

For Immediate Release

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94% of Nova Scotia school support staff vote to strike

Halifax-Kjipuktuk – School support staff in eight CUPE locals across the province have voted in favour of job action, with 94% of workers who cast their ballot voting yes to a strike mandate. Strike votes concluded last week, and this strong result confirms that these 5,000 workers are resolute in their demands, and in their solidarity.

“The treatment of school support staff is indicative of the state of public education in Nova Scotia,” said Nan McFadgen, President of CUPE Nova Scotia. “Even working full-time, the province is not paying these workers enough to live. On top of that they are overworked, understaffed, and as we know, at risk for workplace violence every single day.”

Wage adjustments are one key issue, with the employer pushing for a percentage-based increase instead of a flat-rate increase, meaning bigger increases would go to higher-paid workers and the lowest-earning workers would get the smallest increases—deepening existing economic disparities in this sector.

Also on the table are recruitment and retention, workload concerns, leave benefits, and meaningful language to address violence in the workplace. The latter, as well as proposals on staffing issues and workload, would address the risk factors for violence in schools, a priority for workers in this sector as they experience the majority of violent incidents.

“It’s time for the Province to recognise the value and contribution of school support staff,” said Nelson Scott, Chair of the Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions (NSSBCU). “For us workers, for parents, and for kids, I hope our employer will meet us at the table in good faith and negotiate a fair deal. If they don’t, they know our proposals have 5,000 fed up workers behind them.”

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