



Bargaining Info Update for September 12th, 2022

Mobilizing, Strike Pay and Purple Shirts – Unless you’ve been living off grid and haven’t heard any news for months now – our contract has expired and Central negotiations for a new contract are NOT going well. The Crown and CTA think it’s very generous of them to offer you a 1.25% increase each year, remove job security language from the contract, take away from your benefits and restrict your access to your sick days (which were also forced on us by a previous government) - then you shouldn’t be concerned about anything. If reading that makes you upset, angry, frustrated and wanting to do something about it – GOOD.

On Tuesday and Wednesday (and one zone on Thursday) - mobilizers from the Local will be visiting schools in all zones across the system and asking all members some questions. First, they’ll be confirming the personal contact info the Local has on file for each member – address, cell phone and personal email address. They will also be asking if you are going to support the Central Bargaining Committee by voting YES in about a week and a half. They will be emailing you a link to your personal email address for you to complete for strike pay in the event we do go on strike. This strike pay form (Form E) must be completed by each member as it contains banking information so we can pay members their strike pay directly into their bank account. And finally, if members commit to vote YES, you’ll be asked for your shirt size. OSBCU has committed to provide a tee shirt for everyone who is committing to vote YES.

I have to be honest with all of you – I don’t like the tone of the negotiations so far from the other side of the table. To provide what you think is a “serious” offer of a wage increase of 1.25% while inflation is and has been running wild for quite some time is disrespectful, disingenuous and to be blunt – absolute horseshit. Not to mention the rest of their so called “responses” to the OSBCU proposals including increases to staffing, prep time for EA’s and a DECE in every kindergarten classroom. Notice how all those other ones provide a clear and direct benefit to students and they’ve all been shot down and stomped on as well?

I think it would be very naïve of anyone to not think that job action in the form of a strike isn't a very real possibility sometime late next month. Sure, I'm hopeful that the conciliation with the help of the Ministry of Labor will get some movement or serious talks going – but seeing what the Ford government did just last week with Bill 7 and forcing elderly patients to be sent to a for-profit long term care home that they didn't chose OR get a bill for their hospital care – doesn't leave me overflowing with hope. They are hell bent on ruining public sector services and then handing them over to their private sector supporters.

There's over 240,000 staff involved in education in Ontario. OSBCU represents about 55,000 of those workers. Our group is the furthest ahead in contract talks. Other groups are not being as open and courageous as our leadership is. Some groups haven't even exchanged proposals yet. Maybe that's because they want to ride on our coat-tails or maybe it's because they don't have the support of their members because they haven't been as engaged as we have. That doesn't matter to me at all. It doesn't matter what the teachers, EA's, clerical, librarians, speech pathologists or anyone else on that works for the HWDSB are doing about their Central Bargaining because we don't represent them.

Our members. Our wages. Our sick days. Our job security. Our benefits. Our staffing levels. That's what matters to me.

I think it's very reasonable for us to have more than 90% of our members take two minutes over the course of a week to vote. I think it's very reasonable to have more than 90% of those voting to VOTE YES. That's the goal. All the support the Central Bargaining Team needs, we need to give them.

The very best and most direct way to avoid a strike is to support a strike. Last time around we only had about 40% support for a strike. Look where that left us.

Not this time Doug. Not this time.

HELP WITH FORM E - If you're having issues with completing Form E (be sure to have your banking information including institution number, transit number and account number) and can't seem to get it, please reach out to one of our Lead Mobilizers or our office for assistance. As this would be a Central Strike, the OSBCU is calling all the shots on the strike, including doing things electronically. Our mobilizing members are simply following the directions given to them by our provincial bargaining agent.

Laurie Penner – 905-518-7024

Office – 905-544-7733

Jason Atkinson – 289-237-5672

I Want To Help Out – Many of you have decided that enough is enough and even if it's a small thing – you want to help out. That's exactly what it's going to take to get through this next while. Everyone doing what they can. If you want to volunteer some time to make a few phone calls – great! If you are interested in being a picket captain – great! If you've got a cousin named Vinny who thinks education workers deserve their \$3.25/hr increase and wants to bake canolis for us if we're on strike – great!

If you have a little or a lot of time to help our Local – please contact Laurie Penner or Jason Atkinson our Local Mobilizing Leads at:

Laurie Penner – call or text – 905-518-7024

Jason Atkinson – call or text – 289-237-5672

Thanks to all of you, students and families across the HWDSB had a good first week back to school. I've heard many more compliments to our members this year on how the schools look and I think that's a good indication of the HWDSB families and caregivers finding out just what it is that we do. We don't have summers off. We aren't paid what teaching staff are paid. We work all summer long in buildings without air conditioning. Our work is hard and physically demanding. The public is coming around to the fact and idea that we are deserving of the proposals we made to the Crown and CTA. The public is rallying to our side. All of us need to continue posting on social media, having conversations with friends and family, being friendly to parents in our buildings dropping off or picking up their kids and most importantly, VOTE YES when the time comes.

Cheers,

Blake