

November 17, 2022

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: The Ministry of Education

Subject: **Labour Disruptions - Continued Contingency Planning**

Given the recent announcements by CUPE of their intention to fully withdraw their services in schools as of **November 21, 2022**, the ministry is asking all impacted school boards to implement contingency plans. We are making this request to minimize disruptions to students, parents and guardians in the event that CUPE does not reach an agreement, and proceeds with its strike action.

School boards that would be affected by a work withdrawal by CUPE staff should carefully assess how best to ensure student safety and continuity of learning.

Where a school board determines that it can provide in-person learning for all students, school boards should plan accordingly and continue to communicate with students and families to ensure appropriate notice is provided, including expectations about how long in-person learning may be possible during this upcoming withdrawal of services. Should the operational status of a school change, it is expected that students/parents/families be notified by noon the previous day to provide as much notice as possible.

Unless other circumstances exist that require closure, schools are to remain open to staff that may benefit from working in schools to deliver remote learning.

If a school board determines that it cannot maintain the healthy and safe operation of schools in-person, school boards must support students in a speedy transition to remote learning. Remote learning delivery should align with the minutes of instruction outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum 164.

It is important that students are benefitting from live, teacher-led learning during this period. It is expected that school boards deliver synchronous learning to students, to ensure the continuity of learning. On an exceptional basis, school boards can adapt remote learning delivery, but only as required to meet individual needs.

To facilitate transitions to remote learning, school boards are asked to take immediate steps to distribute available devices so students/families have devices ready at home, including the activation and distribution of mobile WIFI devices for student use at-home, as required. The ministry will establish a mechanism for school boards to be compensated for the costs of activating mobile WIFI devices for students during labour disruption. Should your school board require assistance in expediting the activation of

mobile WIFI devices with your telecommunications provider, or require additional devices please contact Field.Services@ontario.ca.

As communicated in the past, while making effort to keep students learning in schools and in classrooms, special attention should be paid to our most vulnerable children and those with special education needs.

To support contingency planning for students with special education needs, school boards are expected to work flexibly to accommodate their needs, including ensuring access to specialized (i.e. SEA) equipment and supports. We would also ask school boards to continue to focus planning efforts to support in person learning where possible for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning based on individual needs. School boards have flexibility in determining how to deliver in-person instruction in such circumstances, based on local conditions. This could include a central school location hub model where students from different classes or neighbourhood schools attend class together at one site. School boards are also encouraged to continue in person learning for students attending Education and Community Partnership Programs where possible.

Where necessary, school boards should review plans for remote learning for students with special education needs, including the requirements in Policy/Program Memorandum 164 and best practices shared in the ministry's Guide to Remote Learning for Students with Special Education Needs (available on the VLE).

The ministry is also working with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on an approach to support families of the highest needs students in the event of a prolonged labour disruption.

It is important that school boards have safety plans in place for those students who are experiencing or could be expected to experience mental health challenges. Safety plans should include provisions for students to have continued access to services, through the school, community child and youth mental health or local healthcare partners, and where possible, in schools to support in-person access to mental health support.

Given many vulnerable children rely on Ontario's breakfast programs in our schools, every effort should be made to accommodate those children to ensure access to nutritional food.

School boards should ensure that impacts to licensed child care programs are considered in any contingency planning and that all efforts are made to preserve access to full day child care centres co-located with schools.

Child care programs should be given relevant information as early as possible so that they can develop contingency plans and inform families and staff of any changes, or new protocols that may be put in place.

The ministry asks that school boards continue to implement a multi-pronged communications approach for students, families, staff and partners.

The ministry will continue to reach out to school boards to discuss and/or review your contingency plans as necessary.

The ministry notes that school boards should take the appropriate steps as outlined in the [Strike Savings and Eligible Expenses Resulting from Labour Disruption Guideline](#), including the appropriate payroll adjustments, as the ministry will recover GSN funding from school boards in alignment with work withdrawals.

The ministry will endeavour to provide ongoing updates on these and other issues as they arise. As always, thank you for your ongoing work to support students, families and staff.

- c. Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
- Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
- Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
- Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
- General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
- Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)
- Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)
- Co-ordinator, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)
- Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
- Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
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