



BARGAINING UPDATE

AUGUST 2, 2024

Stronger together Provincial table for province-wide solidarity

To our fellow CUPE members in the education sector, we are now well into bargaining! The bargaining teams of all eight NSSBCU locals have met with their respective employers at least twice since May.

But before negotiations started, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) informed us that they did not want to negotiate provincial proposals at a common table, as before. In previous contract negotiations, Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) met with local bargaining committees to discuss local proposals, but also came together to meet with the provincial bargaining committee to negotiate provincial proposals at a common table. Instead, the EECD has indicated that common proposals will be negotiated at local tables. But having a provincial bargaining team negotiate common proposals helps us ensure consistency in common issues across the eight RCEs in Nova Scotia and it helps us present a united front to the employer.

So, in that spirit, the provincial bargaining committee joined Local 5050 (at CBVRCE) and Local 955 (at SRCE)'s bargaining meetings in July, to safeguard that unity when common proposals were on the table. What our provincial bargaining team found is that employers are, so far, choosing to focus on local proposals, and not engaging with common proposals—despite assurances that this wouldn't be the case.

While local proposals are no less a priority for our bargaining teams, provincial proposals cover some of the issues we've all identified as being our shared priorities in bargaining, like wages, workload and staffing, leave benefits, and workplace violence. Considering this, the EECD's new aversion to common negotiations speaks volumes.

But we are neither discouraged, nor deterred by their tactics. As they change the rules, we adapt our strategy. We will continue to coordinate our bargaining efforts, and we will continue to maintain control of our negotiations. The provincial bargaining committee will keep attending local bargaining meetings and keep pushing for progress on common proposals. The next meeting is set for August.

Over the coming months, we'll be looking to you to support local bargaining committees, and the provincial committee. Remember: This is our contract we are negotiating. These are our jobs we're talking about. This is about our livelihoods. All of us being engaged, organized, and mobilized is the best way to support our committees, and for us to make progress in negotiations.

Watch out for more news next month. In the meantime, please reach out to your local executive if you have any questions.

Nelson Scott (Local 5050), Andrew Weaver (Local 964), Kevin Carther (Local 3876), Ciarán Llachlan Leavitt (Local 955), Jenny-Lynn Wardrope (Local 3890), Robert Amero (Local 2272), Jennifer Cox (Local 4682), and Shelley McNeil (Local 5047)

Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions