



Members Update for February 25th, 2022

Last Week's Snow Event – So last Thursday night the weather got really bad during the afternoon shift and there were legitimate concerns about staff getting home safely due to deteriorating road conditions. All of the Executive and stewards got dozens and dozens of calls and messages asking if the board was going to consider closing for the night and sending staff home early. We also got calls asking us why “we” the union wasn’t doing anything for our members. The union doesn’t decide when to close locations and send people home – that’s the employer’s responsibility. They don’t consult us or ask our opinions. I can tell you that there were several calls made to senior managers out of concern for all our afternoon staff. Unfortunately, the people responsible for making that decision lacked the conviction to make it and decided to be lemmings instead of leaders who value and respect their employees. Just after 9pm that night after hours of non-stop calls and messages coming and going – I realized that nobody was going to make the decision, so I made one myself and sent the interim leaders (as Manny has been on vacation before he’s done with the HWDSB) an email which I’ve attached below for you. If you’re one of the members calling or messaging any of your elected reps about “the union” not standing up for its members – please try and remember that our input and arguments only go so far in this decision-making process on issues like this. If it was up to us, I would’ve liked to have everyone go home between 7-8pm to ensure everyone got home safely.

From: Blake Corkill [Staff]

Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 9:31 PM

To: Sue Dunlop [Staff] <sjdunlop@hwdsb.on.ca>; Stacey Zucker [Staff] <szucker@hwdsb.on.ca>; Jamie Nunn [Staff] <jnunn@hwdsb.on.ca>; David Anderson [Staff] <daanders@hwdsb.on.ca>; Robert Avery [Staff] <ravery@hwdsb.on.ca>

Cc: Dawn Danko [Trustee] <ddanko@hwdsb.on.ca>; Becky Buck [Trustee] <bbuck@hwdsb.on.ca>;

Subject: Staff safety tonight

Senior Managers, Acting Directors & Trustees of the HWDSB,

I'm the president of the only worker group present and at schools at 6am when the decision to close schools is made.

I'm also the president of the only workers present in buildings after dinner time when everyone else has gone home.

As that president tonight I have to say I'm very disappointed and frustrated with your lack of attention and caring towards almost 450 workers spread across 100 HWDSB locations tonight as the storm continues to roll in across the GTA.

First we had rapidly dropping temperatures after a day of rain. Then we had freezing rain. Then the snow started and for the last number of hours I've watched plows go past on Main Street trying to keep the city's main thoroughfare open and safe. Between myself, the CUPE 4153 Executive, stewards and Health & Safety reps we've had hundreds of calls and messages asking if workers will be sent home early due to the deteriorating weather conditions.

And what is the response? No. The mall is still open. McMaster and Mohawk are still open. Well good for them. I guess it's good enough for the HWDSB to be a follower and not a leader. We'll close when someone else decides the weather is too bad for their workers. As every one of you is content to be warm, safe and comfortable at home tonight - close to 450 of my members that keep all your locations clean, safe and comfortable for every student and co-worker of theirs will struggle to get home on roads that are rapidly deteriorating because you chose to do nothing. And tomorrow morning, about 120 of my members including myself will be at work by the time a decision is made to close or not. And if we are closed because it's too dangerous to be out on the roads - you'll send those same workers who put themselves at risk to drive into work at risk again to drive back home again.

My members have never asked for special treatment in situations like this - they have only asked what would someone else want for one of their family members or loved ones. Tonight, one of you or a group of you dropped the ball on making that decision. I only hope that later tonight I don't have to deal with a situation where one of my members didn't make it home.

Blake Corkill

Head Caretaker Memorial School

CUPE 4153 President

Getting Active with the OFL – The Ontario Federation of Labor is hosting an online session for all union members across Ontario on Sunday March 6th to help with informing and organizing for a provincial day of action on May 1st and other local campaigns as well. This should be a very informative and energy-filled session that if you are able to make plans to attend, you should, especially if you have signed up to help with mobilizing members ahead of the provincial election, local bargaining and municipal/trustee elections this fall. You can find the link to sign up for the session and receive updates from the OFL here - <https://ofl.ca/event/activist-assembly-2022/>

Health & Safety Committee Update - (sent from Kathleen Powell) N95 masks and rapid tests for casuals can be asked for at their school they go to same thing for the rapid tests. Casual employees can submit the request for N95's using the form on ebase. They would select their location as Education Centre for pick up. Once the board receives the N95s PPE team will email the members.

Snow Clearing Protocol: We are trying to get some thing in place for snow days and maybe some extra help to the schools that need it. They will be looking on a case-to-case basis if needs more assistance.

Pest Control: We are still waiting to hear from Jim Zolis about the new company and will they be signing a book so that we know what they have done. Also, what is expected of this new company and where are they allowed to put bait.

Bylaws – The Bylaw Committee met on Tuesday to wrap up our meeting in January now that the investigation from CUPE National into the meeting has been concluded and the Local was found to have done things properly. Our National Rep will be submitting the approved amendments to the National Presidents Office for final approval and once we receive them back, a new copy of our Local Bylaws will be posted on our website and a copy sent to each school to be posted on the Caretaking bulletin board. I want to thank the members of the Bylaw Committee for their time and efforts in making changes for the Local and we will start the process all over again in September when we ask members to submit changes to the committee.

EasyConnect Hours – (2nd week on the update) So apparently EasyConnect can't count properly. There have been several incidents where, for example, I have been booked off for meetings for 4.5 hours and EasyConnect has shown the hours for the job as being 6 hours. The employer is working with EasyConnect to solve the issue or remove the hours allotted altogether. It is the opinion of the Local that all casual members picking up jobs on EasyConnect only include the actual hours worked on their timesheets and not go by the EasyConnect hours to avoid any time fraud allegations against them. If you are picking up a job for 5 hours, then you should include only those 5 hours on your timesheet for that day regardless of what the software says.

It's a Sh*tty Job – With the melting snow and ice on our playgrounds and grassy areas comes the season of fecal land mines. While it's one of the more unpleasant jobs our head caretakers have during the day shift, part of our job descriptions is to maintain the school grounds, which includes garbage, debris and sometimes doggie doo doo. I have a school that has two fenced kindergarten pens that are frequently used after hours by dog owners to let their dogs run and get some exercise and some of those dog owners don't pick up after their dogs and it's not uncommon to get a call in the morning that there's dog droppings in those areas. I don't like getting those calls but I'd rather clean it up outside and dispose of it than have kids step in it and track it through the school on carpets, stairs and hallways and have a much bigger cleanup. So while there's nothing specific about dog crap in our job descriptions, maintaining the grounds is one of our duties.

Important Benefits Info – Our benefits program is branching out and providing a new way for you to access money for stuff you need – there will be an online information session this Sunday starting at 1pm – you can register by [clicking this link](#) and signing up to find out all the details! Before the online meeting, you can read about what you can spend up to an extra \$1,000 on before August 31st on the website that’s just for our own CUPE members at <https://www.cupe-ewbt.ca/hcsa>

March GMM – Plans are being made to have our March GMM in person on March 20th (the end of March break). We’ve waited two years for this day to come and as long as things keep trending in the province the way they have been, it should be a go. We need to check with Hamilton Public Health about some details but I’m very hopeful that we can celebrate the return to in person meetings! More details will be coming so stay tuned to next week’s update!



CUPE 4153 Wear – We're looking at ordering some apparel with our logo on it to be sold to our members. Shirts, jackets, toques, etc. But first, we want to gauge interest in doing this before we put in an order for a few of each to keep at the office to be sold and then order again as necessary. If you are interested, please email the office at cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca and let Janna know what types of clothing you’d be interested in purchasing!

Just to end on a personal note – due to a family situation I won’t be available to answer any calls after 2pm and there will be days when I’m not at work. If you have a health and safety concern – your first call should always be to your supervisor who is responsible for your health and safety as an employee. If you have a general work question or something related to the collective agreement – please contact one of our Executive or stewards and they will be more than happy to help with whatever it is that’s on your mind.

Cheers,

Blake