

September 10, 2020

Dear YCDSB Trustees:

On behalf of the 1800 members of CUPE 2331, I wish to express my utter shock and dismay regarding the trustee-approved decision to lay off 30 library technicians at York Catholic District School Board.

Implementation of such a decision, would be in violation of Letter of Understanding #3 of the Central Collective Agreement, which was agreed by CUPE's Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU), the Council of Trustees' Associations, and the Crown and ratified in 2019.

Under the central agreement's current provisions, there is no justification for instituting the layoffs proposed by YCDSB. There have been no school closures at YCDSB, no significant decline in student enrolment and no real loss in funding for education workers' jobs at the board. Such a violation of the Central Agreement would require that CUPE/OSBCU file a grievance through the Central Dispute Process and request resolution via expedited arbitration, where we would have every confidence for our success and the restoration of our members' jobs.

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that YCDSB Trustees rescind their decision to lay off the Board's library technicians.

The path that led this decision seems particularly convoluted. Over the last few days, I have been told variously that the Board will lay off these workers in an effort to "align resources to best meet the needs of the students" and "to keep students safe." I am disappointed with the assertion that this is best done by laying off 30 CUPE members and hiring teachers in their place. Our coterminous board, York Region District School Board, is in position similar to that of YCDSB, and yet it has not laid off any workers and is making full use of its existing staff. I trust that YCDSB places the same value on their Library Techs.

I ask the Board to utilize the skills of its education workers and search out ways to enhance and adapt the services they provide. I have previously provided YCDSB with a list of recommendations for ways that YCDSB library technicians might be usefully and successfully deployed within the board system. I remain confident that we can work together to utilize the skills of library techs while ensuring student safety and success.

Alternatively, the OSBCU and CUPE 2331 would have no option but to fight for library technicians and their jobs, up to and including a public campaign to protect the jobs of our members, ensure the services we provide, and continue our contribution to the success of YCDSB students. Such a campaign in the Minister of Education's, home riding would certainly attract much attention, and I trust that we can work together to avoid this.

I thank you for your reconsideration of the Board's decision and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Mary Di Federico  
President CUPE 2331