

March 13, 2025

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff

**RE: Update on CUPE Local 3203 Labour Action**

The Horizon School Division is reaching out to parents and families regarding potential labour disruption which may impact our schools. On March 10, the Horizon School Division was informed that the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 3203 who represent Horizon support staff working within the schools and communities located within the M.D. of Taber have decided that collective bargaining has reached an impasse. This means that labour disruption / strike action is possible in the coming weeks. Should CUPE 3202 vote in favour of job action, they are required to give their employer, Horizon School Division, 72-hour notice before withdrawing their services. It is important to note that the following information only applies to schools within the M.D. of Taber. School operations within Milk River, Warner, and Lomond will continue as normal.

***The Collective Bargaining Process***

The Division is dedicated to collaborating with all bargaining units to negotiate expired contracts. We were pleased to finalize the 2020 - 2024 CUPE Local 3203 contract in June, 2024, which resulted in agreed-upon wage increases for all members of the bargaining unit (some as high as 17%). Following that round of bargaining, Horizon met with CUPE Local 3203 in November 2024 to begin bargaining on a new agreement. The complete timeline of the bargaining process as well as answers to questions related to a strike will be available on our website ([horizon.ab.ca](http://horizon.ab.ca)) in the coming days.

Horizon has offered general wage increases of 10.4% compounded over 2024-2028 as well as other enhancements worth an additional 4.7% for some staff. We remain committed to working with the CUPE Local 3203 negotiating team to collaboratively come to an agreement that is within Division and provincial constraints and that recognizes the value our team members provide to the organization.

### ***Impact on Student Learning***

We are committed to supporting our students, families, and staff as effectively as possible. Safety, health, and security of our students and staff are paramount and will influence our decisions as we navigate the impact of any job action. Our Division is developing contingency plans to ensure as minimal disruption to the classroom as possible. Our intent is to have schools remain open in the event of CUPE withdrawing their services. We recognize that the absence of these valuable staff members will be noticed and that daily operations will be a challenge. Schools are working on contingency plans; we acknowledge that not all activities will be able to occur in the event of labour disruption and not all students will be able to attend school daily.

- **Pre-Kindergarten programs** – will most likely be suspended for the duration of any labour disruption.
- **Students needing additional supports** - we have assessed the needs and created plans to best support each student. Accordingly, students requiring specialized care or medical assistance, for example, may have loss of supports. Your child's school will directly communicate learning plans with you as soon as possible. Contingency plans may include having other students stay home to accommodate those who require additional support.
- **Extracurricular, off campus activities, and school / community events** – may be impacted during the strike. Schools will communicate as early as possible should events become cancelled.

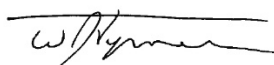
At this time, we are not certain what job action the Union will undertake, but we recognize that a short turnaround time will not give parents much opportunity to respond to potential changes in programming such as at-home learning and cancellation of services and activities.

### ***Safety is a Priority***

We know this news is inconvenient and can bring questions. We encourage you to stay informed by monitoring the Horizon website, <https://www.horizon.ab.ca> which will contain the most accurate and current information. More information will be shared with you as it becomes available, and we remain committed to timely communication (prior to the next school day) if Horizon receives formal strike notice. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate this challenging situation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Wilco Tymensen, Superintendent, Horizon School Division