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**CUPE K-12**



## ***K-12 Presidents' Council to government: Consult with us first!***

VANCOUVER —The BC Liberal government needs to start consulting with the unionized workers who provide important services for the K-12 sector before setting the policy that directly affects it, says CUPE's K-12 Presidents' Council.

That was the unanimous conclusion at the Council's meeting on April 28, where members worked through a full agenda: updates from K-12 coordinators John Horsfield and Kevin Rose; committee and regional reports; recording secretary election; and a chance to hear from the Ministry of Education on shared services.

### **Shared services not about outsourcing**

Government representatives Jill Kot, Kerry Pridmore, and Renzo Del Negro (interim CEO of the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association) explained the Service Delivery Program, answered

questions, and took comments from K-12 presidents.

Kot, Ministry of Education assistant deputy minister, assured the Council that shared services are "not about outsourcing" and that no one model is on the table. The government is not adopting the 25 areas identified by Deloitte as a blueprint, she said, but rather looking at buying power and economies of scale in the K-12 system as a whole.

Pridmore, executive director of the Services Delivery Branch, said the intent is to develop a long-term procurement entity to negotiate provincial supply arrangements that benefit all, such as purchasing paper. She spoke about the employer practices program, attendance wellness, facilities and IT.

Delegates passionately shared their concerns and experiences with the Ministry presenters

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*The K-12 Presidents Council had a presentation on shared services from the Ministry of Education.*

who assured them that their messages would be delivered back to government. Several issues were raised, including:

- The government's shameful underfunding of public education;
- The lack of local autonomy and the government's failure to consult with unions;
- Premier Christy Clark's disrespectful comment in referring to education workers, and the services they provide, as "low hanging fruit";
- Deloitte's call for privatization;
- Problems with the student identification system;
- The loss of jobs in the sector;
- Increases in sick leave due to custodial service cuts; and
- Attendance management

K-12 chair Marcel Marsolais, thanking the presenters, wrapped up the discussion with a reminder of the value of CUPE's K-12 support workers.

"Procurement to CUPE means buying local, buying Canadian, providing training including apprenticeship opportunities, and keeping the work in-house. That creates sustainable employment and quality services now and in the future," said Marsolais. "Work performed by our members generally results in substantial savings for our School Districts."

## **BCSTA AGM an opportunity**

Horsfield noted that the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) annual meeting in April was a great opportunity to meet and talk to all trustees—especially those newly elected, many of whom were supported by CUPE members. At the AGM, CUPE BC President Mark Hancock talked about the many services our members provide in K-12 and spoke of the problems with Bill 11 that we can solve by working collaboratively.

## **Training survey now closed**

Members were reminded about the educational needs survey for support staff and administration workers. The Support Staff Education and Adjustment Committee (SSEAC) survey, which was open to all members, asked them to identify what training they would like to receive. Three-quarters of the 2,000 responses came from support staff. A report is currently being prepared.

## **Key issues discussed**

National representative and past K-12 coordinator Rob Hewitt presented material about the Standardized Provincial Benefit Plan. CUPE researcher John Malcolmson talked about the background and implementation of the Support Staff Learning Improvement Fund (SSLIF).

K-12 coordinators Kevin Rose and John Horsfield updated presidents on the work of the Education Assistant and Job Evaluation committees. They also gave an update on the Support Staff Education and Adjustment Fund (SSEAC). The Presidents' Council was advised that there are only a few remaining Employee Support Grant disputes still outstanding. Unresolved issues will be taken to a third party.

## **Council elects recording secretary**

Delegates elected Maureen Hammel from CUPE 4653 as recording secretary. They also passed a motion to provide assistance for K-12 meetings in regions where distance and other considerations make regional meetings of K-12 presidents difficult. ■

