

# CAAT-A BARGAINING UPDATE: July 2023

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
BARGAINING TEAM

## Dear Members,

As you know, Bill 124 – which had previously limited our salary increases to 1% – was struck down and declared “void and of no effect” last November by the Ontario Superior Court. The presence of Bill 124 throughout our bargaining process, however, meant that the College Employer Council (CEC) refused to negotiate increases to salary or benefits beyond 1%.

Like many Collective Agreements that were bargained since Bill 124 was first tabled in 2019, our latest contract contains provisions for reopening wage and benefit negotiations in the event that Bill 124 was overturned. Like many other unions, in the wake of the court’s decision on Bill 124, we will be returning to the table to negotiate wage increases with the employer.

The Kaplan award, which culminated our latest round of bargaining, provided a process of mediation, where the two parties can negotiate a wage remedy, should Bill 124 be found unconstitutional. We will be commencing this process on August 14, when we will meet with the CEC bargaining team with the assistance of Eli Gedalof, who will be serving as a mediator.

This mediation process will differ from the mediation/arbitration process that



resulted in the Kaplan award. The reopener language in the Kaplan award speaks to mediation and not arbitration, which means the mediator's role will be to find a wage solution that is acceptable to both parties. If a remedy cannot be reached during mediation, possible next steps will need to be considered, following consultation with Local Presidents and the Bargaining Advisory Committee.

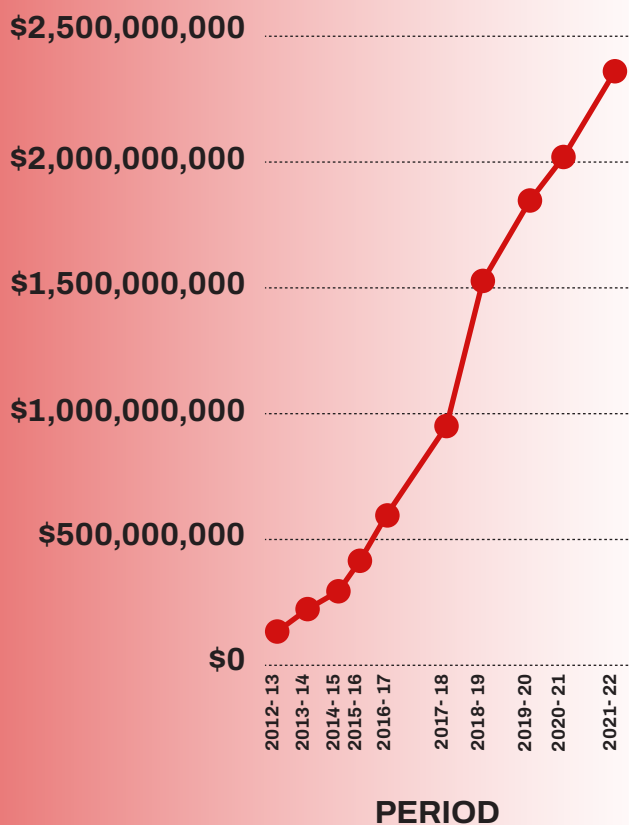
# Preface to Wage Mediation

We look forward to this opportunity to do something as a bargaining team that we were unable to do throughout the months of bargaining that led up to the Kaplan award: negotiate appropriate salary increases for the professors, instructors, counsellors, and librarians whose work enabled Ontario's 24 public colleges to deliver quality education throughout the extraordinary disruption caused by the pandemic. It is time for the employer to come to the table and acknowledge that the record profits the colleges have posted in recent years are a result of the hard work of faculty, and to affirm that faculty are entitled to a fair share of those profits.

While we will not be able to discuss the details of either side's positions in this mediated process, we wanted to provide some context on the many factors that might shape members' understanding of appropriate wage increases.

## College Profits

### CUMULATIVE PROFITS IN ALL 24 COLLEGES



In the last ten years, Ontario's 24 public colleges have publicly reported more than \$2 billion in profits (income over expenses). On average, profits over \$173 million annually have been reported since the start of the pandemic.

These multi-million-dollar profits have one fundamental origin: the hard work of college faculty.

Setting aside the unconscionable abuse of contract faculty throughout the college system, the staggering increase in college profits during the pandemic occurred because Bill 124 artificially and unconstitutionally suppressed employees' wages. We now know how much profit the colleges were able to make because of that unconstitutional law, and we expect the CEC to bargain in good faith to ensure that management and faculty can collaboratively arrive at a fair remedy.

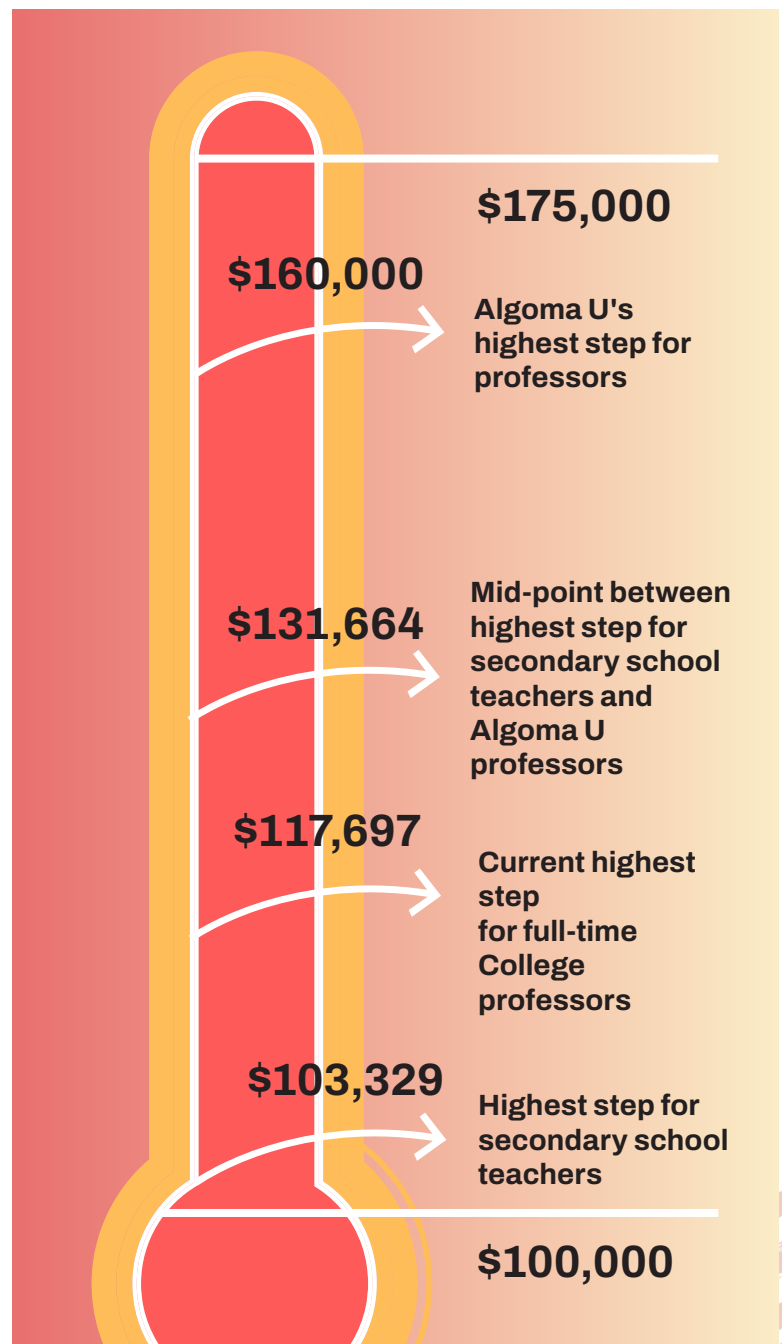
# Established Comparators

As far back as 1972, the salary benchmarks for Ontario College faculty have been grounded in comparisons with Ontario's University professors and secondary school teachers. These salary targets were further refined in a 1991 Salary and Benefits Task Force.

That Task Force concluded that the most appropriate benchmark indicator for the maximum College faculty salary is the midway point between the highest maximum salary of a teacher at an Ontario high school and the lowest maximum salary of a full professor at an Ontario university. It also concluded that negotiators should also be mindful of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Our initial research indicates that the top step for professors at Algoma University is \$160,000, while the top step for secondary school teachers is \$103,329. Taking those figures as an example, the midway point between them would be \$131,664 – an increase of \$13,967 over the current full-time faculty top step of \$117,697.

Quite simply, to reach the established benchmark of our historical comparators, **we would need to see a salary increase of almost 12%.**

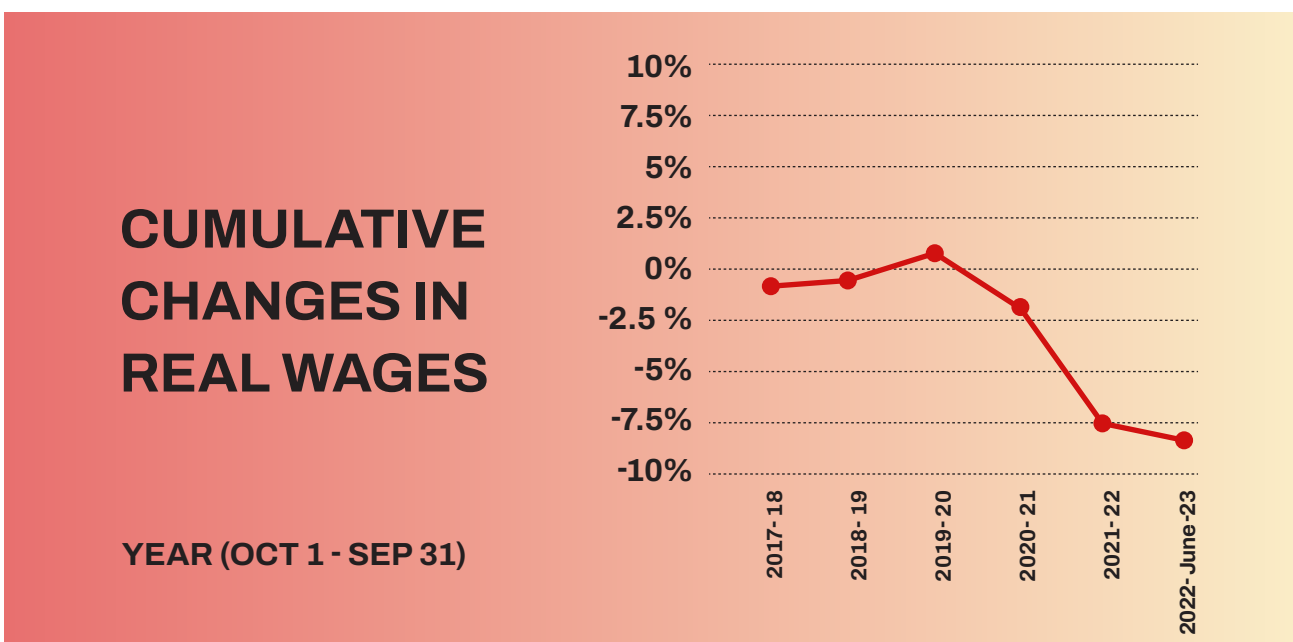


# Inflation

The 1991 report concluded that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) should be viewed by the bargaining parties as a benchmark indicator in the broad framework of wage and benefits discussions at the bargaining table. The CPI represents a change in the total price of a “basket” of selected goods, over a period of time.

Our previous Collective Agreement commenced in October, 2017. The following chart indicates our annual salary increases from that time until the present, compared to the inflationary increase in the average prices of items in Ontario.

Year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30)	Annual Salary increases	Annual Ontario CPI increase (inflation)	Annual Change in Real Wages	Cumulative Change in Real Wages
2017-18	+1.75%	2.5%	- 0.75%	- 0.75%
2018-19	+ 2.0%	1.7%	+ 0.3%	- 0.45%
2019-20	+ 2.0%	0.7%	+1.3%	+ 0.85%
2020-21	+ 2.0%	4.9%	- 2.9%	- 2.05%
2021-22	+1.0%	6.5%	- 5.5%	- 7.55%
2022-June 2023	+1.0%	2.1%	-1.1%	- 8.65%



Put simply, our real wages – the amount that we are able to purchase based upon what we earn – have **gone down 8.65%** since the expiry of our last Collective Agreement in September 2021, and have **gone down 9.5%** since the start of the pandemic and the unconstitutional imposition of Bill 124 on our salaries.

# Other Settlements

We have now seen arbitrated outcomes from wage-reopening disputes for several different bargaining units since Bill 124 was struck down as unconstitutional. We have also seen renewal agreements negotiated without the constraints imposed by Bill 124. Our wage reopening language provides for the parties to arrive at mutual agreement rather than have an arbitrator determine wage increases, and we share this overview as a relevant snapshot of the current bargaining landscape, province-wide:

- The Queen's University Faculty Association is the first faculty association to negotiate a Collective Agreement following the overturning of Bill 124. **On the strength of an 82% strike authorization vote**, they achieved annual increases of 3.5%, 3%, and 3%, retroactive to July 1, 2022.
- The Toronto Metropolitan University Faculty Association ratified a "re-opener" for their 2020-23 agreement. This obtained an additional 0.75%, 2% and 2.5% on top of the previously negotiated 1% annual increases, amounting to total wage increases of 8.25% over the three years of the agreement. Faculty at King's University College (formerly King's College, affiliated with the University of Western Ontario) had a wage reopener in their Collective Agreement that was similar to ours. They recently settled upon a wage increase of an additional 1.95% for the 2023-24 year, in addition to the 1% that had been negotiated under Bill 124.
- Outside of the postsecondary sphere, Ontario hospital workers were recently granted an additional 3.75% for 2022 and an additional 2.5% for 2023, on top of the 1% increases that they had received under Bill 124, plus increases to benefits. The CBC reports that, when estimating what these workers would have received under free and fair collective bargaining, the Arbitrator "looked to the 4.75 per cent and 3.5 per cent, respectively, that both Ontario power workers and federal public service employees achieved."
- The Ontario Nurses' Association was granted an additional 0.75% pay for 2020-21, an additional 1% for 2021-22, and an additional 2% for 2022-23 – all in addition to the 1% annually that had been awarded under Bill 124. This provides for a total of 6.75% salary increase over the life of their three-year Collective Agreement.

## COLLEGE FACULTY BARGAINING TEAM

Ravi Ramkissoonsingh, Local 242 (Niagara) – Chair  
Michelle Arbour, Local 125 (Lambton)  
Shawn Pentecost, Local 415 (Algonquin)  
Jonathan Singer, Local 560 (Seneca)  
Rebecca Ward, Local 732 (Confederation)