

# Our Side of the Table



## **Meeting #4 – May 10, 2011**

### **Vernon Teachers' Association Negotiating Team**

It's been four weeks since our last meeting with the Management Team.

One goal for today's meeting was to sign a Protocol Agreement. Management had concerns about maintaining confidentiality during our negotiations. Each person on the Management Team agreed, however, that nothing they have heard or seen has breached such professionalism thus far. Joe Rogers said, *"If it was just the ten of us, no problem."* The VTA Negotiating Team argued there is no mention of a need for confidentiality in the protocol agreement at the provincial level, and that we are negotiating a public document!

The biggest stumbling block was that Management insisted on including a clause restricting which sections of our Collective Agreement can be discussed, saying *"We will only sign if that's in there."* As a result, though we spent 6 hours over 3 meetings, and were able to finally agree on 17 items (personnel, communications, costs, etc.), we must now proceed *without* an official Protocol Agreement.

How does this affect your Collective Agreement concerns? Though Vernon teachers ratified a list of just under 50 items of local concern, Management made it clear that the Board is only authorizing them to discuss 6 of them. Our Employer is *not* willing to discuss items such as: post and fill practices, technology, supervision, teacher wellness, professional autonomy, and about 40 more!

In the interest of moving forward, we offered to start work on the Management Team's list of items. Most of them were what they referred to as "housekeeping" items. We moved through these items quickly as they were basic edits rather than meaningful changes to working conditions.

We expressed our disappointment at their reluctance to discuss the concerns of Vernon teachers by saying, *"...we are both sitting here knowing there are things that need to be fixed, but we can't talk about it...we changed apostrophes, but our members have not empowered us to change apostrophes. We wanted to talk about things that haven't changed in 20 years, and the local provisions won't be talked about at the provincial table!"*

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12. You can send feedback and comments to:

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