

My name is Heather Upton Brown; I am the secretary at Harry Hooze Elementary school and have been a member of CUPE Local 703 and an employee with school district 42 for 8 years.

When preparing for this evening, I asked my fellow CUPE clerical workers to share real experiences they have had where a crisis was averted due to the actions of the office staff. I received so many stories from these passionate women that it was impossible to relate them all to you. Some were quite horrifying, like the child who was not picked up and discovered by the secretary at 3:30 pm as she was heading home for the evening. She continually called home where no one answered. Finally a parent showed up at 4:00 pm and this parent was so intoxicated, the secretary refused to allow the child to be taken and called 911. Had this been a smaller school with less than 300 students, with the proposed budget cuts, that secretary would have been long gone and no one might have noticed the child. There could have been dire consequences.

My presentation was to be entirely about Safety concerns in elementary schools should the proposed clerical cuts be approved. You would hear some pretty shocking stories, but they won't provide a solution to the deficit problem. So instead, I am going present some of our ideas for solutions:

The one thing that is on everyone's mind— not one excluded management position was cut. The only jobs cut at the district office were CUPE, 5 in total. Not one excluded clerical employee was affected. We are running schools where secretaries are managing admin, staff, 100's of students and their families but each member of the senior team has their own secretary. Since we have declining enrollment and less staff we need less management. If we have fewer employees, we do not need such a large human resources department. There does not need to be an HR Director and a District Principal. I am sure both have important jobs but are they really more important than the person in the office earning less than \$20 per hour, who receives the call from the RCMP to put a school into lockdown?

One clerical position at the maintenance department is proposed to be cut by natural attrition and the work load of that employee is to be shared between the two remaining secretaries. One of the three management positions in that department could also be cut, the work being shared between the remaining two managers. One district principal's salary could save the jobs of all our career planning assistants and then some. By eliminating 3 management positions, you could cut the number of affected CUPE employees by half. We don't think this is unreasonable. Cuts should be across the board, not just to one employee group. A colleague related a quote she heard from an administrator "they are compromising the efficiency of those who will be left to do the work". These cuts will affect the workload of everyone, admin, teachers, CUPE, parents and students.

Expense accounts should be reviewed. Travel should be reviewed. We understand our International students bring much needed funds to our district, but how much is spent on securing these clients? Consider meals being provided for meetings and at Pro D days – these are a luxury that cannot be afforded at this time. I don't think any of us attend pro d events so we can get a free sandwich and muffin. Losing the ability to bank time and thus be paid for school closures should not be limited to CUPE but must be considered for everyone including management.

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YOUR customers

I know there are many more ~~people~~ ^{these} to speak tonight so I will leave you with this. When the next election rolls around, remember the words of James Cash Penney the founder of the Department store chain; "courteous treatment will make a customer a walking advertisement". Most of us voted for you. All we are asking is to be treated with courtesy, dignity, fairness and respect. Children, parents and the community will feel the cuts to those who they deal with on a daily basis and they too will be at the polls. I am a secretary in school district 42, a parent of a student in school district 42, a tax payer and a registered voter. Please ~~do~~ consider adopting the proposed clerical cuts in this budget. Thank you for your time and for considering our proposal. *consideration*

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