

OUR LOCAL 1479 NEWS

Making Schools Work!

Strike Vote & Information Meeting

Thank you so much to all the members that were able to come out and hear Jim Morrison speak and take time to vote during these difficult time.

Next General Meeting

Our next general meeting will take place on **May 30, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at JJ O'Neill.**

See you all there.



Information For Negotiations

It is vital that all CUPE Local 1479 members send their personal home email to lizjamescupe1479@gmail.com to be kept informed during negotiations. The Negotiation Committee would like everyone to have accurate and up to date information. This is confidential information for CUPE members only. We are not allowed to use board mail or email as a way of corresponding with our members.

Negotiation Update

CUPE COMMUNIQUÉ

Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2015

Education workers give CUPE a resounding strike mandate in provincial talks

TORONTO – Results have been tallied in strike votes held across Ontario over the month of March, and education workers have given their union a 93% mandate to take job action if necessary in the current round of provincial negotiations.

“That number says it all,” said Terri Preston, chair of CUPE’s provincial school board bargaining committee, which is negotiating with a council representing employers from Ontario’s English and French public school boards, English and French Catholic school boards (Council of Trustee Associations), and the provincial government. “Our members have communicated clearly their commitment to fighting concessions. They have also said, through the strong mandate they’ve given us, that they are deeply frustrated with the pace and tone of this process so far.”

The parties have been meeting since the fall of 2014 and have so far been unable to reach agreement on a list of items that will be bargained centrally vs. what will be bargained locally. “In a normal round of talks, we bring our list, they bring their list, and we get down to talking,” said Jim Morrison, staff coordinator for CUPE’s school board sector. “In this new process, we are not even able to agree to what we’re talking about, and we’ve had to invoke a dispute resolution process at the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). It’s discouraging.”

“There are a number of items that belong at the central table,” said Preston. “For instance – ensuring schools are properly maintained and safe for kids – that is a province-wide issue. Finding ways to keep educational assistants in the classroom – that is also a province-wide issue. Our members have ideas about cost-savings that apply across the province – these things belong at the central table. The strike mandate our members have given us reflects a great frustration with our lack of agreement on something that simple.”

This is the first round of talks unfolding according to a new process established by legislation, in which a central table determines, by mutual agreement or by dispute resolution hearings at the OLRB, what will be bargained centrally. Local bargaining (local school boards bargaining with union locals on all matters that are not at the central table) will happen concurrently once there is agreement on a list of central issues.

At the same time the central strike vote was taken, locals across the province also took strike votes on their local issues.

CUPE represents 55,000 education workers in Ontario, including educational assistants, school office staff, custodians, early childhood educators, instructors, library technicians, trades people, information technologists, social workers, and student supervisors.

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Sick Leave

The board is starting to look at people who have missed over the 11 days without proper paper work. Please have the proper sick leave forms filled out, they are posted on our CUPE website under "Resources". If you need help accessing these forms please feel free to contact Liz James at lizjamescupe1479@gmail.com or contact Kathleen Dillon De Matos at the board office. We still have a grievance in on the fact that the board isn't paying the automatic 90% that other boards are getting.



Possible strike looming for Ontario school boards; Two boards could initiate a 'withdrawal of services' as early as April 17, with five others that could follow if negotiations go poorly

The Globe and Mail
Wed Apr 8 2015
Byline: SELENA ROSS

Seven Ontario school boards are on notice that their high school teachers could strike within weeks.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is taking the final legal step to clear the way for strikes in the seven hand-picked regions, with two boards already a week into a mandatory 17-day countdown, union president Paul Elliott said.

Boards in Halton and Lakehead (Thunder Bay) districts have a possible strike date of around April 17 if negotiations do not improve, according to paperwork from the Ministry of Labour. Mr. Elliott said papers are pending for the remaining five boards: Peel, Durham, Ottawa-Carleton, Rainbow (Sudbury) and Waterloo.

The strikes would be a "full withdrawal of services," including all classroom time, he said.

Secondary school teachers' contracts expired last August. Under provincial law passed last spring, they have been obligated to bargain centrally on some big items, and board-by-board on others.

The board-level talks are under way, but in a speech last month to union members, Mr. Elliott complained that the province hadn't yet started central bargaining because of

"unnecessary delays" and hadn't set a first central bargaining date for support workers until Wednesday, according to a transcript of the event. He also attacked the Liberal government for what he called a "failed dogma of austerity" and said the union won't accept wage freezes.

The seven possible strike districts were chosen in a special union assembly last May, he said, as part of a plan that would see non-striking teachers "take care" of their striking colleagues. Calling the affected districts "the magnificent seven," he asked their teachers to rise and thanked them in front of the crowd.

In a statement, the Ministry of Education said it remains committed to achieving a settlement at the central bargaining table.

The director of Halton District School Board said board-level bargaining in his district began recently and lasted for only one or two sessions before the union began taking the legal steps necessary to strike. Union negotiators requested a conciliator, and when the conciliator arrived, they immediately asked him or her to file a "no board report" to the Ministry of Labour to say officially there was no progress, director David Euale said.

Union members held strike votes last fall. Now, a "no board report" issued at any school board will begin the 17-day countdown.

The Halton talks weren't at a dead end, and they are continuing, with another date set this week, Mr. Euale said.

"They were progressing, they went through ground rules, they set dates for future meetings," he said.

He said the seven targeted boards, including Halton, may have been picked as "lighthouse boards" because relations aren't as strained in them. "I'm hoping that they have picked us because of our excellent past relationship," he said. "I don't like the possibility of being early into the sanction game, but that's their choice, and we're going to do our best to get a settlement."

The union would have to give the board one week's notice before striking, he said. The board has about 17,300 high school students.

Graduating students would be especially affected by a spring strike, since universities are waiting for their final marks, said Michael Barrett, chair of Durham District School Board and president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association.

"Those students in the seven boards are going to be at a disadvantage," he said.

"I would also say universities would understand labour strife and that that would be taken into consideration when applications have been reviewed."

Last year, when teachers in British Columbia went on strike at the end of the school year, they were ordered to submit final marks for their Grade 12 students.

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Job Postings

76-14-15-CT - 0.6875 FTE Caretaker 1

[76-14-15-CT](#)

Internal/External

Kingston

Closing 4/16/2015 4:00 PM

New General Recording Secretary Elected!

Welcome to Josie Fitzgerald as General Recording Secretary to CUPE Local 1479.

Josie takes over from Joanne George, who is retiring after 30 years as the local's General Recording Secretary.

Strike Committee Help is also welcome. If you are interested in helping out there are many different capacities in which you can do so. Please contact the local if you would like to help out.

Board lays off 118 teachers

The Peterborough Examiner

Wed Apr 8 2015

Byline: KENNEDY GORDON , EXAMINER MANAGING EDITOR

The public school board has laid off more than 100 high school teachers, effective at the end of this academic year, their union reported Tuesday.

In all, 118 contract high school teachers employed by the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board learned last Thursday that they will lose their jobs. The layoffs take effect in September before classes resume.

"We're not happy about this," said board chairwoman Cathy Abraham, explaining that it's all about the numbers: funding is based on enrolment, enrolment is in decline, and the decision had to be made to cut teaching positions. "We had no choice but to reduce staff numbers," she said.

The contract teachers are represented by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. They work in 15 high schools located across a large region, including Peterborough city and county, Clarington and Northumberland County. Before the layoffs, the board employed 816 secondary school teachers, with about 31,865 students enrolled in all schools.

"These are well-qualified, well-experienced teachers who want to work," said Janie Kelly, president of OSSTF District 14. "They were blindsided. We were certainly blindsided by the numbers."

As teachers under contract to the public board, they work at regular positions during the school year -some in the same classroom all year, others moving around, said Kelly. It can change year to year, and they never have the guarantee of full-time, permanent work at one school.

They're different from occasional teachers, or supply teachers, she said, although some of them did that sort of work before landing contracts.

In a letter signed by Colleen Bulger, manager of teaching staffing services and employment systems at the board, teachers are told they will remain on a recall list for up to five years, with an updated list issued Tuesday that outlines the recall order by seniority.

"We try to be as helpful as we can, and as supportive as possible," said Abraham. "We'll work hard to get those staff members back into schools as soon as possible." Kelly said pending retirements were taken into account before the cuts were made.

Some retirements may still happen between now and September, Abraham said.

But unless there's a sudden influx of new students or new provincial funding to the board's schools, recalls are unlikely, Kelly said.

"The reality is, if there's going to be a recall there has to be contract work to come back to," she said.

With a funding formula that has remained largely unchanged since 1997, the board's schools are being affected by declining enrolment -a provincewide trend, Kelly said, that left the contract teachers out in the cold.

"It's devastating for them," she said. "Some of them have been on contract for eight, nine years -and they were occasional before that - and now they're gone."

Teachers affected by the move will gather Wednesday for a meeting at the former PCVS cafeteria. The board's human resources department will talk to teachers about the process of their layoff and discuss options for returning to occasional work or finding other jobs within the board.

"We'll be there," said Kelly.

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Local school workers vote to strike

Hamilton Spectator

Fri Apr 10 2015

Byline: Emma Reilly The Hamilton Spectator

Support workers in Hamilton's public and Catholic school boards have voted overwhelmingly in favour of going on strike should their contract negotiations with the province break down.

A province wide vote of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) members resulted in a 93 per cent of workers supporting strike action.

CUPE Local 4153, which represents the caretaking, trade staff and cooks employed at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), is one of 108 individual units bargaining as a team with the province.

Another is CUPE Local 3396, whose members at the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board are educational assistants, early childhood educators, clerical/secretarial, administrative/technical support, speech language pathologists and social workers. In a release, Local 3396 president Linda Durkin said "members are frustrated with the pace and have taken a clear stand on fighting concessions."

Bargaining has yet to begin in earnest, said CUPE Local 4153 president Arch Walker.

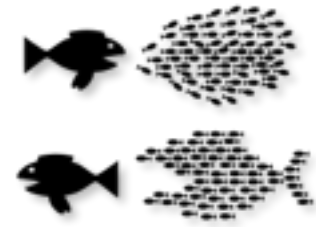
Employees and the province are still hammering out exactly what issues should be presented at the central bargaining table.

"Our focus is on negotiating and getting something rolling at the provincial table," Walker said. "We really want the negotiations to get started in earnest."

Solidarity

Solidarity is the key to success in the labour movement.

Hopefully everyone had time to look at the really cool videos on Youtube by the Canadian Labour Congress Fairness Works campaign and One Minute Message contest entries. Another good documentary to check out is called "Inequality For All" on Netflix.



Work disruption looms at Ottawa high schools; OCDSB received 'no board' report, but first board targeted is Durham

Ottawa Citizen

Thursday Apr 9 2015

Byline: Blair Crawford

Ottawa's public high schools could face more labour disruption as soon as April 20.

The Ottawa Carleton District School Board received a "no board" report Tuesday, starting the clock ticking toward a job action by teachers. The board is one of seven targeted by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation as contract talks - both at the provincial and board levels - reach an impasse.

"At this point in time we are completely focused on negotiating a local agreement," Jennifer Adams, director of education, said Wednesday.

"It's important for students and parents to know that as of right now, teaching and learning continues in our classrooms. If we do get notification, we will inform students and parents right away."

The first board targeted for action - full walkout - is Durham Region, OSSTF President Paul Elliott said Wednesday.

"We're hoping that over the next 11 days that both parties will recognize there is a deadline here and can start working toward a negotiated settlement," he said.

"I do want to be clear that we have not announced any strike action in Ottawa," Elliott said.

The law requires that the union provide five days' notice before taking any job action. The "no board" report, issued by a conciliation officer and dated April 2, sets the April 20 date.

"As of that date, they are in a legal strike position," Adams said. "There could be no action or there could be a whole scope of action, from work to rule to partial withdrawal to a full withdrawal."

The board and the union were continuing to negotiate on local issues, Adams said.

Meanwhile, Premier Kathleen Wynne urged high school teachers to stay at the bargaining table instead of threatening strikes at what the union is calling "the magnificent seven" - Ottawa-Carleton, Peel, Durham, Halton, Waterloo, Rainbow in Sudbury and Lakehead in Thunder Bay.

This is the first round of negotiations with the OSSTF since the province brought in a new bargaining system, with both local and provincial talks.

The union says it won't accept wage freezes that the Liberals want for all public sector workers until they eliminate a \$10.9-billion budget deficit.

Wynne says she knew negotiations would be tough because of the "constrained finances," but says the government is committed to reaching a fair deal at the bargaining table.

The last high school labour disruption occurred in 2012 when high school teachers withdrew from extracurricular activities.

The teachers have been without a contract since August.

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Unpaid Leave of Absence / VLAP

Anyone wishing to request a leave of absence without pay should fill out the CUPE Request to be Absent form and check unpaid leave, 13.01 a. The days will only be granted IF there is available supply coverage. The maximum amount of days that can be requested per year is 5. Requests will be granted, when possible, on first request basis. The pay will come off the directly affected pay period, NOT over the entire school year. You will be offered to option to buy back your pension. You will not lose seniority as it is less than three months.

Compassionate Leave Requests

In our last meeting with HR Michelle Lamarche explained that the only days that will be approved under Compassionate Leave are those unexpected situations that *only* the member can deal with. Please give as much detail as possible without getting too personal.

Strike Committee Information

As we move closer March 7th and the Strike Vote - the CUPE 1479 Strike Committee is looking for any volunteers to email Josie Fitzgerald at josiesmiles4@gmail.com or text/call 613 885 4980.

The Strike Committee Members are:

Josie Fitzgerald - Chair

Amber-Dale Hudson - Co-Chair,
Mobilization Officer

Andrew Eves - Picket Coordinator

Stephanie James - Office Manager

Carrie Moncrief - Treasurer

Jody Uddenburg - Communications
Representative

Brian LaTour - Legal Liaison

Andrea Miller - Office Manager Alternate



We thank everyone who has been sending emails offering their time and assistance and we hope to hear from more of you!

Ontario moves to fast-track process to close 'underutilized' schools

The Globe and Mail

Mon Apr 6 2015

Byline: KAREN HOWLETT

The Ontario government is speeding up the process for closing schools, as part of a crackdown on publicly funded boards with too many classrooms sitting empty.

Several boards are grappling with declining enrolment across Ontario, where about 600 schools, or one in eight, are less than half full, according to the Education Ministry. School boards spend \$1-billion a year, 5 per cent of their provincial operating budgets, on buildings with an excess of empty space. They are coming under renewed pressure to address the financial drain, with Education Minister Liz Sandals saying the money should be used instead for student programs.

Her ministry defines schools less than two-thirds full as "underutilized" - candidates for closing or changes to their boundaries or programs they offer. The ministry unveiled new guidelines 10 days ago for community consultations that must take place before a school can be closed. But critics say the guidelines limit public engagement and make it easier to close schools.

A committee reviewing the fate of a school is required to hold two public meetings instead of four under the new regime, and the time frame for conducting a review is cut to five months from seven. Another major change causing considerable angst for municipal officials is a shift in emphasis toward student achievement and away from considering the impact of closing a school on a community and local economy.

Doug Reycraft, chair of the Community Schools Alliance, a not-for-profit that strives to work with the ministry, municipalities and boards, said holding only two open meetings over a shorter time period leads one to conclude that public input is not important.

"These changes are really just a recipe for an avalanche of closures across the province," Mr. Reycraft said.

"To take the existing process and make it tighter is just an affront to democracy."

Monika Turner, director of policy at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, said focusing the review process more narrowly on the interests of students might help school boards solve their fiscal challenges. But it comes, she said, at the expense of the longer-term interests of a community, including the impact closing a school could have on residential real estate values.

"A school is the hub of a community," Ms. Turner said.

"When you close a school, that community has lost a draw for anybody to ever come back."

The new process gives municipal governments a formal role for the first time, providing an opportunity for school boards to collaborate with municipalities in making the best use of school space.

"Ultimately, we actually want the school boards and the municipalities to have an ongoing relationship where [they] are sharing their planning data so that the municipalities are aware of where there are clusters of underutilized schools," Ms. Sandals said in a recent interview.

Earlier this year, she forced the Toronto District School Board to come up with a plan to reduce its underutilized space, which does not include classrooms used for adult education, English as a second language or community programs.

One in five schools at the board falls within the threshold. Trustees agreed in February to conduct community reviews on a total of 68 schools over the next three years.

Under the new guidelines, the review committee acts as a conduit for sharing information between school-board trustees and the community. However, the power to close a school rests solely with the board of trustees. Committee members do not get to vote on whether to close a school.

Michael Barrett, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, said in many heavily contested cases in the past, it was often a municipality that was fighting to prevent a school from closing.

"Everybody wants the school to remain open," he said.

"But nobody wants to pay for it."

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CUPE Local 1479 has a home base!

As of April 1, 2015 we have a small office space located at 212 Camden Road, Napanee, right around the corner from the board office. This is a great central space where all CUPE records will be stored, Executive meetings and Strike Committee meetings will be held and private meetings with members prior to grievance meetings at the board office.

