

## EWSC PROVINCIAL

JANUARY 2012

NEWS FOR CUPE EDUCATION WORKERS IN SASKATCHEWAN

**SPOTLIGHT ON:  
DONNA ZAROWNY  
SHOP STEWARD &  
NEGOTIATION  
COMMITTEE MEMBER**



Donna is a member of CUPE Local 4799. She has held a position on the Negotiation Team for the past two rounds of bargaining with Horizon School Division. She is shop steward for her worksite at Wadena Composite High.

Donna began her CUPE union career in 1988. She was elected as secretary-treasurer. A mere two years later she became president of the local. In this role, she provided strong leadership for her members. She successfully merged her Lakeview local with the

neighbouring Shamrock local as the two school divisions had amalgamated. With the ink barely dry, she led her newly formed local through a larger merger of six locals after the Ministry of Education mandated school division amalgamations. It was with this amalgamation that she became a member of the negotiation team. She was a valued member as she brought with her a strong spirit of determination. Her commonsensical view helped achieve a Collective Agreement after some 21 grueling meetings with the employer. She was determined that her

former local members would not lose any ground that they had gained walking the picket line.

This brings us to her former local's strike. After meeting with the employer over the course of 3 years and trying to reach a successful conclusion to negotiations, she asked for a strike vote from her members. With a lot of fear and trepidation the members gave the strike vote. In April 2003, she led the charge on the picket line. It took

a lot of guts and courage to do this. But, anyone that knows Donna realizes she will not back down from a cause she believes in. She provided strong leadership and endless support to her members that travelled from town to town picketing. They remained on the picket line some 144 days. This would have been a very difficult time for her local.

Donna was thrust into a situation that very few presidents ever have to endure. She stood

**“BEING A LIBRARY TECH IS A MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE. SEEING A CHILD ENJOY A GOOD BOOK IS A REWARD ALL OF ITS OWN!”**

strong for her union values and challenged the employer in a strike.

Donna was the recipient of this year's EWSC Advocate Award. She was

nominated by her president, and rightfully so, as she is so deserving of this award!

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT? PLEASE LET US KNOW SO WE CAN HELP OUR MEMBERS SHINE.  
Email to: [cupe\\_4799@hotmail.com](mailto:cupe_4799@hotmail.com)

## CHAIR'S REPORT

It has now been a year serving as the Chair of the EWSC; it's time to reflect on how we, as the EWSC Executive have serviced you, the CUPE Education Support Workers. So let's begin reflecting...

We began the year on January 6<sup>th</sup> with a "funding model" meeting with the Ministry of Education. The new funding model information was general and lacked detail on how each school division would be affected. We brought forth our concerns that support workers were not mentioned in the new funding model. We felt that this put our members at risk and they were not given the same consideration to bargain a fair collective agreement as the teachers had. The situation would leave school divisions with the difficult decision of either bargaining in good faith or: reducing services/support staff and/or further deferring the maintenance of schools. This concern was acknowledged by the Ministry and a follow up meeting was agreed upon.

The Minister of Education, Donna Harpauer, agreed to meet with the EWSC on March 1<sup>st</sup>. At this meeting we discussed provincial bargaining. The Minister encouraged us to go forward with this mandate and gave us direction on how to facilitate our goal. We briefly discussed our concerns with the new funding model; however the Minister did not have any

new information to give us at that time. The EA reductions were mentioned and we agreed to disagree on the party responsible for the mandated reductions.

March 21<sup>st</sup> we invited all locals to partake in a round table discussion on provincial bargaining thus beginning our *One for All* provincial bargaining campaign. Some locals expressed concerns on the model of provincial bargaining, so the Executive decided to take our campaign message on the road. We met with 9 executives and/or locals to explain the campaign, expel the myths and advocate moving forward with our lobbying efforts. Another 6 locals received the same message from their Executives.

The EWSC and the Davidson Summit Committee (DSC) joined the Prairie Lilly's on their May Day Rally in Regina on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We marched in the bitter cold wind to the legislature building with our banner; *"Schools shouldn't look like this, stop the cuts to EAs."* Several local presidents and members from across the province joined the march even though many highways were closed due to a snow storm. A new EA petition was created and signed by over a hundred people at this event.

The Sask Party Standing Policy Committee agreed to meet with the EWSC Executive on May 4<sup>th</sup>. We brought forth our provincial bargaining message and our concerns with the new funding

model's lack of support for our members. The message of fairness and equality for all support workers was well received. They requested an update on benefit costing from Cheryl Stadnichuk, CUPE Research Representative.

A stumbling block occurred when we met with the SSBA on May 10<sup>th</sup>. They gave us several reasons on why they do not support provincial bargaining. We brought forth our concerns with the new funding model; they did not offer a response to our concerns. Although they indicated they would consider our request for access to benefit-costing, we were denied the information. We were directed to get this information from our members. The Executive will continue to discuss ideas on maintaining a positive relationship with the SSBA.

We continued our lobbying efforts with the NDP MLA's on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Questions were asked about provincial bargaining, the new funding model and the EA reductions. The EWSC had another positive meeting.

The Davidson Summit Committee (DSC) held a press conference on August 24<sup>th</sup>. The public was given the latest information on the cuts to EAs and teachers. There was not only an increase of intensive/special needs students across the province but many school divisions saw an increase of all students. Our message to the public – "The Ministry of Education is responsible for

ensuring appropriate funding for Education Assistants to maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students”.

Recognizing the ripple effect of the EA reductions and to reinforce the message that all support staff have equal value in our schools, a photo shoot took place in Regina on June 28<sup>th</sup>. In September, we saw several billboards in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Regina and Yorkton. The message: ***I Support Students*** depicting education workers such as administrative assistants, library/resource assistants and EAs. A second photo shoot will take place in Humboldt on January 30<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested in this or need more information, please contact me at

[jackiechristianson@myaccess.ca](mailto:jackiechristianson@myaccess.ca)

The EWSC Annual Conference was held in Moose Jaw in October. Several delegates spoke out claiming “this is the best Conference I've attended.” The evaluations supported the tremendous amount of work from the EWSC Executive and the success of the conference!

CUPE National held their Convention in Vancouver in October/November. Paul O'Donnell invited The Davidson Summit Committee and Leanne MacMillan, CUPE Research Representative from Nova Scotia to participate on a panel at the Education Caucus. Both of us provided an EA power-point presentation. Following the power-point, we discussed the moves in our provinces to reduce the number of EAs.

LEADS agreed to meet with the EWSC Executive on November 18<sup>th</sup>. We discussed provincial bargaining and our concerns with the new funding model. Several questions were asked. As a result of the questions, we realized that we have several common concerns.

The SSBA invited us to attend their Fall General Assembly in November. This provided us with the opportunity to listen to their accomplishments and concerns over the past year. We were able to have informal conversations with school board trustees from across the province. One thing is clear; we share the passion of ensuring that all students in Saskatchewan achieve their best, regardless of where they live and their personal circumstances. An informal conversation occurred with Jeff McNaughton, the SSBA's Director of the Employee Benefits and Disability Management. We had the opportunity to discuss our benefit costing information request. It is evident that the only way for us to attain the benefit information is to request it directly from our locals. Cheryl Stadnichuk is preparing a benefit costing survey for all CUPE Education locals. Once the surveys are sent out, the Executive would like to ask local presidents to please complete the survey as this information is important. Once we have the benefit costing information we will request another meeting

with the Sask. Party Standing Policy Committee.

December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Davidson Summit Committee met with the Ministry of Education to discuss the funding of intensive/special needs students and community schools over the past 3 years. It was a very brief meeting yielding few results.

So, what does the future look like for the EWSC...?

January 11<sup>th</sup>, the EWSC has a meeting with the Ministry of Education to discuss the new funding model. Please stay tuned for more information on this as several locals had presentations from their school boards. ***This concern has been red flagged.***

January 27<sup>th</sup>, the EWSC Executive has a meeting and lunch with the STF. We will be discussing our common concerns: the new funding model and the staffing reductions.

January 30<sup>th</sup>, all locals are invited to attend a Mini-Conference in Humboldt. We will be rolling out our part two plan on provincial bargaining: ***Hire your own Boss*** by preparing for the October 2012 school board elections.

January, 2012, The SSBA agreed to meeting with the EWSC Executive: no confirmed date set. Topic of discussion: the new funding model.

When reflecting on everything the Executive has accomplished over the past year I have to admit, a lot has been done.

It has been an honour serving all the CUPE education support workers across the province. It has also been a pleasure working with an amazing executive. My job as chair of the EWSC continues to be moving this committee forward by speaking out on issues concerning education support workers across the province.

In solidarity,

Jackie Christianson

## EWSC

## CONFERENCE

October 13-15, 2011

Moose Jaw

This year's EWSC conference was held at the Temple Garden Mineral Spa in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Sixty-three delegates, staff reps and special visitors attended the 2 day action packed conference.

On opening day, Jackie Christianson, Chair of the EWSC, welcomed the delegates and guests, and in particular, welcomed Local 2913-- our newest affiliated local-Prince Albert Separate School Division. Jackie spoke about the loss of 250 FTE education assistants, school closures, teachers on the picket lines and how the school boards no longer have the ability to adjust mill rates to cover the cost of expenditures. Jackie wrapped up her welcome by acknowledging the members of our committee who were not in attendance.

CUPE Sask President, Tom Graham, commended the EWSC on their campaign against cuts to educational assistants. He stated

that "it is work that very few people can do" and "we have support of the whole union".

Bill Robb, CUPE National Education Rep, presented "Mobilizing Members for Provincial and School Boards". Bill worked the floor talking and explaining the significance of the upcoming school board elections. "The importance of your activity can create a positive change in the school board elections. Be a good role model, start with small steps, and take 3 people with you".

On the second day of the Convention, Cheryl Stadnichuk, CUPE National Researcher, presented the 13<sup>th</sup> annual "Bargaining Achievements in the Saskatchewan Education Sector 2011" brief. The purpose of this report is to help track bargaining trends and successes on an annual basis. Cheryl pointed out that the average wage settlement for education locals (per settlement) were as follows: 2010: 3.1%, 2011: 2.67%, 2012: 2.75%, and 2013: 3.0%.

**"This is the best conference I've attended"**

Judy Henley, CUPE Saskatchewan Secretary-Treasurer, brought greetings from CUPE Sask, declaring that this Conference and the work that the Executive has been doing is important. The education sector is under attack with education assistant cuts. Funding has not kept up to funding needs of intensive needs students. Judy was proud to inform the delegates that CUPE National is

assisting the EWSC with a cost share campaign including some funding from CUPE Sask for the "Educational Assistants" and "Provincial Bargaining" campaigns. Omar Murray and Jackie Christianson provided the delegates and guests with an update on the "Davidson Summit Committee". They jointly presented an informative power point presentation on the EA Campaign. As the EWSC moves closer to our goal of Provincial Bargaining, it is important that we look for guidance from other sectors. With that in mind the EWSC brought together three different styles of bargaining structures for the delegates to consider. We called it the "Provincial Bargaining Panel".

Gord Campbell, President CUPE Health Care Council, presented "All Inclusive Bargaining". CUPE Saskatchewan Health Care Membership Executive is comprised of 5 members that are elected by their Locals and appointed to the council. The Executive also elects three at-large Trustees, a Secretary Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Vice President and a President. Gord explained that the key to the success of the Health Care provincial bargaining was the merging of our provincial hospital and long-term care collective agreements.

Jackie Christianson explained the "Coordinated Bargaining in British Columbia". In 1994, a sectorial bargaining committee was formed with 46 out of the 54 local (60%) participating with the intention to prepare to bargain with the BC Public School Employers'

Association (BCPSEA). The BCPSEA has the authority to negotiate collective agreements with BC support staff unions to individual boards of education or groups of boards. In 2008, the sectorial bargaining committee leadership and coordinators met regionally with local presidents to assess interest in renewing coordinated structure. The consensus on elements of a provincial structure would include: local bargaining committees, regional presidents' councils, a council of local presidents, administration & communications committee and provincial bargaining committee. It was also agreed to that the BC provincial bargaining committee would have proportional representation from the education locals.

Carol Moen, teacher and former senior administrative staff of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, presented the "STF Bi-Level Bargaining". The Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) Bi-Level Bargaining was mandated to recognize the needs of teachers and their employers at the provincial and the local levels. This bargaining process is enshrined in the Education Act and has three levels; federation, association and the government at the provincial level.

The STF Bargaining Committee is made up from teachers that are employed by the school boards. The government-trustee bargaining committee is comprised of representatives from both the [Government of Saskatchewan](#) and the [Saskatchewan School Boards](#)

[Association](#). Bargaining at the provincial level encompasses wages, allowances, pension, benefits, sick leave and length of agreement. Bargaining at the local level --sometimes referred to as the Local Implementation and Negotiation Committee (LINC) -- covers sabbatical and education leaves, salaries for substitute teachers, special allowances and duration of the local agreement.

Earl Booth presented a provincial bargaining "Our Direction" power point explaining the coordination of processes and meetings that got us this far.

On the last day, elections took place:

Vice-Chair- Earl Booth from Local 5506. Earl lives in Moose Jaw and works for the Holy Trinity Separate School Division.

Treasurer is Russ Tocker from Local 1125. Russ lives in Regina and works for the Regina Separate School Division.

Three Executive Members with two year terms:

Janice Wolfmueller Local 5252. Janice lives in Milestone and works for the Prairie Valley School Division.

Karla Sastaunik Local 4784. Karla lives in Churchbridge and works for the Good Spirit School Division.

Omar Murray Local 4754. Omar lives in Maple Creek and works for the Chinook School Division.

Two Executive Members with one year terms:

Del Augustine L 1125. Del lives in Regina and works for the Regina Separate School Division.

Mark Welder L 4254. Mark lives in Saskatoon and works for the Prairie Spirit School Division.

Betty Molesky, MEPP commission member, presented an update about the Municipal Employee Pension Plan (MEPP). Betty explained that as a commission member she represents trade unions as a whole and her responsibility to the members is to oversee the administration, communication and investment activities of MEPP. Betty explained that MEPP is a defined benefit plan that provides retirement benefits to the employees of school divisions.

Donna Zarowny, a member of CUPE Local 4799, was the 2011 EWSC Advocate Award Winner. Donna's strong leadership skills gained her a position on the bargaining team and the shop steward for her worksite at Wadena Composite High School. Congratulations, Donna.

This year's charity of choice was **Make-A-Wish**. The EWSC held 50/50 draws and had over 40 gifts. The delegates in attendance together raised \$1277.50 for Make-A-Wish.

The EWSC Bylaw Committee presented the recommendations amendments to the delegates. All the amendments being carried. The following motion was seconded and carried:

*"Move to request that Ed. Workers in Sask receive training and /or information on how elect labour friendly SSBA members or trustees."*

Jackie gave closing remarks, reminding the delegates of the January 30, 2012 Mini-Conference in Humboldt. The purpose of the

conference is to prepare the education workers for next year's School Board Elections. Sessions will be on "hiring our own bosses". Jackie also reminded the delegates that the next EWSC Conference will be held in Yorkton, Saskatchewan on October 17, 18, & 19, 2012.

## DAVIDSON SUMMIT COMMITTEE

It was a privilege to be invited to present our cause at CUPE National's Convention this fall in Vancouver.

The plight of the decrease of education assistants in our province was brought to national recognition within the union community.

EWSC Chair, Jackie Christianson, presented a PowerPoint on the achievements and obstacles we have realized. The 250 plus delegates listened attentively to our Chair's presentation. It was a very successful venture as Jackie was able to make connections with each province and even those abroad on governments vision of education systems with less reliance on education assistants within the classroom.

# "It's the end of education as we know it"

*The New Funding Model  
&  
School Board Elections*

Two items that will have a huge impact on education

Attend  
EWSC Mini-Conference  
to get informed  
There will be a  
reimbursement of \$200 per  
local to attend

YOU CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE!

**January 30, 2012**  
10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Bella Vista Inn, Humboldt  
306-682-2686  
(\$84.95 plus taxes)

To register contact Russ at  
[russ.tock@sasktel.net](mailto:russ.tock@sasktel.net)

## EWSC WEBSITE

Thanks to our Editor, Earl Booth, we are able to be current with news and events that affect you as an education worker in Saskatchewan. Earl has expanded articles of this newsletter on the website. Check it out at:  
<http://saskedworkers.cupe.ca/>  
You won't be disappointed!!



**YOUR EWSC HERE FOR  
YOU:**

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**"Quite simply we  
are bargaining  
with the wrong  
people..."**

