

CUPE BC K-12 Committee
Report to Convention – April 2018

Due to submission deadlines, some items may have updates by the time we reach convention; in that case, updates will be verbally provided by the Committee.

Provincial Job Evaluation Pilot Project

The Joint Committee continues to meet, and recently selected the 7 trial districts at the end of 2017. Over the spring, job descriptions were gathered from those districts, which in turn were the basis for the generic job descriptions to be used across the JE Project. The Committee continues to work on this and hopes to be able to have a preliminary report out to all K-12 Locals before the end of the year.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

The Committee applauds all the work our Locals are doing to support SOGI education in the schools. CUPE BC has been invited to work with other stakeholders, having discussions around the implementation of the SOGI-1-2-3 resources in schools for students, parents, teachers, and support staff and administrators. More information about this can be found at www.sogieducation.org.

Stakeholders met on Feb 8th to address concerns coming from parents, and to finalize a plan to provide factual information to parents and other concerned community groups; along with videos explaining the classroom aids, messaging will be consistent: focussing on "shared" or "common" values, not "family" values. Focus on what unites all groups, regardless of religion, beliefs, etc - the safety for all, a safe space for kids, promoting acceptance of others.

Psycho-Educational Assessment Wait Times

At the time of writing, the firm of Allevato, Quail & Roy had been retained and was interviewing our members who had identified experiencing lengthy waits to have their children properly assessed for their unique educational needs. The expectation is that

this will move forward, and we hope to be able to provide an update before the end of the school year.

Violence in the Workplace

This continues to be an issue in our schools and in schools across the country; not just for EA's but for other staff as well, from school secretaries to bus drivers. One member asked his local "how many times is it ok for me to be hit in a day?" Our members are serious about their safety, and we are encouraging proper reporting by our members as well as the use of their right to refuse unsafe work when appropriate. It is estimated that up to 60% of incident reporting is either suppressed, or not reported at all.

This topic has been in the news recently, and our members and locals have made their position clear: The solution is NOT to deny any child their right to a public education, but rather to increase the number of EAs available to support classroom education and individual student safety plans, along with ensuring that all staff have access to student safety plans as required.

On a different note, CUPE has partnered with the BCTF, the BC Labour Heritage Centre, Worksafe and others to promote and educate around the workers Day of Mourning in our schools.

Our goal is safety for our members, and all students in the school.

Public Education Benefits Trust (PEBT)

The K-12 President's Council passed a unanimous motion to appoint Sister Ellen Bryden, a member of CUPE Local 3742 in Prince George, as the Union Trustee to the PEBT.

The PEBT conference was held at the end of February, and focussed on addictions & substance abuse in the workplace, substance abuse claims, and the stigmas that surround those who have addictions. All attendees were inundated with knowledge and

a better understanding of how the Joint Early Intervention System (JEIS) and the sector's LTD plan work in conjunction with each other to assist people who are struggling with addictions.

Modified Calendar

There are still numerous issues around the modified calendar, with nearly every district approaching it in a different manner. Some simply pay members for the extra week, others allow members to make up the time throughout the year, and yet still others simply reduce our members' wages by the extra week of school closure. The extreme differences across the province is a concern we are working to address with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) with attempts to implement a "best practice" across the province.

Funding Formula

CUPE BC was invited by the Ministry of Education to provide a submission on what a funding formula would look like, in order to provide quality public education in the province. We thank the research team at CUPE National both in Ottawa and here in BC for their hard work on this arduous project, as the Ministry was looking for specific concrete proposals, not just broad-stroke generalizations within a short timeframe. The research department studied public education funding models around the world, in order to provide a unique "made in BC" proposal that works for our members and our children.

Custodial Survey

At the time of writing, the key findings from this survey had not been published, however some particularly note-worthy findings include:

- 27% of respondents work more than one job
- 49% say they are not given enough time to do the work expected by their employer

- 55% say they are not given enough time to meet their own expectations of a safe and healthy environment
- 44% say their work has become more hazardous (e.g. more injuries, less safe materials or equipment, significant stress, etc.) since they first became custodians.
- 59% say the area they are expected to clean has increased since they first became custodians
- 49% are given less time to clean the same area as they were previously
- 30% have been told to lower their expectations of cleanliness
- 71% say there is cleaning that is not being done due to increased and/or unrealistic workloads.

Again, thank you to the thousands of custodians who completed the survey - your participation has made a difference. Many thanks to our CUPE K-12 researcher in BC, Sister Liz Blackwood for all her hard work.

Education Assistants (EAs)

EAs still face many challenges, including inconsistent work hours (many work as low as 3-5 hours a day), violence in the workplace, little or no access to safety plans for the children and the workers when they are working in a new school or with new students. In addition, the qualifications for EA training can vary from a few months of an in-house program in some districts, to a 2+ year degree program in others. It is a constant struggle to get through a degree program and practicum, only to have less-than full-time wages, and often little to no benefits.

MSP Premiums

As with most sectors, we have been struggling to ensure that those negotiated "costs" go back in to our collective agreements. Some locals have language that clearly states that all benefit cost savings are to return in to the collective agreement in other ways, but not all are this lucky. There may be a need for this to be addressed at the Provincial Bargaining Table.

Coordinated Bargaining

The K-12 Presidents' Council renewed their commitment to bargain provincially at a common table for common issues, and has begun to prepare for bargaining, with the hope of going to the bargaining table before the end of our current collective agreement.

Strong Start

Creating workload overload issues that are not being addressed by administrators, as these students are not counted in the enrollment numbers, yet they still require the same amount of work and tracking from the school support staff.

The K-12 Committee is working closely with the assigned National Representatives to identify any organizing opportunities within Strong Start programs that are not already organized.

MyEd BC

This software initiative still seems to be problematic for our members; whether it is a lack of information flow within the system, or frustrations with freezing and getting locked out, our members are finding that this provincial system is not intuitive and takes significantly longer than the previous methods of attendance, transcript and student information tracking.

Respectfully submitted:

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Jeanne Marr, Co-Chair
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April 2018

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