

Dear Mr. O'Hara and Ms. Simcoe:

Re: Request to commence central bargaining on agreed central scope items

As you know, the central parties and the Crown will be proceeding to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to resolve several disputes about the scope of central bargaining. At the same time, there are many items that we all agree are within central scope.

On our final day of negotiations on July 21, 2026, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and its Ontario School Board Council of Unions ("CUPE-OSBCU") proposed that the central parties and the Crown commence substantive bargaining on items we all agree are within central scope pending resolution of the OLRB application. The Council of Employers' Associations ("CEA") and Crown verbally stated they did not wish to do so.

CUPE-OSBCU has many urgent priorities to address that matter to its members, students, and parents. First and foremost, we need to prevent pending job cuts that are taking place across the province. Cuts already announced—and additional cuts that we expect in the coming months—will harm students in a context where all major education stakeholders have already said there is a staffing crisis.

Reversing the cuts is not enough. We also need new funding to support more caring adults in school buildings, from educational assistants (EAs) to custodians to school secretaries to Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECEs). It is not only CUPE-OSBCU and all of our allied union partners saying we need more staff. It is everyone from the [Auditor General](#) to the [Ontario Principals' Council](#) to the [Ontario Autism Coalition](#). Indeed, in April 2025 the Council of Directors of Education ("CODE") produced a report titled "[Ontario Education Staffing Crisis](#)." The situation only continues to worsen.

Other key priorities of CUPE-OSBCU also relate not just to the well-being of members, but to the quality of educational services in Ontario. Competitive salaries and benefits help recruit and retain staff in a context where vacancies are routinely going unfilled and absences are frequently not covered. Improved conditions for casual and temporary employees are especially key to making sure staff can be replaced when absent, and to having qualified staff ready to fill permanent positions as they become available.



The central parties and the Crown already agree that staffing, job security, wages, and benefits are within the scope of central bargaining. We can begin to find solutions to these problems right away. The alternative is that staff, students, and parents spend another school year in a system in crisis—to use a term CODE itself has used. This is not in the public interest.

We urge the CEA and Crown to reconsider their position and agree to bargain on the many things we agree are within the scope of central bargaining pending resolution of the OLRB application. This will allow us to implement the changes we need in Ontario education as soon as possible to support students, parents, and workers. Please confirm by August 4, 2026, if you are willing to do so. CUPE-OSBCU stands ready to convene negotiations at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Tigani".

Joe Tigani
President, OSBCU