

Education Support Workers met in Saskatoon to Discuss Changes in Education

Education support workers from across the province met in Saskatoon on November 14 to 16 to talk about the impact of rapid changes to education. The 2013 Annual Meeting brought together stakeholders in education to discuss topics such as P3 schools, Lean in education, and Employment Insurance.

CUPE represents about 80 per cent of school support workers in Saskatchewan. The almost 8,000 pre K–12 education support workers include education assistants, secretaries, maintenance and caretakers, library assistants, bus drivers, food service workers, school counselors, information technologists, and social workers.

The Education Workers Steering Committee (EWSC) Conference started Thursday afternoon with Elder Melvina Eagle giving a blessing at the beginning of the conference. Greetings were brought by Saskatoon Mayor Don Atcheson and Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) Executive Director Darren McKee. CUPE Alberta Education Employee Committee Secretary-Treasurer Debi Thomas also brought greetings.

CUPE National Researcher, Cheryl Standnichuk presented the 2013 Saskatchewan Education Bargaining Achievements and gave a presentation on LEAN. EWSC Chair Jackie Christianson and CUPE Saskatchewan President Tom Graham gave an update on EI changes.

Before the end of day one, the delegates attended their occupational groups for an hour and half of conversation and discussions as it relates to their occupation.

On Friday morning, CUPE National Regional Director Aina Kagis spoke on the role of the Regional Director followed by a presentation from CUPE National Senior Health and Safety Officer, Troy Winters on the changes to OH&S Legislation and Howards Law.

Deputy Minister of Education Dan Florizone spoke to the delegates about P3 Schools and LEAN in education (Student First). Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) Vice President Sonia Susut brought greetings on behalf of the STF.

Friday afternoon NDP Education Critic Trent Wotherspoon brought greetings and CUPE National Representative Bill Pegler talked about BC Education Sector Coordinated Bargaining.

Friday afternoon saw the return of CUPE National Senior Health and Safety Officer; Troy Winters discuss the reporting responsibilities of OH&S committees and employers.

At supper time, the delegates enjoyed a wonderful meal prepared by the Radisson staff and the Walter Murray Collegiate Senior Jazz Band provided desert music for all in attendance.

Saturday, CUPE Saskatchewan President Tom Graham talked about the Saskatchewan Employment Act and P3 and then hosted the EWSC elections.

Earl Booth was re-elected to a two year term as the EWSC Vice Chair

Russ Tocker was re-elected to a two year term as the EWSC Secretary Treasurer

Omar Murray was re-elected to a two year term as an executive

Janice Wolfmueller was re-elected to a two year term as an executive

Andera Bourque was elected to a two year term as an executive

Deb Dufault was elected to a one year term as an executive