

On November 17, 2010, Educational Assistant (EA) concerns were addressed during question period at the Saskatchewan Legislature. More than 30 union leaders and parents attended this session. CBC was on hand to film us as we walked in as a collective group. NDP Education Critic Pat Atkinson asked questions of the new Minister of Education Donna Harpauer.

The first question that Mrs. Atkinson asked was very simple, “What is the government policy with respect to the reduction of EAs to the provinces special needs students”

Minister Harpauer’s response was, “There is no direction from the Ministry on employment numbers, it is up to the school divisions, but the child’s needs come first and EAs play an important role in the needs of children”.

When asked how the Ministry could reduce EAs when student enrollment has been constantly increasing, the Minister responded by saying that “due to the fact that special needs students were once kept at home and hidden, this Ministry decided to promote inclusion. Minister Harpauer went on to say that “EAs do good work however the parents are asking for other supports along with the EAs.”

There were two families from Regina that talked about the lack of supports in their school division for their intensive needs children. Their children had EA support and this support has been taken away from them, without their consent. They are called to the schools to take their children home 3-5 days a week as the schools can no longer “control” the children. This did not happen when their children were supported by an EA. The parents want their children supported by an EA again as they feel their children are not getting an education.

Shawn Rosenfeldt said that the reason for his successful career as a heavy duty mechanic is due to the fact that his EA (Monica Neal) gave up her lunches and breaks to help him bring up his math grade so he would be accepted at SIAST. This support would not have happened without an EA.

Tina Friesen, an unemployed EA spoke up to the fact that there are no EA jobs.

The EWSC would like to thank the following people for their continued support at the Legislature : Tom Graham (CUPE SK. President), Larry Hubich (SFL President), Jen Britton (SOS Save Our Saskatchewan Crowns), Alex Lenko (CUPE Rep), Cheryl Stadnichuk (CUPE Researcher), Elaine Ehman (CUPE Rep), Grace Wudrick (President CUPE Local 4254), Monica Neal (CUPE Local 4254), Pat Sira (CUPE Local 4254), Omar Murry (EWSC Vice Chair), Sheila Bindig (EWSC Treasurer) and Jackie Christianson (EWSC Chair).

The EWSC would like to thank the following organizations' for sending representative to support the parents in our common cause: Real Renewal, SOS (Save our Schools) and the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living.

The EWSC would like to say a special thank you to the parents and concerned citizens who had the courage to stand up for what is just and right, that being that every child has a right to a successful education in Saskatchewan!

Submitted by,

**Jackie Christianson
Chair EWSC**