

# **CUPE** COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Provincial meeting of school workers starts today in Moose Jaw**

**SASKATOON:** CUPE members employed in K-12 education are gathering in Moose Jaw today to discuss the impact of education assistant cuts on student learning and to map out the next steps in their campaign to secure provincial bargaining rights.

CUPE, which represents about 80 per cent of school support workers across the province, wants the right to negotiate one provincial agreement for all 6,500 CUPE members working in pre-K to 12 education – a right teachers achieved in the 1970s. Check-out their campaign video: [One Collective Agreement for All](#).

Education assistants, secretaries, school bus drivers and other school support workers represented by CUPE are currently covered by one of 25 collective agreements with local school divisions.

“Local bargaining has created huge wage and benefit disparities for our members,” says Jackie Christianson, chair of the CUPE Education Workers’ Steering Committee.

The wage difference for education assistants or school secretaries can be as much as \$5.00 an hour from one division to the next, she explains. In addition, some school workers have 100 per cent employer-paid extended health benefit plans, while others only have partial coverage. (For specific examples, [click here](#) to download CUPE’s research paper.)

“We want provincial bargaining rights so everyone working in K-12 education is covered by the same wage and benefit plan, regardless of whether they are working for an urban school division, or a rural one,” Christianson says.

Both the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party supported “exploratory discussions” about provincial bargaining during the last election. But the Saskatchewan Party government reneged on that commitment.

In addition to provincial bargaining, participants at the conference will discuss the impact of the government’s plan to cut education assistants in the classroom.

About 75 education workers are registered for the two-day conference which concludes Saturday at Moose Jaw’s Temple Gardens.

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For more information contact: Jackie at: 550-7227.  
Or go to: [www.saskedworkers.cupe.ca](http://www.saskedworkers.cupe.ca)

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