

## National Literacy Working Group Report

It is with great pleasure that I represent the CUPE members of Prince Edward Island on the National Literacy Working Group (LWG). The Literacy Working Group met in Ottawa this past year in September 2008 and will meet again in May 2009. A Highlights Report of the September meeting is posted on the CUPE PEI website at [www.cupepei.ca](http://www.cupepei.ca) under the “National Literacy Working Group Committee“ tab on the home page.

At the September meeting Sister Sioufi spoke about the recent LWG developments and updates. One of the major developments was the Labour Market Agreements whereby funding for Literacy Programs in Canada are now being transferred from the federal government to the provinces.

- 4 provinces had signed on to the program as of September 2008. PEI now has signed onto the program and will receive \$25 million in Literacy funding.
- Money is to go towards employed workers with low literacy skills, new Canadians and credentials, workers not covered by EI (young workers, Aboriginal people and the self employed), apprenticeship programs etc.
- Funds will be transferred for 6 years starting April 1, 2009.
- Money for delivery of programs has been missing in the past.
- Money for curriculum and delivery was cut 2 years ago. This funding was reinstated and CUPE and others were involved with this.
- Now we have new dollars to deliver actual programs, so how do we access this money? We want Adult Education programs, programs for workers with low literacy skills.
- We want the provinces to develop a new system of delivery (not having to fill out cumbersome forms for gaining funding, filing reports etc.).
- We are asking for:
  1. Public delivery not private trainers.
  2. Good working conditions for the people that deliver the programs ie. Benefits, higher wages, and peer tutors.
  3. Programs that are sustainable.
  4. Joint labour/management committees.

Here on PEI I have continued to build awareness and advancing CUPE’s Literacy work, advocating for the Clear Language and Workplace Education Programs in the following ways:

- Submitted Resolutions regarding literacy at the CUPE PEI Convention and my Local 3260’s Annual Meeting this May.
- set up a Literacy table at the CUPE PEI Convention as well as at Local 3260’s Annual Convention.
- Posted Literacy Reports, information and links on the CUPE PEI’s website.
- A Literacy Presentation by Sister Viviane Bouffard was made to the members at the All President’s Meeting December 2008.
- I hope that this year members will attend the Literacy in the Workplace Workshop

planned for June 2009. It is my goal that executive members from the Division and Locals all attend this very important workshop.

- Sister Sylvia Sioufi, LWG Coordinator from Ottawa will be making a presentation in June to Division. She will discuss Division's and CUPE's role regarding accessing the LMA's funding for programs that are needed for our members.
- Attended 3 meetings with Sisters Bouffard, Delaney, and Nadeau (LWG member from NB) with the goal to coordinate and enhance our work regionally.
- Organized, however due to severe weather a special Literacy information session with members, employers and government on Workplace Learning Programs by Sister Sioufi was cancelled in February. It will be rescheduled this Fall.

CUPE has a long tradition of creating learning opportunities for its members and their families. Through Workplace Literacy Programs members become informed, effective participants and leaders. They gain workplace skills, knowledge, and abilities in an ever-changing world. Members become engaged in in collective struggles to not only improve their lives, but the lives of their families and communities. Their jobs may improve.

I am proud to be part of the labour movement to build the union by promoting, and raising awareness of Literacy and Clear Language Programs. I am proud to be part of the LWG's work to make inclusion a reality for all members!

Respectfully submitted,

Karyn Noble  
National Literacy Working Group member