

January 31, 2025

To BTPS Parents and Guardians,

Buffalo Trail Public Schools is committed to informing parents, and employees about our ongoing collective bargaining process with CUPE Local 1606 (CUPE).

The current collective agreement between Buffalo Trail Public Schools and CUPE expired on August 21, 2024. CUPE represents support staff across our multiple sites, including education assistants, learning commons facilitators, administrative assistants, van drivers, maintenance staff, non-contract custodian, system analysts, and select Central Services roles.

Bargaining between the division and the union commenced with the exchange of proposals on October 17, 2024 followed by the first bargaining session on October 22, 2024. Additional bargaining dates were scheduled for November 28 and 29, 2024. However, on November 8, the union filed for mediation without prior communication with the employer.

Mediation occurred on January 27 and 28, 2025 resulting in agreements on several non-monetary items. As mediation moved to monetary discussions, the employer presented an updated wage proposal of a 10% increase over the next four years. The union opted not to engage in further bargaining on monetary matters at this time and requested that the mediator conclude the process.

Upon CUPE's request, the mediator will present a report stating that they do not intend to make a recommendation in the dispute because the parties are too far apart. Buffalo Trail Public Schools indicated a willingness to continue negotiations and CUPE declined. Future mediation dates have been cancelled. Once the mediator's report is received, all parties will enter a mandatory 14-day cooling-off period, as required by the Alberta Labour Relations Board.

At this time, the union is **not** on strike, and Buffalo Trails Public Schools continues business as usual.

Potential Next Steps

After the cooling-off period, several options are available under the **Alberta Labour Code**:

- **Continue Business as Usual:** Employees continue working under existing conditions while both parties assess next steps. Either party may request to resume bargaining.
- **Strike Vote or Lockout Notice:** A strike vote (by the union) or lockout poll (by the employer) must be supervised by the Labour Board, with a majority vote required to proceed.
- **Notice Period:** If a strike or lockout is approved, the initiating party must provide at least 72 hours' notice to the other party and the mediator, including the time, date, and location of the intended action.
- **Strike Vote Validity:** A strike vote remains valid for up to 120 days. If a strike does not commence within this period, a new vote must be held before any job action can proceed.

Buffalo Trail Public Schools remains committed to reaching a fair and sustainable agreement that supports employees while maintaining stability for students and families. We will continue to provide timely updates as the process unfolds.

Sincerely,



Michelle Webb

Superintendent

Buffalo Trail Public Schools