

Flawed funding formula at the heart of two potential school board strikes

There are now 2 school boards that are facing strikes just as students and parents are preparing for a new school year, and just as the provincial government is making pre-election spending announcements.

Talks between CUPE 4155 and the eastern Ontario French Catholic board, the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien (CDSCEO), broke off recently, raising the possibility that 219 full-time, 97 part-time and 33 temporary employees may be forced to strike to settle their new contract.

And school board workers in the Bluewater district school board are facing job cuts of about 20 full-time equivalents - over 10 per cent of their staff - because of the province's flawed funding formula.

CUPE President Sid Ryan is asking the province to pressure the school boards to use any new funding first to rescind all the recent lay-off notices. The province this week announced about \$300 million in new funding for school boards. Of this, only \$20 million was earmarked towards maintenance and custodial budgets.

The Liberals have yet to try to solve the flawed funding formula, promising now to review it by 2010. How much longer do Ontario students and their families have to wait before the government acts?

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