

Children's Aid Society Sector Four



Activity Report

November, 2001

Mission Statement

"Protecting Children by Supporting Workers"

The CAS Sector advocates for Ontario's Child

Protection staff who protect our children.

*The CAS Sector Executive and Bargaining Committees
through the Central Union, provide resources that members need to
win Better Contracts, Better Working Conditions, and educate the
Public.*

*We are committed to our dedicated members who see that
Ontario's children are safe.*

Preamble:

The CAS Sector Team has had another very active term. In dealing with the government's imposed Child Welfare Reform, members within the Sector have had to contend with staggering workloads due to legislative amendments, technological change, and increased training standards. All of these changes have had a profound effect on how we do our jobs; paperwork has taken priority over protecting children – a fact that many front line and support workers have had difficulty in accepting.

The OACAS resurrected their Workload Measurement Steering Committee and invited OPSEU to be an active member. CAS Sector Member At Large, **David Calvert**, and OPSEU Negotiator **Rob Field** have actively participated in this committee. A report of the Committee's preliminary findings was released in February 2001, and work continues to address further benchmarks not covered in the initial phase. The Sector Executive has been using the findings in this report, as well as our own, in our continued battle with the provincial government against inadequate funding to Children's Aid Societies.

In May 2001, the Sector Executive submitted a Request for Funding to the Board seeking funding for another campaign against workload issues. We were successful in this bid. We wanted to bring to light the fact that in March 2002, between OPSEU and CUPE, there would be approximately 23 locals going into bargaining. Due to workload issues created from the Tory Government's Child Welfare Reform, it was obvious that among others, workload language would be prioritized on most demand tables and would also be considered a strike issue.

In discussions with CUPE, we were able to agree with a list of demands and time-lines established, so that we could institute a coordinated bargaining approach early in 2002. I will address that in detail later in this report.

In order to achieve our coordinated bargaining goals, a number of initiatives have been put into place. One that I would like to report on is an educational program, which works within the spirit of the Network for Better Contracts. With the intent of the NBC in mind, the Sector, with invaluable assistance from Jojo Geronimo, looked at tailoring the Leadership Development Course to suit the CAS world. A pilot project was held for CAS's within Region 4 in September 2001. From all accounts, all of the participants enjoyed the course, and took a lot away from it.

Another Regional Educational is being planned for January, which will encompass CAS's from Regions 1, 2 and 3. Plans are also underway for Regions 6

and 7, however due to the large geographical area, we may also entertain the idea of delivering this course to our own CAS's as well as those with CUPE.

The CAS Sector has adopted language developed by CUPE regarding workload to be included in the Model Agreement. This Model Agreement has been distributed to the locals attending the BPS Conference.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Executive and Bargaining Teams of the CAS Sector for their diligence and commitment in seeing us through the past two years:

Executive

Kim Ireland, Vice Chair, London CAS

Melody Lachance, Secretary Treasurer, Ottawa CAS

David Calvert, Member at Large, Ottawa CAS

Bargaining

Lynne Easter-Froats, London CAS

Paul Melanson, Kitchener-Waterloo CAS (resigned)

Bonnie Conlon, Northumberland CAS (resigned)

Dan Carson, Peterborough CAS (resigned)

Michael Whitehead, Rainy River CAS

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank some of the many OPSEU staff who have assisted us achieve our goals:

Steve Crossman

Carole Whitehead

Jojo Geronimo

Barb Linds

Paul Biladeau

Mike Grimaldi

Cynthia Clayton-Edstrom

Ed Brennan

Frank Rooney

Paul Lau

Katie FitzRandolph

Juliet Feddoes

Staff Reps Assigned to the Sector

The Executive Board of OPSEU

President Leah Casselman

A very special thank you to Rob Field, our Sector Negotiator, whose focus, determination and support does not go unnoticed, no matter whose corral he's in. Thanks for having faith in us Rob.

CAS Workplan

At the follow up meeting to the BPS Conference in January 2000, the CAS Sector developed a workplan to encompass the next two years. The following is our progress to date.

a) Contact List:

A contact list has been established for quite some time. Keeping the list current is ongoing. Updates are sent to locals regularly.

b) Web Site:

The CAS sector web site can be found by accessing the OPSEU home page at www.opseu.org and following the links.

A description, complete with pictures, of who we are, as well as our Mission Statement, bylaws and minutes of Sector meetings is included. As well, an area has been dedicated to News Updates, the Model Agreement, Sector documents and publications, and links to CAS web sites.

c) On Line Conference Centre:

We have been using this Centre for posting articles for the Model Agreement for review by everyone involved. While, at this time, not all of the OPSEU Staff involved in negotiating CAS Agreements are involved in the Centre, it is anticipated that the balance of staff reps will soon be registered and participating.

d) Copies of Collective Agreements to Locals:

This is seen as an ongoing process, however we are looking into the feasibility to having these posted to our web site in the future. In the interim, locals received a disk containing all of the collective agreements for OPSEU CAS's at the Divisional meeting of November 3, 2001.

e) Model Agreement:

This process is now complete, and a Draft copy of the Agreement has been distributed at the 2001 BPS Conference.

This has been seen as one of the largest accomplishments coming out of the Sector. It is part of a very important process, which has seen the standardisation of CAS work through legislative changes and funding .

It only makes sense that we have standardised language in our Collective Agreements as well.

A process is in place for the Bargaining Team to continue to review new contracts for improvements in language in order to keep the Model Agreement current. A request has been made to OPSEU staff that when they are able to negotiate language that is an improvement to the existing Model Agreement, that they advise our Sector Negotiator, who will then forward that information to the Sector Bargaining Team.

f) Team On-Line:

Currently, all members of the Executive and Bargaining Teams are on line and available via email. We are attempting to establish on-line contacts in all of our locals to ensure quicker communication links to the membership. Again, this process is ongoing.

g) Bargaining Survey:

We have received samples of bargaining surveys used within the CAS sector as well as from other sectors and the OPS. At this time, the survey is still in the developmental stages, however it is anticipated that it will be ready in the near future.

Over the Summer of 2001, we participated in the process to develop a booklet for BPS bargaining "Getting an A Contract". As a sector we had the opportunity to provide feedback, a lot of which we were happy to see was incorporated into the booklet. This document will be seen as invaluable for all aspects of BPS bargaining. We will be developing a companion piece, which will focus on the CAS world of bargaining.

h) Newsletter:

Editions of our newsletter, "**CASe Notes**" have been published quarterly and are available in English and French. It has also been posted to the web site and copies have been mailed out to locals. A spotlight on members within the Sector as well as a question and answer section will be a part of the regular features.

i) **SALAD:**

This task has not been given priority at this time, given that the Model Agreement has come along so nicely. As well, it has been discovered that once CUPE and OPSEU obtain all Collective Agreements for publication in the SALAD, much of this information is outdated. While it would be preferable to compile a Model Agreement from Collective Agreements from CAS's all over Ontario, at this time, the Sector is promoting language obtained by OPSEU negotiations.

i) **Addressing Workload:**

A vast amount of energy from the Sector Executive has been focussed on this issue. Preliminary findings from the Workload Measurement Tool developed by the Sector last year were written into a report entitled "Workload Alert". This report received wide distribution and was used in MPP lobbies, and in generally bringing the issue of workload for CAS workers into the public domain.

As mentioned in last year's report, in the anticipated proclamation of Bill 6, members met with the Minister of Community and Social Services, John Baird, as well as Children's Services Critics of the opposition parties. Copies of the report were shared. A lot of work was put forth to prevent the proclamation, however without surprise this Bill was proclaimed and put into effect on March 31st, 2000.

The plight of workload has not gone unnoticed by Employers and the OACAS resurrected their Workload Measurement Steering Committee and invited input from OPSEU in that regard. David Calvert, Member At Large, as well as Rob Field, OPSEU Staff Negotiator continue to participate on that committee. While focussing primarily at this time on the protection functions of CAS work, the committee has developed a Workload Measurement Tool, similar to ours, which has enjoyed the advantage of having the Tool completed by CAS's all over Ontario.

OACAS published their findings in a report and we have utilised their report and our own in our campaign against provincial benchmark funding as it stands today.

Because of the legislative, technological, accountability and funding standards imposed on CAS workers, the issue of workload has become more important than ever.

In the late Spring, we began discussions with CAS representatives within CUPE. It was quickly realized that in order to have our issues addressed with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Employers, both unions would have to join forces and work together towards a common goal.

Also during this time, the Sector embarked on a new campaign against workload issues. Despite efforts made by the Sector and other unions in the past, and now with the Employer's group arguing in their own matter, this intolerable situation was not being recognized by the Provincial Government. Knowing that in March 2002, between OPSEU and CUPE, there would be approximately 23 locals going into bargaining gave us the upper hand we required.

We began meeting with representatives from OACAS, at their request, to review several options for bargaining. Essential Services, Central Bargaining, Pattern Bargaining and leaving the issue as is were all discussed. We were very clear with OACAS that OPSEU would most certainly not even consider negotiating Essential Services, however we would be interested in pursuing some form of Central Bargaining around a number of key issues within the Sector. At the end of it all, the Directors of CAS's within OPSEU gave an equally clear statement that Central Bargaining was not an option.

A facet of this campaign was a "Day of Action", held in conjunction with CUPE. This provincial Day of Action would see OPSEU and CUPE locals from across the province stage lunch hour pickets, media blitzes, MPP lobbies, anything that would get the attention of the Public and the Ministry. Members of the Executive met with locals, either personally or through phone conferences in an effort to enlist their support in endorsing a provincial Day of Action.

October 26, 2001 was selected as the date, and efforts put in place to organize OPSEU CAS's were well rewarded. The Executive Team met with CAS locals across the province. We also met with a representative of the Liberal Social Services Critic, Mike Gravelle, as well as Howard Hampton and Shelley Martel of the NDP. Letters were written to all MPP's; in the case of the Tories, we were demanding that they respond to our requests, and in the case of the Liberals and NDP, we were asking them to bring this issue forward in the House.

A Media Campaign was put in place, which saw OPSEU president Leah Casselman and CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan host a joint press conference in Toronto.

A position paper was published, "Peoplework Not Paperwork", and this report was widely distributed including members, MPP's, and the Media. This report covered the plight of Child Welfare workers, and made three recommendations to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, namely:

1. Re-instate the Comprehensive Review of the Funding Formula that you promised 3 years ago when you implemented it;
2. Work with the Employers and the Unions to develop realistic workload guidelines, as was recommended by the Coroner's Inquests; and
3. Fund existing deficits for 2001 – 2002 and withdraw the threat of anti-deficit legislation claw backs for 2002 – 2003.

This was followed by job actions across the province, including information pickets, mall drops, media releases, black ribbon campaigns, etc. I must state for the record that OPSEU really came through on this event. There was a significant amount of media coverage, and from comments received, members felt that they were finally "doing something" about the issue. As well, many received the support of their Executive Directors, Board Members and Senior Staff. This support in itself speaks volumes as to the critical issue we have before us.

At the CAS Divisional Meeting on November 3, 2001, resolutions were voted on and carried endorsing three major milestones for bargaining. These resolutions focussed on:

- a) Five Central Demands:
 - i) Workload
 - ii) Wages
 - iii) Liability
 - iv) Mileage
 - v) OPSEU Joint Trusteed Benefit Fund
- b) Coordinated Bargaining time-line
 - i) filing Notice for Bargaining
 - ii) filing for conciliation

- c) Establishing a Bargaining Council, made up of the CAS Sector Bargaining Team and a representative from each of the affected CAS locals.

We will continue our work with CAS members within CUPE during this bargaining process. As mentioned previously, between the two Unions we have twenty-three locals either heading into bargaining or in the process by March, 2002.

Through the Bargaining Council as endorsed by the CAS Divisional, regular updates will be provided to all using the On line Conference Centre. This computer message board will be put to use by members on the Council to report on daily bargaining activities. That way, all locals involved in bargaining will know where each other stand in the process. We are also looking at involving the CUPE bargaining council in the process. That will eliminate the feelings of isolation for locals and build on their growing empowerment.

We have never had such an opportunity to demonstrate our strength as we do now. The fate of Child Welfare Workers lies in our hands. The length the Ministry of Community and Social Services is prepared to go in responding to and dealing with the demands listed shall be the measure of our success.

Goals For 2002:

As an executive, we have not had the opportunity to completely assess the goals as set out from the recent BPS conference. The following are milestones anticipated through experience. We will be meeting once more this year in order to debrief from the BPS Conference and take a close look at the issues, demands and requests that came forward from the Workshop, Bargaining Caucus and Divisional Meeting. We will devise our work plan at that time. That information will be provided to the Board so that they may be aware of our plans.

1. The Peoplework not Paperwork Campaign will continue. As members of the Sector it would be irresponsible for us to do otherwise. Our members need to know we are advocating for them in everything we do.

While the initial phase of our mobilizing campaign has been relatively successful, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to maintain the momentum achieved by members within the Sector. The Ministry of Community and Social Services has yet to acknowledge our demands.

We have seen some movement with respect to the withdrawal of the threat of claw backs, in that the Ministry is now asking CAS's to submit "business plans". However, in light of recent announcements by the Provincial Government stating that they need to "find" 5 billion dollars in order to keep with their balanced budget requirements, we see a very real need to continue putting pressure where it belongs – at Queen's Park.

2. Education will be provided to the Sector. In accordance with the Network for Better Contracts, all bargaining teams within the CAS sector will receive the training necessary to achieve their goals. As well, we will implement Regional educationals on Leadership Development in Regions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7.

3. Coordinated Bargaining will be achieved. While the delegates at the CAS Divisional endorsed our time lines, demands and the bargaining council, each local going into bargaining must endorse these in order for this goal to be achieved. It is the responsibility of the Sector Executive and Bargaining Teams to ensure that all locals have up to date information to forward to their members to ensure success.

4. The CAS Bargaining Council will be implemented to ensure that all locals in bargaining will have the same information, the same goals and the same methods to achieve them. We will utilize the On Line workshop to share daily bargaining updates and general information. We will maintain our contacts with CUPE in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page, and the threat of isolation in bargaining is removed.

5. We will continue the Sector's visibility within our locals through communication, such as the web site, mail outs, bargaining bulletins, e-mail and newsletters. We want our locals to be aware of our activities and to be comfortable in asking for advice and suggestions to assist in issues arising in their workplaces.

BUDGET

The CAS Sector Executive had three two-day meetings, and three one-day meetings to conduct the business of the Sector, and to deal with the remainder of the initial workload campaign. The following is an estimation of the costs as of October 31, 2001. The CAS Sector executive has put a process into place wherein members of the Team submit their expense reports to the Secretary Treasurer so that she can keep an itemised account of expenditures made. However, due to circumstances outside of our control (i.e. employer billings), we must determine that the amounts are estimated.

CAS Sector Executive and Workload:

Expenses:	\$ 7,915.63	
Wages:	<u>3,840.00</u>	
Sub-total:		\$11,755.63
CAS Sector Budget:		<u>20,000.00</u>
TOTAL (as of October 31, 2001)		<u>\$ 8,244.37</u>

OACAS Workload Campaign:

Expenses	\$2,000.00	
Wages	<u>500.00</u>	
Sub-Total:		\$ 2,500.00
Amount Budgetted		<u>10,000.00</u>
TOTAL (as of October 31, 2001)		<u>\$ 7,500.00</u>

Campaign 2001 – Peoplework not Paperwork

The following is a breakdown based on:

July 18, 2001:	Two members meet with the OACAS
July 19 & 20, 2001	Sector Executive meet
August 23 & 24, 2001	Sector Executive meet
October 2, 2001	Two members meet with MPP
October 3 & 4, 2001	Sector Executive meet

**CAS Sector Four
Sector Activity Report**

November, 2001

October 25, 26 & 27, 2001 Two members to Toronto to finalize Day of Action,
attend Media Conference, and CUPE CAS Divisional
Meeting

Ongoing Meetings with CAS locals

Expenses: \$11,908.00

Wages: 6,700.00

Sub-total: \$18,608.00

Workload 2001 Budget: 20,000.00

TOTAL (as of October 31, 2001) 1,392.00

BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2002

Sector Executive:

Based on four two-day meetings

\$25,000.00

OACAS Workload:

\$10,000.00

CAS Bargaining Council:

Based on two two-day and

One one-day meetings

\$56,000.00

Thank you for your consideration of this request. You can be assured we will continue to keep the Executive Board updated on our progress on a regular basis. Any questions or clarification may be directed to the writer.

Report prepared by,

Linda Aho, Chair,
Children's Aid Society Sector