
Update # 26 – June 13, 2008

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Hang in there!

We are in the difficult stages of strike action now. This is when doubt and uncertainty set in and we all wonder when we are going to reach a resolution.

It is common in a strike situation that the two sides become adversarial. Employees are clear about the issues when they vote for a strike, but as time goes on and their pocketbooks are affected, doubt sets in. Often, an employer plants seeds of doubt by making statements that may cause uncertainty and fear. Even if statements are later to be proven untrue, the damage has been done. Pressure tactics by an employer are common strategies used as the need to resolve the situation increases.

On May 7, 2008, the membership voted to take strike action. At the membership meeting of May 29, the decision was made on what the strike action would look like. We continue to follow this plan, and in order to reach a resolution more quickly, **we must continue to stand together**. We must keep the end goal in sight – to achieve a fair and equitable collective agreement.

Together we are strong.

Employment Insurance - Neither the Calgary Board of Education nor the Staff Association can make definitive statements about qualifying for EI as each application is considered on an individual basis by the Government of Canada.

The Staff Association legal counsel has advised us that because 10-month employees are seasonal employees, they are laid off each June. Although we are in a labour dispute, 10 month employees are not losing their job due to the labour dispute, nor is it the labour dispute that is preventing them from going to work. Employees will be laid off because of the seasonal work.

Therefore, SA members who want to be considered for EI benefits should be applying as they normally would. The following are excerpts from the Government of Canada website. http://www.rhdsc.gc.ca/en/ei/application/applying_for_benefits.shtml

Who can apply for EI benefits?

You can apply for EI benefits if you have paid into the EI account and you are unemployed.

You can receive regular benefits if you lost your job through no fault of your own, for example, due to shortage of work, seasonal or mass lay-offs.

It also states there:

If a strike, a lockout or other form of labour dispute where you work causes you to lose your job or prevents you from going to work, you will generally not be paid EI benefits.

The legal advice we received is that 10-month employees will be entitled to EI benefits as usual – because the labour dispute is not causing you to lose your job, the 10-month employees are seasonal employees.

Negotiation News - Last Friday, Jean Minifie, Bill Flookes and Albert Herscovitch from SA negotiation team met with the director of Labour Relations and two members of the CBE negotiation. To date we have received NO RESPONSE from this “olive branch”.

Picket Pay - Members who participated in picketing over the past 4 strike days qualify for picket pay of \$25.00 per day of work missed. The support was awesome. Thank you.

Thank You - We have received a great deal of support from so many places. Thanks to:

CUPE Local 40 executive and members – who showed their support in numerous ways including bringing coffee and doughnuts to picketers, picketing in support, respecting picket lines when possible, honking and waving, and offering encouragement to the members they encountered. Also, members of **CUPE Local 37** city workers, who picketed in support of our members.

ATA executive and members – who brought us doughnuts and encouragement, who refused to cross our picket line, who welcomed the Staff Association members back to work and those who did not do our jobs while we were away.

Numerous parents – who brought coffee and doughnuts to picket lines, wrote awesome letters to school administrators and newspapers, and started a petition in support of our members (see SA website).

AUPE – who sent out a media release supporting our position and asking CBE to “treat its employees with respect”, and who also offered a monetary donation in order to encourage the Staff Association membership.

Reminder

**Please attend the information picket on Tuesday, June 17, 2008.
4:30 to 6:00 at the Education Centre.**

The information picket activity is to bring attention to who we are and what we're doing – to refocus attention and to show the Trustees that we're still here and the problems have not gone away. We did try to arrange buses to bring members to this event, but there are no buses available. Car pool, take the LRT or City Transit. Please attend!