
Canadian Union of Public Employees

Educational Assistants, Youth Service Workers, Student Attendants, Workplace Assistants,
Educational Language Interpreter and School Mental Health Support Workers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Staff Appreciation wrapped up last week and I hope each of you were made to feel appreciated. You all do so much for the students in your care, please remember you are making a difference! As well as the daily Staff Appreciation draws, we also had a radio ad airing on both Ocean 100.3 FM and HOT 105.5 FM in recognition of CUPE Local 3260 Education Support Staff during the week of February 12th to the February 16th. (*Staff Appreciation radio ad attached to this email*)

I do want to acknowledge that for some, this time of year can be hard on our mental health. We continue to feel the stressors of increased cost of living, demanding work assignments, working short staffed, increasing mental health issues, lack of health services, break down within family units, illness or sadly death. Please remember you are never alone and if you need assistance reach out to a friend, family, co-worker, union representative or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-239-3826 or 902-368-5738.

Please remember to be extra kind to those you meet or work beside as you do not know the inner turmoil that the person may be experiencing. Most importantly, remember to be extra kind to yourself. Do not push yourself to the breaking point, reach out to someone and get help. Do what you need to do to keep yourself healthy.

STORM DAYS

We have been experiencing some stormy weather so I would like to point out the following: As per Article 16.4 (b) 'Professional Responsibility' and Article 25.13 'Hazardous Conditions' of the CUPE Local 3260 Collective Agreement (*The Collective Agreement is attached to this email*) when the weather closes school, we do not have to attend. It is strongly recommended that on such day's members refrain from posting activities they are doing for the day on social media. On storm days, we should not be seen out and about, shopping, at the gym etc. We do not want to open ourselves up to be criticized by the general public. Ensure Schedule 'F', found at the back of the collective agreement is recorded with all extra and credited hours.

If a storm day takes place on a Professional Development Day or parent teacher interview day, the Employer will not announce school closure. We are expected to follow other provincial government office delays and closures in the area.

Unfortunately, if you do not live in the area that you work and schools are closed in your home area, you are still required to report to work. If you cannot safely do so, document the conditions and contact your school principal. You may have to take the day without pay. If weather conditions improve then it is your professional responsibility to report to your place of work.

If you have questions about your professional responsibility, please reach out to CUPE Area Vice Presidents. Administration cannot make you stay after to photocopy or prepare materials to make up storm days. Please make yourself familiar with your rights.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Be mindful of what you post on social media. Your professionalism as an employee of the provincial government is of utmost importance. A private group does not guarantee the employer will not see your post as screenshots can be taken and reported to the employer. CUPE Local 3260 President and Area Vice Presidents have had to represent members at disciplinary meetings and at termination meetings.

CUPE 3260 BURSARIES

The 2023 ~ 2024 bursary application and guidelines were emailed to members and are on our website at www.cupe3260.ca. Ten winners will be randomly chosen at the Annual General Meeting on May 3rd, 2024 to each receive a \$500 bursary. Please ensure applications are submitted on or before April 5th, 2024. You must be enrolled in the 2023 ~ 2024 school year to qualify. (*The Bursary Application and Guidelines as well as Past Bursary Winners are attached to this email*)

FLOAT DAY

If you have not taken your entitled Float Holiday as per Article 16.3 (b) please consider booking it with your school principal. It must be taken on a day when no substitute is required. It cannot be used on our CUPE Local 3260 Annual General Meeting in May, Joint Staff Professional Development Days or on our CUPE Local 3260 Annual Conference Days in the Fall. Relief Employees in a contract position do receive one float day per school year.

NEGOTIATIONS

At the beginning of January 2024, a judicial review was filed in the Supreme Court by our CUPE National lawyer on behalf of CUPE Local 3260. It is believed there was a mistake in the arbitrator's ruling.

Our CUPE National Servicing Representative Karen Tsistinas has filed a notice to bargain as our collective agreement expires March 31st, 2024. Your new negotiation team will meet March 9th, 2024 to begin bargaining preparations for the next round of negotiations.

LEAVES

If you are considering taking a leave you must have the permission of your school principal. If you are considering a full year leave then reach out to the Employer. If you are denied a leave then please reach out to your CUPE Local Area Vice President as you have a right to file a grievance.

VIOLENCE

The employer does not want their employees subjected to violence day in and day out. Please stand up for yourself, for your student, for your co-workers and for the other students.

Take the necessary steps to make positive changes:

1. Report the violent incident to your classroom teacher.
2. Report the violent incident to your school administrators.
3. File appropriate reports.
4. File a Workers Compensation Report if you were physically injured and see a doctor if needed.
5. Communicate at the school level as to what the Behavior Support Plan is for the child.
6. Contact your CUPE Local 3260 Area Vice President and the Director of Student Services, Dominique Lecours of the Public Schools Branch or Coordinator of Student Services, Venessa Tessier of la Commission scolaire de langue française if denied access to a physical incident form.
7. Keep copies of all reports you have filed.

If you have completed the steps above and there is no improvement then contact your CUPE Local Area Vice President. You do have the right to refuse unsafe work. (*Right to Refuse Unsafe Work document attached to this email*)

It is very important to understand that speaking up is not complaining. People need to know and take the necessary steps to make sure everyone is safe within the work environment. Do not allow anyone to persuade you into not reporting or lead you to believe that this is part of your job. VIOLENCE IS NOT PART OF YOUR JOB!

GRIEVANCES/ARBITRATION

To keep abreast on grievances in CUPE Local 3260, below is a summary to date.

- In July 2021, a group grievance was filed for a toxic and unsafe work environment. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local 3260 members, so it has been referred to arbitration. A settlement offer was issued in the Fall of 2023 and agreed to.
- In October 2021, a policy grievance was filed for a job posting not following specific duties of a classification. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local Union, so it has been referred to arbitration. A settlement offer is currently being discussed.
- In August 2022, a grievance was filed for denying a more senior employee a position. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local 3260 member, so it has been referred to arbitration.
- In January 2023, a grievance was filed for not moving the least senior employee when a school had a student-initiated student transfer. Grievance was heard but not

settled on behalf of our CUPE Local 3260 member, so it has been referred to arbitration. A settlement offer has been accepted. Grievance is now closed.

- In January 2023, a Union grievance was filed against the Employer's practice of hiring people into permanent positions when they do not meet the education qualifications. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local Union. CUPE President, Area Vice President and CUPE National Servicing Representative held a follow up meeting with the Department of Education Registrar in regards to certification of an Educational Assistant and the education qualifications.
- In April 2023, a grievance was filed for a denied leave. Grievance was heard and settled in our CUPE Local 3260 member's favour.
- In September 2023, a grievance was filed for a denied leave. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local 3260 member. Further discussion was to take place between the Employer and CUPE National Servicing Representative.
- In September 2023, a grievance was filed for discrimination against a Union leader. Grievance was heard but not settled on behalf of our CUPE Local 3260 member, so it has been referred to arbitration.
- In January 2024, a grievance was filed for denied Local President leave to begin bargaining preparation. Grievance has yet to be heard.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

CUPE Local 3260 Executive continues to work extremely hard on your behalf. A lot of volunteer hours are spent on Union business. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns please reach out to one of these dedicated volunteers. (*Executive and Committee contact list is attached to this email*)

Issues are being addressed as they come in. There are always numerous emails, texts, phone calls and meetings. I continue to remain a dedicated Union President on your behalf, representing your points, and keeping you all informed.

It is my wish that the remaining half of your school year be filled with personal and professional growth. And that you celebrate your student(s) successes both small and great.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Vandaele
CUPE Local 3260 President
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Attachments to this email include ~

- *Radio Ad ~ Staff Appreciation 2024
- *CUPE Local 3260 Collective Agreement
- *CUPE Local 3260 Bursary Application and Guidelines
- *CUPE Local 3260 Past Bursary Winners
- *Right to Refuse Unsafe Work Document
- *Executive & Committee Contact Information