

**Upcoming dates:**

**October 27 and 28 –**  
Additional bargaining

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

**October 21, 2015**

This bulletin is confidential to members of CUPE whose locals are engaged in provincial bargaining. It is not a public document nor should it be shared in any public forum. It is intended solely for those named above. If you are not the intended recipient, any interception, copying, distribution, disclosure or use of this transmission or any information contained in it is strictly prohibited. If you have received this in error, please delete the bulletin including all forms of electronic or other storage, and destroy all hard copies. Do not forward the transmission.

**Provincial Bargaining Update**

We are negotiating this year, for the first time under a new law called the School Board Collective Bargaining Act which gives CUPE a choice of whether or not to participate in central bargaining. When members of your local voted to participate in central bargaining in the spring of 2014, they did so knowing this would be a tough round of negotiations. But they also understood we were better positioned to take on this fight as 55,000 education workers, rather than one local at a time.

When the members of your local voted to give the OSBCC bargaining committee and your local bargaining committee a strike mandate in March of 2015, it was clear members were prepared to stand together and take job action if necessary in order to fight for wage increases, a collective agreement without concessions, job security and respect.

Despite our efforts to try to complete bargaining prior to the start of the school year, we were unable to get sufficient dates. The government was clearly more interested in getting deals with teachers than with us. In fact, there has been no central collective agreement signed by any group representing

education workers across the province. As you know we are now going into our 14<sup>th</sup> month without a contract.

Since we threatened to strike and started our job action, we have finally gotten the attention of the Council of Trustees Association and the government at the bargaining table.

- The CTA had originally proposed reducing **Short Term Disability Days** from 90 per cent to 85 per cent. Since our job action started they have moved back to 90 per cent. However, there remains the issue of a delay in “refreshing” sick leave at the beginning of the year.
- Since the job action started, there has been some movement towards our proposal on **job security** language. However, what has been offered still falls far short of the job security language we had in the last round of bargaining. Given government initiatives encouraging boards to look at “back office efficiencies”, the sell-off of schools and community supports for students with special needs, job security is critical this round of bargaining.
- Since the job action started, our members have come to realize how much **unpaid time** they have been donating to “make schools work” whether it is in the form of unpaid prep time, admin time, taking work home to complete, etc. We are seeking contract language which would allow these tasks to be scheduled during the work day.
- Since the job action started, the management team has agreed the six month delay in **grid movement** would be lifted and we would return to the language of the Collective Agreement.

So the job action you have taken so far has produced results. However, there remain challenges.

Another issue that has arisen over the course of bargaining is a result of the three teacher agreements reached so far. In the OSSTF, OECTA and AEFO agreements the teachers have decided to take over their benefit plans by establishing a benefits trust which would be run by each teacher affiliate. We have been seeking the advice of lawyers, benefit consultants and actuaries to determine the best way to protect our benefit plans in light of this. It has been very difficult to get accurate data from government and school boards in respect of CUPE benefit plans and who is covered.

We are also trying to deal with issues relating to Long Term Disability (LTD) for members who don't have access as well as for those who are paying a portion or a 100 per cent of benefit. When teachers took over their LTD plans in the last round of bargaining, the costs of LTD for our members in many cases skyrocketed. We are looking to establish a plan which would share LTD costs across school boards.

The CTA continues to refuse to deal with the scheduling of prep time and other activities members are required to do as part of their jobs. The CTA seems to feel members will continue to volunteer their time to make things work once we are done. Hopefully, the work to rule is showing them that is not the case.

However, the government is still insisting that any wage increases be part of an overall net “0” increase. What this means is that we are expected to find savings to pay for our increases. Your central bargaining committee feels strongly that our members should not have to “pay” for a wage increase through strips to their collective agreements.

The government has proposed extending wage grids to provide a start rate that is five per cent lower than the starting rate for the position. This is unacceptable on many levels:

- This would establish a wage grid in collective agreements and on classifications where no wage grid currently exists.
- Introducing a “new” step on the grid, would lengthen the time it would take to reach our negotiated job rate. As wage grids are more common in our female dominated classifications, this would have a greater impact on our women workers.
- This would also lower the first step on the grid for positions within the bargaining unit members may want to promote to.
- Many of our members already have to work two jobs to make ends meet: do we really believe members (including future members) could survive making five per cent less?
- Frankly, if we were to accept this, what would they table at the next round of bargaining?

The central bargaining committee has been clear. We will not accept any measure which would result in reducing the rates of pay for our jobs, nor extend the time it would take to get to the maximum rate of pay for a position.

Our last days of bargaining were October 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>. During those days we made progress on a number of issues but still have important work to do as it pertains to ensuring adequate staffing levels. Unfortunately, due to the availability of the mediator, we will not have bargaining dates until Tuesday, October 27 and Wednesday, October 28.

These weeks are critical both at the central bargaining table and in our bargaining support efforts. We are asking locals to engage in respect rallies outside of Trustee meetings and MPP offices, setting up information pickets outside of schools. We need to be visible in our demand for respect!

We also need to stay committed to the Phase 2 of the work-to-rule. It is working.

We know it has been difficult for many members. We are not used to saying no to principals or managers. In many schools principals are working with members and making alternative arrangements to cover the work which is not being done due to Phase 2. In some schools, principals are sweeping floors if they feel there is a health and safety hazard.

In other schools, members are feeling bullied, threatened and harassed. If that is the case in your worksite, please contact your local president with specific information. Remember work-to-rule is a legal strike. We have filed four Labour Board complaints, so far, against boards for interference in a legal strike.

But most important in the work to rule is stay strong as CUPE members together. Show support for each other at work! Too often we work in classification silos ... now is the time to act as one.

We have been over a year without an agreement. Members are motivated. Let's hold the line and get a Collective Agreement which shows respect for our work. Let's get this done together!

**[www.osbcc.ca](http://www.osbcc.ca)**  
**[www.facebook.com/CUPEeducationworkers](https://www.facebook.com/CUPEeducationworkers)**  
**Twitter: @osbcc**

ME:gb/cope491