

## December 2011 - No 4

### Message from the Chair...

It's been a tough fall for everyone. I have met personally with some of you and talked with many others on the phone and via email since the 2011/2012 school year began and I hear the same message over and over and over again...when will support staff be truly recognized for what they contribute to this system? Somehow I can't help envisioning ...



respect and recognition | for every Staff Association member | everyday | every location

To be fair, there are many absolutely amazing principals and supervisors out there who value all of their staff and treat them with dignity and respect and I salute them for that. Thank you.

Unfortunately, those are not the ones I hear about on a daily basis.

Instead, these are some random samplings of the issues I hear from members:

- can't take breaks from work
- asked why they need a lunch break
- told they can't even say hello to other staff
- questioned when they do something as basic as going to the washroom
- given absence protocols that take a half day to accomplish (and we are talking about people who are ill here)
- work is piled on to the extent far beyond hourly paid hours of work
- hours are slashed but workloads are not
- positions are eliminated and sometimes replaced with a lesser position because of cost – example ("C" and "D" level positions eliminated and "B" level school assistants brought in to replace them even though they are working beyond their position descriptions) or they are not replaced at all and the work is added to someone else's load
- yelled at, demeaned, bullied, and sometimes harassed
- lunchroom ratio of 87 students for 1 lunch supervisor – WOW – how many of you would like that job every day?
- asked to do work not related to position description

Budget cuts play a big role in the life of support staff. I can't think of a time there has been no cuts. It has never mattered what our monetary increases have been. We have often heard...if we give you that there will be cuts, there are usually cuts anyways...support staff roles are not even based on student numbers anymore. Do you remember the days when they were? Offices used to have enough staff to share the workload; classrooms had the support they needed with school assistants and educational assistants, etc.

**PLEASE POST IN STAFFROOMS**

***[www.staffassociation.ca](http://www.staffassociation.ca)***

Lunch program was staffed so supervisors were sitting at a 25 to 1 ratio, a far cry from what they are dealing with today. Libraries actually had a full-time or close to full-time assistant and or Library Technician. Then things started to shift. Hours have slowly been chipped away, workloads have increased dramatically. Some support staff have to work two positions and more to make ends meet.

I have had more members in the office than ever according to office staff. They have never seen the like of the past six months since the budget cuts happened last March.

Our Collective Agreements, both Main Body and PSS are often ignored; there is no respect for them whatsoever in some cases. What are our options to deal with that? Clearly union intervention is needed to try and resolve all issues if possible; if not formal grievances are filed.

I send people to the Employee Health Resource Centre for help with strategies to deal with difficult people and ways to help them cope through stressful situations. I would like to thank the staff at the Employee Health Resource Centre for the great support they give Staff Association members every day and highly recommend that you check out the many options they have to offer.

We held our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> and a number of you came out to see what's happening. Thank you for coming out to support us and taking the news back to your colleagues. At that time the negotiation team shared with you the monetary offer we received from the CBE who said they would be interested in hearing your reaction. We were in negotiations the very next day and the AGM was on the agenda. Your Staff Association Negotiation team shared your reactions with the CBE team around the disrespect you felt. Did they hear it? Only time will tell.

On behalf of the Board of Directors *Lindy Lemay (Vice Chair), Sherry Vaskovics (Treasurer), Jen Copithorne (Secretary for the Executive), Wanda Stevenson (Director), April Byers (Director), Charlene Barva (Director), Fred Fuchs (Director), Linda Soltesz (Director), and Larry Frandle (Director), our Staff Association Office Staff, Dawn Scott (SA Secretary), Sue Wenaas (Professional Development Fund and Convention Coordinator), Mark Johnson (Manager), and Albert Herscovitch (Manager)* I would like to thank all of you for your continued support and to wish you a safe and happy holiday season with all the best for 2012.

*Lois Robb*

## **Our iPad Draw Winner is ... April Jensen**

April has worked for the CBE on the Help Desk for the past five years.

Congratulations April!

Thank you everyone, so far, we have around 750 members who have set up their member profiles! We would like to see more profiles set up as future plans are to communicate through our portal with all of you. Register your profile as you never know when another exciting incentive will be given away...

## **Negotiation Update**

At the November General Meeting we provided a full update on negotiations to date and had the opportunity for a spirited discussion with members present. For those unable to attend, we've posted the supporting PowerPoint on the Website and encourage you to check it out.

The material is in point form and intended for use in conjunction with explanation but should provide a good sense of what's been discussed and tentatively agreed to. The CBE financial offer (finally received a few days before the meeting) is at the end. We got plenty of feedback on that at the meeting and welcome yours, together with any questions you might have.

Since then we've focused on the PSS agreement and had some general discussion of money. CBE is unable to resume discussions until late January. In the interim we anticipate applying for mediation.

## Welcome ELL Instructors

Prior to the current school year there was a restructuring at Chinook Learning Services which saw a division of programs into those teaching the Alberta Education program of studies and those not. Since the latter does not require teacher certification, many instructors in the ESL and LINC programs now fall within Staff Association jurisdiction and have moved to us from ATA. They were incorporated into our current Letter of Understanding for Continuing Ed instructors, with rates set to ensure no loss from their previous.

Since then we've met with some of the instructors regarding workplace concerns they've had and, through the co-operation of their Supervisor and Senior Manager, arranged joint meetings to help foster better understandings and communication around program processes and procedures. We will also be working with the Senior Manager and Supervisor in the new year to address a salary issue that was not anticipated when writing the initial LOU.

We welcome these new members to Staff Association and encourage you to do the same!

### AGM Membership Questions

**Q:** Are we going to have a contract soon?

*A: Please check out the Negotiation Update in this FYI for the answer.*

**Q:** When will the CSSI workers get the same pay as a Behaviour Support Worker?

*A: There is a Job Evaluation process that position descriptions need to go through. For more information on this please call Lois Robb @ 403.242.7555 ext 1.*

**Q:** Was there any consultation around Lead Lunch duties being taken over by Finance?

*A: No.*

**Q:** How would someone go about making a suggestion of changing something within the Collective Agreement?

*A: Call or email Albert Herscovitch, Mark Johnson, or Lois Robb with suggestions you may have.*

**Q:** I am seeing job postings with new titles like School Assistant – Literacy. Are duties blended to include Educational Assistant/Lunchroom/School Assistant? Does Staff Association approve these new job descriptions?

*A: No, each position is unique unto itself and has its own unique individual duties. Because of the shortage of lunch supervisors, Educational Assistants and ELL Assistants are being asked if they would like to do lunchroom. There is a choice; they can say no if they don't want to do it. If people are being asked to do duties outside of their position description they should call the Staff Association Office and yes, Staff Association has to approve new position descriptions.*

**Q:** Can we add SIRS4 needs to work to our Collective Agreement?

*A: Unfortunately no, that is a CBE issue.*

<b>YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>				
Responsibility	Director	Work Location	Phone Number	E-mail Address
Chairperson	Lois Robb	S.A. Office	403.242.7555, x1	<a href="mailto:lmrobb@staffassociation.ca">lmrobb@staffassociation.ca</a>
Vice-Chairperson	Lindy Lemay	Education Centre	403.817.7268	<a href="mailto:lelemay@staffassociation.ca">lelemay@staffassociation.ca</a>
Treasurer	Sherry Vaskovics	Education Centre	403.817.7435	<a href="mailto:slvaskovics@staffassociation.ca">slvaskovics@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director/Secretary	Jen Copithorne	Sir Winston Churchill HS	403.289.9241, x2127	<a href="mailto:jecopithorne@staffassociation.ca">jecopithorne@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	Charlene Barva	Area II, Mount View Centre	403.777.8720, x2315	<a href="mailto:cjbarva@staffassociation.ca">cjbarva@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	April Byers	Area III, HW Riley Centre	403.777.6233, x2254	<a href="mailto:acbyers@staffassociation.ca">acbyers@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	Larry Frandle	Centennial HS	403.256.8140, x2237	<a href="mailto:lafrandle@staffassociation.ca">lafrandle@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	Fred Fuchs	Highfield	403.294.8443	<a href="mailto:fafuchs@staffassociation.ca">fafuchs@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	Linda Soltesz	Education Centre	403.817.7265	<a href="mailto:llsoltesz@staffassociation.ca">llsoltesz@staffassociation.ca</a>
Director	Wanda Stevenson	Christine Meikle	403.777.6770	<a href="mailto:wjstevenson@staffassociation.ca">wjstevenson@staffassociation.ca</a>
<b>Staff Association Office Staff</b>				
Manager	Albert Herscovitch		403.242.7555, x4	<a href="mailto:aherscovitch@staffassociation.ca">aherscovitch@staffassociation.ca</a>
Manager	Mark Johnson		403.242.7555, x2	<a href="mailto:mrjohnson@staffassociation.ca">mrjohnson@staffassociation.ca</a>
Staff Association Secretary	Dawn Scott		403.242.7555, x0	<a href="mailto:dawn@staffassociation.ca">dawn@staffassociation.ca</a>
Support & PSS Staff Development Funding & Convention Coordinator	Sue Wenaas		403.242.7555, x3	<a href="mailto:sue@staffassociation.ca">sue@staffassociation.ca</a>