

OSBCC Bargaining Update

“We are stronger together!”

Bargaining Update – June 2014

Provincial Election

Congratulations and thanks to all locals who campaigned in the recent provincial election to put education issues and school board workers front and centre. Tim Hudak’s public service-gutting mandate was stopped in its tracks thanks to you.

Premier Kathleen Wynne is expected to announce her cabinet on June 24th, and we will know who is named to the education portfolio as Minister. While we’re all pleased to not be dealing with a Hudak government, we know that Premier Wynne has said plainly there is no money for public sector wage increases. We expect a very tough round of bargaining ahead.

Central Bargaining – Next Steps

Notice to bargain was served for all locals and bargaining units on June 2nd, with copies sent to local presidents and national staff. Please advise us if you’ve not received a copy.

Once the new government is sworn in, the Minister of Education will issue a regulation authorizing CUPE as the employee bargaining agent for the 109 bargaining units who voted to participate in central bargaining. We also anticipate a regulation naming a “Council of Employer Bargaining Agents” – this will ensure we are bargaining with all four trustee associations at the same table.

Once those regulations are issued, OSBCC will use the list of issues determined at the February school board sector conference to determine what will be bargained centrally. This list was sent to all local presidents at the end of February.

Any disagreements between OSBCC and the Council of Employer Bargaining Agents as to what belongs at the central table will be adjudicated by the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). If we face a situation where the OLRB determines that any of our issues do not belong in central bargaining, we will provide locals with language you can incorporate into local bargaining in a coordinated fashion.

Under Bill 122, local bargaining can only start once the topics for central discussion have been determined by the parties. So, local unions are asked to hold back from negotiations with their local boards until the central table issues have been agreed and established. This does not prevent you from preparing your proposals for the local tables.

Summer updates through town hall meetings

We will be holding telephone town hall meetings through the summer to make sure all locals are up to date on developments at the central table. We ask all local presidents to advise your OSBCC area rep or alternate of the names, positions and phone numbers of those you would like to have included on the calls. Your OSBCC area rep will be in touch with you for your list.

Preparing your locals for bargaining

You will well remember that in the last round of bargaining, the government introduced Bill 115 during the summer months. Should we face any similar issues, we need to have an established communication structure for getting in touch with members – one that does not rely on the employer’s systems. Does your local have home email addresses, phone numbers, and cell phone numbers for all members? If not, please take steps to gather that information as soon as possible – preferably before the school break.

Establishing Area Councils

We need to establish area councils and be prepared for action in September. We ask each bargaining unit to identify a rep to participate in their area council. Ideally, you will choose reps who are not also on local bargaining committees, because you will be responsible for member mobilization at the same time the bargaining tables are meeting.

Any improvements in our contract will be dependent on our ability to move quickly, to be organized, and to take job action in the event we face insurmountable concessions at the table. We will be providing mobilization training to area council members in August.

Layoffs

Employers across the province have issued layoff or surplus letters to some of our members. If you have members who have been laid off, please let your staff rep know. Please also copy OSBCC Coordinator Jim Morrison at jmorrison@cupe.ca, and school boards researcher Paul O’Donnell at podonnell@cupe.ca. We have developed coordinated grievance language to fight these layoffs, and will work with you to make sure the public knows the impact layoffs will have on students and schools.

Please also advise us of any layoffs at: osbcc@cupe.on.ca.

(see next page...)

Building our Profile

Over the coming months we'll be talking to you about ways to build the profile of our work in the school community. Some locals are already doing things to tell their stories and promote their work – send us your stories and ideas at osbcc@cupe.on.ca.

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