

CUPE
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Members' bulletin September 2018

Dates to Remember:

- OSBCU Leadership Area Meetings on central bargaining – mid-September to mid-October
- Ontario Labour Board decision regarding CUPE's remedy complaint – September 27
- Orange Shirt Day/Every Child Matters – September 30 (see this newsletter for more information)
- CUPE Ontario Leadership Meetings: Dealing with a Ford government and mobilizing for municipal and school board trustee elections – September 11 to 28 (Visit cupe.on.ca/event for more information.)
- CUPE Ontario Health and Safety/Injured Workers Conference – October 16 to 20, Windsor, Ontario
- School Library Workers Day – October 23
- OSBCU Bargaining Conference – November 3 and 4, Westin Hotel, Ottawa
- CUPE National Sector Conference – November 5 to 8, Westin Hotel, Ottawa
- OSBCU Annual Convention – January 29 to February 2, 2019, Niagara Falls

OSBCU represents 55,000 CUPE Education Workers in Ontario.

Welcome back!

A lot has changed since the end of the school year; here's an update to start off September:

Professional development funds

The monies negotiated in the last round of bargaining for professional development will be transferred to boards at the end of August. Your local union and the employer reached an agreement as to how these funds would be used.

Wage increase

September 1, 2018 will see the first of three increases this school year.

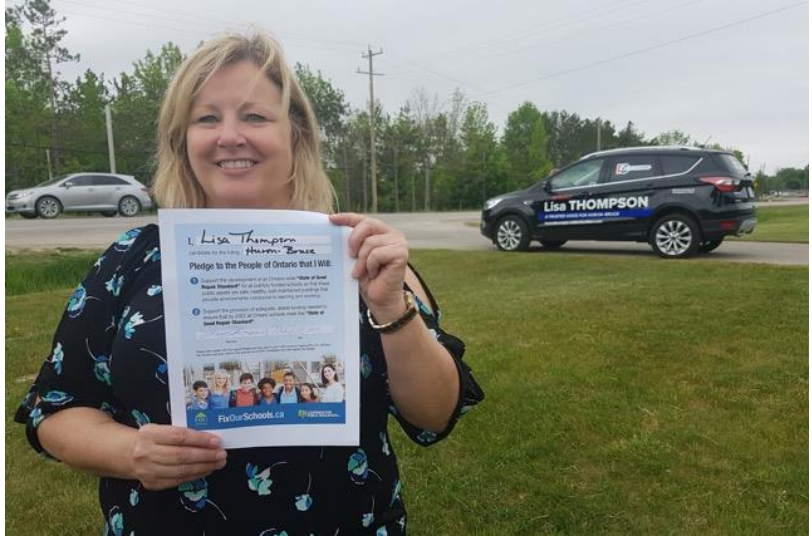
- September 1, 2018 1% increase
- February 1, 2019 1% increase
- August 31, 2019 0.5% increase

Wage increases will clearly be a focus of central bargaining for our next contract.

School repair budgets

The new provincial government cut \$100 million allocated to school repairs when it eliminated the carbon tax. The OSBCU continues to work with Fix Our Schools to deal with the \$15 billion in deferred maintenance costs.

Did you know Lisa Thompson, Ontario's new Education Minister and MPP for Huron-Bruce, signed the Fix Our Schools pledge form? Go to fixourschools.ca to see if your MPP signed the pledge.



Sex ed curriculum

The new PC government has rolled back the sex ed curriculum to one that was in effect in 1998. As education workers, we know much has changed since that time. We have joined together with those who know that keeping children safe includes a curriculum that talks about appropriate names for parts of the body, issues of consent, internet safety and sexual orientation.

On July 13, Laura Walton, OSBCU's First Vice-President, spoke at one of the first press conferences on this issue, giving her reaction as an EA, mother of two, and CUPE member. You can see part of her powerful presentation at bit.ly/2LgvDAX.



Busy summer at the OSBCU

Preparing for bargaining

Your Central Bargaining Committee has been meeting to review the results from the members' bargaining survey and to determine priorities for central bargaining. Leadership meetings are being held across the province to review the list of priorities and to ensure nothing is missed. Then, in November, a provincial meeting will be held to endorse a final list.

Your **Area Mobilizers** have also met to discuss a plan to “create a state of readiness” as we go into bargaining. Successful bargaining always depends on a high level of member engagement and support for their bargaining committee. Area mobilizers will be following up with local presidents to ensure all locals are aware of the supports available to prepare for what looks to be another challenging round of bargaining.

School board trustee elections

We are working very closely with CUPE Ontario, local labour councils and CUPE district councils to encourage greater voter interest in school trustee elections. School Trustees make many decisions that impact our work: they determine how board funds are to be allocated; they make decisions regarding school closures or consolidations; they set parameters for bargaining; and they can make decisions regarding contracting out our work.

Over the next few years, it will be critical to have trustees who value us as their employees, value the services we provide, and who commit to the public delivery of that work. We need to identify and elect trustees who will fight for better funding of our public education system.

School safety: it's my job!

Let's take a moment to thank our school custodians for the incredible work they do over the summer to get our workplaces ready for a new school year. Despite record breaking temperatures, floors are stripped, classrooms are cleaned top to bottom and school machinery and alarm systems are tested to make sure they are in good working order. Summer is anything but a break for our custodial staff who keep our schools safe places to learn and work.

Central Disputes Committee

Our Central Disputes Committee has been actively working to deal with the backlog of disputes. A thorough review of all 150 disputes (29 filed in 2018 alone) has been completed with the respective local presidents. Fifty disputes have been resolved, another 50 are awaiting response from the Council of Trustee Associations (CTA), and an additional 30 have been referred to arbitration. It should be noted some of the 30 arbitrations represent multiple disputes on the same issue from the same local.

CUPE National has assigned one of its lawyers, Mona Staples, to work with the OSBCU on a full-time basis. Should we be unable to resolve an issue with the CTA based on the information provided, our new process will involve a conference call with the Central Dispute Committee, Mona, the local president and the assigned staff rep. Based on that discussion, a determination will be made as to whether it is best to pursue the issue centrally or at a local level.

The Central Disputes Committee is made up of the OSBCU First Vice-President (Laura Walton), the French Vice-President (Sylvain Piché), and the Associate Coordinator (Michel Revelin).

Long Term Disability Insurance

CUPE has been working with the CTA and the Crown to try to identify a common provider for long-term disability insurance (LTDI). Premium rates have skyrocketed for LTDI over the past year. Having a common provider would allow claims experience to be shared across the province, thereby lowering the premium rate overall. A request for proposal has gone out to potential providers. We hope to have this process completed by December.

OSBCU Infrastructure

Getting the OSBCU off the ground has been much like starting up a new local. Our Secretary-Treasurer, Vicky Evans, has done a great job in getting our financial house in order, drafting a policy-and-procedures manual, and initiating a process for determining a website provider.

Our OSBCU trustees will be coming in at the beginning of September to let us know if they have any questions as to how we are proceeding. CUPE Ontario has offered their assistance in collecting affiliation fees.

Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters – September 30

Orange Shirt Day is an annual opportunity to keep the discussion happening around all aspects of residential schools. The date was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools. It is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year.

As Orange Shirt Day falls on a Sunday this year, check with your school and/or board to see when activities are being planned. And don't forget to wear an orange shirt on the day to show your support.

Success Stories

International languages instructors save their program at the TCDSB!

Members of CUPE 3155 are international languages instructors who teach in 44 elementary schools at the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB).

At the end of June, the local was informed that the board was considering eliminating the Extended Day delivery model of the International Languages Elementary (ILE) program at the TCDSB. This schedule extends the school day by half an hour to allow for international language instruction to be integrated into the school day; the model has existed in the TCDSB for more than 40 years.

The teachers' union at TCDSB, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA), had filed a grievance based on a collective agreement provision that stated the extended-day schedule would not continue past 2017. The arbitrator decided in favour of OECTA and ruled the extended-day model could not continue in the fall of 2018.* This decision had the potential impact of ending the integrated day delivery of ILE program and putting all of our members out of work.

In fact, TCDSB held two special meetings to discuss this issue. The Executive of CUPE 3155, with very little notice, called an emergency meeting of their members. They divided into committees to save the program: media contacts, allies, parents, politicians and a committee to produce a T-shirt design.



CUPE 3155 members with TCDSB trustee Maria Rizzo

Within two weeks, they got their message out. Letters were sent to trustees; Domenico Paglia, CUPE 3155 president, was interviewed by radio, TV and print media; online and hard-copy petitions were circulated. At the board's special meeting on July 13, for over two and a half hours, TCDSB trustees heard from students, parents, grandparents, representatives from embassies, Toronto city councillors and community organizations about the value of the program. Not one person spoke against the program.

As a result, the trustees voted unanimously to approach the Ministry to continue the program as part of the 300 Instructional minutes per day!

Congratulations to the members of Local 3155 for a great campaign and a great result.

*CUPE has filed for a judicial review of the arbitrator's award, on the grounds that neither the TCDSB nor OECTA gave notice to CUPE of the hearing, despite its potential consequences for the members of 3155.

Local 16: Making High School Cafeterias Work!

The Algoma District School Board has three high school cafeterias that are staffed by CUPE 16 members, with three members in each location. The employer had been attempting over the years to have the schools' cafeterias break even, as boards do not get funding to staff cafeterias. The board and staff did their best, but sales were still not operating on a cost-recovery basis.

Then in 2011, the Ministry of Education introduced PPM 150, a school food-and-beverage policy that included nutritional standards for school cafeteria food. The introduction of a healthy menu further reduced sales: students did not like the healthy choices, which were typically bland and did not taste very good.

In 2016, the Algoma board approached CUPE to discuss a pilot project that would integrate a culinary arts teaching program with one of our cafeterias. It was decided that Superior Heights High School would be the location for the pilot project and school staff agreed to participate.

To say the pilot project was a success is an understatement. Staff have been allowed to experiment and have input into the weekly menu. The local's cafeteria lead, teacher, principal and supervisor meet once a week to discuss the next week's menu and ideas to improve the meals and cafeteria.

Students are also surveyed for menu suggestions. For example, some students who arrived as refugees from Syria requested dishes from home; one Syrian student, who worked in a restaurant in his home country, spent a day with CUPE 16 members, showing them some Middle Eastern recipes. The board has also invested in new equipment and has allowed our members to be creative.

With the help of students and the culinary arts teacher, CUPE members provide over 700 from-scratch, healthy and delicious meals at a reasonable price every school day. Sales increased so much that a second cash register was installed to handle two lines. It is no longer a pilot project and there's hope that the board will expand it to other cafeterias.

This has been a win for the board and students, but mostly a win for our members, who now feel more secure about their jobs. And it's now been established that a cafeteria run by CUPE members can not only break even, but even make a small profit.

Thanks to Mike Galipeau, President, CUPE Local 16, for sharing this story.

Does your local have a story to share? If you would like to share a success story from your local, please contact Terri Preston, President, OSBCU, at tpreston@osbcu.ca.

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