



TOGETHER, EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

OSBCC Bargaining Update 2012

Issue 14

August 16, 2012

Sisters and Brothers,

The OSBCC Bargaining Committee was elected to represent over 50,000 CUPE school board workers at the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) with the school board associations and the province of Ontario.

A lot has happened in recent weeks. The OSBCC held its second (virtual) Town Hall meeting on Thursday, August 9, 2012. We will summarize those discussions in this update.

To date, the government has reached deals with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA), the Association of Professional Student Services Personnel (APSSP) and most recently, the “Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens” (AEFO or Association of Franco-Ontarian Teachers). All agreements reached between the government and unions so far have been without an Employer – meaning without the agreement of any school board trustee associations. This is significant.

The government sent a letter to all school boards advising them of timelines for filing for conciliation and getting No Board reports in time to unilaterally change working conditions before September 1.

A number of English Catholic School Boards filed for conciliation on August 7. It is clear the English Catholic Boards are extremely unhappy with the deal the government reached with OECTA, in particular as it pertains to the seniority hiring provisions for supply teachers and the responsibility diagnostic testing now falling to teachers.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board has broken ranks with the others and voted to accept the OECTA Memorandum of Understanding as its parameters for bargaining.

We have been clear with the Employers and the Ministry that we feel there is still a possibility to find a CUPE solution which would work for support staff.

On August 8, Brothers Fred Hahn and Brian Blakeley and Sisters Linda Thurston-Neeley, Kathy Johnson and Terri Preston met with the Minister of Education.

We went into great detail about why the OECTA deal would not work for CUPE support staff whose average earnings fall very close to the Low Income Measure for a family of four in Ontario. We discussed the problem with a one-size fits all solution and the impact which

would be felt by our members. We asked about why we would have to take three unpaid days when the grid movement for CUPE members would be about 0.2 per cent across the province. We pointed out that there was no magic in the September 1 date for grid movement in CUPE contracts as our grid movement, where it exists, takes place on anniversary dates or on January 1. We asked if all of the costs to be borne by school boards in the OECTA deal were fully funded by the government or whether we would see boards dipping into our budget lines to find funding.

We were clear we were not interested in reaching deals without the Employers. We also said we were sure that legally they could not legislate these provisions and that if they tried to we would fight them with everything we had. We also reminded them they were a minority government and we did not believe any attempt at legislation would pass.

The Minister was encouraged to hear we felt there was still a possibility to reach a central deal for support staff and indicated she understood support staff had particular needs which may require a different approach. She also stated the OECTA deal was fully funded and would not result in the Boards needing to dip into the budget lines which fund our members. She asserted that if we were to try to reach a central deal with the associations, we would need to move quickly or might get caught up in other events.

We are focusing our efforts on getting a central agreement with Employer representatives that works for support staff before the end of the month. In the meantime, we are asking locals to continue with local bargaining under the guidelines previously sent to local presidents.

There is no question we are heading into a challenging fall but it is equally clear that “Together, everything is possible.” We appreciate your continued support.

In solidarity,

Your Bargaining Committee

:gb/cope491