

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

Collective Bargaining Update

Sturgeon Public School Division Board of Trustees would like to update parents, students, employees and stakeholders on the current status of collective bargaining with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 4625. CUPE represents support staff in our schools: Educational Assistants, Administrative Assistants (at school locations), Office Clerks, Therapy Assistants, Licensed Practical Nurses, Finance Clerks, Nutrition Coordinators and Library Technicians.

Negotiation timeline:

- The previous collective agreement expired on August 31, 2020.
- Bargaining occurred on June 27, 2022, October 17, 2022 (cancelled by the union) and January 23, 2024.
- On January 29, 2024, the parties jointly filed for formal mediation.
- Mediation occurred on March 11, 2024, May 3, 2024, and September 20, 2024.

The mediator issued a recommendation for settlement on September 21, 2024:

- This new contract, if ratified by the parties, would expire on August 31, 2024.
- A 3.25 percent salary increase:
 - A 2.75 percent increase retroactive to February 1, 2024;
 - A 0.5 percent market adjustment as of October 1, 2024.
- A restructuring of the salary grid from six steps to five, which would allow new staff and casuals to start higher on the grid, representing an increase to the starting wage.
- A \$100 annual increase to the Health Spending Account.
- The ability to carry over an additional personal leave day.

This recommendation exceeded the amounts proposed by Sturgeon Public Schools. Considering the market wages for the positions represented by CUPE Local 4625, the Board of Trustees felt the additional increase in pay and grid restructure was a fair way to address our employees' interests while endeavouring to maintain staffing levels needed for a safe and caring learning environment for the students in our schools.

On October 4, 2024, the Board of Trustees ratified the mediator's recommendation.

We understand that CUPE Local 4625 has rejected the mediator's recommendation without presenting it to their members for a vote. Instead, the union has applied to Alberta's Labour Relations Board to hold a strike vote on October 25, 2024, for this last round of negotiations.

We are aware that 99 percent of public sector negotiations for this time period have been settled for a 2.5 to 3 percent wage increase – less than the 3.25 percent recommended by the mediator.

The Board is committed to putting students and families first and remains open to further discussions with the union. We would like to reassure our parents, students, employees and stakeholders that we will do our best to maintain current operations should the union choose to strike.

We will provide updates as they become available.

Mediator's Recommended Terms of Settlement

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