



# News Release

## Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools Reacts to Recent ATA Media Release

*For immediate release – March 6, 2024*

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) announced, in a surprise media release late yesterday, that Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) is sidestepping "the third-party independent mediator ... in teacher negotiations". Nothing could be further from the truth.

On February 26, 2024, in an email from the mediator to both the ATA and RDCRS, the mediator stated,

**"Further to my phone calls with each of you on Friday, I understand that the Employer reviewed the "binary choice" in Sean's email of February 15, 2024, and agreed the next step should be for the mediator to write out and let the cooling off period begin. However, I understand the Employer is willing to meet with the ATA, without the mediator, on March 7 and 8, 2024 during the hours previously discussed (evening and day)."**

The mediator further stated in that email correspondence,

**"I have decided to not issue recommended terms of settlement at this time as I feel the parties are too far apart in their current positions. Attached is the letter confirming this decision".**

The email the mediator is referring to on February 15, 2024, came from the ATA chief negotiator, Sean Brown, in which he referred to a "binary choice" as follows,

# News Release

**"Given the results of the meeting and the sentiments shared by members, I believe the next step is a binary choice:**

- 1. The employer bargaining team returns to the table and listens to its teachers. Furthermore, that the employer be prepared to move on the items that members need. (Our preferred option), or**
- 2. The mediator will need to write out and the two-week cooling off period will commence.**

**We hope to hear back that the employer will return to the table. If not, then they will leave teachers with few options."**

Vice Chair Dorraine Lonsdale states, "RDCRS believes that factual reporting of events, activities, and matters pertinent to our local teacher negotiations with the ATA is now necessary for our communities to understand what is involved in these local teacher negotiations. To this end, RDCRS has opened a section of our website to report to our communities on our local teacher negotiations. Information will be shared on a regular basis as we continue to negotiate with the ATA."

The bargaining team for RDCRS will attend the scheduled meetings on March 7 and 8, 2024 and bargain with the ATA to reach an agreement that is mutually acceptable to both parties.

"It is the intention of RDCRS to continue a principled and respectful approach while bargaining the local items tabled by both parties. The school division highly values its teachers and in addition, we are responsible to students, parents, and our communities," Vice Chair Lonsdale continues. "RDCRS has a duty to preserve our programs and services, to manage our complex education system and to be financially accountable for our decisions. These three pillars extend also to our bargaining of collective agreements affecting our employees. RDCRS takes these responsibilities seriously, and these responsibilities always remain an important part of our considerations."

# News Release

The Division is committed to serving children and parents with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and within the means of the Division.

*Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools serves over 10,650 students in 21 schools in Red Deer, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail, Blackfalds and Olds. It also supports the learning of over 850 students in a Home Education Program. The Division is committed to serving children and parents with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and within the means of the Division.*

**For more information, contact:**

Communications Department

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools

P: 403-343-1055 Ext. 310147

E: [communications@rdcrs.ca](mailto:communications@rdcrs.ca)

W: [www.rdcrs.ca](http://www.rdcrs.ca)