

'It is always a last resort': Winnipeg daycare staff go on strike ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Staff at a Winnipeg daycare are officially on strike.

The members from Les Tournesols Daycare in St. Vital hit the picket line Monday after more than a year of bargaining with their employer.

The Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union, which represents the staff at the daycare, said the employer is cutting back on sick time and vacations.

"Strikes are a last resort, it is always a last resort," Kyle Ross, president of the MGEU, told CTV News on the picket line Monday. "But it has been challenging and the employer has not moved on any positions and they recently have shown that they do have funds available that they could be supporting these workers and improving their lives and helping them out."

Ross said the employer has been difficult, leading to the strike. He says the daycare staff want the centre to apply for federal funding which could be used to increase their wages.

In a statement to CTV News, Manitoba's Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning Wayne Ewasko confirmed he was aware of the strike, and pointed to recent government announcements for the child-care sector – including up to \$3 million for a one-time TFS deposit eligible for the regulated child-care sector, and a \$2.9 million Retirement Enhancement Benefits package.

He said as well, under the Canada-Manitoba Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement, \$34.7 million will be allocated to the existing operating grants through an additional wage grid supplement.

"The operating grant increase provides facilities with an average increase of 37 percent across all space types in licensed centres, homes and nursery schools," Ewasko said in the statement. "This allows boards of directors to raise staff wage supporting retention and recruitment of trained early childhood educators."

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: child care workforce ^[4]

strike ^[5]

working conditions ^[6]

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