



NEWSLETTER

Employee Relations Committee (MERC) Newsletter
For the Ministry of Children and Youth

Issue 1 August 2006

Update from the MERC: Introducing your team!

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has about 1,980 bargaining unit members working at Bluewater Youth Centre, Cecil Facer Youth Centre, Brookside Youth Centre, Sprucedale Youth Centre, Thistletown Regional Centre, the Child and Parent Resources Institute (CPRI) and 64 probation offices.

Your MERC team

Jack Hopkins is the Chair of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee for the Children and Youth Services. Glenna Caldwell is the Vice Chair. Waltraud Knott is the third member of the committee.

Jack is a youth officer from Bluewater Youth Centre. He was a member of the past two Corrections bargaining teams and has been a union activist for over twenty years.

Glenna is a probation officer working at the Oshawa Youth Probation office. She is also a past bargaining team member and has been a steward for 19 years.

Waltraud works at CPRI as a Psychometrist II CPRI. She has been a union activist for 19 years.

MERCs, LERCs and RERCs

The function of Ministry (MERC), Local (LERC) and Regional Employee Relations Committees (RERC) are to discuss matters of concern to our members and to promote and maintain a work environment where your input counts.

The MERC team has been busy over the last year. We have completed the Terms of Reference under which we operate. These terms will be available at the divisional meeting. If you want a copy prior to divisional call one of the team members. In addition, all minutes are also posted on the OPSEU website.

The committee meets every six weeks to deal with issues that affect our members. Before matters come to the Provincial MERC team they should be addressed at the Local or Regional Employee relations committee. If items are not resolved they are to be referred to the Provincial MERC team. A form is

attached for referral if needed. The procedure that the union and the employer have agreed to is in the Terms of Reference.

Elections for MERC and Health and Safety Team Members

Elections of your MERC team and now your Provincial Health and Safety Review Committee take place every two years. This year elections will be held Nov. 25, 2006 at the divisional meetings. Make sure your locals send your representatives to this important meeting!

Upcoming elections for regional Employee Relations Committee

Elections for Regional ERC representatives (for probation services) will also be held at divisional. This means each region will elect four representatives for a regional employee relations committee to work on issues relevant to that particular region. We are hoping to have ERC training shortly after the divisional elections. There is no change to the Local Employee Relations Committee elections process.

Local Employee Relations Committees will continue to elect as they usually do.

Provincial Health and Safety Youth Divisional Review System

Your MERC team pushed the employer to deal with health and safety concerns. We negotiated with the employer and we now have our own Provincial Health and Safety Youth Divisional Joint Health and Safety Review System. The mandate of this committee is to review health and safety issues with ministry-wide application and to act as a forum where issues and concerns can be addressed. At this time only youth justice is covered in these terms of reference, however, the employer has agreed in principle to expand this committee to the entire ministry in the future as transformation issues are sorted out.

Elections will be held for the Provincial Health and Safety Youth Divisional Review System Committee at divisional for this three member team. The terms of reference for this team will also be available at divisional.

In addition, probation has a safety and security standards working group specific to probation concerns. Committee members are Beth Anich, Trish Cronin, Glenna Caldwell and Jack Hopkins. Don Larman, POAO president, also sits on this committee. A health and safety survey will be coming out shortly and we need as many people as possible to fill this out! Please! We are trying to get a snapshot of where problems are so that they can be corrected.

By-laws for divisional meeting

We are in the process of writing the by-laws for our division so that members can vote on them at the divisional. The membership asked us to develop these by-laws and a package will be brought forward for consideration by the members.

Issues at the Table

Transformation items

This issue is a standing item at every meeting. Please check minutes for further details.

Developmental Services

MCYS agreed to track the numbers of employees taking YSO training via Central.

Recruiting

OPSEU requested the true vacancy listing for both CPRI and Thistletown be provided to the union.

Child Welfare

MCYS advised no new items to report.

Children's Mental Health

MCYS stated no new items to report.

Invictus

All staff were successfully placed. There was no job loss for our members.

Ministry Identification

New identification cards should have been issued to all staff. If you have not received one ask your supervisor. Badges have been requested at the table, however the employer has not yet responded to this question. Your MERC team feels we should not be the only employees designated

as Peace Officers without an officially sanctioned Ministry identification shield and card.

Conversions in Youth Justice

The MERC team has been working on the unclassified conversions for youth justice facilities and for probation offices. Your MERC team is focused on making unclassified seniority meaningful, reducing the size of the unclassified work force and increasing the classified numbers. We have successfully converted 31 youth services officer positions and are now working on converting cooks and nurses. Probation officer conversions should be up to date.

Peace Officer Status

All probation officers should have been either confirmed or reconfirmed with Peace Officer status. If you have not, please notify your manager.

Workload

Excessive probation workload in some areas continues to be a problem. The MERC team asked the employer to monitor this closely. Managers were advised to pay attention to the numbers and ensure fair distribution of cases. Caseloads should be a standing item at staff meetings. If you are having workload concerns please advise your manager.

Mileage

We continue to ask the employer to review this policy. Management advised us they have passed the message on to MGS for review.

CPRI/Thistle town Update

As many of you know our brothers and sisters in MCSS are under the threat of closures at the remaining three adult developmental facilities (Rideau, Huronia, and Southwestern Regional Centers). A memorandum of agreement has been reached between the two affected ministries (MCSS and MYCS) to mitigate the loss of jobs in the sector. Staff in the facilities who wish to remain in the OPS will be able to obtain lateral transfers to identical vacant positions at CPRI and Thistle town (Article 6.1.1).

Job trades (Article 10.3), shall be approved between employees of the three developmental facilities and CPRI and Thistle town. The positions must be in the same classification and employees must be able to perform normal requirements of the position without training. Both of the above options are strictly voluntary and must be formally requested by the employee. If you have any questions contact your HR staff, Job Security Officer or Waltraud at 519 858-2774 ext. 2077.

The memorandum is in effect until Dec. 31, 2009 and may be extended by mutual agreement if the Developmental Services facilities closures have not been completed.

In Solidarity

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Authorized for distribution:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leah Casselman'.

Leah Casselman, President