
Northwest Board and Teachers Ratify Local Contract

June 17, 2009

In a model for labour negotiations Northwest teachers and the Board of Education recently approved and ratified a local contract. Direct negotiations began in February last and were successfully concluded with the signing of the contract. The negotiations were conducted using a problem solving / consensus building approach.

Asked for his comments, the chairperson of the teachers' Local Negotiating Committee, Brent Keen, commented that he was: "very pleased with how the negotiations went. The people sitting down at the table were excellent to work with. We used a problem solving approach and came up with what I think is an excellent agreement. I'm very pleased with how everything turned out and I'm pleased that it was ratified by 95% of teachers."

For his part, Glen Winkler, the Director of Education for the Northwest School Division was very pleased with both the tone of the meetings and by how quickly the bargaining team was able to come together with an agreement that both the board and teachers could approve.

He noted that, "It was a very positive experience and something that we value very highly – the cooperation of the teachers. I think it was based on a really solid agreement that we had established in the first round of negotiations after amalgamation."

When asked about the significance of the 95% approval by teachers Mr. Winkler stated that a "95% ratification is really remarkable. The Board also were unanimous in their approval. It's important that people recognize the Board appreciates the working relationship they have with their teachers and this is another indication that it's positive. They really value that."

Under the terms of the agreement the contract will run from September of 2009 through to September of 2012.

