

October 27, 2021

Dear Students and Families,

As you may be aware, strike votes affecting various educational services recently took place. As a result of the vote, CUPE locals 1190, 2745 and 1253 – whose members include mechanics, educational assistants, custodians and bus drivers – are now in a legal position to take strike action.

We understand that this situation is stressful for families, especially during a new school year. However, I want to assure you that our experience managing the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the past year has demonstrated that the education system is flexible and adaptable.

School districts have contingency plans in place to ensure learning continues, but families must be prepared for potential disruptions in their normal routines.

We understand how important it is for students to have stability and routine to best support their learning and overall wellbeing. It also helps support our operations across the education system ensuring that teachers can focus on student learning and plan accordingly. That is why once a school has been affected by strike action, students should be prepared for sustained home learning.

Should strike action occur at any one of our schools:

- The school will use the first day as an operational day to have teachers and staff prepare for the move to home learning, similar to the process used during COVID-19 outbreaks.
- Furthermore, as there may not be any notice for strike action in schools, everyone must be prepared for unannounced early dismissals.
- As access to school buildings will be limited during this period, it will be important for families to make arrangements with school staff to gather any essential items left at school as quickly as possible.

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- Early learning and child-care facilities located within a school will communicate with parents directly regarding any impacts that strike action may have on their services.
- If **only school bus transportation is impacted**, schools will continue to welcome students in-person. However, families will be responsible for finding alternate means of transportation for students.
- Children who benefit from having an **educational assistant** will not be able to access services normally received should your school move to home learning, but plans will be in place to ensure the continuity of learning for all our students to the greatest extent possible.

While the locals have voted in favour of possible strike action, it does not necessarily mean strike action will be taken. But, by preparing in advance and keeping families informed, we hope to give families plenty of time to plan ahead – including potentially making arrangements for extended periods of home learning.

More information will be shared with families through the school districts in the coming days. Please check your school district's website and social media pages for the most up-to-date information or call them directly.

Thank you for your understanding and continued cooperation throughout this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dominic Cardy", written over a circular scribble.

Dominic Cardy
Minister