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K-12 Provincial Bargaining Committee meets *CUPE locals discuss strategy, unveil new website*

RICHMOND - CUPE's BC K-12 Presidents' Council Provincial Bargaining Committee (PBC) met on Wednesday, March 9 in Richmond.

With bargaining now underway at 33 of 56 local tables, the current round has truly begun. CUPE support staff bargaining in K-12 will be difficult and in the face of tight central control, local bargaining committees are seeking to bargain non-monetary issues. All open bargaining tables are reporting that employers show no willingness to bargain provincial matters.

At its March 9 meeting, the PBC adopted a motion to open discussions with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) around moving toward a provincial approach to K-12 support staff bargaining. Achieving a provincial table remains a high priority for CUPE K-12 locals, given issues that have been bargained provincially. These include stable funding for long-term disability plans from the Public Education Benefits Trust and education and training opportunities for members through the Support Staff Education and Adjustment Committee.

PBC members received a presentation from CUPE Research on local proposals to date from unions and employers. In order to effectively coordinate bargaining, CUPE locals will now be able to share timely information on local proposals at tables throughout the province.

CUPE Communications unveiled the new BC K-12 Presidents' Council website, found at bcschools.cupe.ca. The website and related tools will support effective communication within CUPE and more broadly. A button linking to www.bcschools.cupe.ca will be available for use on local websites.

The Provincial Bargaining Committee is next scheduled to meet on April 27, 2011. Any developments prior to that time will be reported to members.

www.bcschools.cupe.ca