

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Education
All Stewards in the Ministry of Education

FROM: Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: November 20, 2007

**SUBJECT: Ministry of Education
ERC Minutes – October 4, 2007**

Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President

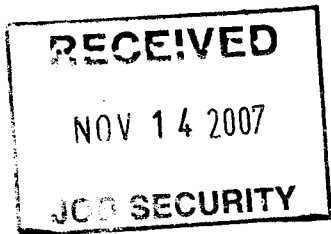
IN SOLIDARITY,



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)
October 4, 2007
Centre Jules Leger, Ottawa**

For Management:
Lisa Sherin, Co-Chair*
Mercedes Gagnon
Simon Ouellet
David Doherty
Deborah Metrakos

For OPSEU:
Alicia Czekierda, Co-Chair
Chris Cormier
Sue Blackford
Stephen George

*Chair of the Meeting

Guests:

Rejean Gennesse
Nancy Sanders

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Confirmation of Agenda	Item 4 – Residence 1&2 Residence Review deferred until new Business. Wellness survey removed from the agenda.	
Approval of Minutes	Minutes of March 29, 2007 and June 15, 2007 approved.	
Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC) Training Module	Management indicated that it supports in principal the establishment of a branch LERC for Field Services Branch. At Field Services Branch staff have a good rapport with management. It was suggested that OPSEU survey its members to determine their interest in establishing a branch LERC.	OPSEU will identify members, if any, for a Field Services Branch LERC, and inform Management. Management will then identify its members.

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	<p>OPSEU was encouraged to hear that issues were being resolved locally, but felt there is still a need for a LERC. It confirmed that some members of the Branch have contacted OPSEU to request a LERC.</p>	
<p>Seniority List, True Vacancy Report, Unclassified Contracts List</p>	<p>OPSEU raised concern over the significant increase in the true vacancy report. Management discussed issues related to the reporting of Full-Time equivalent positions (FTEs). The growth of the true vacancy numbers may reflect the use of data from the end of August which would record most of the seasonal positions as vacant.</p> <p>OPSEU felt that the unclassified list fails to record some unclassified contracts.</p>	<p>Management will re-run the true vacancy report and the unclassified list once the September 31 data is available.</p>
<p>Provincial Schools Governance</p>	<p>Nothing new to report</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Residence Counsellors 1 & 2 / Residence Review</p>	<p>Discussion deferred to later item.</p>	
<p>WSIB Summaries</p>	<p>OPSEU raised concern that the report is arriving too late for it to review, and requested that in future it be sent at the time OPSEU sends its agenda items.</p> <p>Management reported that it is using a slip and fall CD which is targeted to staff working in maintenance staff, though it is available to all staff. Maintenance staff sign to confirm receipt of the training. For maintenance staff using ladders Provincial Schools Branch is contracting with an external consultant to provide height training. OPSEU suggested that the training might be used in Professional Development sessions, and orientation training.</p>	<p>Management will refer the CD for consideration to the Health and Safety Committee with a suggestion that this be included in the orientation program for new employees. OPSEU will refer other positions at Provincial Schools Branch that may be appropriate for review through the relevant managers.</p>

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Workboot Allowance	Management confirmed that a memo has been sent to all appropriate managers advising them of the new allowance and the discretion to exceed the 24 month time period where appropriate. A copy of the memo was provided to OPSEU at the meeting.	A copy of the e-mail will be sent to all MERC members.
Wellness Survey	Deleted from the agenda.	
Provincial Schools Branch Strategic Plan	<p>Superintendent, Provincial Schools Branch attended by teleconference.</p> <p>The Superintendent reiterated that her role was to coordinate the process for the development of the plan and that there may be questions regarding the implementation of the directions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: Issues raised related primarily to need to better communicate issues related to funding and the funding process. Professional development came mainly from teachers group – related primarily to consistency. The plan was never about increase in funding – the process was always intended to be neutral with respect to funding. OPSEU indicated that it was more concerned about decreased funding. Management confirmed that reducing funding was never part of the review. • Deaf Adult Education: This issue was identified under items beyond the mandate. This reflects staff passion about these issues, but adult deaf education is beyond the mandate of the Branch. The schools may work with partners to advance adult education. • Attracting Interpreters: We have been able to hire interpreters when we post vacancies. The difficulty is when we need freelancers. This is especially difficult in Ottawa. • Professional Learning Community: Provincial Schools Branch has expanded offering of the Additional Qualifications (AQ) 	Items marked deferred will be answered in writing and appended to the minutes.

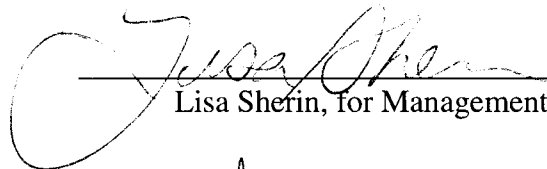
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	<p>courses. We are working with Nipissing University for the development and delivery of AQ courses for deaf education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships: Provincial Schools Branch has been working with various partners – for example Nipissing University and George Brown College. • Attracting Professional Staff: Provincial Schools Branch has been able to fill seasonal professional positions, using a combination of seasonal and classified staff based on operational need and the nature of the employment market. • Program Partnerships: deferred • Mentorship Program: 9 Residential Counselors are participating in this cycle. People were identified through an application process. It is a 1 year program with a practicum, with assigned mentors. • Funding for Training: The Strategic Plan process was not seeking additional funding. • Nutritional Review: deferred • Accessibility Committee: deferred • Review of Health Services: deferred • Respectful Work Environment – Attracting Qualified Staff: deferred • Staff Development and Training Plans: deferred <p>OPSEU indicated that it feels the Strategic Planning Process has been a teacher driven process. It does not see it as offering any benefit to the members it represents.</p> <p>Management indicated that the purpose of the plan is to address services. It is not intended as a staff development plan.</p>	

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Breaks at W. Ross MacDonald School	OPSEU reported that it has had a discussion with the local manager and this issue has been resolved. The resolution will be recorded in the LERC minutes.	
Job Specifications	Management apologized for the delay in providing a job description. The delay was caused by human error.	Management will confirm the appropriate contact for obtaining job specifications.
YMCA Day Care at E. C. Drury School	Management reported that it is developing a formal agreement with the YMCA. It has assigned an EA from E.C. Drury with E.C.E qualifications to the YMCA for this school year, as a development assignment. The staff member is the only one of the Education Assistants with both the Early Childhood Education. and American Sign Language qualifications. The Education Assistant continues to report to the E.C. Drury Principal as her manager. Prior to the agreement there were 11 Education Assistants at the school. An additional Education Assistant has been hired to maintain 11 Education Assistant working directly for the school.	<p>Management will confirm that the additional staff position is for the same number of hours as the person assigned to YMCA would normally spend in the school.</p> <p>Management will provide OPSEU with a copy of the service agreement with the YMCA, once signed.</p>
Reducing Use of Unclassified Staff	<p>OPSEU has asked what the Ministry has done to reduce the number of unclassified positions. The Ministry indicated that it has requested, but not yet received, the data from the Ministry of Government Services.</p> <p>With respect to Provincial Schools some areas where there has been some conversion – example cleaners as E.C. Drury and the Library Technician position at Centre Jules Legere. In many areas there is little opportunity to convert seasonal staff to classified staff given the seasonal operation of the schools. In areas where there may be partnerships which lead to legitimate year round work, Management will look at creating classified positions.</p> <p>OPSEU suggested there may be a need for classified staff in the Stores Department, as deliveries occur during the summer.</p>	<p>OPSEU will refer other positions at Provincial Schools Branch that may be appropriate for review through the relevant managers.</p> <p>Management will review the</p>

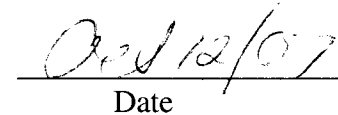
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		stores-receiving function for potential conversion to classified position.
Conversion of Seasonal to part-time positions at W. Ross MacDonald School	<p>OPSEU expresses concern over further downgrading the positions by splitting the hours as it has at W. Ross MacDonald where a vacant seasonal residential position was replaced with 1 20-hour and 1-25 hour position. It notes the result is that the employees have no benefit entitlement.</p> <p>Management responded the change is based on operational needs. It allows for more consistent breakfast coverage for students in the residence, and follows a model used at another residence at the school. Management noticed that a number of internal candidates (5) applied for the positions as the reduced hours better fit with their family situations. OPSEU noted that 3 of the 5 internal applicants ultimately declined the offer. Splitting the schedule also leads to individuals who have to work only afternoons, which further impacts on their family life.</p> <p>OPSEU noted the impact on morale, staff health, and staff resignations resulting from changes in the scheduling of staff. It sees a practice of ``operational needs`` as undermining the bargaining unit. It feels that its concerns are not being addressed and there is growing skepticism over the willingness of management to take its concerns seriously.</p>	Management will convey OPSEU`s concerns to the Provincial Schools Branch senior management group, and to the residential review.
Results Based Planning Update	<p>Management distributed a confidential report on the impact of the Results Based Plan on position increases - decreases by branch, bargaining unit, and classification.</p> <p>OPSEU noted that most of the new positions are AMAPCEO. Management responded that the bargaining unit classification is based</p>	

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	on the nature of the work needed.	
Workplace Violence and Prevention	OPSEU asked about whether the Ministry has reviewed the toolkit that has been developed and whether it is the intention of the Ministry to put in place a workplace violence and prevention policy. Management indicated that it is still reviewing the toolkit.	Management will keep OPSEU informed on this issue. The item will be made a standing item.
Human Resource (HR) Transformation Update	<p>Management reported that implementation is to be phased. The Enterprise and Regional Recruitment centres will be first. HR Directors have been asked to do a preliminary mapping of staff. A communications strategy for line managers is being developed.</p> <p>Three main components of the organization design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Recruitment Centre • Specialized centres of expertise • Strategic Business Units <p>Terms of reference being developed for a pilot strategic business unit for the I&IT function. Business process reviews are in process.</p> <p>The Provincial Schools HR function is out of scope at this time. The Ministry HR Branch has met with Provincial Schools Branch to map out the services which are currently provided from the Ministry to ensure that the function continues under the new model.</p> <p>OPSEU inquired as to whether Provincial Schools Branch will be brought into the new structure at a future time. Management responded that no decisions have been made at this time.</p>	Management will provide regular updates to MERC.
Provincial Schools Branch Residential	OPSEU has asked when the Request For Services closes. Management indicated that 5 vendors, from the vendors of record list, have been	Management will provide OPSEU with further details of the process.


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Review	contacted. OPSEU asked why the review is called a residential review. Management responded that the focus of the review is the provision of residential services. The review will examine the linkages with other services.	The item will be made a standing item.
OPS Employee Engagement Survey	<p>OPSEU raised concern that the information was not sufficiently broken down. Management responded that there was concern over privacy and so an OPS-wide decision was made that branches with less than 20 responses would not be separately reported.</p> <p>OPSEU asked what the next steps in the process are. Management responded that each of the divisions is communicating with staff and consulting with them on responding to the four priority areas. This information will then be provided to the Senior Management Team, and will ultimately be rolled-up into a Ministry action plan.</p>	



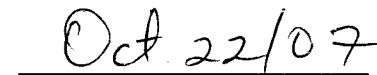
 Lisa Sherin, for Management



 Date



 Alicia Czekierda, for the Union



 Date