



CUPE BC 2023 CONVENTION EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The CUPE BC Education team has had a busy start to 2023, as there have been over 25 different workshops, both in-person and virtually scheduled, in the BC Region from January to February. There are an additional 30 workshops scheduled over the next couple of months. Some highlights from the past few months are outlined below.

CUPE had a very strong presence at the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Winter School over the past five weeks, both with facilitators and participants. Thank you to all the CUPE members and staff who participated and represented CUPE strongly.

The CUPE National Women's Conference was a great success with over 600 women gathering from across the country to be empowered, engaged, and educated.

Planning for Spring School is well underway, with registration open. The school will take place from May 28 – June 2, 2023 at the Coast Hotel in Kamloops. The courses being offered include: Mental Health, Executive Leadership with a panel discussion, an Advance Grievance to Arbitration legal workshop, 2 streams of Steward Learning Series and modules, and Collective Bargaining. Don't forget to apply for your scholarships and bursaries from CUPE BC.

The NADC has set dates for their Spring School taking place in Prince George from May 15-18, 2023. More details on that to follow soon.

Fall school is in the planning stages as there is a lot going on this fall with the National Convention right around the corner.

If your local wants to book or host a workshop, be sure to have your National Representative request the workshop or you can reach out to Tina Meadows or Vanessa Wolff for assistance.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming workshops and learning opportunities on the CUPE Education website. You can search all available workshops both in BC and other provinces and can register for any open workshop across the country. Be sure to have your local's approval if it involves book-off for your employer.

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Education Committee members act as Social Convenors at weeklong schools sponsored by CUPE BC, and this year was no exception. Darlene Foley was a pillar at both last year's Spring and Fall Schools, holding down the social activities single-handedly, and should be commended for her amazing efforts to make a great week of social fun for all participants. She will be back for Spring School, joined by another member of the Committee.

Metro District Council Report (Dennis Donnelly)

The Metro District Council (Metro) will be introducing bursaries this year for members to attend CUPE-sponsored education events, including weeklong schools. Details of this should be finalized shortly. With the recognition that its member locals are not equal in size, accessibility, and financial capabilities, Metro will be instituting a policy of assisting locals financially for their members to participate in education opportunities.

As we move towards more in-person education, Metro plans to sponsor additional courses and seminars both through CUPE and other organizations. Some of our larger locals have exhausted the lineup of courses offered in the Online Learning Series and look forward to the return of in-person education offered by CUPE. In the meantime, several locals have taken advantage of courses offered by Area Labour Councils that have partially resumed in-person offerings.

Although there is a desire to return to in-person education, we recognize the importance of continued use and expansion of online programs to allow for broader access to union education for all members.

Northern Area District Council Report (Jennie Copeland)

This past year, the Northern Area District Council (NADC) has been able to offer both a Spring and a Fall School. The Spring School was held in June 2022, one of the first in-person events post-COVID. It had a smaller turnout, due to the timeframe of the school year and the concerns in regard to COVID-19. In November 2023, a Fall School was held in Prince George. This had a bit of a better turnout, as it was a more centrally located school that allowed for more locals to attend.

Having the two weeklong schools in person made for a more in-depth learning experience for the attendees. With the previous format of online only, it was a half or full day of learning for each subject, whereas the in-person allowed for the facilitators to take the time that was needed on the subjects being discussed to allow for the shared discussion amongst the attendees.

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At the last Convention, I was extremely happy to see the Resolution that I had personally worked on for each of the Committees brought to the floor for a vote and unanimously passed – dealing with lobbying the provincial government to increase the cell phone and internet services across the province to remove the “dead” zones which create areas where you cannot access a signal when issues arise. When I was heading to Vancouver for the One Big Committee Meeting (OBCM), I was happy to see that the Fibre Optic line was finally being run to my home, but to date it has still not been connected to allow for better internet service.

I have also noticed while travelling the various highways in this vast province, that the cell service dead zones are slowly getting smaller and smaller, but there is still a lot of work to be done. For the Alaska Highway running north of Fort St John to the Yukon border, there have been payphones installed along the highway to allow for phone access, as well as a few cell phone towers. It is still a difficult area to be able to contact any help, and with the vandalism in this province, I don't feel these payphones will last for very long.

I am hoping to continue on the two committees that I currently sit on, to work with CUPE BC for the next 2 years to support matters that are important for the north, but also all of the province. I felt very fortunate that the Convention was in person, as I was able to network with the CUPE BC staff and explain to them how the pandemic has affected our members, asking them to come here and talk to our members personally to understand why we are so passionate about representing our members and the issues that they face in front of management in our local.

Okanagan Mainline District Council Report (Darlene Foley)

2022 saw the return of in-person/hybrid meetings. Although we had planned for a blanket ceremony to take place, we were not able to complete this request. Our members are still very interested in planning this, and we are working together to hopefully make it happen this year.

One of the highlights of the year was having Shelley Saje Ricci join us through Zoom, to give us an inspirational and motivating discussion on Indigenous history. OMDC has educational ideas/courses, including an Intro to Stewarding Course, that we are aiming to put into action throughout this New Year.

In November 2022, we successfully facilitated a Retirement Planning Course, a course that is in demand throughout the province. We look forward to hopefully hosting more. As the year is beginning, we are very excited as to what the future holds for the education of our members.

CUPE Local 900 (Darlene Foley)

Local 900 is very pleased to say that we were able to train 47 of our members throughout 2022. Some of these were online courses, some were local courses, and some were from the two schools that were put on by CUPE. This local has a very active Education Committee and is very diligent in searching out and requesting courses. In April, we put on a two-day Introduction to Stewarding course, with our National Rep Harry Nott facilitating, and the members have said it was one of the best courses they had ever attended. We've been fortunate to have such an excellent trainer available to us.

The local Education Committee met in September to go over and award the bursaries that we are pleased to give out each year. Four bursaries of \$1000.00 were allotted to members or relatives, as well as two for \$500.00, to current members only for continuing education. The two \$500.00 bursaries are in the name and memory of Bill Ferguson, a longtime CUPE activist and founder of CUPE Kamloops. 2022 saw the increase to two \$500.00 bursaries, from one the previous year.

We are excited to begin the New Year, and what promises to be a year of new education opportunities.

Kootenay District Council Report (Anita Early)

The Kootenay District Council (KDC) Executive, along with the National representatives assigned to our District Council, have been working hard to restore attendance to our general membership meetings by offering educational workshops over two days prior to the meeting. We devised our two-year plan to include a Steward Learning Series workshop along with a Local Executive Training workshop option for each quarterly meeting outside of the Mental Health First Aid being offered at least once every year. We are hoping that with advance notice for early registration and small local subsidies, we'll be back in the full swing of maximum attendance once again.

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Respectfully submitted:

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