



Members Update for January 18th, 2022

Back to School on Monday Wednesday – Students will be returning to in person learning tomorrow now that Mother Nature has calmed down. LOL. We'll return to all regularly scheduled shifts, duties and sections. There have been quite a few emails from the employer about Covid protocols, N95 masks, etc that you need to be aware of so please check your HWDSB emails for anything from the HR Dept or the Director. In addition to this information, the OSBCU sent out an update yesterday which I'm including as part of this update for you to read as well. Because in some CUPE Education Locals they represent teaching staff, not all the info is directly related to our maintenance and caretaking staff so please disregard anything that speaks to those positions.

Education Center Weekend Work – I want to give a HUGE shout out to everyone who worked at the Ed Center on Saturday and Sunday to break down and repackage the Rapid Test Kits for the benefit of students and co-workers in all of our buildings. This was a monumental task and our members stepped up and did a fantastic job!

Vaccination appointments - are available for education workers at <https://www.fhvax.com/> at the Center Mall beside EB Games. Lots of appointments are available.

If there's more info to update members on that comes between now and Thursday night, I will try and get that out at Friday morning, but don't be surprised if this is the only update you see this week.

Cheers,

Blake



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Information and Concerns pertaining to the In-School Learning

January 17, 2022

N95 Respirators

- The Ministry said last week that all workers should have an N95 mask. However, they say it is “optional”. It has been the position of CUPE and the OSBCU that according to the science, a non-fitted N95 respirator provides superior protection over a surgical mask. Many boards are stating that the protection is the same – this is not true. Please ensure that this is addressed with your members and through your Joint Health & Safety process
- Wearing outside – the nonfitted N95 respirators lose effectiveness when wet. To that end the advice is to not wear them outside. The risk is not as great outside as inside. Surgical masks should be worn and physical distancing should still be maintained when outside.
- We are hearing that members have access to only 1 N95 per day. Members should have access to more N95 as required (in case they get wet, soiled or damaged). An important piece to note is that N95s may be used for up to 40 hours so do not throw them away like the surgical masks – they may be dried out in a paper bag and re-worn.
- School boards should be providing you information and instruction on how to put on and take off a respirator safely and to ensure a good seal to the face.

Test Kits

- All staff and elementary students are to be provided with 2 RATs when the return to school. Secondary students will receive theirs when more supply arrives. It is also our understanding that these tests came in bulk requiring that boards repackaging. In many cases our members were involved in this work. Could you please look into what has occurred in your board and provide us an update? Please ensure that all kits for staff included the instructions on how to properly use the test.

Reporting of cases

- The government has chosen to cease the reporting and tracing of cases in schools. We are seeing a number of boards write letters to the Ministry with concerns about this. If your board has sent a letter to the Ministry please forward to us – we are compiling them for tracking.
 - We would encourage you to message your members about reporting to supervisors when they themselves are off with COVID. Workers should also continue submitting WSIB exposure forms when students and staff they have been in contact with are away from school so that the paper trail is maintained.
 - We have requested support from CUPE Ontario to speak to the WSIB regarding the concerns we have over our members being ineligible for PCR testing and the impact it may have on WSIB claims. Workplace exposure forms are a necessary element when establishing a claim.
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Staffing shortages

- Staffing shortages within our classifications is nothing new – in fact, we have been raising the alarm regarding these shortages far predating the pandemic. We know that the recruitment and retention issues are the direct result of low wages, poor working conditions and the precarious nature of our work. The pandemic has just increased the pressure further.
- Locals should be consulting their local collective agreements to ensure that language is being adhered. Many of you have language that speaks to not being able to transfer members to other location, not being able to perform the work of another bargaining unit etc. Please work with your staff rep to ensure that this language is not being violated as the boards rush to put temporary measures in place.
- We know that our members have the skills and abilities to step in for teachers who are away. However, the issue does not rest on that alone. Some pieces that need to be considered:
 - Who is back filling the work that is vacated by the CUPE member replacing a teacher? Our work is highly skilled and requires qualified professionals.
 - If our members are required to replace teachers, in what capacity are they working? Are they covered under the teacher's union collective agreement? In case of issues who would represent them?
 - No member should be required to work more than their shift in the day
 - Has the employer exhausted all other options prior to seeking our members out (e.g., reassignment of staff from education centre)
- Please check to see if your employer has job postings for temporary staff. Are these employees part of your bargaining unit? Is the pay in line with your casual staff etc. Please reach out to your staff rep and us if there are concerns.
- Unqualified replacement workers: Does your board have parents or other unqualified people filling in for EAs and/or other education workers? Please tell your staff rep and OSBCU if parents or others have been hired to fill education workers' jobs.

It is very important that we continue to highlight the work that our members perform, especially now. Please ensure that folks send photos with a quick note of the work they do to info@osbcu.ca



CUPE 4153 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FORM

****Please print clearly and do not use your HWDSB email address for any union correspondence. ****

FIRST NAME - _____

LAST NAME - _____

ADDRESS - _____

CITY - _____

PROVINCE - _____

POSTAL CODE - _____

HOME PHONE # - _(____)_____

CELL PHONE # - _(____)_____

PREFERRED/PERSONAL

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