



Brigitte Scott, President CUPE 2268

Iris Lapierre, Recording Secretary

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Hello Members of CUPE Local 2268:

In the fall of 2009, the Union became aware of a document entitled Enhancing Opportunities through Full-service School Divisions. It was released by the Student Support Branch Early Learning and Child Care, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

At the annual Education Workers conference in Regina, discussions began about this document. Jackie Christianson, President of Local 3766 Regina Public, informed the conference of the devastating effect she feels this document is having on the membership of her Local. She was the initial driving force to making people aware of the effect this document was having on the number of E. A. s throughout the province.

In January, 2010, an All-Presidents meeting was held in Davidson. The main purpose of this meeting was to ensure all the participants had this document, and we went over the potential ramifications that could come out of it. At the February 3, 2010 CUPE 2268 GMM we reported to the members, in attendance, on this document and the discussion held in Davidson. We also directed all present to check out the EWSC Web Page <http://www.saskedworkers.cupe.ca/> for current new releases and other related information. On February 5th our Recording Secretary Iris Lapierre emailed electronic copies of the following documents to all the CO's:

- Discussion Paper – Education Property Tax
- Enhancing Opportunities
- EWSC EA Information on school closures...funding...EA
- Golden Rule
- Transformation of Spec Ed to Student Services

On Wednesday, February 24, 2010, Thursday, February 25, 2010, and Friday February 26, 2010, there were articles in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix pertaining to this document. On Thursday, February 25 I contacted Human Resource Superintendent, Al Boutin indicating we are aware that an email was sent out to the Principals regarding the media take on the reduction of EA's. I asked whether the email could be forwarded to the union so that we could prepare a memorandum to our members advising them of the board's perspective on this issue. Mr. Boutin forwarded the email and we are sharing that information with you.

Email Wednesday, February 24, 2010 to Elementary Principals/High School Principals from Superintendent Greg Chatlain.

- ***We have been working within a new model of identifying students for a few years now. There is no longer any individual funding - it is block funding based on prevalence rates and even that is frozen now pending the new funding model that is being developed.***

- *Every school division has evolved their own service delivery model that reflects their own uniqueness (rural or urban, inclusive or more congregated, number of students to serve, etc. etc.). Divisions remain autonomous.*
- *A while ago, the Ministry introduced a philosophical debate around the balance of Para-professional and professional supports in a school division. They tabled a research paper that explored the concept of a Full Service School Division (an offshoot in my mind of SchoolPLUS) that brought together service delivery models from across the globe and examined them around what services and the levels of service that could be available from a division. Part of that exercise was to explore staffing levels. A staffing profile was part of that research paper. The reporter has taken that research paper and applied it to the provincial numbers. Some divisions feel that they have been told to move to the levels in that research paper. I cannot speculate on the discussions they have had internally or with the Ministry, but our division has not been told to comply. That staffing profile is a profile, and not the profile. It does raise good dialogue (as good research should) that we as a division need to have continuously around how we can improve services to our students. This research paper along with other recent research will provide good fodder for debate.*
- *Some divisions have chosen to change their staffing and that is their prerogative to do so. I don't know what their motivation is in doing so.*
- *GSCS has a very long history of an exemplary service delivery model for students with intense learning needs. Are we perfect? Far from it, but we have always held a clear vision for what we are trying to accomplish. Our array of supports for students with intense learning needs – EAs, LATs, OTs, SLPs, DHH, VI, Ed. Psychs., Clinical Psych., coordinators, Software support, etc. etc. are all very valued and critical components to serving our students. And continuing to grow. Budget, as always, can have an impact in all areas.*
- *As always, we will continue to wrestle with how to improve our model. Is there an imminent plan to do what the article suggests? No. We will; however, continue to challenge ourselves around improvement. This area is a very complex endeavour. Any significant change to a staffing profile would necessitate a significant change in how the different supports work together as well as the mandate of their role. Those kinds of changes require significant exploration prior to changing or else one risks destabilizing the endeavour. We don't shy away though from difficult work if it will mean better outcomes for our students.*

We appreciate the strong commitment of our board in providing an education model that supports that all students have an equal opportunity to develop and learn to their full potential.

If there are questions, do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the 2268 executive. Also if you are interested in hearing more of what's happening at the Regina Public School Division you could contact Jackie Christianson, President of Local 3766 to hear their story. Jackie can be contacted at jackichridtison@myaccess.ca. She is very passionate about this document and the ramification it could have on the number of Educational Assistants in the Provincial School Divisions.

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 President
 Local 2268