



### Upcoming events:

- **March 26:**  
Organizing to Build Power: Member-Organizer Training Session (3 hours)
- **March 28:**  
Organizing to Build Power: Member-Organizer Training Session (3 hours)
- **April:**  
School board-specific bargaining training (Dates to be announced March 31 for all areas - watch for details)
- **April 27-29:**  
CUPE Ontario Convention (virtual)
- **June 5-9:**  
OSBCU Convention, Windsor



# OSBCU QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## From the President's Desk

Welcome to the second edition of the OSBCU Newsletter!

While the pandemic continues to provide a backdrop to much of our work, our focus has become the upcoming round of negotiations and the organizing needed to achieve real gains.

In December we welcomed over 200 delegates to our Leadership Conference, where the priorities for bargaining were discussed and passed. We also introduced the organizing plan that is underway to achieve the gains you need as education workers - high participation!

In the last 3 months, we have developed, engaged and trained 95% of our bargaining units and close to 500 members in our Organizing to Build Power sessions. Structured organizing conversations (SOCs) are happening everywhere! Already we have multiple locals who have reported conversations being completed and letters signed with the majority of their members. Building worker power is key in achieving the gains that we need.

Liz James, whose portfolio includes this quarterly newsletter, has really amplified this organizing work in this edition. She has had a chance to chat with members in locals who embraced the organizing plan and they have shared their insights.

The next three months are packed. There are many events, including CUPE Ontario’s virtual convention and OSBCU’s own convention, which will take place in person in Windsor. We also have the Provincial Election on June 2. I should not need to tell you how important this

election is as we head into negotiations both centrally and locally. More information will be coming around elections and I encourage everyone to get active, ask questions of the candidates and vote like your job depends on it - because in fact, it does.

In solidarity,



Laura Walton

## Organizing to Build Power: our road to gains in bargaining

**H**ave you been impacted by the low compensation increases? Do you struggle to make ends meet? Do you have to choose one expense over another to pay? Are you living pay cheque to pay cheque? Have you had to take on additional work to cover rising costs due to high inflation rates? If you have said yes to any of these questions, then you have been impacted.

What do we need to do to win the much needed, and deserved, raises and more? All 55,000 CUPE education workers need to get engaged and show the government that we will not accept their 0 or 1% raise increases!

The plan to win better began in February, when Organizing to Build Power was launched for OSBCU/CUPE school board locals across

Ontario. The campaign was developed in collaboration with CUPE national representative Sarah DeClerck and supported by OSBCU elected mobilization officers and booked-off members. The training borrows from a global training program that has trained thousands of workers in dozens of countries around the world. Its goal: teach workers how to build the union power to fight and win.

“It is important to recognize that this is a member-led initiative,” said Laura Walton, OSBCU president. “We are trying to move away from “union led.” It is through the OSBCU structure that this work is happening, be it organizing, political action, etc. It is run through the locals with support from elected officers and booked-off members.”

Organizing to Build Power is about shifting the power from the employer to the workers to win gains at both the local and central bargaining tables. To make the shift, members must engage in high participation organizing across the sector and build strike readiness. Without all members actively participating and visibly demonstrating the organizing initiatives, the employer will see the members as weak and ineffective.

## One-to-one conversations

Have you started having the organizing conversations with your coworkers to listen to what issues matter most to them? And then to explain how their active participation is key to building the power to win the improvements they deserve?

If you have, that is an amazing start! If you haven't, contact your local union president or email [memberorganizing@osbcu.ca](mailto:memberorganizing@osbcu.ca) for information on how to get involved. The OSBCU has more organizing actions coming this spring!

## New! Member Organizer Training

For new member organizers, we have scheduled two shorter virtual trainings in March. Both these sessions of **Organizing to Build Power** are in English. If your local would like to schedule an organizing training in French or English for your new member organizers, don't hesitate to email us at [memberorganizing@osbcu.ca](mailto:memberorganizing@osbcu.ca). The organizing training will cover:

- The organizing plan to build power in the school board sector
- 6 step organizing conversations - how to move co-workers into action!

Please share these dates, times and links with your local's new member organizers:

- Saturday, March 26, 10am to 1pm  
[Registration for March 26](#)
- Monday, March 28, 6 to 9pm  
[Registration for March 28](#)

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## Feedback on Organizing to Build Power

We asked some of the people who've taken part in the training session for their opinions. As you'll see, they were happy to share!

### CUPE 1480

**Erin Provost, President, and Nichola Harkness and Daniel Todd, Lead Mobilizers**

It's great to learn new ways to engage all the members, instead of just the select few that attend the meetings or run for elected positions. Together, we made a plan to move forward and for reaching out to and contacting members.

We have more rank-and-file members coming forward to be involved in the mobilizing efforts than we have had in previous years.



### CUPE 4156

**Keith Levere, President and  
Sandi Unwin, Lead Mobilizer**

Keith: Seeing members wanting to be involved in this work is exciting. We're building a movement one member at a time. It is like being in a flash mob where one person gets up and dances, followed by another and another, and then a crowd to an entire region moving forward. Our members enjoy open and transparency over the old closed and limited information and enjoyment being allowed to be engaged and making decisions.

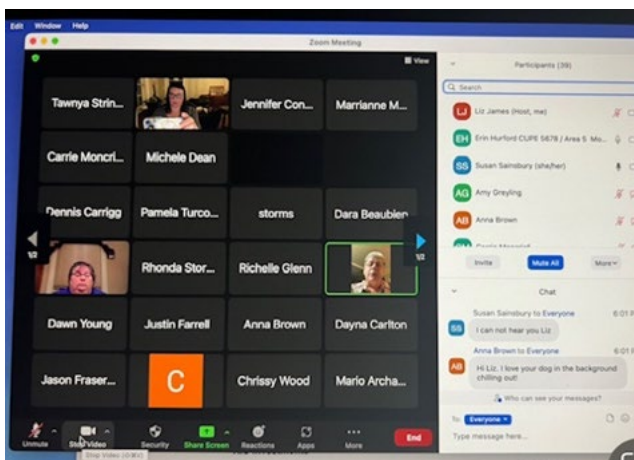
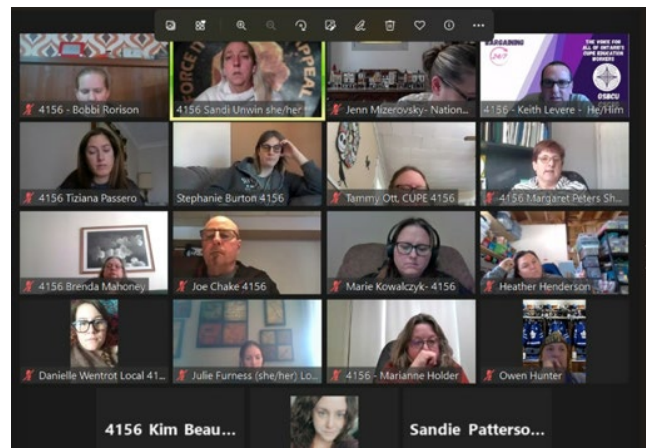
We believe Organizing to Build Power is an outstanding program that involves all our members but also involves our community. It gives power to our members.

Sandi: It has been an exciting time for our local. Our members are feeling united and gelling together as we move forward together. It is amazing to see all our classifications involved as one united team. Our team ensures no one is left out.

### CUPE 5678

**Erin Hurford, President and  
Nancy Ripley, Lead Mobilizer**

Love to see the excitement of members who have never been involved before get excited and motivated to get involved. We have had multiple organization meetings and several members trained in the organizing to build power workshops. Members are tired of not making gains during negotiations. It is time to stand up and be heard by the government and public. We are not teachers. I believe we will gain more member support for the union.





**CUPE 1358**

**Darlene Sawchuk, President**

I am excited about the enthusiasm and motivation of the mobilizers to get out and have meaningful conversations with their fellow members. This training is a new approach for all of us. It really does build power within the local, everyone has a responsibility to come together and build unity for the changes we all want to see. Members are talking to their co-workers, they are getting the letters signed, they are building momentum for what is to come. That is what this training provides: the path to get from where we are as a unit to where we need to be.

I loved the new mindset, how we think about "union" and "members." No more "the union." It was, as I said, a great new way to look at organizing and how to have effective conversations. This training can have nothing but a positive effect on our local. I hope it creates a very engaged membership who understand that we not only *need* them to be involved but we *want* them to be involved. We welcome their thoughts, suggestions and activism.

# Elect your bosses!

This opportunity is coming for members: Election Day in Ontario is June 2.

CUPE/OSBCU members will be reaching out to all candidates across the province, inviting them to commit to support publicly funded and publicly delivered education. The more that party candidates see that dozens and hundreds and thousands of voting education workers in their ridings are signing the Letter to the Next Premier, the more likely they are to pay attention to our issues.

Are you ready? Are you prepared? Would you like to help and get involved? We are looking for members who are interested in helping with our political action campaign.

Email [politicalaction@osbcu.ca](mailto:politicalaction@osbcu.ca) for more information.

# Job Classification Working Groups – What’s been happening?

## DECEs

The meeting of the DECE classification group discussed bargaining priorities for their members. Topics included professional development focusing on employer policies. A hot topic is supervision. DECEs are often left alone doing supervision of the whole class and are concerned about safety. There needs to be built in prep time to ensure all planning and documentation can be done during work hours.

## Instructors

Instructors discussed the issues around coordinated language. Contracting out services to practicum students and volunteers CLP & PBLA, contract and part-time non-union members and minimum hours of work. There was also discussion around H&S/Injured Worker language regarding inspection in new off-site locations and community centres. Job security and Job Evaluation were also flagged by the group.

## EAs

EAs’ top concerns were hours, wages (year-round), relevant PD, workload, sick days/ personal days, safety, pension, paid lunches, breaks, supply enhancement, EI (12 months paid), respect/fairness. Regarding mobilization, we are coordinating with OFL to get info out regarding our work and school safety.

## OSBCU Executive contact information

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