



YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
**EDUCATION WORKERS**

Dear Trustees of YCDSB,

We were deeply disappointed after the board meeting that took place on the evening of November 24th, specifically because of comments made during the discussion around church permits.

The point of this discussion was to find ways to help the respective parishes, which we can appreciate. The problem is, the conversation shifted to an attack on CUPE 1571 and CUPE workers as a whole.

During the discussion, there were many suggestions about having volunteers do the work of CUPE 1571 members. Not only would such a move be a direct violation of the collective bargaining agreement – one that the union, the employer and the trustees all signed – but it would dishonour the hard work of our collaboration, as well as the professionalism and dedication of the members of CUPE 1571.

We were shocked and dismayed by Trustee Mazzotta's willingness, in a public forum, to dismiss a signed contract and then suggest that members of CUPE 1571 and unionized workers as a group should "show compassion." As if our frontline workers are somehow being greedy! The comments were unprovoked and insulting.

Trustee Mazzotta also suggested that CUPE and the employer discuss hiring retired CUPE workers *at half the going wage* to do our members' work. Trustee Mazzotta's declaration that "all they do is open the building" not only shows the lack of respect for the incredible work our frontline members do, but could not be a more reckless statement.

Our joint collective agreement would make Trustee Mazzotta's suggestion yet another violation of our contract.



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We use the word “reckless” above to describe the trustee’s proposal because of the current pandemic. What makes Trustee Mazzotta believe that a retired member would have the proper training? What happens if this person were to get hurt? They would certainly be in that more vulnerable age group with respect to Covid-19.

This is a clear example of trying to save some money at the expense of the health and safety of our staff, students and communities, all while letting a group of workers know how under-appreciated they are.

We were especially surprised and hurt to hear these comments from the one trustee who has been trying to pass a motion that would see only two teachers receive a bonus pay for going above and beyond. I would like to note that, “going above and beyond” is something that so many YCDSB employees do on a daily basis.

We have always taken pride in building strong relationships and working collaboratively with the employer. CUPE 1571 members have been extremely accommodating, as has the employer, and we have all benefited from open lines of communication.

We have and always will be open to discussion and hearing different alternative solutions to reach all of our goals. Yet we were not contacted in advance of the meeting and we had to hear this discussion in a public forum, while having CUPE workers, 1571 members and our collective agreement being attacked.

We would also like to recognize and thank those trustees who did speak out to acknowledge that these conversations were premature and in violation of our mutual agreement.

CUPE 1571 members are frontline workers who are overworked, under constant pressure and afraid of getting sick. Many of us also have financial struggles. The comments made at this meeting were unfair, shocking and inappropriate. I feel that the reputation and work that we have done over the years, to raise the profile and public awareness for CUPE workers in the community, was damaged after last night’s comments.



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We believe that CUPE locals 1571 and 2331 and CUPE as our union deserve an apology in writing, as well as an acknowledgment at the following public Board Meeting.

We look forward to moving past this unfortunate incident and continuing the great working relationship that we've all enjoyed. We all have the shared goal of serving our students and communities to the best of our abilities, while respecting and understanding the different but equally important roles each of us do.

Regards,

Michael Saliba  
President Cupe 1571

Mary Di Federico  
President Cupe 2331