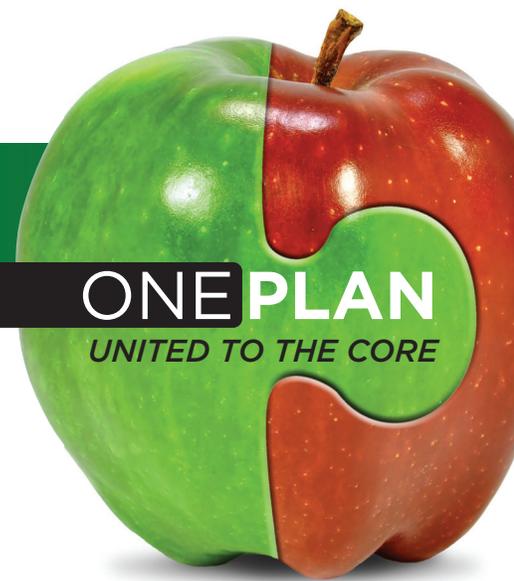


# CUPE EDUCATION WORKERS' BENEFITS TRUST



**ONE PLAN**  
UNITED TO THE CORE

## 2019: the year in review

### Welcome to your second CUPE EWBT annual report!

This report is designed to provide you with an update on the Trust's activities during 2019 as well as reviewing 2020 to date.

We're including a summary of the Trust's financial status as at December 31, 2019, together with our 2019 achievements. We're also providing a brief update on our 2020 activities to date, and a few details that have us looking ahead.

To date, 2020 has been an unprecedented year, with COVID-19 having a dramatic effect on global economies, future financial market expectations and societies in general around the world. Safeguarding the Trust's financial health is not only our priority, but is a necessity so we can continue to support members, and their families, no matter the economic conditions we are experiencing.

We hope this report finds you and your family well during these unprecedented times, and we wish you good health as the fall season approaches.

### A year of focused, continuous improvement

#### The Board of Trustees

The CUPE EWBT is managed by a Board of Trustees made up of nine members. Five of the Trustees are appointed by CUPE and four are appointed by the Employer and the Crown, ensuring representation from the government, the Trustees' Association and the collective CUPE EWBT membership.

The Trustees are responsible for effectively managing the CUPE EWBT, including overseeing plan financials and administration, and appointing professional advisors. Regardless of any personal affiliations, we have a fiduciary obligation to manage the Trust in the best interest of all plan members.

Sitting on the Board of Trustees are:	
Bill Campbell	Karen McRae ( <i>effective June 1, 2020</i> )
James Clark ( <i>to Feb 29, 2020</i> )	Wanda Muirhead-Toporek
Dan Crow, Chair	Terri Preston
Gary Goddard	Debra Tatters
Tammy Graham	David Wright

You can read more about each member in their bio on the [CUPE EWBT website](#).

#### General updates

In 2019, negotiations between OSBCU/CUPE, the CTA and the Crown were concluded for the current bargaining period. Among other details, the negotiation achieved a 1% annual increase to the funding amount per full-time equivalent (FTE) and, more importantly, postponed a reconciliation process that may have had a negative impact on the funding received by the CUPE EWBT in the future.

**Benefit improvements**

The CUPE EWBT approved several changes to the benefits plan in 2019 and implemented those changes as of March 1, 2020. These benefit improvements were guided, in part, by last year’s member survey, and made possible thanks to the Trustees’ sound financial management, and the negotiations between OSBCU/CUPE, the CTA and the Crown.

**The 2019 CUPE EWBT Benefits Survey**

We asked. You answered. The majority of members felt the plan meets their needs and those of their family and that the benefits offered were up to date. Full survey results can be found in the **November 2019 member update**.

A full list of the benefit enhancements and other information is available on the website, in the **January 2020 member update**.

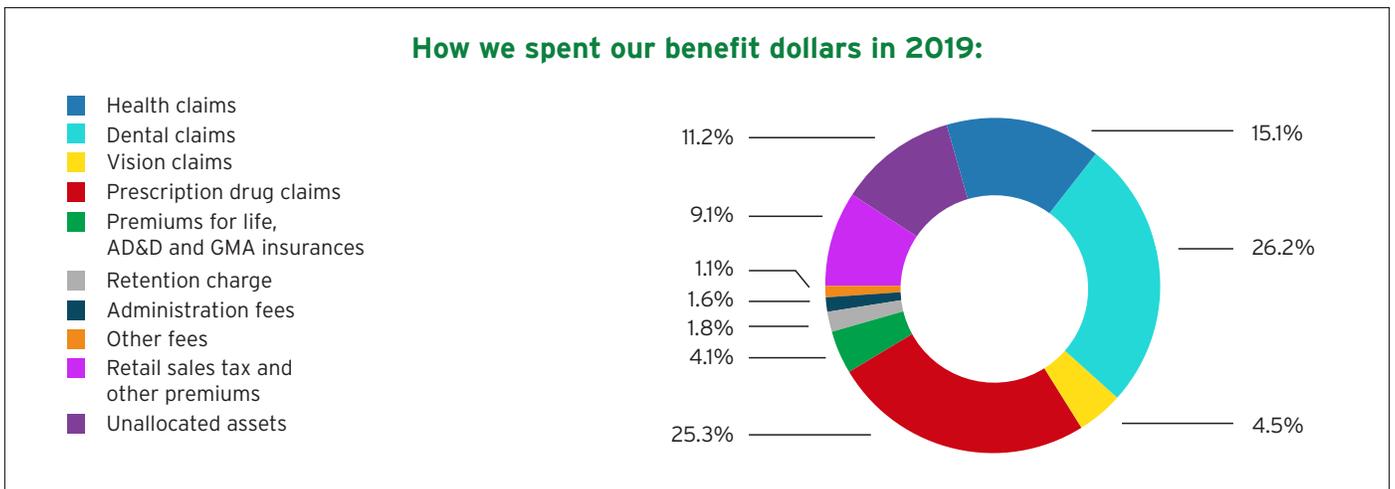
**Focus on finances**

As at December 2019, the CUPE EWBT had 52,386 members spread across 64 school boards in Ontario. Of this group, 46,579 elected to have benefits coverage.

Funding for our Trust comes from three separate sources. The majority comes from FTE funding, which is provided to the Trust through the school boards and is based on the number of full-time equivalent staffing positions. The FTE provides the basis for the funding we receive to help pay for your benefits. The other two sources are interest earned and member contributions, which are crucial to ensuring the Trust’s sustainability. Between January and December 2019, the CUPE EWBT received \$262 million in funding as follows:



Most of the Trust’s funding goes directly toward paying your claims, as well as the premiums charged by our insurance providers. The chart below illustrates our expenses and how the benefit dollars were spent in 2019.



In 2019, funding exceeded the Trust’s operating costs, resulting in unallocated assets. These unallocated assets are used for various purposes, such as fully funding appropriate Trust reserves and allowing for the plan improvements that came into effect on March 1, 2020.

Overall, our plan ended 2019 in a strong financial position, with more than \$38 million in net assets available for paying benefits as at December 31.

Based on the annual audit and actuarial valuation, we can confirm that the Trust is in a solid financial position today and is expected to remain so for the next few years. The Trustees monitor the plan's financials regularly and are aware of any changes that arise.

However, the cost of benefits is increasing significantly every year. Our projections assume an increase of 6% to 8% per year, which is a much faster pace than the funding currently negotiated. For this reason, the Trust remains dependent on the outcome of future negotiations. Rest reassured that the Trust is solidly positioned for the future. Through excellent plan management and governance, we are working toward ensuring we maintain our financial strength for years to come.

## Looking ahead - 2020 to date and beyond

So far, 2020 has been a year unlike any other, with the COVID-19 pandemic having such a sudden and severe impact, causing financial market volatility, interruptions to both work and home life, and economic fallout. These interruptions and economic troubles impacted our members and their families, and we evaluated all aspects of the plan thoroughly to make sure any and all available and appropriate support could be provided to members during the pandemic.

Fortunately, the plan's financial position made it possible to provide support through a premium holiday. The six-month premium holiday has allowed members to focus their personal and financial energy on other priorities, instead of worrying about making contributions to the benefits plan.

While it may feel like 2020 has been solely about the pandemic, we want to reassure you that we have continued to work on several other important matters, namely:

- We now accept electronic beneficiary designations from members. We are truly hoping that this will save our members valuable time, and effort, when submitting these important forms.
- In March, we moved to our new Trust office. Should you need to contact us in writing, the new address is: 175 Commerce Valley Drive West, Suite 350, Thornhill, ON L3T 7P6.

Additionally, we continued one of our most important initiatives, which is improving upon our already rigorous administrative and financial governance practices.

These include:

- Monitoring group benefits trends within the marketplace, identifying opportunities to further support plan sustainability while reducing risks throughout the process;
- Regularly meeting to discuss and review plan operations;
- Developing and maintaining policies designed to safeguard our members, including formal approaches related to benefits appeals, resolving conflicts and plan investments; and
- Remaining up to date on industry standards.

## Looking for more information?

Want more details on your benefits or how our plan works? Check out the CUPE EWBT website at [www.cupe-ewbt.ca](http://www.cupe-ewbt.ca). There, you'll find our ongoing member updates, FAQs, plan booklet, plan guide and other useful resources.

For questions on enrollment and eligibility, call OTIP Benefits Services at **1-866-783-6847**.

For questions on life, health and dental claims, call Canada Life's dedicated CUPE EWBT line at **1-866-800-8058**.

For any general inquiries and Trust-related issues, please email [info@cupe-ewbt.ca](mailto:info@cupe-ewbt.ca).

## A final word

This bulletin has been prepared exclusively for eligible CUPE education workers in the province of Ontario covered by the CUPE Education Workers' Benefits Trust. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to provide advice. If there are any differences between the information provided in this bulletin and any legal documents that govern the delivery of benefits, the legal documents will apply. The CUPE EWBT Trustees have sole discretion to modify any or all plan terms, including benefits levels, eligibility conditions, premium share, limits and co-pay amounts.