

## **CUPE Ontario puts heat on Liberals to fix formula- Phase III Launch of Fair Funding Campaign**

CUPE Ontario is working with the Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee to put the heat on the Liberals to fix the school funding formula in the run-up to the October 10th provincial election. Phase III of its Fair Funding Now campaign will kick into gear during August and September across the province.

Radio ads and media conferences are planned for cities in Northern Ontario during the latter part of August to highlight staff cuts by school boards in Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins. Messaging will drive home the fact that 60% of Ontario's school boards will cut jobs this year, because they simply don't have enough funds to table balanced budgets under the current funding formula.

At the same time, radio ads are being planned with strike aversion dollars for CUPE 4155 workers at the Conseil scolaire catholique de l'est ontarien located southeast of Ottawa.

Widespread radio advertising will kick into even higher gear in early September in centres across the province. The campaign builds on the successful Queen's Park media conference in July in which CUPE Ontario and the OSBCC received wide coverage, reports and editorials for its analysis and exposé of budgets submitted by 45 of the province's 72 boards for the 2007-08 year.

The blending of political action and bargaining negotiations to leverage faulty funding as a key issue has been a mainstay of CUPE Ontario activities in 2007. Earlier in the year, that strategy successfully assisted CUPE 218 in Durham and CUPE 1483 in Dufferin-Peel to win more favourable settlements at the negotiating table.

"Our aim is to keep the Liberals on the run in as many ridings as possible," says CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan. "Between our campaigns and bargaining negotiations, we're going to force them to make a move prior to October 10th to keep their promise, fix the formula and get the funds flowing into school operations. Otherwise, the Liberals are going to suffer badly at the election polls."

CUPE Ontario's radio ads are not letting John Tory off the hook either. Along with the fact that the Conservatives created the faulty funding formula, Tory's proposal to fund faith-based schools would strip even more dollars away from the current system, adds Ryan, making the Liberals and Tories two sides of the same coin when it comes to short-changing schools.