

May 2020

Timeline of voluntary redeployment for education workers

Friday, April 24: OSBCU and other education unions took part in a call led by the Ministry of Education. We were told that the government would be asking education workers to voluntarily redeploy to other public sector employers in need of staffing. They were asking for endorsements from education unions, including CUPE locals, and from the Council of Trustees' Associations (CTA).

OSBCU was asked to provide a reply by 9 a.m. Monday morning.

Saturday, April 25: OSBCU held a conference call with leaders from municipal, long-term care and social services, who confirmed that members who had been redeployed reported positive experiences; and that CUPE members who were overworked and exhausted welcomed the help and support of redeployed workers. (OSBCU was already in talks with OSBCU and CUPE staff over two proposed redeployments of CUPE school board workers to hospitals in Kenora and Lindsay.)

Sunday, April 26: Approximately 100 representatives from CUPE school board locals joined OSBCU's town hall call to hear what the Ministry was proposing, what it could mean for CUPE members and to decide whether or not to endorse voluntary redeployment for education workers.

Locals gave the proposal their strong endorsement and OSBCU shared with locals a set of principles and draft letter of understanding that should form the basis of locals' individual agreements on redeployment.

Monday, April 27: On an early-morning call with the Ministry, OSBCU passed along locals' endorsement of voluntary redeployment. We also provided a draft set of principles to the Ministry under which CUPE school board locals would agree to be redeployed. These principles ensure that redeployment is voluntary and time limited. They also address such issues as wages, benefits, pension, service, seniority, discipline and training, especially in the use of personal protective equipment.

Tuesday, April 28: OSBCU learned that two employers – a hospital and school board in Lindsay, each with CUPE locals – had circumvented the redeployment process as outlined and reached their own agreement without CUPE's or the CTA's involvement. We made a call to the Ministry of Education to advise them of the situation. We also affirmed that CUPE locals' endorsement depended on the principles that we had shared with the Ministry and that any deviation or alteration could threaten CUPE's support.

Wednesday, April 29: OSBCU held an executive meeting by teleconference, where VPs reported that locals were aware of the coming announcement and were speaking to their members about redeployment.

April 29 to May 6: Negotiations with Ministry of Education and Council of Trustees' Associations over principles and content of template redeployment agreements.

Friday, May 8: Education minister Stephen Lecce is expected to announce the government "Community Involvement" initiative to match broader public sector workers to employers in need.