



Update for March 26th, 2021

Just a really quick update this week - time has just flown by this week and if it wasn't for the rain pounding on my roof that woke me up super early before day 2 of the OSBCU Convention starts today, I probably wouldn't have had time to even put this together.

I've attached an update from OSBCU that talks about some of what happened yesterday on day 1 of the Convention for you to read over. It's definitely not the same doing a virtual convention and the lack of networking, meeting new people, making new friends and sharing ideas and experiences is what I'm missing most. I count on the contacts I've made at other courses, classes and conferences to help me with new things that come up in our local - how they handled it, what they had to do, what resources they used, etc. - and I enjoy sharing some of our experiences with them and their locals as well and it all benefits members across the province. Nobody in this local or across the province has all the right answers to all the questions at a moment's notice - it's a collective effort to help everyone.

I'm going to provide a link to our next General Membership Meeting notice as there is going to be a lot of important information for members provided in the April meeting and in May as well. Next month, brother Patrick and I will share some information and ideas on the Strike Defense Fund as well as the Trustees will present their findings after completing the audit of our finances for the year 2020. In May, members will be presented with and vote on proposed amendments to our local bylaws which are important to how our local functions on a day to day basis. I encourage you to make the time to attend these meetings - our last meeting had to be cut short because we lost quorum (the number of members we need to have a meeting and conduct business). Our quorum is 23 people - so if you want to think about it this way - 23 people can decide how this local functions and operates on behalf of over 500 of us. Our meetings are held virtually now to make it easy to join from home so please join in, participate and have your say in how things get done!

April GMM Notice - <https://cupe4153.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2021/03/GMM-ZOOM-Call-Notice-April2021.pdf>

Surprise, surprise - still no memo about clarification on enhanced cleaning when students are symptomatic at school, cleaning plexiglass. I mean, it's only been two weeks since we started asking for it - but who's counting.....

In closing, I can't stress enough how important it is to look after yourselves. It's no surprise that after a year of pandemic lockdowns and isolation that mental health issues are increasing at an exponential rate. Self care and

attention are important. Take the time for yourself. Plan an activity that YOU enjoy. Order a take out meal YOU haven't had in a while. Take up a hobby YOU have wanted to do for a while. Pick up the phone and call someone YOU cherish and tell them why they are important to you. If you find yourself struggling, reach out to someone you trust and don't keep it bottled up inside.

Stay safe, stay healthy, be kind,

Blake

OSBCU Convention 2021

Day 1 - Thursday, March 25



Addresses



In a video message, **CUPE National President Mark Hancock** addressed delegates at OSBCU's virtual conference: "The pandemic exposed a lot of the inequities in our society. ... But over the past year, we have shown just how essential this work truly is to helping kids get the best start possible - during normal times, and during a global pandemic. Our members in the education sector went above and beyond to support their students and their communities. ... The pandemic didn't stop us from providing valued services to the public. And it didn't stop us from doing our critical work as a union either."



CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn spoke to delegates after "a long and tough year" in which the pandemic "laid bare how critical public education services are to students, parents, our communities and the economy." He detailed the differences "between the reality of what we're all facing dealing with COVID and the picture being painted by the Minister of Education and Premier Ford... even as they sit on billions of dollars... never actually spent." He hailed "the solidarity and power you've built in the OSBCU" and urged delegates to mobilize to defeat the PC government in the next election: "We need to pull out every stop - do everything we can - to defeat Doug Ford and make real change."



Marit Stiles, MPP for Davenport and the Official Opposition NDP Critic for Education, thanked CUPE education workers for their compassion, resilience and hard work and recognized OSBCU for its leadership and solidarity. She spoke about Ford government's dismal performance around school reopenings as a sign of what's ahead. She warned, "Stephen Lecce and Doug Ford were cutting education before the pandemic and now they're already looking to return to those cuts. We can't let them get away with it.... Together, we can fight for the dignity and fair pay that you deserve, and the stronger public education system that our children, and our economy, rely on."



CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury told OSBCU delegates: "The National Strike Fund has over \$124 million. With the largest strike fund in the country, locals across Canada know that CUPE National can support them when they need it. It is my responsibility to make sure CUPE National has the resources to offer the services our members count on. With CUPE's solid financial foundation, I am positive we will be able to face the challenges ahead."



CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick paid a touching tribute to the education workers, saying "I want you to know that your contributions are not going unnoticed in the eyes of children and families. Despite all the obstacles the Ford government put in the way, you have kept students safe. You've made it possible for them to keep learning in the classroom and on-line. On behalf of all parents and members of CUPE Ontario, thank you. ... I want to encourage you to think big and be bold. Because while the pandemic has caused devastation, it has also created unprecedented opportunities to achieve great things."

Day 1 Highlights

Addresses from:

- **Mark Hancock**
CUPE National President
- **Fred Hahn**
CUPE Ontario President
- **Marit Stiles**
NDP MPP & Education Critic
- **Charles Fleury**
CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer
- **Candace Rennick**
CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer

Other:

- **President's Report**
- **Secretary-Treasurer's Report**
- **"Celebrating Our Success"**
- CUPE 2544
- **Introduction of Resolutions**
- **Elections**
- **Staff Presentation - "Think Provincially, Act Locally"**



CUPE

Reports



In her **President’s Report**, **Laura Walton** looked back on the trials and achievements of a year made even more challenging by COVID-19: “Three hundred and seventy-six days later, our members continue to go above and beyond, expanding their repertoire to serve our students, our schools and communities

safely. And they do all this in spite of a government that has failed to provide a real and sustainable plan to keep us all safe while undermining the real key services we provide.” She emphasized OSBCU’s commitment to being the political voice for CUPE school board members and to raising the profile of education workers and their roles. Her report also detailed OSBCU’s success in working with allies and providing open and frequent communications on a range of different platforms. A 50 percent increase in central disputes was evidence that “local leaders are holding your employers accountable,” said Walton. She also warned about the coming fight over online

learning, which could lead to “layoffs, privatization, and funding cuts.” Finally, she also noted that that it’s just over a year until OSBCU serves notice for the next round of central bargaining in 2022, concluding, “We are on the brink of something amazing, and I cannot wait to get started, together.”



Tammy Graham, Secretary-Treasurer of OSBCU, is positive about council’s financial picture: “The OSBCU is moving into the next fiscal year in a solid financial position. We are well suited to prepare for and mobilize members in the lead up to the critical round of Bargaining in 2022.”

Success story



CUPE 2544 President Eddie Pereira shared his local’s social media campaign, The Day #StartsAndEndsWithCUPE, which has given greater profile and recognition to 2544 members.

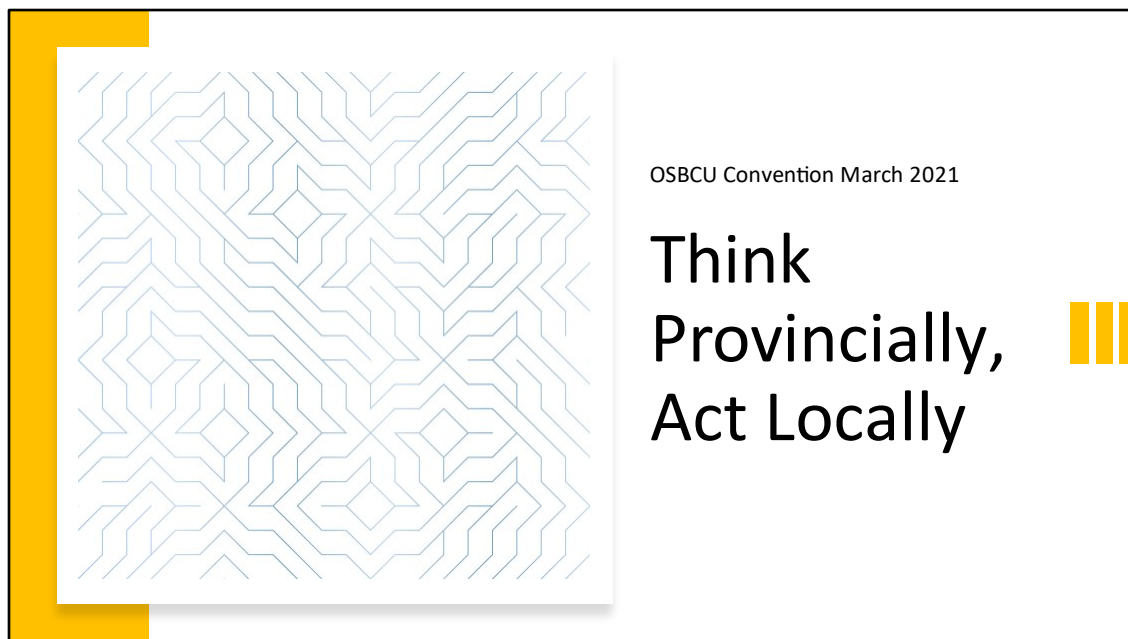
Convention business

Election Results

Congratulations to the following representatives on their election:

- President - Laura Walton
- 1st Vice-President - Rod McGee
- Secretary-Treasurer - Tammy Graham
- 3-year Trustee - Sue Wilkinson
- Francophone Vice-President - Christine Couture

Staff presentation



CUPE researcher Dan Crow spoke to delegates about the importance of “acting locally” to support central bargaining and enforcing the central agreement in the workplace. He linked members’ grassroots action in the community to education funding and policy and urged education workers to use their political power to influence trustees and MPPs and to build relationships with community allies, including parents’, students’ and community groups. He concluded: “The next round of bargaining is going to be difficult once again, but with strong local unions and rank-and-file activism we can build the kind of strength needed to win big at the central table.”

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