

CUPE 1004

Delegate Report

Date: Nov 7 – 9, 2016

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Subject: CUPE BC Education Sector Conference,

Delegation: Sarah Carrier (Capilano Students' Union)

Report:

1. Overview (1004 members sent, location, purpose)

I attended the CUPE BC Education Sector Conference in Vancouver from November 7th – 9th. I come from the post-secondary division of the education sector, working at the students' union at Capilano University. I am also the small units unit chair, representing a number of the different smaller bargaining units that are part of the post-secondary sector. The theme of the conference was "A better future for all – investing in Public Education" and given the underfunding and challenges facing our education system both in K-12 and post-secondary, this conference purpose was for members to share their experiences, learn solutions, and renew our role in speaking up for public education.

2. Highlights

November 7

Paul Faoro, President of CUPE BC highlighted how Christy Clark has eroded public education funding to the 2nd lowest in the country. We need to restore post-secondary funding to the 2001/2002 levels, to remain majority government funded, and to decrease tuition and lower interest rates on loans. He said that the current government has a mind-numbing, short sighted plan for public education.

Keynote speech by David Eggan, 1st NDP education minister in history of Alberta. He talked about how since in office he has/is:

- restored funding for public services
- created new jobs: 1000 teachers, 300 support staff
- opened 30 new schools since past September, and none of those schools were built as P3's
- developing new curriculum over next 6 years to deal with Truth & Reconciliation commission report
- trying to make linkage between K-12 & post-secondary.

Chair of Vancouver School Board (Mike Lombardi) was there and asked how his government works with their school boards? David responded that they are duly elected and that underlines their legitimacy.

November 8

Panel discussion called "current challenges, future solutions" with panelists:

Mike Lombardi (Duly Elected Chair of the Vancouver Board of Education)

- Discussed the upset by the firing of the VSB.
- Highlighted how VSB most audited school board. 3 successful audits.
- The fired VSB members are bringing a defamation suit against Ministry asking for full retraction and apology.

Rob Fleming (MLA BC Opposition Spokesperson for Education)

- Most hyper-partisan destructive government and the good news is there's only 6 months left with them.
- Education is most critical investment we can make to meet the challenges of this country & move forward.

Kathy Corrigan (MLA BC Opposition Spokesperson for Advanced Education).

- Crisis in post-secondary education as we have government who does not prioritize public education.
- Funding for PSE has actually decreased
- BC students with highest debt load, highest interest rates
- Shutting the door on the middle & lower income families
- Issues with cuts to ABE & ESL funding
 - impacting people trying to upgrade education
 - immigrants are brought in but not supported
 - short sighted, no economic sense and put barriers in the way for people struggling.

Q&A period with panelists:

- consensus amongst delegates that a fact based awareness campaign in the upcoming election is a priority. The issues need to impact people personally to be affected by them and want to see the change. The facts need to speak the truths.

A workshop was provided by CUPE's legal staff on college board of governor. We reviewed the colleges and universities act and discussed how they impact our institutions decision making bodies, and how the staff can get elected to sit on the board of governors, and how they can make change.

November 9

An attendance management & duty to accommodate workshop was provided. It reviewed the legality of these programs and management rights to put them in place. It was suggested that for workplaces with these programs in place, to ensure there are AMP policies that needs to allow management to have discretion for non-culpable instances. These programs are an attack on sick benefits as they are scaring members to use these benefits, so they come in to work. AMP triggers will keep reducing over the years, creating more challenges for members who use their sick benefits.

A workshop on violence in post-secondary education was provided and highlighted:

- CA language: need language built-in regarding working alone, first aid, etc. WCB language is disappearing from the Act, so need to build it into CA to ensure protection.

- Shared stories from the different workgroups of known violence at the different campuses.
- How to deal with toxic work environments: raise at health & safety meeting with facts e.g. survey, reoccurring grievance, etc.
- Safe-walk programs: successes at other schools when working with athletics programs
- Reviewed [UBC's risk management webpage](#) and some of the processes they have in place such as if there was an active shooter on campus.
- WorkSafe does not cover volunteers, but they need basic training as can sue employer.
- Stressed the importance of note-taking and document all issues.

3. Action items/takeaways

- There are various issues in the education sector and they are mostly due to the chronic underfunding by the provincial government. We can see this change, if we elect the right people in to government, as seen in Alberta. We need to focus on fact-based campaigns that fight for education, and see it as a priority. We need to put our efforts in with the upcoming election, and continue those efforts post-election to work with the elected party to address funding for education and to keep that dialogue ongoing, not just during election time.
- Violence in the workplace is a major issue across the education sector. Ensuring that strong health & safety language is built in to our collective agreements is essential for protecting worker's rights. We need to review what our campuses currently have in place and look for ways for improvements and to build more awareness about these issues.
- Employers with attendance management programs should have policies for those programs. We need to review the collective agreement language in our workplaces to see if the policies do not align with the CA language, as it gives the ability to grieve policy or application to policy.