

President: Karen Wong

Recording Secretary: Roberta Blanchard

February 3, 2014

“CUPE - on the front line” That’s our provincial logo. And rightfully so. We are the front line workers. Often we are the first contact with students, parents, teachers and administration.

Our clerical staff is the first to greet you as you come in the school, or first to answer your telephone inquiry. We work an extremely busy schedule, and are often multi-tasking throughout the day. We ask that the parents and students take a moment in the office, listen to the phones ringing, the keyboards clicking, and the lineup of people in the office. Look around, how many students are in the office waiting for a CUPE staff to assist them? Even with this stressful worksite, our greetings are welcoming and friendly. We enjoy the interaction between parents and students, and we are proud to help to build the community of SD57.

Our educational staff is the front line workers with the students. We greet your children in the morning, and help them prepare for the new lessons of the day. We are often assigned multiple duties as well, and sometimes the parents and students are not aware of how thinly spread CUPE educational staff have become. Yet we also continue to do our work with a happy and pleasant attitude.

Our custodians are front line workers. We are at the school long before anyone else, or late into the evening, depending on our shifts. We are there to keep the schools a safe and clean working environment for all. In most cases, students are respectful of our custodians workload, and don’t create unnecessary work for them. We appreciate that understanding and respect.

I often retell the story of the teacher who gave his class a pop quiz. Amongst the many questions there was one – the very last one – nobody was expecting: *“What is the name of the person who cleans your classroom?”*

Many of the students thought this was some kind of joke. When the time was up, all students handed in their quiz with the last question unanswered. Nobody knew the name. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward the quiz grade.

“Absolutely,” said the professor. *“In your lives, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say “hello”.*

So tonight, as president of CUPE 3742, I am not asking for support for funding increases, additional staffing and hours of work, or even bargaining. All I’m asking of the parents and their children is, when you see a CUPE worker, smile and say ‘hello’.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wong
President, CUPE 3742, School District 57, Prince George, BC



Canadian Union of Public Employees

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