

W.A.N.T.E Bulletin Please Post

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May 4, 2021

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE

To W.A.N.T.E. Members

As Chairperson of the Collective Bargaining Committee, I have recently received several emails from members frustrated that negotiations, as yet, have not produced any tangible results. The honest answer is that they are right to be frustrated. There have been a few issues since the ratification meeting in 2019, but I will confirm that at no time has W.A.N.T.E. halted the negotiations process. Going forward, the Committee is focused on coming to an agreement with WSD. To that end, the Committee will be sending our proposals to our labour relations expert for a final assessment and from there we will be contacting the Division for bargaining dates.

Some members have contacted W.A.N.T.E. referencing the positions of other unions/associations, such as the bus drivers, hydro workers, and other school divisions have taken in their negotiations. While I respect their concerns, not everything they cited can necessarily be applied to our situation.

Regarding the bus drivers (UFCW, Local 832), members referenced a generous amount of strike pay. In my 20 years working with W.A.N.T.E. I have talked to labour lawyers, labour relations experts, and members of many other unions in Manitoba and have never heard of the kind of strike pay mentioned. I am not saying it didn't occur, but at the very least I would want documentation directly from their union.

The reference I made to the bus drivers' strike was in no way meant to instill fear. Rather it was meant to let members know there is a financial reality to taking a stand to strike.

Regarding members referencing other school divisions agreeing the Government's wage freeze is unfair, those members do not indicate that those other school divisions are willing to increase wages beyond what has been outlined in the Government's wage freeze.

While I certainly understand some members believe we should strike, it also needs to be understood that a majority of our members must be willing to strike. As I explained in my first update letter, during my tenure on every Collective Bargaining Committee since 2005, W.A.N.T.E. has sent its members extensive surveys on this subject. In each one, most members were not willing to strike. Further to that the current Government is in the process of removing the power of the arbitrators to award monetary findings. Instead, pay increases will fall to the Provincial Treasury Board (a Government appointed Board) - a very sad reality for all Manitoba unions/associations. Members also mentioned back pay. It needs to be understood that members would only lose back pay for the time they went on strike.

Continued



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Each union/association faces its own unique challenges when negotiating a new contract. W.A.N.T.E.'s strategic leverage is different from the Teachers' unions or other Non-Teaching unions within the Province. W.A.N.T.E. has always and will always stand up for the best interest of its members. The contracts we have negotiated over the years have proven to be as strong or stronger than any other union/association in the public education system. Please be advised that our President meets with the other Non-Teaching Association Presidents on a regular basis. Part of those discussions are about negotiations and contracts.

Again, our collective bargaining proposal is currently being reviewed by our Labour Relations Lawyer and we will inform the membership when those proposals have been sent to WSD.

To see other ratified and pending collective agreements in the Province, please follow the link below for the most current information.

<https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/NonTch%20Settlements%20Update%202016%202022.pdf>

W.A.N.T.E. continues to vigorously fight for the best interest of its members.

Respectfully,

Bruce Zilkowsky
Chairperson, Collective Bargaining Committee



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