

Collective bargaining dispute

Business, Management



Collective Bargaining Dispute Collective Bargaining Dispute Collective bargaining “ consists of negotiations between an employer and a group of employees so as to determine the conditions of employment”(Cornell University Law School, n. d.). The conditions of employment usually include among others, the wages, work hours and benefits. Aside from determining the conditions of employment, another purpose of a collective bargaining agreement is to have definite rules that will govern the relationship between the employer and employee(International Labour Organization, 2007).

The collective bargaining dispute is between two parties, the British Columbia Teachers Federation and the British Columbia Public School Employers Association. The main focus of the dispute is the request for wage increase and the problem of teachers not doing administrative work. The negotiations have been going on for a year and five months already but no resolution has been reached (Strandberg, 2012). A third party has been brought in to assist in the dispute’s settlement. A need for an acceptable collective bargaining agreement between the two parties must be structured in such a way that both associations will be satisfied with the resolution of the various issues on hand.

The dispute stems from the situation wherein the teachers are not doing administrative work such as writing report cards, supervising recess and other administrative tasks(Strandberg, 2012). Furthermore, the teachers are requesting for a 15% wage increase over three years but the employers are not willing to give such an increase because the government has a “ net-zero mandate”(Strandberg, 2012).

British Columbia Teachers Federation President Susan Lambert claims that

the other teachers in Canada are receiving higher salaries compared to what they are receiving (Knickerbocker, Teachers table new reduced package to kick-start negotiations, 2012). They are citing inflation as one reason for their request for a wage increase. On the other hand the British Columbia Public School Employers Association maintains that increasing the teachers' salary would be a violation of the government's net-zero mandate for public sector unions (Steffenhagen, 2012). An increase may only be granted if there is any realized savings from the contracts.

One believes that the teachers' refusal to write report cards is unethical because as a teacher that is their duty. It is, however, not illegal for them to ask for a wage increase. It may be considered unethical on the part of the British Columbia Public School Employers Association to argue that they cannot increase the salaries of the teacher because of the net-zero mandate of the government, while other public employees such as the Delta Police, the Surrey firefighters and British Columbia Ambulance Paramedics were given increases.

The third party who was asked to assist in resolving the dispute is Trevor Hughes, the assistant deputy minister. His role is to come up with the best possible solution which will be agreeable to both the British Columbia Teachers Federation and the British Columbia Public School Employers Association.

As of February 23, 2012, Hughes stated that it was "very unlikely" that a voluntary settlement between the teachers and their employers will be reached (Kamloops The Daily News, 2012). Hughes goes on further to say that neither the British Columbia Teachers Federation nor the British

Columbia Public School Employers Association is willing to give way. The British Columbia teachers have planned to hold a day of action on Monday, February 27 to plan their next course of action (Knickerbocker, 2012).

The dispute can be resolved if the teachers agree to a wage increase this year but any wage increases for the following years will depend on the availability of government funds. The amount of any future wage increases must be discussed on a yearly basis. The British Columbia Public School Employers Association may agree to a wage increase provided that the teachers agree to do other administrative work.

In this kind of collective bargaining dispute, the only way to resolve the issues is for both parties to identify their priorities and be willing to compromise. There is a need to do more research and investigation on the arguments of the two parties concerned to determine the validity of their claims and eventually prioritize their demands in order to come up with a solution which is acceptable to both parties. Only when both parties become flexible will a win-win solution happen.

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