

Upcoming dates:

December 14 to 18, 2015 –
Charter challenge (with
other unions) on Bill 115

February 9 to 13, 2016 –
OSBCC Conference

December 4, 2015**Central agreement ratified**

Province-wide ratification votes concluded today, and school board sector members voted to ratify the central agreement reached on November 2nd by a majority of 80 per cent. The agreement was ratified by double majority – that is, a majority of members voting and a majority of CUPE's 110 participating bargaining units in the sector voted in favour of the memorandum of settlement.

We know that most of you are very disappointed in the wage increases. After the wage freezes in the last round, we heard you loud and clear that we cannot continue to fall behind in every round.

We also share your frustration with the new process and legislation under which we bargained – the School Board Collective Bargaining Act. Clearly, there are serious issues that need to be worked out before the next round of bargaining. The process took too long; it was too difficult to place issues of central importance to us on the central bargaining table; local boards continue to drag their feet in local talks. We expect to have discussions with the government to evaluate what worked under the new legislation and what didn't, and we will be clear about what needs to change for us before the next round begins in a year and a half.

In terms of what did work, we owe CUPE's members in the school board sector a huge thank you for your commitment to mobilizing and for enacting an effective work-to-rule job action in the last two months of bargaining. Without the visibility of your job action, and without all the organizing you did in your communities over the summer months, we would not have been able to fight back many of the concessions the Council of Trustee Associations (CTA) sought, including wage rollbacks. CUPE members across the province stood together to demand respect in the workplace – you caught the attention of the public and the government, and sent a clear message that we won't be taken for granted.

Next steps

Local bargaining continues in most of the school boards. We urge you to continue to try to deal with issues such as supervision, violence in the workplace, job descriptions, and the contracting in/out of our work.

Bill 109

Ontario's Liberal government has introduced Bill 109, which will have an impact on our sector if passed as is. This legislation would take away the right of workers to choose which union represents them when their workplaces merge. Under the proposed changes to the Public Sector Labour Relations Act, if one union has more than 60 per cent of members in the merged workplace, that union would automatically become the union for the newly merged workplace, without representation votes.

CUPE, the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU) and the Ontario Nurses' Association are fighting these changes and defending the right of public-sector workers to choose their union.

Here is a link to a radio ad that has been airing in recent days:

<http://cupe.on.ca/government-taking-away-your-right-to-choose-which-union-you-belong-to/>

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