



CUPE 4153 Update

March 14th, 2025

Open Invitation to Casual Members

Unlike some other workplaces where part time or casual members don't have a say in the day to day life in the workplace - casual members are a big part of our membership and our employer can't function without them. I want to stress that if you're brand new and just passed your probation or if you've been around for a few decades - your voice, concerns and votes all count the same. Each month we have a General Membership Meeting at which we discuss a number of issues, hear from committees and hear about what's happening in the workplace and we need to hear from our casual members. Everyone is invited to our meetings and we want and need to hear from you! Our next meeting is on Sunday March 23rd. Starting at 9am we'll have an information session for members about LTO Positions - what they are, what are the benefits to being in an LTO, what are the drawbacks, how long they last and a bunch of other info so that members are aware of what they are getting themselves into. At 10am providing we have quorum - we'll start our official meeting and we generally are done and wrapped up by noon.

Fire Department Update

Anyone who may be responsible for conducting monthly fire alarm testing - the fire department has changed some of the options when you call them to report doing the testing. Instead of what the option to report fire testing being #6 - it is now #3 so please be aware of that change going forward!

When You're Going To Be Late

We have an obligation to show up on time, work our full shift and perform our job duties as employees. Lately, we've had quite a few investigations regarding members showing up late. Punctuality counts folks. Don't show up an hour early and be hanging around. Ideally show up 10-15 minutes early for your shift, get your footwear changed, put your lunch away and be ready for your shift when it begins.

If you're going to be late - you need to let your supervisor know. Not your school phone, not your co-workers. Notify your supervisor. If you're permanent staff - notify your area supervisor or if they are on vacation - whoever is covering for them. If you're casual staff - you should be notifying the supervisor of the school you've picked up your shift from. Our employer takes time fraud very seriously. It might be a one time issue or it might be a frequent thing - but when it happens - be open about it and let a supervisor know.

Bullying and Harassment Issues

After some talks among the Exec, Stewards and Health & Safety members - any of our members with a bullying or harassment complaint or allegation - all of those issues will be dealt with by our Health & Safety Committee members. Bullying and Harassment is covered under the Occupational Health & Safety Act along with all other health and safety issues. Stewards will represent and advocate for members on Collective Agreement issues and grievances and assist with health & safety issues when it crosses over into a grievance.

EasyConnect Issues

Another issue we've been seeing more frequently lately has to do with EasyConnect. Members have been trying to report an absence and for whatever reason the absence hasn't been registered within the system. Could be a software glitch, could be someone forgetting to hit OK at the end - could be anything to mess with the process. After you submit an absence - you will receive an email from EasyConnect to your board mail (Focused or Other) with the absence details. If you don't receive that email within about 10 minutes - it likely hasn't been recorded properly.

If you can't report your absence - you NEED to advise your supervisor by email so that your position and section can be covered by someone else and your school isn't left shorthanded.

Who Looks After Sh*t Cleanups?

Yeah, it's a sh*tty situation to get that call on the caretaking phone that says "Can you check the bathroom upstairs, somebody just said there's a mess in there?" or "Can you go to classroom 123 for a cleanup?"

Nobody goes to work hoping for a sh*t cleanup. But, it happens every day across the board in the majority of schools. When it comes to cleanups within classrooms with an EA present to support the child who had the accident or created the mess - there are no hard and fast rules about who cleans up. The general rule is the EA responsible for the student is to look after the "initial cleanup". The EA is primarily responsible for the safety of the student. If the student is acting out and putting themselves or anyone else in danger - the EA is not going to have time to do any initial cleanup. We're going to have to do it all and make the area safe for use. Cleaned and disinfected properly. I've been called to a room to do a cleanup and been told "We got most of it already - just a bit on the wall and we're good" and I've heard "Sorry, he's been a handful and still acting out so I haven't had a chance to clean anything yet." Ultimately, it's our job to clean and make the area safe.

If you find that the initial cleanup isn't being done on a regular basis and it's not tied to student behavior - it needs to be brought to the attention of your supervisor and one of our health & safety reps. Your supervisor would be responsible for communicating with the Principal about addressing the issue with staff. Our members don't direct workers from other worker groups, so leave that to your supervisor.

Seniority List Issues

To finish off for this week - the latest seniority list has been released by HR. Please check the seniority list available online on the board website and if you have a disagreement with your seniority date - please contact cupestaffing@hwdsb.on.ca as well as Pat Amatangelo by email and let them know WHY you believe your date is wrong. It's not sufficient to just say it's wrong - there needs to be a reason to dive into paperwork going back in some cases years and counting days.

OSBCU Convention

On Monday, four of your elected reps will be leaving for Ottawa and the annual OSBCU Convention. OSBCU is the provincial bargaining agent for all CUPE School Board Workers in Ontario - representing 57,000 members. Pat Amatangelo, Doug Thornberry, Laurie Penner and myself will be making the trip and returning Saturday evening.

We'll be debating issues, amending the OSBCU bylaws, electing reps for different areas of the province and doing a lot of learning in classes and open sessions and setting things in motion for our contract expiring next year. **Please contact the office by email or phone this week and your questions and issues will be directed to elected reps still at work this week.** The four of us will be in and out of sessions all day and unable to take calls during the day but we will be checking messages and emails when we can.

Cheers,

Blake