

December 16, 2024

Dear parents, guardians and families:

We are writing to share an update as the Disputes Inquiry Board (DIB) process comes to a close and how it may impact teaching and learning in the coming weeks.

As we have written to you previously, Edmonton Public Schools applied to the province to establish a Disputes Inquiry Board after the Division and CUPE Local 3550, which represents support staff in schools, reached an impasse. When writing the report, the mediator considered the history of negotiations between the two parties and information provided by both the union and the school Division about the outstanding monetary issues. The mediator provided both parties with recommendations that would help them reach a deal and avoid a strike.

Both the Division and CUPE Local 3550 have received the mediator's report, who recommended the following:

- A five-year term for the new collective agreement, retroactive to September 1, 2020, ending on August 31, 2025.
- The following wage increases:
 - 1.25% on June 1, 2023
 - 1.5% on February 1, 2024
 - 3% on September 1, 2024
 - The cumulative increase compounds to a 5.85% increase that would be available to members following ratification of the collective bargaining agreement (as well as retroactive pay).
 - The recommendations also include removal of Classification B from the wage grid and deletion of Step 1 from the wage grid to enhance recruitment and starting wages, as well as compensation for individuals working as temporary bi-weekly.

While we originally proposed an eight-year deal, the mediator has recommended a five-year agreement, advising that it would preserve CUPE Local 3550's ability to come back to the negotiating table for the remaining three years of the 2024-2028 term.

What happens next?

Following the receipt of the recommendations both parties had an opportunity to accept or reject the terms outlined within the report. Edmonton Public Schools accepted the recommendations of the DIB.

The CUPE Local 3550 bargaining committee has rejected the offer included in the DIB, which means that support staff will vote on the recommendations from December 17-19, 2024.

If the recommendations are accepted, a new collective agreement will be finalized and ratified, and there will be no disruption to school operations.

If the recommendations are not accepted, CUPE Local 3550 may choose to strike. They would be required to provide 72 hours' notice of initial strike action.

Impact on learning

We understand that any job action would impact our schools and student learning. We are committed to keeping schools open, but learning will look different for some students. I know that principals and their staff have been working incredibly hard on plans, if support staff go on strike, to keep teaching and learning moving forward for students. In some cases, for safety, students may be asked to remain temporarily at home if reasonable supports are not available.

We have been working hard to find solutions that are consistent with the needs of families. While schools have already been in contact with the families of students who may be moving to at-home learning to support safety, if you have specific questions about your individual circumstance, please reach out to the school.

The safety, health, and well-being of students are our top priorities. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and make decisions that prioritize their health, safety and security.

Continued commitment

The Division remains committed to and is actively looking to come to a resolution with CUPE Local 3550, within the authority we have. We will continue to work with CUPE Local 3550 at the bargaining table should support staff vote to reject the mediator's recommendations.

Update on custodians

While Edmonton Public Schools has been working through the Disputes Inquiry Board process with the support staff union, we have successfully ratified an eight-year agreement with custodians.

Stay informed

We will provide regular updates and information as it becomes available. If you have questions specific to your child's program, please contact your child's school directly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



Darrel Robertson
Superintendent of Schools