



### Update for January 29th, 2021

Let's get a few quick reminders out of the way first this week:

**Emails & Communications** – **This is the hot topic and probably one of the most important we have on the go right now.** Preparations are well under way to bring all of our communications (email, website, monthly meetings, etc) to members back under our own control and members will start to see the benefits of that very soon. The first piece of putting that all in place is having a reliable way to communicate with everyone. These days, email is the best way and almost everyone has their own email address. We don't want members to have to check "another" email and remember passwords, etc. Communication should be easy and to an address you already use and check regularly. Our responsibility as a local is to get you the information on issues, topics, votes, etc. - what individual members do with that information (read and understand it or pay no attention to it) is totally up to them. **We need your personal email address. Not your HWDSB email, but a personal one that you check regularly.** Please send an email to the office ([officeadmin@cupe4153.ca](mailto:officeadmin@cupe4153.ca)) stating your full name and the email address you would like to receive info from the local to. If we don't hear from you, one of our membership officers will be in touch shortly to get that information from you. **It only takes about 30 seconds to send that email – why not do it now and shorten your 'to-do' list? Please share this with all staff in your building – today is a great day to get this done with no staff or students to look after!**

**Casuals & Coverage** – If you are a casual and are told there is 'no work available' - WE NEED TO KNOW. You should be contacting a steward or Exec member as we have been fighting for and assured that the employer will be following our replacement coverage clause in the collective agreement.

**Office Hours** - As previously mentioned, our office is currently closed to visitors due to the State of Emergency in Ontario. Janna will have remote access to emails and phone messages. If you're contacting the office, either send an email to [officeadmin@cupe4153.ca](mailto:officeadmin@cupe4153.ca) or call the office and leave a message and she will get back to you as soon as possible.

And now, this week's items.....

**Workplace Conflicts** – I think we all can agree that it would be fantastic if we came to work and got along with all of our co-workers. But, we can also agree that doesn't always happen. I can say that personally, I've been very lucky in that the vast majority of schools I've worked in, I've had a good relationship with my fellow 4153 members. But, let's face it – conflict happens. People disagree. People argue. As a local, we would always hope that our members can find a way to agree to disagree in a respectful way. Things may get personal when it comes to family issues or politics, but we have a responsibility both as a union member and employee to treat each other with respect in the workplace at all times. This means that we cannot and should not create an environment where a fellow member (or anyone on staff) is talked down to, spoken badly about or made to feel anything less than equal. We as a union have our Equality Statement and the employer has a Code of Conduct and other policies that speak about not treating others with respect. You can have your opinions, but if they are negative opinions about someone else – it's best to keep them to yourself.

When workplace conflict does happen, it's important to remember that the local can offer help to sit down and talk about the issues with members involved. But, this process is totally voluntary and members don't have to give us their time to do that. We have a small group of people who have taken the CUPE Conflict Resolution course just for these types of situations. There's no blame involved, just members helping members to attempt to find a way to resolve the situation before the issue is brought to management and then it becomes a totally different animal and may result in discipline, someone being transferred to another location or even more severe consequences and we don't ever want to see that happen.

If you are having issues in your school with another member, we always encourage members to try and resolve the situation themselves as a first step. Talking to co-workers and letting them know how their actions or comments made you feel is a good place to start. If that doesn't resolve things, members can contact one of our stewards, explain the situation and if necessary, we can send two of our conflict resolution people in to try and resolve things in a calm and reasonable way. If that still doesn't bring about an end to the conflict, as an employee of the HWDSB, you always have the right to escalate the situation to management as a Harassment claim or Code of Conduct claim to the HR Dept where it will be investigated by the employer.

Here's a few documents relating to this issue:

CUPE Equality Statement - <https://cupe.ca/equality-statement>

HWDSB Code of Conduct - <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/secondary/supports/safe-schools/code-of-conduct/>

**School Closures** – We have 6 (or 7) schools closing at the end of this school year – if you have a permanent position in one of those schools – you should be trying to post out to avoid the deployment process and possibly getting assigned to a school that you would rather not be at due to location or some other reason. We have asked that the employer continue with postings to make the process fair to everyone, but it is still their decision to hold postings or not and as of yesterday – I haven't heard from them about their intentions.

**What's in the Collective Agreement?** - This week, we're going to look at the first step in the grievance procedure – outlined in Article 6 of the collective agreement.

6.03 - The parties to this agreement agree that it is of importance to adjust complaints as quickly as possible. Employees with a complaint, shall first discuss this matter with their immediate supervisor. If the complaint is not then satisfactorily adjusted, the grievance procedure outlined below may be followed by the Union (the clause goes on to describe the steps in the grievance process)

When there is an issue in your school that has to do with schedules, overtime, pay rates, timesheets and pretty much anything else – your first call or email should be to your supervisor. They have the responsibility of managing the workplace. Emails are preferred for one reason only – documentation. Make note of the dates you spoke to your supervisor. It's very easy for someone to claim "I didn't say that" or "I wasn't aware of that issue" at a meeting a few months from now – but it's not so easy to claim that when it's in black and white and presented at a grievance meeting. If your issue isn't resolved by the supervisor and you feel you want to discuss things with a steward, that is your right. Any comments by supervisors about "you don't need to call your union about this" should also be relayed to one of our stewards as well when discussing the issue. It is important to note that a grievance isn't always going to be filed on an issue – if there are no collective agreement issues being breached by the employer and/or no labor laws in Ontario being broken – sometimes there is very little recourse we can take on behalf of members.

**Collective Agreement Hard Copies** – While it's taken longer than we expected, the hard copies of the collective agreement ordered by the local through the employer are on their way to each school. Area supervisors will be picking up the agreements from the Ed Center and delivering them to each location. The copy delivered should be kept in the caretaking office for all members to read and refer to. The original plan was to have them delivered through board mail, but with the extended school closure, the mail hasn't been running for a couple weeks now. Instead of the local having to pay book off time and have stewards take them to schools, Bob Avery offered to have supervisors take them around and since the collective agreement involves both the employer and union, there was no conflict with that decision.

**Yesterday's Vote Results** - Firstly, thanks to everyone that voted yesterday and made time to be part of the process. We had a good turnout and from what I've heard, things went very smoothly with our online voting again. On behalf of the Executive, I want to extend a warm welcome to the following members who were elected to these positions:

Stewards – Flora DiCarlo, Danny Catanyag, Dave Wardell, Michelle Madley

Cheers,

Blake