



CUPE
EDUCATION
WORKERS

**Members'
bulletin**

THE POWER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

April 2019

Town Hall Call - recap

Thanks to everyone who took part in the Town Hall call on Thursday, 21 March. For those who weren't able to call in, I am sending this bulletin as a summary of the points covered.

Locals are welcome to use this bulletin when talking to CUPE members and when reaching out to community organizations, parents' councils and other allies who can support us in fighting the cuts.

On March 15, 2019 the Minister of Education made an announcement on changes to education and education funding in Ontario. The news focused on changes to class sizes, but buried within the documents that accompanied the announcement were cuts to education funding amounting to more than \$282 million.

There is little doubt that these funding cuts will lead to job losses. The Education Minister said repeatedly that no teachers will lose their jobs but she refused to give similar assurances for education workers.

Funding Cuts

- There are projected cuts of \$98.1 million in 2019-20, increasing to \$245.3 million in 2020-21; that's a reduction of 0.4% of total GSN funding in 2019-20 and 1% of total GSN funding in 2020-21.
- The base Cost Adjustment Allocation will be discontinued, meaning a cut of \$36.6 million - this cut will eat into school boards' ability to fund CUPE jobs

- The Human Resources Transition Supplement will be discontinued, amounting to a \$10 million cut; this was funding to assist boards with the implementation of the 2017-2019 central agreements.
- \$235.4 million in the Local Priorities Fund expires on August 31, 2019; this will be a subject of collective bargaining.

When the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) are released after the provincial budget on April 11, we will know more about

- How changes in class size affect the School Operations Grant;
- How changes to the funding ratio for Early Childhood Educators (reduced from a minimum of 1.14 FTE to 1.0 FTE for each supported school).

Class Size

The Ministry announced changes to class sizes and has also launched a second wave of consultations on class size. The proposed changes to class sizes are:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3: no change proposed
- Grades 4 to 8: Increase the average class size from 23.5 to 24.5 students, and introduce board-wide averages instead of hard caps
- Grades 9 to 12: increase class sizes from 22 to 28 students

These changes will likely mean cuts to School Operations funding and therefore CUPE jobs, notably maintenance and custodial positions.

Other Changes

- Teacher hiring practices: changes weaken the use of seniority in hiring and give principals more say in hiring.
- Curriculum changes, including to the math, STEM, indigenous curriculum
- Parents will be allowed to opt out of sex ed as it's taught in the Health and Physical Education curriculum
- EQAO – promise to modernize the agency and its processes, with no concrete proposals on how to do that.
- E-learning – Secondary students will be required to take 4 credits through online courses
- Cellphone use: ban on classroom use of cellphones unless they are being used for educational purposes
- Increase access to internet services in all schools (by 2021-22)

How OSBCU is preparing to fight back against cuts:

- Member mobilization training is still happening in some OSBCU areas
- OSBCU in coordination with the Organizing Department has organized an action planning session for the first week of April during which time each area will develop concrete plans to make our organizing/mobilizing work happen.

- Three important dates are
 - o April 6 - Queen's Park rally with other education unions against cuts to education
 - o April 11 - provincial budget, around which we will schedule an action
 - o Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) – to be released after the budget

- Solidarity sticker campaign: Stickers with OSBCU's slogan "We are the Power of Public Education" – and in French "On est le pouvoir de l'éducation publique" – to promote the value of our work in the public education system.

- In the month of April, we want locals to take some political action by meeting their MPPs in their constituency offices. We will supply a lobby guide and talking points to help you make the case to your MPP that cuts to education will hurt children, families and communities.

Finally, none of these actions will be effective if we can't communicate with our members. So we urge locals get their membership contact list up to date and ready to pass along news from OSBCU promptly to members.

In solidarity,



Laura Walton
OSBCU President

Email: lwalton@osbcu.ca

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