



Update for April 16th, 2021

First things first – this is gonna be a long update with a hefty amount of info for you. I don't like to dump so much at one time, but this past week just seems like every day is bringing new changes and challenges. So, sit back, grab a coffee or some other beverage and let's get to it!

Quick Notes

Remote Learning –Starting on Monday, students will be learning from home again as positive cases have climbed dangerously high recently. Daycares and ASD programs will still be available in person in HWDSB locations, unless Doug the Slug makes some other announcement later today or over the weekend. As of right now, there will be no negative impact on our members and we continue as normal. More on this further down the update.

Employee Assistance Program – Very important for all our members to be aware that help is available and no problems anyone is facing right now are too big or small to talk about with a professional. The EAP information will continue to stay attached to the weekly update for quick reference. The service is for all HWDSB employees (permanent and casual) and is totally anonymous and provided by a 3rd party.

Being Safe at Work – It all starts with your daily screening. Be honest about how you're feeling physically. If you feel like a bag of dirt – don't come to work and put your co-workers at risk. If you pass your screening and are at work – be sure and wear your mask at all times except when eating or drinking. You should never be closer than 6ft from a co-worker for an extended period of time. Don't crowd together at lunch or dinner breaks – consider setting up tables in an open space (library or gym) and space them well apart if you're close with your co-workers and still want to talk and eat together on your breaks. I don't want to get any more notifications of member to member transmission and outbreaks – there's no reason for it to be happening. You can find the education screening tool online and/or print off a copy to go through the questions before coming to work each day. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

What's Up Dougie? – Well, we're gonna hear from the 800lb gorilla again later today and rumor has it, even more restrictions and possibly a curfew are on the option table. At the press conference yesterday, one of the health officials stated that "If we don't change, things aren't going to get better." To me, that's a great big signal that nobody is gonna like what is likely coming down the pipe. As always, guessing right now would be just that – a guess. I'd rather wait to hear what's actually happening tomorrow and plan from there. So far, I've heard options from a province wide curfew (which would be incredibly hard to enforce properly) to shutting down manufacturing and construction sites. Just as I was finishing the update I jumped on Twitter to check and see if anything had leaked out yet and there's lots of concerns over a curfew and more forced closures including religious gatherings. No matter what's announced today – if there is an impact for our members – we will be in touch so keep an eye on your emails Friday night or Saturday.

OSBCU Custodial Forum – Last week, the OSBCU hosted their first online forum for custodial members. Normally, these forums would be held at the OSBCU conference, but they decided this year to open it up to all members across Ontario. I participated in last week's and it was very well done and was pretty interesting to hear what happens in other boards and with other local members. Questions around Covid issues & challenges were asked and solutions offered as well as general concerns about the work we do and employer policies. These types of events are great ways to meet some new people who do the same work we do and exchange ideas and opinions and make new friends. Many of the people I've met over the years have become very good friends and people whose opinions I trust when trying to strategize and handle issues that we come up against in our schools and with our employer. There was quite a response from custodial staff that work afternoons that couldn't participate in the forum last week, so OSBCU wanted to be inclusive and have scheduled this next one for Monday April 19th at 10:00am. If I remember right, the first one lasted about an hour and a half. You can follow the link below to pre-register and the forum will be held on the Zoom meeting platform which is the same as we use for our monthly membership meetings.

You can pre-register here:

When: Apr 19, 2021 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctcOqqrjwsHtAy7hDxyc-wy8ZelwN0pkL7>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Postings and Deployment – There will be one more round of postings on April 30th, then postings will stop for a while in order to complete the deployment process for permanent positions at schools that are closing later this year. Hopefully the stoppage period won't last too long and we can get everyone who already owns a permanent position in those buildings a new place to go in September and postings will start up again for everyone.

So What Do We Do Next Week ? – I expect us all to receive an email from Bob Avery today about hours and expectations for next week. All our members should expect – as in the past – to be working their normal hours, including those members currently doing enhanced cleaning. These are instructional days as noted in the collective agreement and it's no different than if the school was full of staff and students. As for what we should be doing – there's no end to what we can accomplish. Scrubbing walls, high dusting, scrubbing chairs, touch up painting, window glass – the list goes on and on. No, we aren't starting summer cleaning. That isn't a possibility until if and when the Ministry of Education declares that students will not be returning to in person learning this year. Our jobs rely on in person learning and like I've mentioned before – last year we had assurances from the government that there would be no income or job loss for any FTE position. This year, they have not given that same assurance so please don't complain about possibly having to clean the same office, classroom or bathroom a few times, right now I'm thankful we haven't had to deal with any layoff notices so far and I hope we don't have to at all. There will likely be more supervisor activity in all locations to monitor what we're doing during the remote learning period, so don't be surprised if you see your supervisor a few times a week and they ask what's being worked on and have a look around.

Vaccinations – If you got an email from the HWDSB last weekend about being eligible for a vaccination – congratulations! But, as many people found out – just because the HWDSB said you were eligible didn't mean the Ministry of Health recognized you as eligible. I did email the HR Dept on Monday morning about how they determined who was eligible and who was not as from what I heard this week, our maintenance workers and casuals didn't receive the eligibility emails. Strangely enough, neither did some teaching staff. As of last night, I had not received a reply to my questions. As for calling the Ministry of Health number listed on the email – it appears that depending on who you spoke to on the other end of the phone determined if you were assigned an appointment for your shot. This is out of the hands of the Local and the HWDSB. The only suggestion that I have for members at this point is to try calling again and hopefully the next customer service rep will be more accepting of the letter and you can get signed up. Remember to have your health card number, postal code, employer letter and your HWDSB email address ready for when you speak to them. Listen to the entire recorded message then press 0 to speak to a customer service rep and be ready to wait on hold for a while.

OSBCU Custodial Classification Reference Group - Each OSBCU classification (Custodial, Maintenance, EA, ECE, Library Worker, Paraprofessional, etc.) has a reference group that brings together members in those jobs and brings information about what's happening around the province to quarterly meetings in addition to what is communicated by local Presidents during regular communications. Again, normally nominations to these positions would normally happen at OSBCU Conference, but this year it's being done differently. Here's a cut and paste from an email I received from Laura Walton a few days ago,

As mentioned at our convention and in our classifications, the OSBCU Executive is pleased to provide the applications for our new Classification Reference Groups. The new structure is as follows:

- For each classification group (Clerical, Custodial, EA, ECE, Instructor, IT, Library Workers, Paraprofessionals/Professionals, Trades/Maintenance and Transportation) there will be one (1) representative from each Area (1-7) plus a francophone representative.
- Applicants must have endorsement from local president in order to be considered.
- Once a member of the classification group, they will meet 4 times a year. A report from each meeting will be distributed to local presidents for wider distribution to the OSBCU membership.
- Meetings are planned for evenings and weekends, however, if any book off/union leave is required the OSBCU will be responsible for that book off.
- All applicants must be from an affiliated OSBCU local
- All committee members will be required to complete a confidentiality agreement

Applications for all classification groups are open until April 22 at 5 pm. Applications will be reviewed by the OSBCU Executive Board during the Executive Board Meeting April 23-25, 2021. Appointments to the Classification Committees will be communicated to the successful candidates and copied to their local presidents April 26, 2021.

If you are interested in submitting your name to be considered to represent Area 2 for Custodial or Maintenance, I'll put a copy of the application at the end of the update and you can print it off and fill it out. The deadline is April 22nd and you'll need to get it to me before that so I can sign it and send it off to them before the deadline.

Who To Contact - To help you get the information you're looking for and to speed up the process a bit, here's a quick list of who to contact for certain things -

Grievances, Disciplines and Investigations – Peter Bowker, Chief Steward

Member to Member Conflicts – Darlene Barrick

Wellness and Return to Work – Patrick Cumbo

Kathleen Powell – Health and Safety Issues

Melanie Kivell or Brenda Maxwell (both are in HR at HWDSB) - all issues with postings and successful applicants – email them with your concerns and if there is no response within a few days, contact a steward

Retirements – Dave Dickhout

Attendance Management Meetings (Phase 2 and beyond) - Mark Lachowicz and Pat Amatangelo

All benefits coverage and eligibility issues should be directed to OTIP or Canada Life directly. Contact numbers for them can be found at www.cupe-ewbt.ca

Payroll issues should be directed to your supervisor and Jamie Peters in the HWDSB payroll department. This would include not being paid, being paid the wrong amount, etc.

Any general questions can be directed to one of our stewards who are happy to help out. If they're not sure of the answer right away, they will get the answer for you as soon as possible and get back in touch with you. It's important to be very honest when describing a situation you want an answer for – as leaving out certain details can drastically change the answer in the future.

You can find a full list of all union positions on our CUPE 4153 website under the "About Us" tab.

The Executive, Trustees and Stewards list can be found here:

<https://cupe4153.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2021/03/2020-2022-Officer-List.pdf>

The list of all other Committees can be found here:

<https://cupe4153.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2021/03/2020-2022-Committee-List-JUNE-2020.pdf>

Please print off copies of these for your caretaking office for quick reference.

Monthly Members Meeting - Next Sunday morning, we're having our monthly members meeting on the Zoom platform like we have for a couple months now. We're starting earlier this month as we have a few extra things to get through like making decisions on the Strike Defence Fund and hearing from our Trustees about their audit of our books for the 2020 fiscal year. And that's on top of regular business and discussions. So, we'll be starting at 9:30am and it's important that if you're able to join that you do – not only so that you're informed and vote on issues – but also because last month we lost quorum and had to stop the meeting which mean we didn't get to certain items. We have about 500 members. Our quorum for meetings is 23. That means as few as 23 people can decide how things run in the local. Your involvement is important. We have room for 300 people in the Zoom meeting, and it's all socially distanced and you don't have to wear a mask. Heck, as long as you mute your microphone and have your camera shut off, you could be sipping margarita's in your underwear while you're listening in and voting for all we know.....LOL

You can find the full announcement for the April GMM here on our website:

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

I am truly thankful for all the work you do as members of Local 4153 and for the kind of people you are.

I know sometimes it takes me a while to return a call or email but I hope you know it's just due to how fast information is coming at locals these days and trying to deal with more issues than normal. Who would've thought any of your elected union positions would just wish that things would settle down to what was normal a little over a year ago?! I know I'd be more than happy to return to pre-Covid workloads for the Local. You all need to know that the amount of work, study, hours and experience that goes into every situation we deal with on your behalf is because of the great membership we have. None of us do these jobs because it's a financially rewarding job. None of us do these jobs because we don't have anything better to do. We do these jobs because our members are worth it and we appreciate you and want to see good things for all of our members.

It ain't easy being in maintenance or caretaking, but we do it pretty damn good.

Cheers,

Blake



Welcome to LifeWorks

Feel supported and connected with a confidential Employee Assistance Program and innovative well-being resource

Life can be complicated. Get help with all of life's questions, issues and concerns with LifeWorks. Any time, 24/7, 365 days a year.

Download the app now, just search for "LifeWorks"



LifeWorks offers support with mental, financial, physical and emotional well-being.

Whether you have questions about handling stress at work and home, parenting and child care, managing money, or health issues, you can turn to LifeWorks for a confidential service that you can trust.

Life	Family	Health	Work	Money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement • Midlife • Student life • Legal • Relationships • Disabilities • Crisis • Personal issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting • Couples • Separation/divorce • Older relatives • Adoption • Death/loss • Child care • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Addictions • Fitness • Managing stress • Nutrition • Sleep • Smoking cessation • Alternative health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management • Career development • Work relationships • Work stress • Managing people • Shift work • Coping with change • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving • Investing • Budgeting • Managing debt • Home buying • Renting • Estate planning • Bankruptcy

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Tel: 905.739.3999 • Email: info@osbcu.ca • www.osbcu.ca

OSBCU Classification Group Application

Name:

Local:

Email:

Phone Number:

Area:

Are you a francophone who works in a francophone board?

Yes

No

Classification Group:

Custodial

Clerical

ECE (incl. RECE & DECE)

EA

Instructor

IT

Library Worker

Paraprofessional/Professional

Trades

Transportation

Why are you interested in becoming a representative on the OSBCU Classification Group?



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Do you have any skills or experience that would make you a good candidate for the OSBCU Classification Group?

What interests you most about this work?

Do you self identify as a member of an equity seeking group (black or racialized, women, LGBTQ2S+, worker with disability, young worker)?

yes

no

By signing below, you agree to the following

- Your local is an affiliate of the Ontario School Board Council of Unions
- You are able to attend virtual meetings which will be held during evenings and weekends.
- You are able to commit to a minimum of 1 meeting (evening or weekend) per quarter
- You have the endorsement of your local president.

Member Signature:

Presidents Signature: