

February 2024

On behalf of CUPE Local 716, School District 38 support staff, we are pleased to present this brief to the Richmond School Board. Our proposal seeks to address the need for more support for our existing and future Education Assistants specifically with the focus on mentorship, recruitment, and retention. Our brief is a request that will help foster, within the district's support staff, a feeling of value and provide them with the skills, confidence, knowledge, and safe guidance enabling them to succeed within their increasingly challenging profession.

EA CONSULTANTS

The Union is requesting that the District add three (3) new EA Consultant positions, to bring the total to four (4) EA Consultants. Ideally there would be one consultant per quadrant with a case load of twelve schools each, allowing the EA Consultant to mentor EAs and provide strategies and skills to assist in their role supporting challenging students. This would have an immediate positive impact on our inclusive learners and the people who support them.

Rationale: with the increase of student population and more challenging needs of Social Emotional Learning and co-morbidity, the EA Consultant is overwhelmed and stretched to their limit. Which lends to the problem of our current and future EAs not able to receive support when needed to meet the diverse needs of their students. Often wait times can be very lengthy. Example: if the EA consultant is needed at a particular school for three to four weeks to work with an EA and their student, other schools that are in urgent need of a consultant will have to wait. This position used to be shared with three consultants and either through attrition or layoff, is now reduced to one individual. In addition, one of the after-effects of the COVID epidemic, many of our neurodiverse students have developed challenges when it comes to returning to the classroom. Challenges around socializing, attentiveness, problem solving, and self-regulating are common.

DAYTIME CUSTODIANS

The Union is requesting five (5) additional FTE daytime custodians to be placed in the five big elementary schools, namely Ferris Elementary, William Cook Elementary, Ecole Anderson Elementary; Brighthouse Elementary and Ecole T. Homma Elementary that have student populations equivalent or greater than some of the District's Secondary schools.

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Rationale: with the high levels of student population, the needs are as great as the Secondary schools. Also, this would address the importance of community within a school organization. Our custodians are missing out, and the elementary aged kids are missing out on what could be a positive connection/relationship with their school custodian, the caretaker of the school.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Union is requesting that more funds be allocated to Container 3 - Staff Development specifically for more in house training specific to the Richmond School District's needs with a focus on all employees' mental health within the workplace. We also request extra funds dedicated to additional training concurrent with the CPI (de-escalation) training.

Rationale: There has been a rise in requests for more mental health support among all sectors of the district. Many employees are dealing with personal issues which can impact their own social emotional ability in supporting all of our students, especially our most vulnerable ones. Many employees are returning to the workplace after being off for extended leaves due to injuries and PTSD. With reference to additional training, other than CPI, we believe that there are many educational offerings that our membership would benefit from; especially new employees and as a refresher for our current staff. This would be another layer of injury prevention, which in turn could potentially lower the number of workplace injuries.

In closing, we would like to take this time to thank our School Board Trustees, Mr. Usih, Superintendent of Richmond School District and Ms. Wang, Secretary-Treasurer, for their consideration in hearing our proposal.



President, CUPE Local 716