

On November 15th and 16th, 2010 a gathering of more than 60 Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) labour issues delegates were provided training in Regina and Saskatoon. A power point presentation was used to inform the members in attendance of what is taking place in regards to the cuts to Educational Assistants (EAs) in the pre K-12 education system. The power point provided evidence that the reductions to EA's are in fact happening, despite the continued denials from the Ministry of Education.

This was the first time the EA power point presentation was shown to the labour issues delegates: many of these delegates are not in the field of education. At the end of the presentation, the labour issue delegates were silent. The silence quickly changed to outrage that any government could keep this quiet and in fact, deny that this is the new direction of the government. The delegates understood that the government's decisions would have an impact on all children in Saskatchewan.

We discussed the “peer supports” that the Ministry of Education is suggesting that teachers use as a replacement for educational assistants support. The delegates saw first hand that the Ministry of Education is blaming the parents for feeling entitled to EA support for their intensive needs child. They heard that the Ministry feels parents should not want the support of an EA as; EA's provide an “invasive support”. The Ministry is blaming the teachers for special needs students not having better academic results. The lack of academic results is due to a “teaching problem not a learning problem”.

The 60 SFL labour issues delegates are now prepared to hold meetings with their members on this important concern.

You will find the research that was used in the EA power point presentation in its entirety when you click on the EA Research tab located at the top of the main page of the EWSC website.

Submitted by:

**Jackie Christianson
Chair EWSC**