



Bargaining Info Update for September 7th, 2022

Last Thursday We Had A Meeting - On Thursday of last week, your Local Executive called a Special Meeting to discuss the Central Bargaining process, the Why Vote Yes campaign and answer any questions that members had. Part of the feedback from that meeting was that I pull together all the bargaining/OSBCU resources and info and share them with all members. So, this is that piece for all of you. OSBCU is sharing information like no other union. I think we do a good job of sharing information with members in our own Local. It's up to members to take responsibility and keep up with the information coming out – especially in a year when our contract has expired and the likelihood of job action at some point in the near future is increasing daily.

OSBCU is the Ontario School Board Council of Unions. The OSBCU represents all CUPE Education Workers employed by school boards in Ontario. There are 55,000 members in the OSBCU. The OSBCU is the largest bargaining unit in CUPE National who represents about 700,000 members across Canada. The OSBCU represents dozens of different job classifications and membership is different in each school board. In our board, CUPE represents caretaking & maintenance. In the Hamilton Catholic board, CUPE represents mostly EA's. In other boards we have clerical, IT, librarians, speech pathologists, ESL teachers – the list goes on and on. The OSBCU bargains the Central part of our collective agreement – central items apply to all 55,000 members. Central items are items like wage increases, sick days, vacations, shift premiums, benefits and more.

While our contract expired about a week ago, we continue working under the terms of the old contract until a new one is reached. When both Central and Local bargaining are completed and approved by members, only then do we have a new contract.

The OSBCU has a number of resources available to all members and the public on their Central Bargaining process and proposals. This time around, the commitment to open and transparent bargaining and sharing of all information has been a top priority.

OSBCU Website – www.osbcu.ca

Sign up for OSBCU Central Bargaining Emails – you can receive updates to your personal email each day the OSBCU is in Central Bargaining with the Crown and CTA – find out what we proposed or what the Crown and CTA responded with. You can sign up by visiting this link - <https://osbcu.us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=dcfef3cf193c219d80a42fc31&id=962899ba7d>

OSBCU Proposals and Response – Below is a list of the OSBCU Main Proposals and the Crown/CTA responses and counter offers – if you can even call them that. These are also available as an attachment with this email.



CUPE Ontario School Boards Council of Unions (OSBCU)
What does the August 15, 2022 Employer Proposal mean for you?

What CUPE-OSBCU Proposed	What the Crown/CTA Proposed	What would the Employer Proposal mean for you?
Wage increases of \$3.25/hour in each year of the next agreement	2% increase for members earning less than \$40,000 per year	A real wage cut for all education workers of 9-11% over the next 4 years.
Pay casual employees the same rate as permanent employees	1.25% for members who earn \$40,000 or more per year Continue lower pay rates for casual employees	Cumulative wage cut of 20-22% since 2012. Recruitment and retention problems would continue and worsen, meaning jobs unfilled and fewer supports for students. Increased workloads.
Improve job security/service security language to ensure minimum staffing levels	Elimination of all job security/service security language	School boards could, and would, cut staff below existing levels, denying students the services they need.
Additional funding to create new staff in all education worker classifications	No new money for staffing	Students who need additional supports would be deprived of what they need. Workloads would increase to the breaking point and schools will be less able to function. No ability to increase cleaning standards in schools.
Preserve the existing sick leave and short-term disability plan	Massive cut to short-term disability plan	Most members would not be able to access the short-term disability plan they currently have and will lose income at a time when they need it most.
Paid prep time for members who work directly with students	No paid prep time	Unpaid work would continue to be expected of education workers. The employer does not understand the value of prep time.

What CUPE-OSBCU Proposed	What the Crown/CTA Proposed	What would the Employer Proposal mean for you?
Guarantee that a Designated Early Childhood Educator is in every Kindergarten class	No guarantee of a DECE in every Kindergarten class	Thousands of students would be denied the benefits of the two-educator model of full-day Kindergarten.
Require all boards to provide minimum hours of work for education worker positions	No change to hours of work for positions that are currently under the normal standard	Fewer hours of work for low paid workers, and less time available to provide supports for students.
Improve access to professional development for all education workers	Status quo on professional development	Education workers would be denied access to training and skills development required to keep up in a dynamic field
Benefits funding to allow for improvements to the plan for all members	Freeze funding for benefits for 4 years	Benefits would be cut substantially by 2024. The benefits plan will be unsustainable without funding.

A detailed, piece by piece description of just how bad the Crown/CTA response is for all of us can be found by making a little mouse click here - <https://www.osbcu.ca/materials/aug15proposal/>

Strike Pay FAQ – How much is strike pay? How many hours do you have to picket to qualify for strike pay? What happens if you can't picket due to a medical condition? All this and more are answered for you - OSBCU has created a list of questions and answers around strike pay. You can find that attachment with this email to read yourself.

OSBCU Links & Partners on Social Media – Make sure to like and share to spread the REAL facts on your own social media

Twitter - @osbcucscso

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/osbcucscso>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCO2AGdfjiGefQt66ZQyE9Xg>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/osbcucscsocupe/?hl=en>

Shareable Website for Parents & Caregivers - <https://39000isnotenough.ca>

Ontario Parents Action Network (OPAN) Twitter - @parentaction4ed

Fred Hahn, CUPE Ontario President – Twitter - @FredHahnCUPE

Why Vote Yes Campaign – all 55,000 members of the OSBCU will be invited to participate in a strike vote later this month. Members will be voting electronically to give the OSBCU Bargaining Team a mandate to call a strike if necessary and negotiations with the government don't seem to be progressing at all. **You are not voting YES to a strike. You are voting YES to support the OSBCU Bargaining Team and give them the ability to determine when and if job action is necessary to secure the gains the workers and students in the education system deserves.**

Key Dates for the Campaign and Vote:

September 22nd @ 6pm -- Virtual online meeting to review and answer questions about why we need to vote YES

September 23rd – Voting opens online.

October 2nd @ 6pm – Strike vote closes

October 3rd @ 9am – OSBCU to release strike vote results online & in media

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

I hope this list of resources helps for everyone to understand what's at stake in the near future. The OSBCU proposals were based on member input. They were costed out and projected by one of the smartest people I've met.

They have been stepped on and treated like crap by the Crown and the CTA. They think you're only worth a raise of 1.25% over the next 4 years while inflation has been and continues to be around 7%

Your wages have been cut by legislation in the last decade by about 9-11%.

At the end of the next 4 years if you accept the 1.25% increase offer – your wages will be approximately 20% lower than a decade ago.

DECE's should be in every kindergarten classroom.

EA's should have prep time the same as teachers.

More staffing is needed in all areas of education.

The education system shouldn't be based on the backs of those paid the least and expected to volunteer or donate time when government projections show an increase in provincial revenue as the economy recovers.

And the list goes on and on, but I won't take up any more of your time today. Just do me a favor....

Talk to your co-workers about the proposals and responses and how it will impact you. Encourage your co-workers to vote YES to support the OSBCU Bargaining Team. We want a 95% YES vote in our own Local with at least 80% of members participating. When the mobilizing team comes around to talk with you – tell them you're ready to vote YES and fill out your Form E for strike pay!

Cheers,

Blake



CUPE OSBCU Strike Pay and Benefits FAQ

(Subject to the CUPE National Strike Fund Regulations which can be found at [National Strike Fund Regulations | Canadian Union of Public Employees \(cupe.ca\)](#))

How much is strike pay?

Strike pay is \$300/week for 20 hours of strike duties. Strike pay is not taxable income.

Full-time members must perform 20 hours of strike duties a week. Shifts are four hours long, Monday to Friday. Full-time members are asked to complete one 4 hour shift a day for a total of five shifts a week (20 hours).

Part-time and casual members are also welcome and encouraged to perform 20 hours of strike duties a week if possible and receive full strike pay and may perform fewer hours for a pro-rated amount if they are unable to perform 20 hours a week.

How do I qualify for strike pay?

To qualify for strike pay you need to complete Form E Application for Strike Pay and participate in strike duties, signing in and out of your daily strike duty shift with your picket captain. We will use an electronic system for completing Form E and strike sign in and out.

Can I perform a double shift of 8 hours/day?

For the strike to be effective, members need to be on the picket line every day. If you need to request a different schedule, please speak with your local's strike committee who will review and approve on a case-by-case basis.

I am not able to participate in picketing, can I be accommodated?

If your medical restrictions prevent you from participating in 4 hour, picket duty shifts, please contact your local strike committee to request an accommodation. There is a pre-approved list of alternative picket duties for members whose medical restrictions indicate a need for a medical accommodation such as phone banking and other alternative duties.

Benefits during a strike

Your extended health care and dental benefits will continue in the event of a strike if you have benefits prior to the strike.

Will I continue to pay my employee premiums during a strike? I can't afford that.

The CUPE strike fund will pay both the employer and employee share of benefits premiums for all members participating in the strike so that benefits prior to the strike are continued during a strike. More information will follow in the coming weeks about benefits in the event of a strike.

How long will the strike last?

The more united and well-organized we are, the shorter the strike will be. The most important part of winning a strike is for each, and every member not to report to work, and instead to participate in the strike. We only need to withhold our labour one day longer than the employer can function without us.

Will I be punished for playing a role during the strike?

You have a protected legal right to strike. Management cannot legally discipline members for supporting their union. Your union representatives will support you if any action is taken by your employer.

Does a strike actually have any effect on the bargaining process?

Striking when negotiations break down is our greatest power as workers. In New Brunswick, when CUPE members went out on strike across the province, including education workers, they won real wage increases. When the employer sees that we are united and strong, they are more likely to concede to our demands at the table.

What if I am on vacation when the strike starts?

If you are on approved vacation prior at the time the strike begins, your employer should honour the remainder of your approved vacation. You are encouraged to cancel your vacation and participate in the strike because the stronger the participation, the more likely you will win your contract demands.

Once on strike you cannot go on vacation.

What about my maternity leave top-op, will they continue during the strike?

The employer should continue to pay your maternity leave top-up during the strike for as long as you are eligible.

I am on EI maternity or parental or adoption leave prior to the strike. Will my Employment Insurance benefits continue?

Yes, your EI benefits should continue for the duration of your leave if you were on EI prior to the strike.

I need to apply for EI maternity, parental or adoption leave benefits after the strike has started and need a Record of Employment (ROE) from the employer. Are they obligated to provide one?

Yes, they employer should give you your ROE.

What happens if I am on short-term sick leave/short-term disability when a strike starts?

If you are on approved short-term sick leave/short-term disability prior to the strike your sick leave/short-term disability benefits should continue.

Am I eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits during a strike or lockout?

Maybe, if you can show that your leave was anticipated and arrangements for it were made prior to the strike. If you were on short-term sick leave before the strike that may demonstrate that your leave was anticipated. If your sickness wasn't anticipated or starts during the strike you will not qualify for EI sickness benefits.

What happens if I get sick during the strike and cannot fulfill my strike duties, will I received strike pay?

If you are sick and cannot report to your strike duties, you should contact your picket captain who will communicate with your local strike committee co-chairs. You should not picket if you have COVID or other symptoms of illness as you could potentially make other members sick, however as soon as you are well again you should return to picket duties. If you are sick, you will receive strike pay for your lost shift, if you can provide reasonable proof of illness.

I am on LTD. Will be my LTD benefits continue during a strike?

Members on approved LTD claims prior to the strike should continue to receive LTD benefits. If an insurance carrier or employer discontinues LTD benefits then you should contact your local strike committee.

Who will pay the cost of the employer and employee LTD premiums?

CUPE will continue the employee and employer LTD premiums for members participating in the strike.

What happens to my pension during a strike or lockout?

When you are on strike, you do not earn any pay from your employer. Therefore, OMERS contributions are not deducted and there is no credited service added to your pension record for the strike period. For pension purposes, the time period of the strike is not included on your pension record. Your employer will report this time to OMERS as a leave period if it was a scheduled workday.

Will I be able to purchase my strike period?

Yes. OMERS rules allow a member, on a voluntary basis, to make a service purchase for the period of a legal strike. Once the strike has ended, your employer should provide you with a service purchase application form. If you choose to pay the cost of the service purchase, the time period of the strike will be added to your pension record as credited service.

How much will the OMERS service purchase cost?

The cost will be equal to “double contributions” – in other words, if you choose to make the purchase, you will pay both your portion and your employer’s portion of the contributions to cover the strike period. You can find more information on the OMERS website here: [A Legal Strike and Your OMERS Pension.](#)

If I am injured while on strike duty, can I make a WSIB claim?

No, you can’t but you can apply to continue on strike pay.

If I am getting WSIB benefits will they continue during a strike?

Yes, provided that you continue to qualify medically and continue to co-operate with WSIB requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact your local’s strike committee and/or assigned National Representative.



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<p>Improve job security/service security language to ensure minimum staffing levels</p>	<p>Elimination of all job security/service security language</p>	<p>School boards could, and would, cut staff below existing levels, denying students the services they need.</p>
<p>Additional funding to create new staff in all education worker classifications</p>	<p>No new money for staffing</p>	<p>Students who need additional supports would be deprived of what they need.</p> <p>Workloads would increase to the breaking point and schools will be less able to function.</p> <p>No ability to increase cleaning standards in schools.</p>
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