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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Over 50 jobs lost in Saskatoon Public Schools since Sask Party's Austerity Budget**

**SASKATOON:** Saskatoon Public Schools are facing an increasingly dire situation in the wake of the Sask Party budget cuts. Despite an increase of 511 students this school year and the opening of four new schools, the school division had its budget cut by over \$11 million. This meant cutting staff instead of increasing staff to meet increased demands.

"Our school divisions have been placed in a very difficult position and have been forced to take drastic cost cutting measures while still trying to provide a proper education for our youth," said Tom Graham, President of CUPE Saskatchewan. "School divisions had \$54.5 million cut while the government increased education taxes to \$67 million, and directed these taxes into the general revenue fund. So where is the \$121.5 million going? It isn't going into education."

Since the Saskatchewan Party's March budget, 10 full-time equivalent permanent Educational Assistants, 11.9 full-time equivalent permanent Secretaries, and 1.5 full-time equivalent permanent Library Technician positions have been cut by the Saskatoon Public School Division. 29 temporary Educational Assistant contracts have not been renewed.

"At this time last year, we had about 8 temporary contracts that weren't renewed; this year we lost 10 full-time permanent Educational Assistants in addition to the 29 temporary EAs that weren't renewed," said Scott Barrett, President of CUPE Local 8443. "I'm really starting to worry about the increasing student-to-Educational Assistant ratio over the last couple of years, because this means less one-on-one time for students who need help. Students are going to suffer because of budget cuts."

With the introduction of four new P3 schools, and no increase in funding to staff the maintenance of the facilities, Saskatoon Public Schools introduced split shifts at 13 of its schools to make up for the staffing shortfall. Students, teachers and in-school administration are now required to attend to the needs of these buildings while staff aren't on shift.

CUPE represents over 7,000 workers in the K-12 school system and over 30,000 workers province wide.

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