

ECSSA News

Edmonton Catholic Support Staff Association

November 2006



CEP 7th National Convention

This convention was held from October 15—October 19 in Vancouver. Over 1500 delegates and guests were in attendance, including ECSSA's representatives Denise White, Danny Burrell and Veronica Slavik.

The convention is held every second year where delegates representing 130,000 members from locals across Canada gather to discuss, debate and vote on issues that affect all our members and all Canadian workers. This gathering continues to demonstrate how all working people share the same problems and how workers' rights issues affect us all. Issues discussed included the exporting of Canadian jobs and natural resources, national day care, organizing for the future of CEP, the strength of our national Defense Fund, Canada's role in Afghanistan, international workers' rights, the CEP Mentorship program and many other social justice issues. While attending this convention, one quickly realizes how workers' rights struggles affect each and every one of us, whether they be within our own locals, within our province, our country.... or throughout the world. There were many guest speakers who highlighted these issues for delegates. Walden Bello, a human rights and peace campaigner from the Philippines, spoke against corporate driven globalization. Maude Barlow, the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, spoke of the serious issues of Canada's continued exportation of our natural resources and the resulting loss of jobs for Canadian workers. Jack Layton, Leader of the NDP party, spoke of our role in Afghanistan.

CEP members once again demonstrated their personal commitment to social justice issues. Through many fundraising efforts, members donated \$13,000 to the Portland Hotel Society which provides transitional housing for people recovering from substance abuse or mental health issues. Over \$142,000 was raised for the Spina Bifida Association of Canada, CEP's charity of choice. Over \$16,000 was donated to support CEP members across Canada who are currently walking the picket line.

Another important function of this convention is to allow members to vote on various resolutions to the CEP Constitution which governs all CEP members. There are also many general resolutions which affect the policies and procedures of CEP. All of these resolutions are presented to the delegates and, after debate on the floor, delegates vote on behalf of the members of their own locals.

Elections of regional and national officers also take place at this convention. Your ECSSA representatives voted on your behalf.

If you would like further information regarding this convention please visit the CEP website at www.cep.ca. Newsletters of each day's events and activities are available to view. As well, there is a 5—10 minute video report of each day at convention. Both of these reports provide a very interesting "snapshot" of CEP, its members and the business of convention.

*And they for who their country die shall fill an honored grave...
For glory lights the soldier's tomb.*



Joseph Drake



10 Month Vacation Entitlement

We have had several inquiries regarding vacation entitlement and how it is earned by 10 month staff. Each school year staff earn vacation time, based on FTE and the number of months worked in the school year. Each year some (if not all) of that vacation entitlement is taken during our vacation periods of Christmas Break, Teacher's Convention and Spring Break. In many cases statutory holidays play a role in these calculations. For example there are three statutory holidays during Christmas Break, and one floater day (which is determined by the District each year). In most years, this would mean that of the ten days that you are off, six would be vacation entitlement and four would be considered statutory holidays. The same could possibly apply during Spring Break if it happens to be inclusive of Good Friday and/or Easter Monday. This year, Remembrance Day (a statutory holiday) is on a Saturday. This will be accounted for during Christmas Break. For this year, Christmas Break will include five vacation days and five statutory days. The method in which these calculations are done varies from year to year depending on the school calendar, the timing of vacation periods and statutory holidays, and your personal vacation time earned. Each year at the end of June all of these entitlements are calculated for the previous school year. In some cases, the District may owe vacation entitlement to the employee and sometimes the reverse is true. Your pay advice at the end of June will reflect whatever adjustment was necessary.

Thursday Early Dismissal

In our September newsletter we printed some information regarding the payment of extra hours worked by part time staff on extended Thursdays where there is usually an early dismissal. There still seems to be some confusion regarding this practice. If you are part-time, and Thursday afternoon is your usual time off and you are requested to work that afternoon, you are entitled to payment for those additional hours. The District will cover the cost of these additional hours for September 6/7 (Labour Day), October 11/12 (Thanksgiving) and April 11/12 (Easter Monday). These are the only three occurrences where the District is covering the cost of extra hours. If your school has an extended Thursday because of Family Day or Good Friday, those costs are to be covered by the schools. Since the Sept. article was published, it has come to our attention that some full time support staff work their 35 hours over 4 1/2 days and also take Thursday afternoons off. If that is the case for you, you are also entitled to payment for these additional hours if you are required to work. The difference in this example is that the school would cover the additional cost - not the District. Please remember that whether you are being paid for these additional hours or taking time-in-lieu, the choice is yours. Please refer to Article 8 of the Collective Agreement, and specifically 8.2 which covers time-in-lieu arrangements. We hope this will clarify any remaining confusion. If not, please feel free to contact the ECSSA office for assistance.



CEP Fall School

Over the weekend of November 3-5, members of the ECSSA executive attended courses offered by the Alberta Area Council of the CEP. This school takes place every fall and is a terrific opportunity for the future leaders of our Local. Each year four sessions are offered which may include collective bargaining, leadership programs, handling grievances and arbitration, steward training, labour law, public speaking, and educating members. Each year, ECSSA offers these training opportunities to all of the Executive and the Board of Directors, particularly those who may be considering running for office in our Local. As with any organization, ECSSA is committed to education and mentorship. ECSSA is also facing the reality of upcoming changes as some of our Executive and Board of Directors move on or retire.

As well as the CEP Fall School, there are many other opportunities for union related training that ECSSA can take advantage of, in its commitment to education and mentorship. If you are interested in accessing these educational opportunities and perhaps getting further involved with your Local, please come to one of our Board of Directors Meetings. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Joseph High School. All members are welcome to attend any of these meetings. You can meet all of your Executive and Board of Directors, find out what we are doing for our members, and explore what opportunities there may be for you. Becoming involved with your Local is interesting, challenging, educational and offers many, many rewarding experiences.

Supervision

This is another area where ECSSA receives a number of calls requesting clarification. All support staff may be asked to do supervision—there are no restrictions in this regard. Regardless of where you work.....office, library or classroom, you may be asked to do supervision. Supervision is considered part of your work duties. You do not have to give up your breaks or lunch period to do supervision. If you are scheduled for supervision during a “regular” break time (such as a recess period), your break should be scheduled at an alternate time before or after your supervision. Remember that coffee breaks are considered part of your working hours, lunch breaks are not. We encourage all our members to take their scheduled breaks—it is important that you take the time to rest and relax for a few minutes. You will find you are much more effective in your duties if you take advantage of these breaks.

Caring Report

We extend our sympathies and prayers to the following members: Gilbert Calhoun of St. Mark on the loss of his brother-in-law; Pauline Calhoun on the loss of her brother; Minda Rudakewich of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the passing of her mother; Mary Lamontagne of Good Shepherd on the loss of her father; Annette Abbenhuis of St James and Denise Yasinsky of St. Gabriel on the loss of their father; Rose-Ann Stirling of St. Francis Xavier on the loss of her father and Pat Horby of Good Shepherd on the passing of her father.

We also extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Marilyn Orchard of Louis St. Laurent.

Please remember to contact ECSSA when any of your support staff colleagues are ill or bereaved. Forms, instructions and contact information are available on the ECSSA website in the newsletter folder (look to the bottom of the newsletter list).



Harassment Policy Review

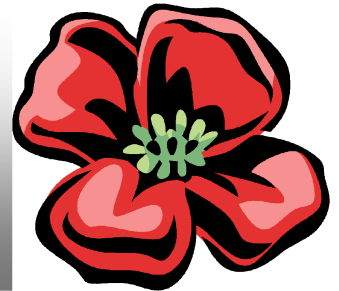
During our last round of negotiations, ECSSA and Edmonton Catholic Schools agreed to a Letter of Understanding which stated that *“a committee will be struck with representation from the District and the Local to review the District’s Harassment policy. This review will be completed by March 31, 2007.”* The committee has now been established with representation from all four employee groups as well as District representatives. There will likely be several meetings to review the policy and recommend changes. Once the new policy is established, ECSSA will provide a full report to our membership.

Meetings

Wednesday, November 15 Liaison Meeting
 Wednesday, November 15 Collective Agreement Information Session
 Thursday, November 30 Public Interest Alberta Education Funding Meeting
 Monday, December 4 Executive Meeting
 Wednesday, December 6 Board of Directors Meeting
 Thursday, December 7 Harassment Policy Review Committee

*All we have of freedom, all we use or know
 This our father bought for us, long and long ago.*

Rudyard Kipling



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Support Staff

The glue that holds it all together!!