

2014

CUPE K-12



Strike Action FAQ Sheet

Why is the BCTF taking strike action?

Teachers will begin rotating strikes on Monday, May 26 because of the unwillingness of the provincial government (and the BC Public School Employers' Association) to offer improvements to class size, composition, and other vital learning conditions for students.

The rotating closures are part of a two-stage strike plan. Teachers gave their bargaining team an overwhelming mandate to begin low-level job action and then move to rotating strikes if meaningful progress was not made in negotiations. Eighty-nine per cent of teachers voted in favour of the two-stage job action.

CUPE K-12 members have firsthand knowledge of the provincial government's unwillingness to properly fund education and the high cost to students and services caused by decades of underfunding. Throughout B.C., school districts are cutting staff and services to make up for budget shortfalls. CUPE K-12 locals are now heading into bargaining with the same employer.

What is CUPE's position?

The right to strike is one of our most crucial and effective weapons in negotiating fair collective agreements. The vast majority of contracts are settled without a strike or lockout. Once a strike is called, solidarity is key.

CUPE supports the BC Teachers' Federation in their current job action and calls on all union members to respect picket lines. **Do not cross any picket line!**

CUPE education support workers have the right under the collective agreement to refuse to cross a legal picket line. In this instance, a legal picket line can be as few as one BCTF member holding a picket sign. CUPE has pledged to support the BCTF in its efforts to reach a fair collective agreement.

CUPE members must go to work unless there is a picket line. If there is a picket line, members must respect it.

What about strike pay?

CUPE members receive strike pay from both CUPE BC and CUPE National. CUPE BC pays members \$15 per day / \$75 per week starting on the third day of a strike. This amount was increased from \$10 per day at the 2014 CUPE BC division convention. At the last CUPE National convention members increased strike pay to \$60 per day (\$300 per week maximum). CUPE National strike pay kicks in on the tenth day of a strike. Pay for rotating strikes is cumulative.

CUPE National strike fund regulations define a strike as a cessation of work caused by a strike, a lockout or honouring the picket line of another CUPE local or trade union at a shared worksite. These regulations cover rotating strikes.

To collect strike pay members must participate in the strike by performing assigned strike duties for at least 20 hours per calendar week. Duties can include walking the picket line, attending training sessions, etc.

Marcel Marsolais, CUPE K-12 Presidents' Council Chair