



June 10, 2016

Funding for Public Education

OSBCC committee members and alternates recently met for an update and planning session. Among other things, we reviewed some analysis done by our researcher, Paul O'Donnell, about where we are seeing cuts to the public education system.

Twenty-nine Ontario boards will see a cut in their school operation funding in the next year, with the Toronto District School Board cut by 6.4 million, and Hamilton Wentworth by 1.2 million. Grand Riviere and Lakehead boards are each looking at 10% cuts over two years.

Special education funding will be hit hard, with 25 school boards receiving less money for special education than they currently receive. Ontario trustees are cutting jobs to try to meet their obligation to provide balanced budgets.

We need to fight these cuts at both provincial and local levels. We are developing a campaign that will address the failings in the funding formula. Without additional funding, our ability to provide safe and supportive learning environments for students is hindered, and the next round of bargaining will be more of the same. We aim to roll this campaign out in the fall.

Terri Preston, chair of OSBCC, attended a meeting with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Education this week. There is a serious disconnect in the relationship between the funding for special education and the transitioning of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder into the school system from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) therapy programs. Every stakeholder at the meeting spoke of the need for more staff, and more professional development in applied behavioural analysis (ABA) methods. We will share the slide deck from the Ministry's presentation when we have it.

PPM 159: Collaborative Professionalism

You should have received by now a copy of Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 159. Please read this carefully. This document is the entry point to ensuring our members are a respected part of the education team. We encourage you to absorb it, and to take it to labour management meetings to ensure your members will be recognized through implementing this policy.

Ask questions:

- What does this mean in terms of how professional development will be delivered?
- What is the role of your members in the development of school safety plans, and transition meetings?
- What are some of the best practices out there that we should promote?

In the last round of bargaining, we made the point that our members needed to be seen and heard as part of the school team. This document is the tool we use to insist on greater participation as key members of that team.

Provincial Benefits Working Group

As we mentioned on our last call, CUPE had sent a letter to the CTA and the Crown requesting an extension to the May 1st timeline. We have secured that extension to allow us enough time to review the data, and conduct a thorough due diligence process.

We have survey results back and are in the process of translating the presentation so we can distribute it to all locals. There were 11,473 surveys completed (a 20.9% response rate). The ability to get this out quickly to members is largely due to the work you did leading up to bargaining last round. Having the ability to communicate rapidly to members remains a key priority. Thanks to all of you for sending the survey out to your members.

We have been sending board-specific data to locals regarding FTE counts. We appreciate the effort local leaders have made to ensure its accuracy. We believe we now have all the FTE data in your hands. If you have not yet responded, we will follow up – it's crucial we get this information back before the end of June.

If you believe there are errors in the FTEs reported for your board, please contact Paul O'Donnell (podonnell@cupe.ca), and also your employer to have an initial discussion re the discrepancy. If it can't be worked out, we will ask the CTA and the Ministry for their assistance.

It appears that on a number of the reports, employers have failed to include instructors in their count. All positions in the bargaining unit should be included in the count.

Collective Agreement update

We are working through the CTA to correct a number of issues arising out of the implementation of the central agreement.

Our internal committee is Chris Wilson, Sylvain Piche, Tammy Graham, Terri Preston, and Jim Morrison. Jim has asked servicing staff to start formalizing complaints, using the form found in the central agreement. The disputes we have resolved to date have been done

through discussions and a less formal approach. But there are clearly a number of situations where the boards are not responding to that approach, and we will likely need to proceed to arbitration in those cases.

We are working to set up an initial meeting of the CTA and our committee to streamline the process and ensure we have a common understanding of what type of dispute is likely to be determined centrally vs locally.

Article C 4.14 (Timelines) states:

“Disputes that arise during non-instructional days (summer months, Christmas break, and March break) will have timelines automatically extended.” So while it is still important to get information regarding a dispute to us as soon as possible, timelines are waived during the summer.

We still have four bargaining units who have not yet completed local bargaining.

Health and Safety Provincial Table

Our Health and Safety representatives have been attending a joint provincial table with teachers and other unions. The committee met twice in May and looked at protocols the hospital sector has in place regarding violence in the workplace. They have also looked at ways of standardizing reporting procedures, and consistent practices in sharing information with staff regarding students with a history of violence. Monthly meetings have been scheduled for this committee from September to December.

Classification Reference Groups

We need to get the classification working groups up and running. The reference groups were elected at our conference, and will be contacted by committee members for an initial conference call to be scheduled in the next two weeks. We are looking forward to input from these groups as we move ahead with campaigns and to give us input on positions we may take in meetings with the CTA.

Provincial Working Groups

We are actively working on getting our provincial working groups up and running. Jim and I will be providing dates to the CTA to enable us to move the work along. There is a possibility of initial meetings in early summer.

Thank you to locals who have submitted LTD information so we are well prepared once we get a date for our initial meeting with that committee.

Levy

As you can see, we anticipate a busy year ahead. During our recent meeting, the committee reviewed our finances. A motion was passed to reinstate our voluntary levy. We will send you a letter to this effect in the coming week.

On behalf of our committee, we wish you all a safe and relaxing summer.

The Ontario School Boards Coordinating Committee (OSBCC) is a committee of CUPE Ontario, representing 55,000 members working in schools across the province.

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