

OUR LOCAL 1479 NEWS

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 1479 September 2014

www.cupe1479.ca

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT....

Thank you Joanne George for your hard work over the last 30 years as our union general secretary. You always have the agenda ready to go, keep impeccable records and meeting

minutes, and arrange education & conferences and so many other things outside your role. Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication. Sadly for us, Joanne will be retiring from the position in March 2015. CUPE Local 1479 is lucky to have such a dedicated individual!

We wish you all the best in your upcoming retirement and a great last few months as our secretary!!



Welcome to the 2014/2015 school year!

WE HOPE THAT EVERYONE HAD A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER AND ARE RETURNING TO WORK RESTED AND REJUVENATED.

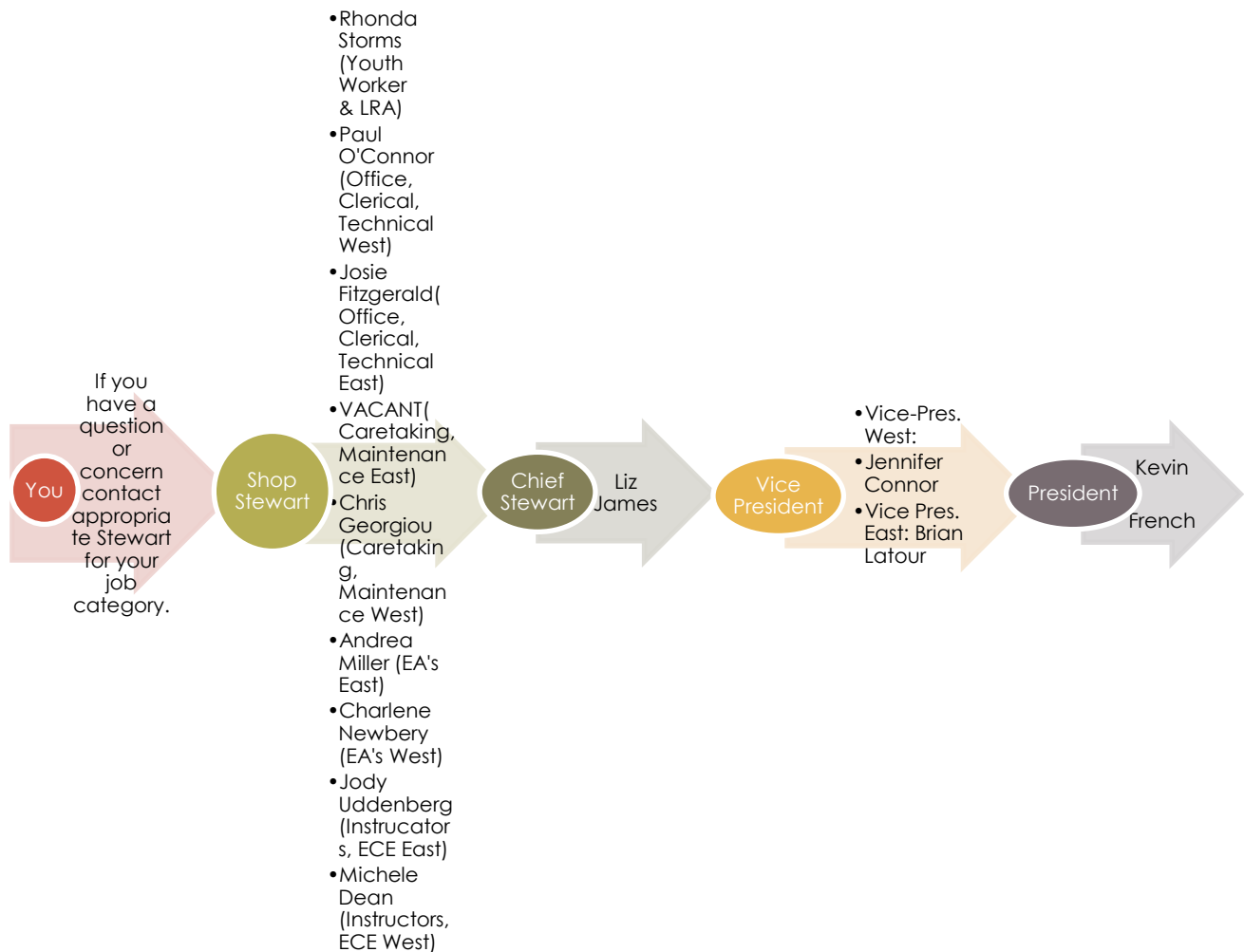
YOUR CUPE LOCAL 1479 EXECUTIVES WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A VERY SUCCESSFUL AND FULFILLING SCHOOL YEAR!



Do you have a question or concern?
Not sure who you should contact? You
are not alone, your union is here to
support you!

If you need to access your Stewart for support they will get back to you with
appropriate information or have the appropriate person contact you back.

Following this process will ensure a timely and most accurate response.



Non-Teaching Internal Job Postings:

22-14-15-YW - 1.0 FTE Youth Worker 22-14-15-YW

Internal Belleville 9/9/2014 4:00 PM



23-14-15-LRA.LTO - 0.10 FTE Learning Resource Assistant 23-14-15-

LRA.LTO Internal/External Batawa 9/17/2014 4:00 PM

Education Support Staff...

What's that?

Are you proud to be a school board support staff worker? Would you like the general public to know that we are not teachers? Don't make the same high wages? Are not paid at Christmas, March Break or summer vacation?

With this upcoming round of bargaining it is important that we get the message out to the public about all the important non-teaching roles that we all do on a daily basis. Every day we are making our schools safe, clean and an excellent place to have our children educated. **Our schools work because we do!**

NEXT GENERAL
MEETING

SEPTEMBER 13 @
9:30A.M.

JJ O'NEILL

We hope to see as many
people at the union meeting as
possible.



Education Support Staff...
What's that? Continued

One idea that Josie Fitzgerald came up with at the Mobilization Information Meetings held in August is making your Facebook status about your specific job. For example, my status could be "I'm a Learning Resource Assistant in a K-8 French Immersion school and my role is more important than ever! With the amount of information being provided to students through media and books it is essential that they always have someone to help them gain access to, evaluate, ethically use, create, share and integrate this information into their daily lives and their educational tasks."

We can't wait to see what you all come up with on your own about your own support staff positions!

[Student Supports: Portraits of CUPE School Board Workers in Ontario](#)

Highlight and right click open hyper link above to watch videos produced by Paul O'Donnell from CUPE Ontario. Paul does a good job informing the public about all the different Support Staff jobs in a school board and the role they play. You can even share your job category on your Facebook.

CUPE Socials?

Would anyone be interested in starting to do some fun things together as a local? Maybe some would be involving our family members as well? Some ideas maybe sports leagues, picnics, card games.

Please contact:
lizjamescupe1479@gmail.com

Central bargaining for school board workers provides new opportunities to protect and serve public education: CUPE

TORONTO, Ont. – Representatives of Ontario school board workers say they look forward to helping to shape and preserve vital elements of public education in Ontario. The statement was made on the day that their union served notice to bargain in school boards across Ontario, where CUPE represents workers in 110 bargaining units.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) represents 55,000 school board support workers in Ontario. In May, their members voted to participate in central bargaining with the Ministry of Education and school boards and earlier this month, Ontario's Education Minister issued a regulation that designated CUPE as the bargaining agent for its members.

“We are looking forward to meeting with representatives from the government and trustee associations as soon as possible to start the negotiations process,” said Terri Preston, chair of CUPE's Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC).

“Our members are seeking a contract that respects the work that they do and fully recognizes their roles in making schools work. We are mobilized and ready to bargain.”

Jim Morrison, CUPE coordinator for the OSBCC, continued: “The ministry will participate at the central table and all the players have clearly defined roles in the bargaining process. Under this model, we hope to make gains that benefit our members and also help to ensure the future of public education in Ontario. Through collective bargaining, CUPE will present workers' concerns and issues to both the ministry and employers. And throughout this process, we will signal our plans to protect public education through a strong collective agreement.”

Area bus operators in court



By [Alanah Duffy](#)

Thursday, June 12, 2014 5:09:11 EDT PM



SMITHS FALLS - The Liberal government has allegedly spent \$1.6 million earmarked for autism and safe schools funding to fight small bus operators in an ongoing legal battle, according to documents released by independent school bus operators.

The Independent School Bus Operators Association (ISBOA) say they have obtained legal documents that reveal the Liberal government has been paying two private law firms to fight the legal battle between small school bus operators

about the request for proposals process. According to ISBOA, the \$1.6 million has been funnelled away from autism training and safe schools programming grants for school boards.

Healey Transportation Ltd. owner Frank Healey said it was disheartening to learn the legal funding was being taken from other initiatives.

"It kind of makes you gasp," said Healey, whose company is based in Smiths Falls.

"We had to ask the question of where the money was coming from. It all kind of tumbled out that it was coming out of the education budget. That was what was disclosed under disclosure requirements of the court."

Small school bus operators have been in a legal fight with the government since 2012 over a request for proposals process the government introduced in 2009.

Bus contracts are now awarded based solely on price, something that small bus company operators say could signal the extinction of locally-owned school bus companies.

Stock Transportation, Ltd. has decided not to apply for bus routes within the Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO) consortia, which organizes routes for both the public and Catholic school boards in the area. The company said STEO was offering a two per cent increase in pay when it needed a 10 to 12 per cent increase to remain viable in this area.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Education said the ministry did provide funding for legal costs.

“Funding directed to safe schools or autism initiatives has remained constant and has never been re-directed to fund this lawsuit,” said spokesman Gary Wheeler.

Healey said his group will be in court in Kingston later this month for this matter, with a trial scheduled for September.

He said he’s disappointed with how the government has taken away local autonomy to decide bus contracts.

“To take away control and authority of local governance, and more importantly, to take away anyone’s chance at local level of participation, is bad business,” Healey said.



Our Website

Please go to <http://1479.cupe.ca/> to see the latest information concerning our local. Our site is even a sample site on the CUPE Ontario webpage! Let your colleagues know! An informed membership is a strong membership!

Teachers' dirty looks; Wynne harangued by unruly educators -- but critics suspect she'll give them a raise anyway

The Toronto Sun

Sun Aug 17 2014

Byline: CHRISTINA BLIZZARD

Column: Queen's Park

It was a breathtaking demonstration of smug self-entitlement.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) held its annual festival of indignation last week and invited Premier Kathleen Wynne to speak to them.

In a remarkably conciliatory speech, Wynne reiterated her support for teachers and asserted her hope that her government would be able to work with teacher unions productively in contract talks this fall.

It was a hostile crowd that still has bitter memories of Bill 115--former premier Dalton McGuinty's ham-fisted attempt to get runaway teacher salaries under control.

Wynne even agreed to a bear pit session, taking arrogant, self-serving questions from the floor.

Despite union assertions it's all about the kids, none of the questions talked about what was best for the children in the classroom. It was, "gimme, gimme, gimme."

Onlookers were treated to an unsavoury spectacle of Wynne--a duly elected premier elected with a majority mandate to hold the line on public sector salaries -- being harangued by a handful of union yahoos over issues from why she isn't taxing corporations more to pay for new schools to why teachers no longer have the ability to bank sick days.

"The government basically stole \$10,000 out of my pocket," declared one delegate, talking about how Bill 115 scrapped the gratuity, whereby teachers could cash in accrued, unused sick days on retirement.

He didn't mention the massive pay hikes the Liberal government gave teachers over the past 10 years, nor the hundreds of millions of dollars the government poured into their pension plan.

The most worrisome aspect was that these people are teachers.

We allow them into classrooms to spend time with our most precious asset -- our children--in their formative years.

They were angry, rude and clearly had little understanding of the democratic process that gave Wynne a mandate to govern on behalf of all the people, not just the privileged few with a bully pulpit and a fat pension.

ETFO president Sam Hammond was not available for an interview for this piece.

In sharp contrast to ETFO's gunslinger stance is the more moderate position of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA).

President James Ryan said he's noticed a marked difference in climate since the last round of talks with McGuinty and his education minister Laurel Broten.

"Even those unions that actually reached agreements with the province would not describe it as an enjoyable process under Ms. Broten," Ryan said Friday. "I think we see a real difference with Ms. Sandals and Ms. Wynne."

He recognizes the sick day gratuity is probably gone for good, but doesn't want a replay of some of the other measures extracted in the unpopular legislation.

Bill 115 imposed three unpaid days off onto teachers, although some boards were able to reduce it to two days and some were able to avoid the measure by offering voluntary unpaid days off.

Sandals said last week the government would consider pay hikes for teachers if savings can be found in other areas of the budget.

Ryan said his union will put its "creative juices," into finding such savings, but says the boards, the province and the union often can't agree to what those savings are.

"Often what OECTA sees as savings isn't what the province or the school board would see as savings," Ryan said.

His union isn't prepared to make concessions on larger class sizes.

"We want to protect the working conditions we have, including class sizes," he said. "We'd like to see smaller class sizes."

Tory critic Lisa MacLeod said she doesn't believe Wynne and Sandals will hold the line on teacher salaries.

"I suspect they are going to get a 2% to 2.5% increase and I don't believe Kathleen has it in her to stand up for her deficit reduction targets," MacLeod said.

"The Liberal line will be it's neutral on the funding envelope. The question is, what does that mean?" asked MacLeod. "Does that mean the staffing envelope which is what minister Deb Matthews says, or is it the entire ministry envelope, which is what Liz Sandals says?"

Power up your calculators, folks. There will be some very creative new math in these negotiations this fall.

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Elementary teachers union votes to close schools on 'Snow Days'

[The Independent Free Press](#)

[Thu Aug 14 2014](#)

By Louise BrownTorstar News Service

It may be deep summer, but Ontario teachers are talking snow days.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario has voted this week to recommend boards close schools whenever buses are cancelled for bad weather, to spare staff having to drive on dangerous roads.

"No one's looking for days off, but we want the same measure of concern for teachers as students, and if it's not safe for buses, teachers shouldn't be made to try to come to school either," said Marg Macfarlane, president of the ETFO in the Halton District School Board.

The Halton union proposed a motion that was approved this week at ETFO's annual meeting, that when an Ontario school board cancels school buses because of bad weather, it should close schools too. The union will now consider whether to call on Queen's Park to look at the idea.

The Hamilton-Wentworth school board already has the policy "if buses are cancelled, schools are closed."

Currently most boards try to keep schools open even when buses are cancelled, and ask teachers to at least try to get to work. Most boards let teachers book off if they have tried and been unable to make it in; sometimes, but not always, with pay.

"This year in the big snow storm of Feb. 5, our schools were kept open but the school board meeting that night was cancelled because the roads weren't safe (for trustees), which obviously sends a mixed message," said Halton teacher Rob Smolenaars, the union's chief negotiator.

He noted that same day a Peterborough teacher was killed in a car accident on her way to work.

But many boards that have rural schools cancel buses more than six days a year, and closing schools that often it could have a "huge impact" on working and single parents, said Mark Joel, superintendent of education, operations and transportation for the Durham District School Board, which cancels buses five or six days a year, particularly north of Highway 7 and around Lake Scugog.

"In terms of the custodial role schools play in society, some parents are expected to be at work regardless of weather and some don't have backup for their children if school is closed," said Joel, adding that no teacher is ever forced to come to school if he or she feels the trip would be unsafe.

"Sometimes buses are cancelled because they can't get along sideroads or because it's too cold for students to wait at pickup spots, not because all roads are hazardous."

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board cancelled buses board-wide three days last year - and a full 12 days in the windswept region around Orangeville, said board spokesperson Bruce Campbell.

"But the schools stayed open and even though some students stay home- especially in high schools- there still could be learning opportunities on those days."

Peel District School Board cancelled buses board-wide twice last year, and six days around Caledon, "but there is an expectation that we will deliver an education to students and parents expect us to have our doors open if possible," said spokesperson Carla Pereira. "Less than one-third of our students take the bus and the rest are in walking distance.

"But if staff feels they can't make it to school safely after making a reasonable effort, they can call the principal."

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Bargaining Update:

As most of you are aware our collective agreement with the ALCDSB expired August 31, 2014. We took a vote in the spring to decide if we wanted to bargain at the central bargaining table along with the teachers and all other CUPE locals. The vote results were 100% in favour of the central bargaining.

On August 20th the negotiation committee had the opportunity to participate in a Town Hall Call from Terri Preston & Jim Morrison from OSBCC. On the call we heard them speak about what is going on centrally. There has been a notice to bargain sent from Jim Morrison to all trustee associations. The act indicates that the parties must meet within 15 days of the notice to bargain. At the first meeting the two sides will establish ground rules to move forward together. The second meeting is held to discuss what will be negotiated at the central table. At the February conference we discussed different key issues that we felt were most valuable to be brought to the central bargaining table. Some of the issues that were discussed are benefits, wages, and sick leave, to name a few. The employer will also bring the items they would like negotiated centrally as well. If the two parties can not agree on an issue or issues then it will go before the Labour Relations Board for help. If there is an issue that CUPE would like negotiated centrally, but the employer doesn't and the Labour Board sides with them, then CUPE Ontario will send out common language that they would like to see applied to all the collective agreements at the local tables across the province. The next step will be to begin the negotiation process. Once the issues are identified then local bargaining will begin and the two will happen simultaneously. Our job as local negotiators is to finalize our proposals for the ALCDSB. The goal locally and provincially will be to seek improvements not lose anything. We have taken the surveys that were handed out last year and gone over them and looked for the most common issues and put them in our local proposal. If the employer at the central or local table puts concessions we will need to be ready for job action. Josie Fitzgerald has stepped into the role as our Bargaining Mobilization Committee representative. She attended a three day training session where different things were discussed, including the process to initiate job action if talks break down. We will be attending a meeting next week with the other area 6 executives to discuss what we need to do to be ready to mobilize members, raise our profile in the community and get members involved.

I will keep you as updated as possible during the process so everyone is aware of what step we are at.



Sabeehah Motala, an early childhood educator reads to a senior kindergarten class at Wilkinson Public School (Fred Lum/The Globe and Mail)

Crowded, chaotic classrooms hurt Ontario full-day kindergarten push

Caroline Alphonso - EDUCATION REPORTER

The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Sep. 02 2014, 6:00 AM EDT

Last updated Tuesday, Sep. 02 2014, 12:37 PM EDT

Some full-day kindergarten classes in Ontario are crammed with as many as 40 students, so many that the children can't fit on their classroom carpet for group time, raising questions about the Liberal government's ambitious program.

As Premier Kathleen Wynne's government rolls out full-day kindergarten to all schools this fall, documents obtained by The Globe and Mail through freedom-of-information legislation show the Ministry of Education has been inundated with complaints from parents and educators about large classes impeding learning.

Ontario has staked its reputation on the success of the program, even though critics have characterized it as an expensive form of government-subsidized daycare that the Liberals, facing a \$12.5-billion deficit, can ill afford. Alberta and Manitoba have decided against full-day kindergarten, basing their decisions on the cost, while Newfoundland and Labrador recently pledged to implement full-day senior kindergarten in 2016. The hope is that the investment will pay off with higher graduation rates and improved academic outcomes.

But documents obtained by The Globe show that Ontario's early learning program is grappling with huge issues. About 640 kindergarten classrooms, or 8 per cent of those that introduced the program, had more than 30 children in the past academic year, according to a confidential briefing note to the minister in January. One senior

kindergarten classroom at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board had 40 children – the biggest class for that age group – according to the ministry documents. The board told *The Globe* that it ended up dividing the class.

In letters to ministry officials, parents described classrooms as “understaffed daycares,” “chaotic,” “overcrowded” and “hostile” environments for learning. One parent opted to put a child in a daycare kindergarten program, which has a lower student-teacher ratio. Another parent kept her four-year-old daughter out of school.

“I strongly believe in the public system,” the parent wrote, “however the government has really let down these kids in jk/sk as well as their teachers.”

In Ontario, daycares are required to have one educator for every eight preschoolers, and primary classes have a cap of 23 students. There is no cap for full-day kindergarten classrooms. Instead, the government stated in its response to various complaints that school boards are required to maintain an average class size of 26 across the board. Full-day kindergarten classes have a teacher and an early childhood education worker.

Research shows that small primary classes have little impact on achievement; good teachers matter more. The Liberals, however, have pointed to smaller class sizes as a key education platform, saying children get more attention and do better in school. The government excludes full-day kindergarten from those calculations.

Martha Hradowy, who represents early childhood education workers at Windsor’s Greater Essex County District School Board, said the situation has become so dire that some schools have created learning areas for full-day kindergarten students, which hold about 100 children in one large room. Classrooms are divided into four separate corners.

“The high levels of noise do impact learning, and speech development,” Ms. Hradowy said. “We believe that the ministry needs to step in.”

A spokeswoman for Education Minister Liz Sandals said the government has no plans for a hard cap, despite demands from parents and educators.

Ontario's full-day learning program incorporates two years of a revamped curriculum for junior and senior kindergarten. The program has been introduced in phases over five years, and the government is spending more than \$1.45-billion in capital costs to expand and retrofit schools, on top of millions in operating dollars.

The government has defended the program by pointing to a study that it funded showing children enrolled in the first two years of the province's all-day learning program were better prepared for Grade 1 and have stronger language development and better communication and social skills. But other studies suggest children in a full-day program are academically no better off in the primary grades than those who attend a half-day program.

John Paterson's five-year-old son, Charlie, will be attending full-day senior kindergarten at Toronto's Swansea Public School this year. Not only will Charlie's class have 30 students, but he will be in a large room that will hold two classes, or 60 kindergartners. Mr. Paterson said he and other parents have expressed concern to school officials, and would prefer the government cap the class size.

"I think the benefit of a large classroom is my son gets a lot of fun social interaction," Mr. Paterson said. "But I suspect, and a reasonable person would surmise and conclude, that the actual learning and communication of knowledge to each student is diminished with 30 kids per teacher [and an early childhood educator]."