

OUR SCHOOLS NEED
FAIR FUNDING

NOW

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CAMPAIGN UPDATE

JANUARY 2007

MOBILIZING FOR OUR RIGHTS

This fall Ontario CUPE members in the school board sector began an ambitious campaign — **'Fair Funding Now'** — to change how the provincial government funds school support services.

Currently, the education funding formula promotes a cycle of continuing cuts to special education, custodial, maintenance, secretarial and clerical, and many other areas of school support services. Using the school board budget process, CUPE school board members highlighted how structural flaws in the funding formula fuel cuts to support workers' jobs and how these cuts impact on the quality of students' education in school communities across Ontario.

At an emergency school board sector meeting late in October, members passed a resolution focused on escalating local actions and using collective bargaining to strengthen protections for school board workers. The resolution called for:

- ❑ Province-wide local 'days of action,' MPP lobbying, a postcard campaign;
- ❑ CUPE members mobilizing in communities to elect 'no-cuts' trustees in the November school board elections;
- ❑ Launching a communications campaign that included media releases, letters to the editor, and deputations to school boards in order to show the public how the flawed funding formula hurts both students and school board workers;
- ❑ CUPE locals supporting the **'Fair Funding NOW'** campaign through a \$10 per member contribution.



CUPE call for 'fair funding' continues

The next phase of the **'Fair Funding Now'** campaign, has now been approved by CUPE Ontario and sector leaders representing school board workers from across the province on the Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC).

The campaign continues to focus on how funding impacts on education issues in local communities as we head into this spring's provincial budget announcement.

'Fair Funding NOW' focus areas:

- *EAs' hours of work/workload; issues related to special needs; supervision;
- *\$350 million provincial under-funding of facilities;
- *School closures;
- *Community use of schools;
- *How the education funding formula fuels support staff cuts.

Look for more information on the "Fair Funding NOW" campaign in the next bulletin update.

From October to December (2006) from Thunder Bay to Toronto, CUPE members in the school board sector called on the province to recognize the vital contribution support staff make to the quality of students' education by fixing funding formula flaws.

There were many positive outcomes as a result of CUPE's very public mobilizing focused on education funding.

MOBILIZING SUCCESSES

In our communities:

- ❑ CUPE media releases were picked up by local media, many CUPE members' letters to the editor that focused on education under-funding and the funding formula were published, TV and radio stations interviewed CUPE leadership and members following the October 23 sector meeting in Toronto.

The mostly positive media coverage has positioned CUPE as the 'go-to-it' media source for information on the funding formula in many Ontario communities.

- ❑ The election of many progressive 'no-cuts' school board trustees across Ontario in the November elections.
- ❑ Several school boards offered to work with CUPE in securing better provincial funding for support services.
- ❑ CUPE radio ads were heard by millions of voters in southern Ontario.

With the provincial government:

- ❑ Ontario Liberals publicly acknowledge that the funding formula is flawed and that they intend to make changes to it prior to the 2007 provincial election.
- ❑ The Education Minister met with CUPE leaders. She agreed to consider setting up a discussion table specific to education support workers' issues and to meet with CUPE on a regular basis.
- ❑ CUPE brief — called the '**The Fix Is In**' — presented to the parliamentary assistant to the minister.
- ❑ Stating that the upcoming spring budget will provide "new" monies for education;

Don't forget to send your local's \$10 a member contribution to the province-wide campaign.



BARGAINING SUCCESSES

Mobilizing on education funding issues has also resulted in positive outcomes at the bargaining table. Several locals in bargaining this fall and early winter, have negotiated new contracts that include additional hours for EAs — a priority issue in both bargaining and the '**Fair Funding Now**' campaign.

SOLIDARITY SUCCESS

For the first time, CUPE & OSSTF are joining forces on school support services funding issues.

A special CUPE/OSSTF symposium has been organized on February 21 – 22, 2007 in Toronto.

Plan to attend this important school board sector meeting.

Use the OSBCC list serve to share what's happening in your school.

To sign up, please contact: podonnell@cupe.ca

Here's what you should share with others in the sector?

- ❑ **successful ways to get members involved;**
- ❑ **bargaining achievements on hours of work or staffing formulas;**
- ❑ **local campaign actions.**