

TALKING POINTS

Answering Questions from Parents, Students and the Community

HOW CAN TEACHERS ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT THE REALITY IN SCHOOLS?

- We all want what's best for kids. Schools must provide a high-quality education and a school experience that allows students to learn and grow. Alberta's government must support that vision with adequate and sustainable funding
- While protecting the privacy of students and colleagues, share examples of the impact of cuts on the school environment:
 - Talk about long waits and lack of access to other professional resources.
 - Discuss large class sizes and complex learning environments, such as unsupported inclusion issues, an ever-increasing number of diverse learners and multigrade classrooms.
 - If you can, share a specific experience. Tell them about a situation a colleague has described to you.
- Parents who want to offer support can visit StopTheExcuses.ca to sign up for updates. After signing up, they'll be invited to take action by sharing on social media or by e-mailing their MLA, the minister of education and the premier. By sharing stories about how their children and family have been affected by the underfunding of education, parents can apply pressure on the government to negotiate.

WHAT CAN TEACHERS TELL PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT BARGAINING?

- The government has not provided the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) with the mandate to negotiate on important issues—such as class complexity, class size, supports for students and violence-free classrooms—in order to improve the learning environment for students and teachers.
- Teachers are asking the government to really listen to what teachers and parents are saying about learning conditions in schools and the needs of students.
- Teachers understand that the bargaining process creates uncertainty for parents, students and the community.
- Teachers want to be in the classroom and to reach a negotiated deal at the table. The government has offered hiring new teachers, but now we need to address salary so current teachers will stay and new teachers will join the profession.
- Teachers do not want to take job action. The goal of job action is to put pressure on the government to address the building crisis in schools due to the lack of sustainable funding.

MY STUDENTS HAVE ASKED ABOUT BARGAINING AND JOB ACTION. WHAT DO I TELL THEM?

- If a student asks you what is happening with bargaining, be honest (while considering the student's age and degree of understanding).
- Teachers are asking for help to make sure that classrooms are safe for everyone and that students have access to supports such as school counsellors.
- Job action creates uncertainty for students, parents and teachers. Teachers want to be in their classrooms helping students, and they hope that a fair agreement will be reached soon.
- Teachers want every student to be excited to come to school, and they want to make sure that every student has what they need to succeed.
- Keep your tone positive. Don't be critical of the government, your employer or individual people. Emphasize that teachers believe that students are essential and so should everyone else.

StopTheExcuses.ca



The Alberta Teachers' Association