



Members Update for September 2nd, 2022

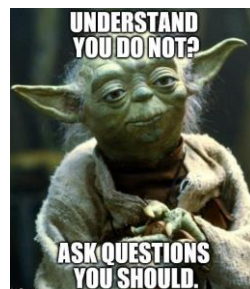
In Case You Missed Last Night's Meeting - If you weren't able to join in on the Zoom meeting we had last night to discuss the state of Central Bargaining and the OSBCU Why Vote Yes campaign – you're in luck because all the information is already available online for you on YouTube! The OSBCU hosted a webinar a few weeks ago and it's available on YouTube for you to watch and learn and get the real facts around our bargaining proposals, the insulting response from the Crown and CTA and why we all need to be voting YES to a central strike later this month. The entire video including questions and answers on a number of topics associated with bargaining and the strike vote is about two hours long. The first part is a breakdown of why OSBCU made the proposals it did with all the relevant facts and data to support them. Then there's more general discussion and questions from other OSBCU members from all across the province.

You can watch the video by clicking on this link at any time - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjGIGiL74Cc&t=688s>

Trustees Letter – Many of you have messaged me this week asking if there's been any response from the HWDSB Trustees regarding the letter I sent them last week about supporting the OSBCU Central Bargaining Proposals or not. As of Thursday night when I put the wraps on this update – Dawn Danko the HWDSB Chair did respond and restate her support for us that she shared during our PD Day and stated that there had not been a full trustee meeting since receiving my letter and when they had a chance to meet it would be discussed.

Changing Careers – On a sad note, I have to tell you that a long time member, supporter, ally and union advocate for CUPE 4153 has decided to move on to greener pastures. Flora DiCarlo has decided to move on and pursue a career change and I want to thank her for her many years of helping and guiding this Local to where we are now. While I'm sad to lose a close friend and advocate, I always want the best for those closest to me – even if it takes them a bit further away from me. We will follow our bylaws as closely as possible as in other elections for vacant positions to choose a new Chief Steward. That individual will also automatically become part of our Bargaining Committee as per our Local bylaws. For now, contact one of our stewards and they will do their absolute best to help you with your concerns.

Who to Contact? - With another school year starting, there's always questions about who should I contact about 'stuff' from bereavement to vacation to pay issues. A number of our Executive, stewards, mobilizers and picket captains are already doing other jobs within the Local and it's going to be stupidly busy for all of us for the next 3-4 months. I will encourage you all to do some searching yourself before calling or texting with a question. As always, if you're stumped and can't find the answer or can't wrap your head around part of the Collective Agreement (and don't worry about that it still happens to all of us!) - you're more than welcome to ask and yes, we've probably heard it before.



Pay rates, vacation, bereavement, overtime wheel, sick time – all these issues are found in both our Central and Local parts of our Collective Agreement. You can find our agreement on our website. Go to www.cupe4153.ca and then click on Resources and then Collective Agreement.

If you have a question about what does a steward do or when do we have elections or how much pay does the President get for doing that job? If it's a local issue only and has nothing to do with the employer, it's probably found in our Local Bylaws. You can also find them on our website under the Resources tab.

If you can't find what you're looking for – call or email a health & safety rep, one of our stewards or our union office. That's what they have been elected to do is help you – the members. You can find all contact information for Local elected positions on our website by clicking [here](#) and you can print it off and hang it in your caretaking office for quick reference.

Health & Safety reps can help with issues in your school from “that looks unsafe for me to do but my supervisor asked me to do it anyhow” or “should this classroom have 3 extension cords plugged into each other?”.

Stewards can help you with overtime issues, vacation issues, job posting issues, payroll issues, etc.

The Executive is always around to back up and provide support to any of the other elected positions. Most of us are being stretched in other ways by being involved in OSBCU Committees, spending time in meetings with the employer, helping strategize and organize for a possible strike and preparing for our own Local bargaining. I can honestly say that we have never been this busy in my memory. And it's going to stay that way for likely 3-4 months.

Any questions or calls can always go to our office. Janna is our wonderful and talented office administrator and you can reach out to her by phone at 905-544-7733 or send an email to cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca and she will find the answer for you or have someone get back to you with the answer.

Covid 19 Protocols – Michelle Madley and myself were part of a meeting to discuss the Covid 19 protocols for this upcoming school year. We discussed a memo that was going to be sent to all staff on Wednesday. Other worker group presidents and representatives were asked for input and questions. Michelle and myself had 3 questions that we are awaiting answers on and will provide information for our members when we receive feedback and answers.

- 1) Ventilation – the HWDSB has a continued commitment to providing proper filtration to all locations. Our question was that ventilation systems that are to be turned on 2 hours prior and after occupancy – what does the HWDSB determine as occupancy? Is it when CUPE members arrive and open the building or is it when students arrive?
- 2) Daily screening is being encouraged by both the Ministry of Education and the HWDSB but it is not mandatory. How will this affect our Collective Agreement language about quarantine and isolation periods not being deducted from our sick bank?
- 3) Isolation rooms & Covid cleanups – Isolation rooms are “encouraged” to be set up by individual schools OR provide a designated area where students can wait to be picked up by a parent or caregiver. CUPE members will NOT be required to go into classrooms where a student with symptoms has been sent home to clean desks or the entire classroom.

HWDSB Property and Camping – We all know that mental health and substance abuse and homeless issues are becoming a bigger problem in Hamilton and frankly, all over the province and country. Health and community supports have been cut and the last few years of the pandemic and job losses have only made things worse. I can't imagine what it's like to face homelessness. I've been close a few times over the years, but thankfully have never been in that position. **If you ever encounter anyone camping out or sleeping overnight on HWDSB property, you are NOT to approach them and ask them to leave. That is the job of a supervisor.** If you're asked by your principal to ask someone to leave – let them know you'll contact your supervisor and let them handle it.

If you're working this weekend trying to finish things up in your school or someone else's - THANK YOU for giving up your downtime to help out and get things done. If you're taking the weekend to relax, hang out, unwind with an adult beverage or you get a certain glow after 4:20 – GOOD FOR YOU! We all deserve that after the last two years of turmoil and a few months of pretty intense summer cleaning right before we're in the thick of things again!

The government would like people to think that just anyone can do our jobs and it's not worthy of a decent increase and that we're just greedy union thugs that like to hold families hostage with the threat of a strike. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who does this job day in and day out has a personal attachment to their school and community because we care, not because we want to get rich doing this job. I'm pretty sure none of us have offshore bank accounts hiding all our huge bonuses and millions of dollars we've tucked away. Unlike government funding for private companies owned by the richest Canadians, any increases workers like you and I receive is likely to go right back into the economy and benefit others. Thank you for supporting quality public education for Hamilton students and families.

Cheers,

Blake