

I would like to clarify the Meridian Booster's news article, "CUPE Takes gov't to task in EA pay disparity".

What the CUPE Education Workers Steering Committee has been working towards is provincial bargaining for all education support staff, not just wage parity for one group of support staff (EA's). Currently CUPE bargains, 26 collective agreements with school divisions in the province. Under provincial bargaining, CUPE school support staff would achieve one collective agreement in which wages, benefits and pension would be equally bargained regardless of where you live. In other words, equal pay and benefits for equal work. These are the same rights that teachers, nurses and health care workers share across the province.

Having all education support staff under one benefit plan would be one cost effective start to provincial bargaining. The province would save money as group benefit rates per person decrease with the increase of people using the same benefit plan. It would be more cost effective than the current practice of each school division paying for separate plans. This is also about fairness: all support staff should be treated fairly by having access to the same level of benefit coverage as do teachers and health care workers.

Provincial bargaining is a reasonable request as the Ministry of Education now controls 100% of the education taxes that we, the tax payer provide. Why would we not want to save money?

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