

## **PLEASE POST IN STAFF ROOMS**

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### **May 2011 - No 7**

#### ***Cuts Order of the Day in Spring Staffing***

Spring staffing is always a hectic time for everyone but never more so than this year! The number of support staff facing significant cuts in hours and being identified for transfer appears higher than ever, as too are the challenges associated with the process and occasional misapplication of it. There is a great deal of information on both the CBE and Staff Association websites to answer the more common questions but if you're in doubt on anything, or feel something is not being handled correctly, do call the office and we'll try to help in any way we can, including intervention where warranted.

In the current budget climate Principals and Supervisors are faced with some unenviable decisions. While many approach these with some sensitivity to the fact their decisions impact the lives of their staff and will do the best they can to mitigate a difficult situation, some still demand life altering decisions from employees with no time to consider. Drastic changes in hours of work appear, in some cases, to impact the spirit and intent of the seniority provisions in the Collective Agreement. If nothing else, some of what's occurring this time around underscores the importance of improving provisions in the Collective Agreement to address problem areas, as we are attempting to do in negotiations.

#### ***And For Those Left ...***

With the number of support staff having their hours or positions cut, we can anticipate plenty of potential for pressures and stresses on those remaining in their positions. A certain degree of flexibility is present and works well in most workplaces, provided it's not one-sided or imposed. However, things like expecting employees to do the same work in significantly fewer hours, or to do work for which they are neither trained nor paid, or to do their own work and cover that of a position that has been eliminated, is bound to cause friction. We know that you are committed to your work and particularly to the students across the system, which is certainly laudable, but just as certainly, we must ensure that this commitment is not exploited!

#### ***Negotiation Update***

Given the number of calls we've received of late it's clear an update on the status of negotiations is well overdue. The delay has, in part, been a result of our hope to have something concrete to report other than that we're continuing to meet and in part a reflection of the frantic activity in the office as a result of spring staffing and lay-offs in the service units.

From September through the end of January we spent all of our time trying to find a way to consolidate the two Collective Agreements (Main Body and PSS) into one, which was the primary interest of the CBE in these discussions. The reason for our willingness to do so was simple -- it

## Negotiation Update Continued

appeared that it could potentially result in gains in areas that otherwise might be unlikely. While significant headway was made in that effort, it ultimately could not be realized when it became clear that our fundamental concerns around protecting the rights of PSS members and their conditions, both now and into the future, would not be adequately addressed by the CBE.

Since that time we've proceeded with discussing all proposals in the context of the existing two Agreements structure and have made reasonable headway in a few meetings. Unfortunately several planned meetings were cancelled and despite everyone's stated objective of reaching a tentative Agreement before the end of the school year, it became clear last week with another couple of cancellations that to do so will be impossible. Since meeting during the summer months also appears to be impractical, we'll tie-up what we can before the end of June and reconvene in September.

Clearly this is not ideal for anyone but we'll just have to make the best of it. We've recently engaged in (timely!) discussions of our primary interests involving changing hours of work and lay-off and re-call procedures and will try to resolve these over the next month. At this point salary increases and other money issues have not been discussed at any length and there is a definite reluctance from CBE to go there until all other matters are dealt with.

Over the summer we will also need to look at all options available to us in the event that an Agreement isn't reached in a timely manner. We will try to be more diligent in updating information on our Website going forward and appreciate your patience as we try to craft the best possible Agreements for you!



### ***The SA Board of Directors would be happy to organize a "Meet & Greet!"***

*We would welcome the opportunity to meet with any interested group and would be more than pleased to help organize such an event. Please contact Lois Robb at the Staff Association at 403.242.7555 ext. 1.*

If you have a question for Staff Association that you would like to have answered in our next FYI, please submit your question to Dawn Scott via e-mail at [dascott@staffassociation.ca](mailto:dascott@staffassociation.ca). Please reference "FYI Question" on the subject line.



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