

School²Work

OPSEU members are once again feeling the brunt of the budget shortfall. On Thursday the devastating news of lay offs and cutbacks was delivered to a large number of computer technicians and secondary/Ed Centre office staff



Notice of layoff for :

- 8 Computer Software Technicians
- 1 Computer Network Technician
- 2 Education Centre members-
1 AV Technician, 1 Senior Clerk

Notice of reduced work hours, 12 month employees going to 10month+10 days was given to **90+** secondary office/clerical and Education Centre members.

In addition there are several unfilled positions at the Ed. Centre resulting in increased work loads for other members.

We hear that there will be further positions to remain unfilled upon retirement

of current members. We are told that declining enrollment is one of the factors for these reductions. However workload does not seem to be decreasing in line with this decline in enrollment. It is more important than ever that all members monitor who is doing the work of our bargaining unit. Anyone who becomes aware of someone

outside of our bargaining unit fulfilling any of the functions that laid off, or reduced hours members were doing need to call us immediately.

All Local 330 bargaining unit members should follow the Collective Agreement. We have bargained in breaks and hours of work that should be adhered to. When anyone stays late or takes work home to complete it is undermining the work of other members and could ultimately result in more layoffs and reductions.

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Q What does my Collective Agreement give me when management is cutting hours and people are losing jobs?

A Unionized workers generally enjoy better wages and working conditions than non-unionized workers. We have the benefit of vacation and sick day allowances, the right of recall, and the right to a grievance procedure when there are violations of that agreement. We are stronger together than alone.

Your Collective Agreement cannot, unfortunately, guarantee hours of work or a job—there are clauses in every CA that gives managers the right to manage—which includes the right to decide on the number of employees needed to manage and operate its schools (Art 6.01) The best protection you can arm yourself with is knowledge of your collective agreement. The union role in this situation is to make sure procedure is followed.

Q Can I access the EAP program when I am on lay off?

A The Employee Assistance Program is available to you whilst you are eligible for benefits. You do not need to be actively enrolled in the benefit plan—just eligible. This means that for the year that you have the right of recall you can access the EAP program.

If you are struggling under a financial burden, life stresses or need any other type of counseling this program offers up to six sessions for each concern you are dealing with, at no charge to you. It is a confidential service and is also available to eligible family members.



1 800 268 5211
www.sheplfgl.com/go/members

Along with other bargaining units OPSEU was invited by our employer to sit at a table and participate in a plan called “Healthy Workplace Initiatives”. A good working relationship can be invaluable for all concerned and this appeared to be a promising joint venture.

Unfortunately at a meeting on April 28 OPSEU had to walk away from the table along with ETFO and OSSTF colleagues.

We are most definitely willing to work hand in hand with our employer to promote healthy workplaces and help develop an action plan to create healthy workplaces for our members incorporating respect, empathy, fair and equitable treatment free from harassment and violence, promoting and educating in stress reduction and healthy lifestyles. We are not prepared to sit down and be complicit in developing an attendance management program that includes a discipline procedure related to absenteeism for our members.

We are hopeful that discussions won't end here, that the employer will agree that a healthy workplace—for both mind and body—is the most important step in reducing absenteeism, with the positive result being that an attendance program is not required and time saved could help out budget woes.