

2010

# Bargaining Achievements in the Saskatchewan School Board Sector

Prepared for the

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## Introduction

In Saskatchewan, CUPE represents 6,455 support workers in the education sector which covers Pre K-12 (Pre Kindergarten to Grade 12). CUPE members work in a variety of jobs in Saskatchewan schools such as educational or teaching assistants, secretaries and administrative assistants, library assistants and technicians, caretakers, maintenance workers, bus drivers, computer technicians, social workers, community school coordinators, speech assistants, workers in various trades and many other classifications.

As of October 20, 2010, CUPE had 26 collective agreements in the Pre K-12 education sector, compared to 32 last fall and down from 58 agreements in 2006. The number of collective agreements in this sector has been reduced by more than one-half in the last four years as a result of rural school division amalgamations that came into effect January 2006. Since then, rural CUPE education locals have merged into one local per new school division and have bargained one collective agreement with each school division. This year the process of merging collective agreements from the legacy school divisions is completed with the negotiation of one agreement between Local 4875 and the North East School Division.

This is the twelfth consecutive year that CUPE Research has produced this summary of bargaining achievements in the Saskatchewan education sector. When these reports began, there were over 60 bargaining units in the education sector. The Education Workers' Steering Committee requested a report to help track bargaining trends and successes among the vast number of settlements in the sector.

This year's document reports on nine (9) settlements in the education sector. The agreements were ratified between November 2009 and the end of October 2010.

The information in this report is based on the contract settlement reports completed by the CUPE staff representative assigned to the education local. CUPE's Research Representative compiles and analyzes the information from the settlement reports and supplements the information by reviewing collective agreements and speaking with the staff representative.

# I – Saskatchewan Wage Settlements 2009-2010

## Provincial Wage Settlement Trends

The Labour Relations and Mediation Branch of the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety monitors both public and private sector negotiated wage settlements in the province of Saskatchewan. The branch provided data on 26 settlements in 2010 to date, compared to a total of 29 settlements in 2009 and 24 settlements in 2008. The settlement data is based on voluntarily-submitted reports from unions. The 2010 data is considered “preliminary” until all settlements that occur in 2010 are reported. At that point, the 2010 average for wage settlements will be adjusted to reflect any new settlements.

Table 1 on the next page shows that the average annual negotiated wage settlement for both the public and private sector was 3.9% in 2009 and 2.8% for 2010 (preliminary). The private sector settlements were slightly higher on average than the public sector settlements – 2.9% for the private sector vs. 2.7% for the public sector.

Table 1 also shows the average annual negotiated wage settlement *per employee*, a calculation that takes into account the number of employees in a bargaining unit. The average wage settlement per employee in Saskatchewan was 3.9% in 2009 but only 2.3% in 2010. The average private sector employee received a wage increase in 2010 that was a full percentage higher than the average public sector employee: 3.2% compared to 2.2% for public sector employees.

The wage settlement information shows a significant downward trend in public sector employees’ wages. In 2007, 2008 and 2009 public sector workers saw average wage increases of 4%, 4.9% and 4%. Government spending restraint and a tougher bargaining climate has resulted in much lower wage settlements for the public sector in 2010.

**Table 1 – Average Annual % Wage Settlements in Saskatchewan  
1998 – 2010**

Year	Total Number of Settlements	% Increase per Settlement			% Increase per Employee		
		Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
1998	41	2.1	1.8	2.4	2.0	1.8	2.6
1999	61	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0
2000	52	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.5
2001	72	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
2002	63	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0
2003	45	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8
2004	42	2.5	2.4	2.6	1.2	0.8	2.8
2005	69	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.6
2006	48	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.1	2.0	2.9
2007	54	3.6	3.7	3.6	4.0	4.0	3.4
2008	24	4.1	4.3	3.9	4.9	4.9	4.2
2009	29	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.8
2010P	26	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.3	2.2	3.2

P= preliminary data.

Source: Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, Wage Settlement Statistics, October 21, 2010.

## **Major public sector settlements - Saskatchewan**

With a tighter provincial government wage mandate, public sector wage settlements have been lower this year compared to the last number of years.

### **SGEU/Public Service Commission**

The SGEU ratified its provincial agreement with the Public Service Commission in April of 2010 which provided for wage increases of 1.5% in 2009, 2.0% in 2010 and 2.0% in 2011. The provincial agreement covers just over 10,000 provincial government workers and is in effect from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2012.

CUPE Local 600 and the Public Service Commission negotiated the same wage increases as the SGEU provincial agreement: 1.5% for 2009, 2% for 2010 and 2% for 2011. The term of the agreement is also from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2012.

### **Health Care Provider Unions**

The health care provider unions (CUPE, SEIU and SGEU) finally reached an agreement with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) on August 13, 2010. The 25,000 health care workers in these three unions had been without a collective agreement since March 31, 2008.

The provincial health care agreement between CUPE and SAHO provides wage increases of 4% retroactive to April 1, 2008, 2% for 2009, 1.5% for 2010 and 2% for 2011. In addition to general wage increases there are market wage adjustments ranging from \$0.50 an hour to \$4.43 an hour for nine technologist classifications. The settlement also increases the shift premium to \$2.10 an hour and the weekend premium to \$1.80 an hour.

The agreement is in effect for four years: from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2012.

SEIU and SGEU health care provider bargaining units received the same wage increases as CUPE.

## **University Sector**

In the University sector, both Local 1975 (University of Saskatchewan) and Local 1975-01 (University of Regina) support staff reached agreements in 2010.

Local 1975-01 ratified its agreement with the University of Regina on June 1, 2010. The agreement covers 650 members and is in effect from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012.

General wage increases are: 2.25% for 2010, 2.25% for 2011 and 2.75% for 2012. There were also improvements to shift premiums (from \$0.90 to \$1.00/hour) and other premiums. The Supplementary Employment Benefits plan for employees on maternity, adoption or parental leave was improved from 15 weeks top up at 95% of salary to 25 weeks at 90% of salary.

Total compensation is 9% over the three-year term of the agreement.

The agreement between Local 1975 and the University of Saskatchewan has a more complicated process for wage adjustments. Individual employees will receive an annual 2% wage increment that is referred to in their collective agreement. Different classification salary ranges will receive further increases – Phase 1 and 2 Salary Ranges increase by 3% in each year of the agreement, and Phase 3, 4, 5 and 6 Salary Ranges increase by 2% in each year of the agreement.

There were also increases to shift premiums (now \$1.00/hour) and the introduction of a standby premium (one hour pay for each 8 hours on standby).

## **Future public sector bargaining**

The one major set of bargaining that education workers will be watching for is the provincial agreement currently being negotiated by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) and the SSBA/Provincial Government. The STF provincial agreement covers about 12,000 teachers in the province and expired on August 31, 2010. The Pre K-12 education sector is not covered by the *Public Service Essential Services Act*.

The largest CUPE education bargaining units also have their collective agreements expiring in 2010 (see Appendix III). The agreements of 3,818 CUPE school support staff in 15 bargaining units expire on or before December 31, 2010 (58% of education bargaining units, or 60% of our education members).

## II – Saskatchewan Education Settlements 2009-2010

This document reports on nine (9) CUPE education settlements that were ratified between November 2009 and the end of October 2010. The total number of members covered by these eight settlements is almost 1,400. The list of these settlements can be found in Section III and Appendix I.

The highlights of bargaining over the last year include:

- **The merging of eight (8) collective agreements into two (2) new agreements.** Local 4875/North East SD merged six agreements into one, and Local 4254/Prairie Spirit merged two agreements into one. There are now a total of 26 CUPE collective agreements in the education sector, down from 58 agreements in 2006.
- **Wage parity achieved in the newly merged collective agreements.** Workers in the same classification were paid different wage rates in the legacy agreements. Local 4875 achieved wage parity in the merged collective agreement by levelling the lower wages up to the best rate.
- **Improvements to women's wages.** Local 4799/Horizon SD successfully reduced the number of increments in their wage schedule for predominantly female classifications from six to four. By eliminating the bottom two steps, the start rate for Educational Assistants, Secretaries, Librarians, Receptionists and Data Entry Clerks went from \$12.61 an hour on September 1, 2009 to \$15.15 an hour effective September 1, 2010 – a 20% increase.

Local 4747/Living SK SD also improved the wage rate of female classifications by negotiating a flat rate rather than a percentage wage increase. This brought up the lower paid classifications (female jobs) and ensured that all positions in the agreement are paid more than \$15 an hour.

These are important equity gains and meet CUPE's goal of a minimum \$15 an hour for all CUPE members.

- **Significant improvements to benefits.** Benefit coverage has been extended to all members in the newly merged collective agreements. Some of the legacy agreements had only provided Core Benefits (LTD, Group Life, AD&D). Local 4875/North East SD and Local 4799/Horizon SD negotiated extended health care and dental benefits for all members (at 50/50 cost share of premiums). Local 4799 had merged several legacy agreements into one collective agreement in their previous negotiations, and in this recent round of bargaining they were able to address the disparity in benefit coverage.

Local 4747/Living Sky SD achieved 100% Employer-paid benefits effective September 1, 2010 (up from 80% employer-paid) and 100% Employer-paid LTD effective September 1, 2012 (from 100% employee-paid).

- **Improvements to Supplemental Unemployment Benefit (SUB) Plans.** Two CUPE Locals (4254/Prairie Spirit SD and 4784/Good Spirit SD) made improvements to SUB Plan benefits in recent negotiations. Local 4254 increased the length of time that employees on maternity leave get the top up from EI from 9 weeks at 95% of salary to 12 weeks at 95% of salary. Local 4784 previously had no SUB Plan and was able to negotiated 6 weeks top up of EI to 95% of salary.

There are now a total of 7 CUPE education Locals with collective agreement language outlining SUB Plans and one education local whose members can access a SUB Plan through employer policy but without language in the collective agreement.

### **Comparison of CUPE Education Agreements Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) Plans**

Local	Employer	# Members	# of Weeks Benefit	Top up of EI Benefits
650	Regina School Division	195	6	95% Salary
2668	St. Paul's RCCSD	503	12	95% Salary
3730	St. Paul's RCCSD	138	9	95% Salary
3766	Regina School Division	310	12	95% Salary
4254	Prairie Spirit SD (Saskatoon East)	260	12	95% Salary
4747*	Living Sky SD	585	12	95% Salary
4784	Good Spirit SD	195	6	95% Salary
8443	Saskatoon Public School Division	1006	12	95% Salary
<b>Total</b>				<b>3192 (49.4%)</b>
STF	Provincial Government/SSBA		12	95% Salary

\*School Division Policy. The SUB Plan is not in the Collective Agreement of Local 4747.

### **Benefit Improvements – Progress on our Goal!**

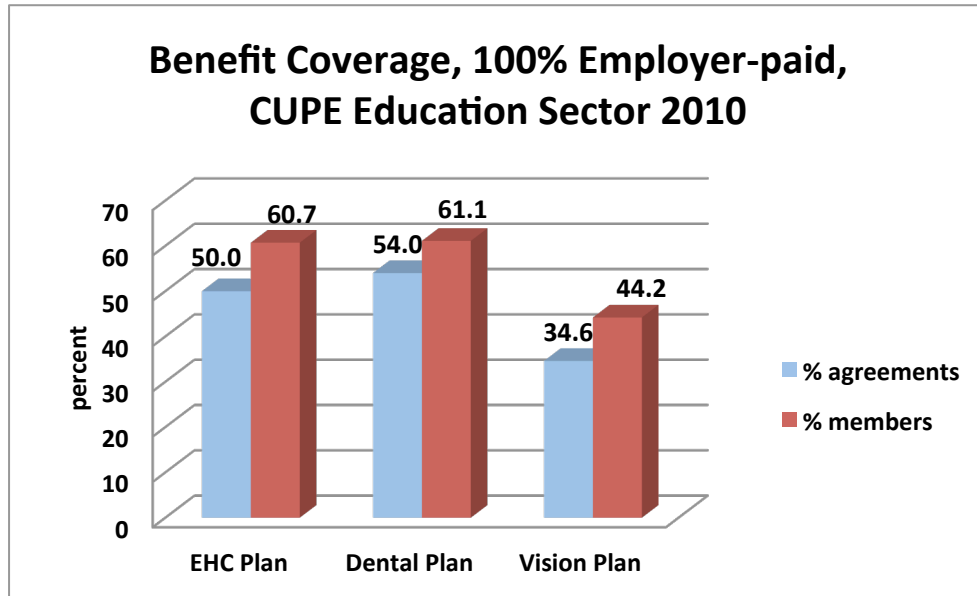
CUPE's education sector has made significant gains in the last year toward comprehensive benefit coverage for all members. More CUPE education members have extended health and dental benefits and more CUPE members have their benefits paid for fully by the Employer (see the accompanying Benefit Comparison document).

There are three education locals, however, without any benefit plan – not even Core Benefits. All of these locals are bus driver locals (Local 832-4, 885 and 4678). All other CUPE education locals have Core Benefits and at least one other health benefit (extended health, dental or vision).

Core Benefits (LTD, Group Life and AD&D) are more likely to be paid jointly by employees and employers, but Extended Health and Dental benefits are more likely to be paid fully by employers.

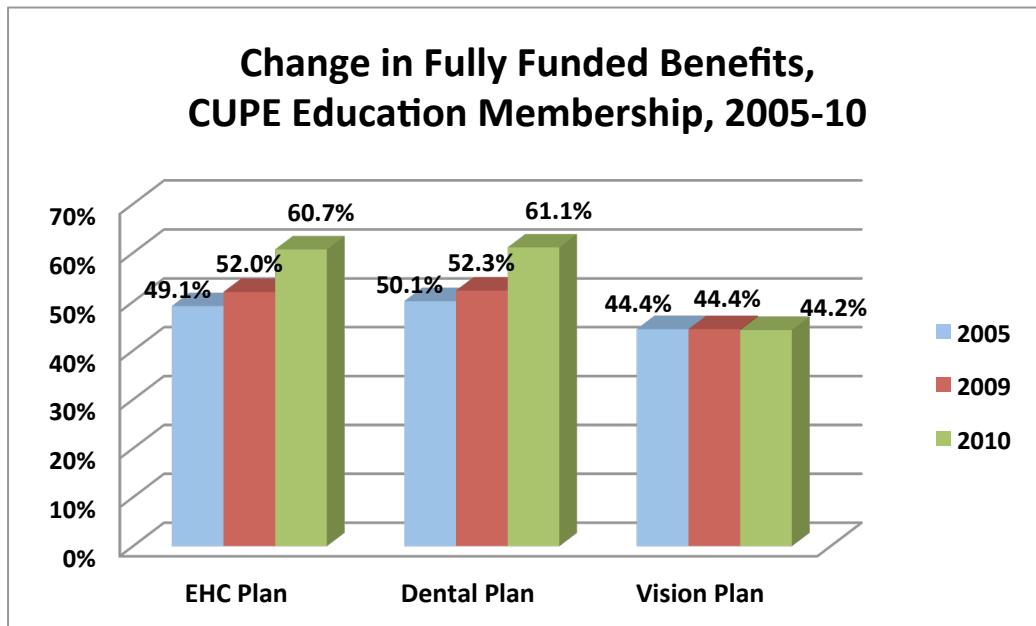


The goal of the Education Workers Steering Committee is to achieve fully-paid health benefits for all CUPE education members in the province in line with teachers, provincial government employees, health care workers and others. The chart below shows the percentage of collective agreements and the percentage of members who have health benefit premiums paid for 100% by their employer.



CUPE Research

In the last five years, education locals have made significant gains in obtaining employer-paid benefits, except for Vision Plan coverage which has remained flat. The chart below shows the percentage of education members with 100% employer-paid benefits from 2005-2010.



CUPE Research

If we were to include those collective agreements in which the employer pays the majority of the premium costs (60%, 80% and 100%), then the statistics would be as follows:

- 79.4% of CUPE education members in Saskatchewan have the *majority* of EHC premiums paid for by their employer.
- 79.7% of CUPE education members have the *majority* of Dental premiums paid for by their employer.
- 57.3% of CUPE education members have the *majority* of Vision premiums paid for by their employer.

## **Summary**

In conclusion, education locals in Saskatchewan continue to make real progress toward benefit and wage parity.

This year's report provides information to allow education locals and their staff representatives to highlight progress on goals with the membership and build support for further gains.