



Memorandum

The Alberta Teachers' Association

INFORMATION MEMO

Date 2025 02 21

To Members of the Calgary Catholic Teachers' Bargaining Unit

From Sean D Brown, Coordinator, Teacher Employment Services (TES)

Re School Principals and Labour Action

It has come to the attention of the Alberta Teachers' Association (Association) that the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division (Division), at a recent Shepard Leadership Council (SLC), provided information regarding principals and their involvement in any potential labour action. While the Calgary Separate School Local No 55 (Local) has reached out to the Division to clarify the statement, the response has not provided the level of comfort the Association requires to ensure that our members have accurate information.

The Association understands that school leaders were told that, in the event of labour action, principals would not be allowed to participate. Further, they would continue to receive their regular pay and accrue pensionable service during a strike. The Division believes its position to be accurate for a few reasons:

1. The *Education Act* dictates the role of the principal (bolding added to draw attention to the specific area)

Principals

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- (a) provide instructional leadership in the school,
 - (a.1) **provide a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,**
- (b) ensure that the instruction provided by the teachers employed in the school is consistent with the courses and programs of study prescribed, approved or authorized pursuant to this Act,
- (c) evaluate or provide for the evaluation of programs offered in the school,
- (d) ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister,
- (e) **direct the management of the school,**
- (f) **maintain order and discipline in the school and on the school grounds and during activities sponsored or approved by the board,**
- (g) promote co-operation between the school and the community that it serves,
- (h) supervise the evaluation and advancement of students,

. . . continued

- (i) evaluate the teachers employed in the school, and
- (j) subject to any applicable collective agreement and the principal's contract of employment, **carry out the duties that are assigned to the principal by the board** in accordance with the regulations and the requirements of the school council and the board.

2. Past practice. Specifically, the Division has provided an example where, to their recollection, principals were required to be at school during a labour action to deal with situations in case students showed up in cold weather. In this instance, the Division has said they directed principals to complete these tasks.

To be clear, school leaders, including principals, are members of the bargaining unit, and should Local members go on strike, principals will join them.

Like classroom teachers, principals do not have essential service contracts and cannot provide professional service, nor can they be directed to do so in the event of a strike. Principals, like their classroom colleagues, will not receive pay or earn pensionable service if a strike occurs. If the Division directed members, including principals, to provide service during a strike and attempted to reprimand somehow or cause them employment difficulties, the Association asserts that they would have violated the Alberta *Labour Relations Code*, under Prohibited practices by the employer, etc. Specifically, s. 149 (1) (a)(vii) which states:

- 149(1)** No employer or employers' organization and no person acting on behalf of an employer or employers' organization shall
- (a) refuse to employ or **to continue to employ any person or discriminate against any person in regard to employment or any term or condition of employment** because the person
 - (vii) has participated in any strike that is permitted by this Act

While the Association fully understands the unique and challenging role of school principals and acknowledges that they have specific duties dictated by the *Education Act*, they remain members of the bargaining unit and have all the rights, entitlements, and responsibilities afforded them by the collective agreement and legislation. This also means that even though their roles are different, principals will be expected to be treated the same as their classroom colleagues should a strike occur.

The Association will update the Central Strike FAQ document to reflect this issue, so members have the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

Should members, including school leaders, have questions or concerns, please contact TES at 1-800-232-7208.

SDB/dmc/ejl

cc A E McCaffrey, Local President, Calgary Separate School Local No 55
J C Schilling, President, The Alberta Teachers' Association
K L Kempt, D J Moroz, A L Scott Davies, District Representatives, Calgary City
TES and Local Staff Officers