



# CUPE 4153 Update

February 12th, 2025

## **Snowmageddon!!!!**

I think by now we're all aware of the potential for another snow day tomorrow. Snow supposed to be starting this afternoon/evening into tomorrow morning and dumping anywhere between 15-25cm depending on which forecast you watch.

Just a reminder that snow removal is EVERYONE'S job. It's not just your head caretaker's job on day shift. Afternoon shift staff are responsible for it as well. Entrances should be kept clear and for schools that have evening rentals - walkways should be cleared as well. Sometimes that just means doing some salting if it's just a light snowfall. Tonight it might mean some shovelling depending on how much is on the ground before we close up for the night. If you're outside cleaning up - the team inside should be helping you with your own section. Yes - that means areas of the building won't be cleaned as normal and that's ok. Anything that's missed - leave a note for your head caretaker or send an email to your supervisor and head caretaker about what was missed so if a Principal is complaining or asking why things weren't done - there's a quick answer for them.

## **Follow Up From Last Snow Day**

I wasn't going to share this email but I was encouraged to by a few people this week to let our members know that even when you don't hear anything about an issue - it doesn't mean your elected reps aren't working, meeting and talking in the background to make sure your voices are heard. Last week we had a snow day and it was a late call. The HWDSB Policy on Inclement Weather states that the call to close needs to be made by 6am. Last week it was closer to 6:20am. I sent an email to the Director and Trustee Felix-Miller about how it impacts our members on day shift and the risk they're put in and well, I'll let you read my email and the Director's response:

Sheryl and Maria,

I wanted to inquire about the late notice yesterday for the inclement weather. The board has had a policy in place for many years that when the buses aren't running, schools aren't open as it's deemed not safe for staff to be commuting, and everyone should be staying in place at home.

Everyone except for my members on day shift.

This was very problematic yesterday as 100 CUPE members ventured out between 5am and 6am to be at work for 6am and start cleaning up.

When there was no communications at 6am about a closure for the day, my members started shoveling, salting and snowblowing to get ready for visitors. Some had to rely on co-workers to tell them schools were closed because the notice of that closure didn't go out until almost 6:20am and they were outside in winter gear, bundled up and likely wouldn't hear a "ding" from a phone in one of their pockets.

Then, those same 100 members have to get back on the roads that none of their co-workers have to travel on to try and get back home safely to their families.

The Inclement Weather Policy for the HWDSB states,

- School boards have varied policies on cancellations. The HWDSB Rule is: Severe weather + Bus cancellation = Schools and Administrative Buildings are closed. When HWDSB cancels busing due to inclement weather, we have deemed the roads unsafe and this triggers the closure of schools and administrative buildings.
- HWDSB will announce the cancellation of school and board operations by 6 a.m. Families will receive an email communication by this time if there is a closure.

My question is this for today - why wasn't the Inclement Weather Policy followed and a decision made by 6am and communicated to at least my members who are out on the roads and not still fast asleep in bed

or sitting on a couch at home waiting for the tv to announce a closure? Our safety has to take priority at these times - we are the ONLY workers on location at that time and putting ourselves at risk on the roads. In the past, Communications has said that "there's no way we can just let your group know first about a cancellation" which I find to be highly suspect in today's world of advanced and instant communications.

I would like to point out and request again that notifying my members who are already in a risky position under these circumstances should absolutely take precedence and priority over any other employees.

Blake Corkill  
CUPE 4153 President

And the response to that was.....

Good afternoon Blake,

Thank you for reaching out. I regret that there were situations yesterday where your members had already arrived at schools and started their shift prior to the communication being emailed to staff.

While the decision and following communication was made as soon as possible, there has been a transition in staff recently in various areas affecting this process. I acknowledge that the decision was communicated late, and that is not acceptable. However, given that our commitment is to make the announcement by 6:00 a.m., it is possible that some CUPE staff may find themselves in a similar situation again, as they will likely already be on the road for their 6:00 a.m. shift when the announcement is made.

Please know that we will be reviewing and debriefing the school closure process from yesterday to learn how we can do better moving forward.

I am in complete agreement with how important your members are, and this circumstance is not indicative of their value to HWDSB. We will seek to do better in future in communicating school closures.

Best regards,

**Sheryl**

**Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini**

*Director of Education and Secretary of the Board*

## **Election Around the Corner**

Not only have you probably heard about snow coming tonight but then again on the weekend - but you've probably also heard about the provincial election coming up on February 27th. I'm not going to spout off about who you should be voting for so don't worry about that. I'm going to encourage you to vote. Only about 43% of eligible Ontario voters exercised that right in the last election and 40% of those people voted for Doug and his Conservative buddies. That means that just around 18% of Ontario gave Doug Ford a majority government that tried to ram the notwithstanding clause down our throats during our collective bargaining with the Crown and CTA.

CUPE Ontario has provided a fact sheet about the last few years, our wages and the impacts of the public sector cuts on all of us and I'll attach that with this update.

If any of our members want to get involved with worker friendly candidates in this election and help out with distributing signs, knocking on doors and handing out literature - we can put you in touch with CUPE Ontario staff that are working with candidates who need the help! You can contact the office and Janna will pass your info along and get you hooked up!

Many of us see this election call for what it is - an extension opportunity for Doug. Right now without this election he's got a year and a half left in his term. If he wins again - he's extended his time by 2 ½ years overall. This isn't about having a majority to try and combat the spray tan menace from south of the border - this is about wanting to stay in control and keep doing what he's been doing to line his buddie's pockets.

We bargain our next contract with whoever wins this election. We've bargained with Doug and know what his tactics are and we'll be ready for him if he wins again. If the landscape changes and there's a minority government it doesn't mean things get any easier for us. The best thing we can do for ourselves is to hold each other accountable and vote. Vote for the candidates that make the most sense for your family and your ability to care for them and have them looked after by the public system we have here in Ontario from our schools to our hospitals and everything in between.

Cheers,

Blake

If you think this election does not matter – think again. You, your family, and your community have been negatively impacted by the Ford Conservatives' Bill 124.

## BILL 124 CAPPED PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES AT 1% DURING RECORD HIGH INFLATION OF 6.8%

### Doug Ford's attack on workers

One of this government's first acts after getting elected was to legislate wage theft from public sector workers via Bill 124.



Bill 124 cost public sector workers on average  
**\$25,629**



**6,000**  
social assistance  
workers



**50,000**  
personal support  
workers

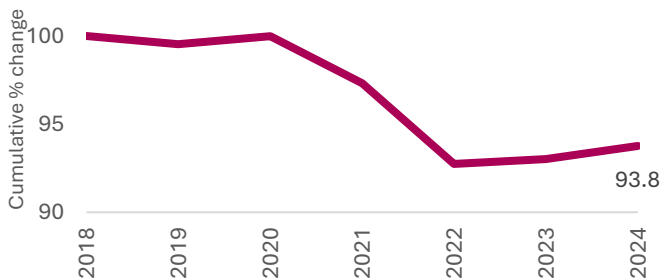


**8,500**  
early childhood  
educators

Ontario needs tens of thousands of public sector workers. Bill 124 made these shortages far worse. We will be short

**1 in 3** families were impacted by Bill 124. This legislation weakened public services and drove away essential workers during the pandemic.

### Real public sector wages fell under Ford's Bill 124



### \$13.7 billion stolen

The Ontario government must now pay public sector workers \$13.7 billion in back pay and on future wages plus \$4.7 million to unions for their legal fees. This legislation revealed the government's prioritization of corporate interests over frontline workers who tirelessly serve and protect communities during challenging times. Ford's priorities lie with profits, not people.

**The Ford Conservatives tried to scapegoat public sector workers to keep us divided. We don't have to fall for it.**

The government, serving corporate interests, scapegoats public sector workers to distract from its failures. Rather than addressing crises harming the working class—low wages, crumbling infrastructure, and underfunded services—they falsely claim we are overpaid. This is a deliberate lie to justify austerity while corporations and the richest hoard wealth. We must reject these attacks and recognize the truth: wages have stagnated for a generation. Real solutions lie in taxing the rich and corporations, not punishing workers.

