

Well hello again everyone, long time no chat....Let me introduce myself to those who are new or just getting interested in union activities and being a part of the process by voting this Thursday!

My name is Blake Corkill and I'm the head caretaker at Memorial School. I really enjoy my job at the school and get along great with the staff and students. A big downtown school that's over a century old often makes for a busy day but I enjoy it. In the past I've served the Local as a Health & Safety committee member and chair and 2nd VP. I was President from June 2020 until this past November when I resigned for a few reasons - both personal and work related. After talking with my daughters and some very good and close friends - I've decided to run for the position of President again in this week's election. I have sent an email to our Election Committee this morning directing them to remove my name from all elections except for President in the best interest of the Local and to preserve the choices of our members.

Here's what I want you to know and what you can expect from me as your President.

The role of the President is to oversee and guide the Local. They don't get involved in every squabble, grievance, investigation or return to work issue. We have people elected to do that - from our Chief Steward to the Executives, Stewards and in the fall our Health & Safety reps as well. Keeping up with current legislation, proposed legislation, changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act, our own employer policies and procedures, attending Provincial and National meetings, OSBCU meetings and planning sessions as well as making time to talk with as many of you as possible to see how we can better serve our members and support them in their daily work activities. That's where my focus will be. I may be in the office every day of any given week depending on what's going on - or maybe I'll be in my school 2 or 3 days a week and in the office a few. Some weeks I may not even see the office. When there's meetings after work hours, it will be my choice on whether to attend or ask someone else to attend and bring back information for us. One thing I learned last time was one person can't do it all. It takes a good team to help guide and make decisions for us all. Every person you elect should have the best interests of the Local at heart and be prepared to vote, act and commit to furthering the Local. As a Union we value good compensation for our work. We also value a healthy work/life balance. Most evenings I will not be checking emails or answering calls or texts - that's my personal time. There's more than enough managers, supervisors and other Exec members that have my personal contact info that in case of a real emergency, they can get a hold of me.

Here's some of what I'll commit to doing over the next two years,

- No touching of the strike fund without a full membership vote. We need to decide on whether to add to the strike fund before the end of this contract, leave it alone with whatever money is in there or do away with it and use the funds to provide more training and support for elected positions so they can better advocate and represent all of our members.

- I will expect that any Executive that is also elected to any other position will resign one or more positions and only hold one position to encourage more participation from members in running the Local. There is simply no need or excuse for an Executive to hold multiple elected positions.
- Get a new Bylaw Committee up and running as soon as possible, seek input from members on changes and hold a membership vote on adopting new and current bylaws that reflect where our Local is at and where we want to be in the future. I would like to see this process completed by December or January.
- Easier communications between members and the Local. We've got a good system in place with the weekly email updates but we're not using our office administrator to her full extent. Most questions, concerns or congratulations should be going through our office by phone or email during normal business hours. Workplace emergencies after business hours should be going through your supervisor or a health & safety rep by legislation.
- Training - I will expect that any elected official that has not been fully or properly trained will take any necessary training before they actually start representing members. Sending someone into a meeting to represent a member that hasn't received training, hasn't sat with an experienced rep to observe and take proper notes and isn't fully confident in themselves yet shouldn't be happening, ever. Members should have the confidence and trust in whoever is representing them.
- Health & Safety - I will commit to all members that having an election for health and safety reps is one of my top priorities as soon as possible.
- Create a handbook of Frequently Asked Questions for all members by the end of the summer that addresses the most frequent questions we get about the collective agreement, health & safety issues, our bylaws, etc. Informing and educating members needs to be a priority. Equipping members to deal with strange or downright wrong requests from supervisors or settling disagreements between staff based on facts instead of emotions is a key to being effective and respected in the workplace.

I could go on for a long time about things but I won't for now. If you have questions or comments for me - you can reach me at my board email and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

Please remember to set an alarm on your phone or make sure you check your personal email on Thursday and exercise your right to vote and have your say in who will be on the team to lead and support you through the next two years ramping up to the end of our current contract. There will be lots happening in the next two years and we need a great team with new and fresh ideas and people to get us fully prepared. Ask questions of the candidates - what do they believe in, what changes do they want to make, etc. It's your right to ask and have answers to your questions.

In Solidarity,

Blake