



Local 4400

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TDSB Chair, John Campbell, Balances Budget On Backs of Children

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"The well-researched and well-received Pascal Report on Early Childhood Education, which again reinforced the need to have extra help in all Junior and Senior Kindergarten classrooms, should have provided an incentive and ammunition for keeping the Educational Assistants working until the E.C.E.s could be placed", said John Weatherup, President of CUPE 4400, Toronto Education Workers.

"Instead of taking credit for doing the right thing, we now have special needs kids, kids for whom English is a second language, and little ones with behavioural problems, being left on their own, sacrificed to the false idol of "the almighty balanced budget"', declared Weatherup.

The 200+ Educational Assistants – all women -- were notified that their jobs, working with the most needy and vulnerable students in the system, were gone and their benefits cut off as of Friday. "When you dump these many experienced adults from the system – many of whom reflect the communities of our newer immigrant communities – one has to ask: what is going to happen to safety in the schools? What is going to happen to the thousands of children who will not be tested and identified for special education until grade three because of the backlog? And what is going to happen to the families who no longer have someone around who knows their language and their child?", asked Weatherup.

"When John Campbell first ran for Trustee, he said that the problems of the TDSB could be solved 'with a good business plan', said Weatherup, "but the business of the TDSB is education. How can eliminating support for the most needy during their most important formative years make any sense – business or otherwise?"

"John Campbell is the worst Chair we have ever had." concluded John Weatherup.

FAST FACTS: Response to John Campbell's letter to the Guardian, June 19, 2009.

- * 150 Educational Assistants "full time equivalent" positions were eliminated by the TDSB
- * Kindergartens are half day classes so a full time position equals 2 kindergarten classes.
- * If a worker only has one class, that person is considered a .5 or 'half' a position.
- * 150 positions = over 200 people who are directly affected (eliminated).
- * Because of bumping rights, perhaps most of the 1,750 classes in approximately 500 schools may be affected (with workers having to move to other schools)

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