

# MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 30, 2017

TO: K-12 Presidents Council, CUPE K-12 members,

CC: Tracey Matheson, Michael Reed, Janet Szliske, All K-12 Reps, Paul Faoro, Trevor Davies, Robin Jones, and Meena Brisard

FROM: Elizabeth Blackwood, CUPE Research

RE: **CUSTODIAN SURVEY – STATUS AND DATA USE**

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## **Introduction**

We have been hearing about an increasing and alarming number of conditions affecting the cleanliness of British Columbia K-12 schools and the working conditions and well-being of those tasked with the crucial work of keeping our schools clean and healthy. In order to get a comprehensive picture of the extent of the issues facing K-12 Custodians, CUPE issued a 73-question survey to the thousands of custodians cleaning K-12 schools throughout the province.

This memo is an update on the status of the initiative, as well as an overview of some of the ways we can use the data in our efforts to improve the working conditions of K-12 custodians and the state of cleanliness of our public schools.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for participation in this survey. Many of our local presidents, executives, and local activists worked very hard to help roll out this survey to their membership. This work paid off in a big way. We had a response rate of 38%, which means that we heard from more than 1 of every 3 CUPE custodians. High response rates greatly increases the strength of the data.

We would also like to thank everyone that took the time to fill the survey out – It was not a short survey and your time and participation is much appreciated.

## **Status and Timeline**

The survey closed in August and the final draw for the grand price was held at the end of September (please see the CUPE BC website for news about the draw winners).

Prior to the close of the survey we released preliminary results (representing about 80% of the final respondents). We received good media on this with a number of media outlets discussing our release and very good social media pick-up.

The BC Division and K-12 staff have also discussed these results in various meetings with the Minister of Education and ministry officials, alerting them to the fact that final results will be produced soon.

Final results have been compiled and CUPE research is now undertaking data analysis. A memo with highlights of important findings will be produced for circulation to the Ministry of Education, media, the public and parent and community groups. All K-12 locals will also be given this memo for information and circulation to their members.

Finally, a comprehensive report will be compiled that will address the issues in-depth, in conjunction with other research in the area and personal stories from members across the province. This report will be available to all, and amongst other purposes, will be an important tool for lobbying and informing bargaining.

## **Highlights**

As noted, a memo highlighting key findings is forthcoming. In the meantime, some particularly note-worthy findings include:

- 27% of respondents work more than one job
- 49% say they are not given enough time to do the work expected by their employer
- 55% say they are not given enough time to meet their own expectations of a safe and healthy environment
- 44% say their work has become more hazardous (e.g. more injuries, less safe materials or equipment, significant stress etc.) since they first became custodians.
- 59% say the area they are expected to clean has increased since they first became custodians
- 49% are given less time to clean the same area as they were previously
- 30% have been told to lower their expectations of cleanliness
- 71% say there is cleaning that is not being done due to increased and/or unrealistic workloads.

Again, thank you to the thousands of custodians who completed the survey. Your participation has made a difference.