

# Media Release



ONTARIO PUBLIC  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

## Update Regarding Negotiations with CUPE-OSBCU

**Toronto, September 29, 2019** – Regrettably, the mediation among the Council of Trustees Associations, the Crown and CUPE has ended without reaching a collective agreement.

During negotiations we have responded in a responsible way to CUPE's proposals including benefits, job security and a renewal of funding for additional staffing.

School boards are concerned about current levels of absenteeism and the impact on students. CUPE's sick leave plan provides access to 131 days of sick/short term disability leave annually – 11 of these are payable at 100% of wages and 120 days paid at 90% of wages. This plan has driven a significant and continuous rise in absenteeism rates. These levels of absenteeism negatively impact school board budgets, but more importantly the support provided to our students.

We are not proposing a reduction in the number of days (131) but only a modest alteration to the percentage of wages paid in the short term disability leave when employees are absent from work. To date CUPE have refused to agree to any changes to the plan.

We had hoped to avoid significant job action by CUPE. We believe that we are seeking fair changes that support ill and injured employees while maintaining the educational experience of students through decreasing rates of absenteeism. We are committed to negotiations with CUPE to achieve a collective agreement that meets the needs of all involved.

CUPE has chosen to begin job action which will commence on Monday, September 30, with a withdrawal of many of the core services that they provide for students. Our boards will be monitoring the situation with a particular emphasis on the impact on student safety and well-being. We recognize the valuable work that CUPE members perform for our schools and we remain committed to achieving a collective agreement.

*The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.*

For more information, please contact:

Shane Gonsalves

Managing Director, Government Relations and Public Affairs

Ontario Public School Boards' Association

[sgonsalves@opsba.org](mailto:sgonsalves@opsba.org)