



Upcoming dates:

April 30th – Management team and province's briefs submitted to OLRB

June 8th, 10th, and 23rd – Hearing dates at OLRB

November 23rd, 2015 – Charter challenge (with other unions) on Bill 115

April 20, 2015

OSSTF strikes

As you know, OSSTF teachers in Durham are on strike as of Monday, April 20th. Six other boards around the province have been targeted, and strikes may commence in those boards in the days to come. The next publicly announced strike deadline is Rainbow District School Board (Sudbury), for April 27th. No deadlines have yet been released for Lakehead (Thunder Bay), Halton, Peel, Ottawa-Carleton, or Waterloo boards.

CUPE has been meeting with the leadership of OSSTF in the last week about their plans for job action. Please note: so far the OSSTF strikes are all related to local bargaining, and not their provincial table.

We have asked that all CUPE local presidents in the targeted OSSTF boards meet with the local OSSTF presidents to discuss what kind of support we can lend to their strikes. It is absolutely crucial that we show great solidarity with the teachers in their job actions. This will send a clear message to our employers and the provincial government. As we all know, solidarity breeds solidarity, and it also helps win strikes.

CUPE has written to Premier Kathleen Wynne to ask for a no-reprisals agreement for CUPE members who do not cross picket lines. An agreement like this was reached between CUPE and the government in the BC teachers' strike last year. We do not yet have a reply to our letter.

In the event we do not secure a no-reprisals agreement, members are expected to report to work even if the school is closed. OSSTF represents the office clerical staff at the Rainbow School Board, and they've told us they will inform their clerical members to report to work even if the schools are closed.

Generally in strike situations picket line protocols are established. We ask all CUPE members to respect any protocols OSSTF establishes. For example, if the picket line protocol dictates that people will experience a three minute delay before being permitted to cross, please stand in line and wait the full three minutes. If you are driving, wait patiently (one person to a car) even if other motorists are impatient. Holding up traffic and creating chaos is a way of assisting the strikers.

If you are driving, place a sign in your window showing support for the job action (e.g. “CUPE supports OSSTF job action.” Spend some time walking the line with teachers on the way in or on the way out of work.

If for any reason you feel unsafe in crossing the picket line, you have a right to refuse unsafe work. You should go to a safe location and call your supervisor, and report that you feel unsafe. You may be assigned to a different work location.

If your employer indicates that CUPE members are not to report to work, insist that they are paid, and remember that layoffs can only be accomplished through the layoff provisions in your collective agreements, so please enforce those.

Should an individual or CUPE bargaining unit determine that they will be honouring OSSTF picket lines by joining them, they will have full access to the strike fund as per CUPE National’s Strike Fund Regulations. The Strike Fund Regulations are available on the CUPE National website (www.cupe.ca), and say that strike pay can be accessed on the 10th day of picketing or other strike duties. Strike pay shall be \$60/day to a maximum of \$300 per week for at least 20 hours of picketing per calendar week.

We will continue to keep local leaders up to date and ask that you please keep your members informed on what is happening.

Other tables

We understand that ETFO has also requested a no-board report, and that it will be issued sometime this week. This will trigger a legal strike position for them in early to mid-May.

OECTA has left the provincial bargaining table and has indicated to the management team that they will not return until after they have taken their provincial strike vote on April 23rd.

Reminder regarding OLRB dispute resolution process

CUPE has filed its final submission to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to settle our list of items to be bargained at the central table. The management team will respond by the end of April, and our hearing dates are set for June 8th, 10th and 23rd.

As we mentioned in our last bulletin, until we have a final determination of what items we are bargaining at the provincial table, neither we nor the employer can file for conciliation, nor can they ask for a no-board. To be clear: this means we cannot be in a legal strike or lockout position until the list of central items is determined.

We also remind you that this is not a time for us to slow down in our mobilizing, but rather a key opportunity to get our strike committees up and running. We are bringing the OSBCC committee members and alternates together this week to develop a mobilization strategy. We need to keep our members engaged and in the public eye over the rest of the school year in preparation for the fall.

We also need to hold trustees and the government to account for their continued refusal to address our issues at the provincial bargaining table, and to deal with the shortfall in funding in a visible way.

Remember to check for updates at www.osbcc.ca, to “like” us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CUPEducationworkers>, and to follow us on Twitter @osbcc .

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