# Ontario Education Workers Rank-and-File Committee opposes unions' scuttling of school support strike, charts way forward

**Ontario Education Workers Rank-and-File Committee**
**7 November 2022**

*The following statement was issued by the Ontario Education Workers Rank-and-File Committee (OEWRFC) Monday afternoon in response to the announcement of the top leaders of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and its Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) affiliate that they were ordering the Ontario education support workers to end their militant strike.*

*All education workers and their supporters wishing to join and help build the OEWRFC can contact the committee at ontedrfc@gmail.com, join the OEWRFC Facebook group, or fill out the form at the end of this article.*

**Don't allow the unions to snatch defeat from the "jaws of victory"!**

**Who authorized OSBCU to call off our strike! Demand mass membership meetings to discuss the way forward!**

**For a general strike to bring down the Ford government!**

The OSBCU/CUPE leadership has arbitrarily announced the shutting down of the courageous strike of 55,000 Ontario education support workers at the very point that workers had Ford and Lecce on the ropes.

The support workers' defiance of the illegitimate, anti-democratic "Keeping Students in Class Act" galvanized mass working class support. With sentiment building for a general strike, Ford was forced to announce a tactical retreat this morning.

Fellow workers, don't be fooled! Ford's supposed "olive branch"—repeal of Bill 28 in exchange for ending the school support workers' strike—is in reality a poisoned chalice.

If the strike is scuttled now, thereby realizing the first aim of Bill 28, Ford lives to fight another day. Moreover, "negotiations" will resume on the basis of the massive concessions that the OSBCU/CUPE leadership made last week, without any authorization from the rank and file, despite OSBCU President Laura Walton's repeated promise of "transparency" in negotiations.

We must act now to prevent workers' demobilization and the imposition of a sellout that will also strengthen Ford's hand against the teachers, whose unions scandalously ordered their members to scab on the school support staff strike, and all workers.

Education support workers should demand immediate mass membership meetings and that the strike continue until rank-and-file workers have had their say. Who authorized Walton and OSBCU to end our strike without workers' consent?

Rank-and-file workers power—for that is what compelled OSBCU/CUPE to even authorize a strike—has shaken the Ford government and its big business backers, and demonstrated that there is no popular support for its program of austerity, privatization and real wage cuts for workers.

Now is the time for the working class to press home the advantage by mobilizing its power in a general strike to bring down the Ford government.

Don't let the CLC, OFL, four teacher-union and CUPE/OSBCU bureaucrats snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Any negotiations with Ford and Lecce will be about negotiating our terms of surrender and result in contracts that fail to reverse years of real wage cuts, defend public education, or otherwise satisfy our just

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demands. We can only achieve inflation-busting wage increases and the securing of billions of dollars in investments for public education by building a mass movement to mobilize the working class against capitalist austerity.

Teachers and all workers should join the education support workers in preparing a general strike. All workers have an interest in defending public education and preventing the government from establishing a precedent, as it did with the unrepealed Bill 124, for real-wage cutting contracts.

To secure victory, we must seize the leadership of our struggle from the corporatist trade union apparatuses through the building of rank-and-file committees, uniting education workers across sectional lines in schools, and workers at every workplace, public and private sector alike.

**To join us in this fight, contact the OEWRFC at:** *ontedrfc@gmail.com*

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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