



First Student and Unifor Collective Agreement Negotiations Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

April 30, 2025

Where do First Student and Unifor negotiations currently stand?

Negotiations and talks are ongoing between both parties. Durham Student Transportation Services, Durham District School Board (DDSB) and Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) remain hopeful that an agreement can be reached at the bargaining table and avoid any job action and/or strike.

What is a “No Board Report”?

A “no board report” in labour relations is a formal notice issued from the Ministry of Labour after the parties have failed to reach a collective agreement in labour negotiations. The issuance of a no-board report triggers a 17-day period after which the parties can legally strike or lockout, depending on the nature of the dispute.

Will negotiations continue during a strike?

Our understanding from First Student and Unifor 4268 is that attempts will be made to continue negotiating if job action/strike occurs.

When will we know there is an actual strike?

Currently, Unifor 4268 has issued a “No Board Report” to the Ministry of Labour. This allows Unifor 4268 to be in a legal strike position as of May 16, 2025. Labour action in the form of a strike could begin as early as the morning of May 16, 2025, if an agreement cannot be reached. If we receive additional information, we will share that with families, and school board staff via school messenger and our website. (www.dsts.on.ca)

Will schools remain open?

All DDSB and DCDSB schools will remain open with regular start times and dismissal times.

How many schools are affected by this situation?

There are 126 schools throughout Durham Region that may be affected by any job action. A full list of schools can be found at www.dsts.on.ca

How will I know if my bus is affected?

Please sign up for the DSTS family portal by clicking on “Track Your Child’s/Student’s Bus” via www.dsts.on.ca

Will a bus still arrive to pick up and drop off my child?

First Student Ajax/Brooklin transports approximately 11,000 DDSB and DCDSB students. If Unifor pursues labor action or a strike, DSTS does not have the capacity to cover all bus routes currently serviced by First Student. In the event of a strike, families will need to make alternate arrangements to get their child to and home from school.

You are asking families to get their children to school. What about congestion at the schools during drop off and pick up times?

We are aware of potential congestion during these busy times. Staff will assist in directing traffic flow during these times. We are also encouraging families to consider carpooling or public transit as an option.

What if I can't get my child to school or pick them up from school?

DSTS, in collaboration with DDSB and DCDSB, is committed to keeping families informed about the current labour situation and any related developments. Communications have been proactively shared with families whose children are on First Student bus routes. We hope that these advance notices and regular updates over the past few weeks have provided families with the necessary information and time to prepare alternative arrangements in the event of labour action or a strike.

Can my elementary child be dropped off early or picked up late from school?

School hours are determined by collective agreements and regulations from the Ontario Ministry of Education and cannot be extended for childcare purposes.

School hours and regular supervision guidelines will continue throughout any job action or strike.

Elementary school supervision begins 15 minutes prior to the school bell time.

What if my child is late or misses school due to no bus services?

Schools will take into consideration the interruption in bus service. Please contact your local school for further information.