

Bargaining Achievements in the Saskatchewan Education Sector 2011

Prepared for the EWSC Annual Conference
October 13-15, 2011



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INTRODUCTION

In Saskatchewan, CUPE represents 6,688 support workers in the PreK-12 education sector (Pre Kindergarten to Grade 12). CUPE members work in a variety of jobs in Saskatchewan schools such as educational or teaching assistants, secretaries and administrative assistants, library assistants and technicians, caretakers, maintenance and trades workers, bus drivers, information technology specialists, social workers, community school coordinators, speech assistants and workers in many other classifications.

As of September 30, 2011, CUPE had 25 collective agreements in the PreK-12 education sector, down from 58 agreements in 2006. The number of collective agreements in this sector has been reduced by more than one-half in the last five years as a result of rural school division amalgamations that came into effect on January 2006. Since then, rural CUPE education locals have merged into one local per new school division and have bargained one collective agreement with their new employer. This required the amalgamation of up to six collective agreements in some cases.

This is the (lucky) thirteenth year that CUPE Research has produced this summary of bargaining achievements in the Saskatchewan education sector. When the first Bargaining Achievements report was written, there were over 60 bargaining units in the education sector. The Education Workers' Steering Committee requested a report to help track bargaining trends and successes among the vast number of settlements each year in the sector. Since then, the number of settlements occurring each year has gone down as the number of bargaining units have been reduced as a result of amalgamations.

This year's document reports on nine (9) education settlements. The agreements were ratified in the period from November 2010 until the end of September 2011. Very recently, Local 832-04, representing bus drivers from Good Spirit School Division, de-certified shortly after concluding a collective agreement. This reduced the number of CUPE collective agreements in the sector from 26 last year to 25.

The information in this report is based on the collective agreement settlement reports completed by the CUPE national representative assigned to the education local. CUPE's Research Representative uses that information and supplements it with additional information from the representative or by reviewing collective agreements.

This report also summarizes wage settlement trends in the province and major settlements in the public sector.

I. Saskatchewan Wage Settlement Trends 2010-2011

Saskatchewan has a booming economy, the lowest unemployment rate in the country (5.3%), and one of the lowest provincial public debts. The economy is expected to grow 3.8% in 2011, the second highest growth in the country after Newfoundland and Labrador (3.9%).

With such a positive economic outlook, one would expect the average workers would be doing well. Average weekly earnings grew by 3.5% in the first half of 2011 (Sask Trends Monitor, August 2011). Most of the growth in wages, however, has been in the private sector.

Table 1 on the next page shows that the average annual negotiated wage settlement for both the public and private sector was 2.9% in 2010 and 3.1% for 2011 (preliminary, based on 31 settlements). The private sector settlements, however, have been significantly higher, on average, than public sector settlements – 3.6% for the private sector compared to 2.0% for the public sector.

Table 1 also shows the average annual negotiated wage settlement per employee, a calculation that takes into account the number of employees in a bargaining unit. The average private sector employee received a wage increase in 2011 of 2.9%, compared to a 2.1% wage increase for the average public sector employee.

The wage settlement information shows a depressed trend in public sector employees' wage adjustments. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, average public sector wage increases averaged 4.0%, 4.9% and 4.0% respectively. In 2010 and 2011, public sector wage increases were reduced to 2.3% and 2.1%. Government wage guidelines of 5.5% over 3 years and a tougher bargaining climate created by essential services legislation has resulted in much lower wage settlements for the public sector in the last two years.

The Labour Relations and Mediation Branch of the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety monitors both public and private sector negotiated wage settlements in the province. The branch provided data on 31 settlements in 2011 to date, compared to a total of 43 settlements in 2010. The settlement data is based on voluntarily-submitted reports from unions and employers. The 2011 information is considered “preliminary” until all settlements that take place in 2011 are reported.

**Table 1 – Average Annual Percentage Wage Settlements
in Saskatchewan - 1998 to 2011**

Year	Total Number of Settlements	% Increase per Settlement			% Increase per Employee		
		Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
1998	41	2.1	1.8	2.4	2.0	1.8	2.6
1999	61	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0
2000	52	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.5
2001	72	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
2002	63	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0
2003	45	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8
2004	42	2.5	2.4	2.6	1.2	0.8	2.8
2005	69	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.6
2006	48	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.1	2.0	2.9
2007	54	3.6	3.7	3.6	4.0	4.0	3.4
2008	24	4.1	4.3	3.9	4.9	4.9	4.2
2009	18	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.4
2010	43	2.9	2.6	3.2	2.3	2.3	3.3
2011P	31	3.1	2.9	3.6	2.2	2.1	2.9

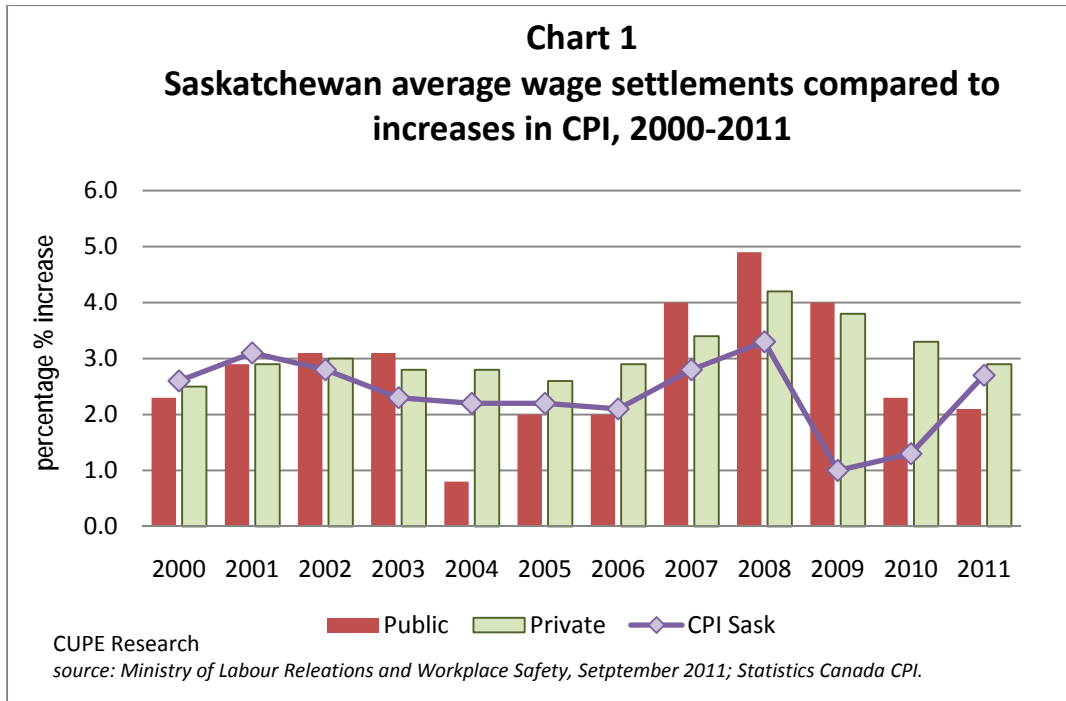
Source: Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, Wage Settlement Statistics, September 22, 2011

Consumer Price Index

Appendix IV of this report provides historical information on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada, Saskatchewan, Regina and Saskatoon. Inflation has been relatively low over the last number of years although Saskatchewan's CPI has been somewhat higher than the Canadian average.

How have Saskatchewan workers fared in comparison to increases in the cost of living?

Chart 1 compares public and private sector wage settlements to increases in the Saskatchewan CPI. The chart shows that public sector wage increases have been, for the most part, below increases in the cost of living. In the eleven year period from 2000 to 2010, average public sector wage increases exceeded the annual increase in the CPI only six times. Average private sector wage increases, on the other hand, were above the CPI nine times over eleven years.



Major provincial public sector settlements in 2011

The past year has been difficult for bargaining in the public sector as the government implemented a wage mandate of 5.5% over three years and most of the public sector is covered by the draconian *Public Services Essential Services Act*, which restricts the right to strike. Bargaining was difficult as many unions initially faced concessions, limited economic increases and intransigent employers. As a result, it has taken more than 18 months on average for most public sector unions to conclude an agreement.

Three major unions – the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) and SGEU (SIAST academic employees) – engaged in strike action this year.¹ Of the three unions, only HSAS is covered by the essential services legislation.

In this past year, CUPE and other unions initiated court action through the SFL to challenge the essential services legislation. A successful challenge could restore – or at least enhance - the right to strike for our health care, university and municipal workers and significantly alter the bargaining climate.

¹ Neither the STF nor HSAS is affiliated to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL)

Saskatchewan Teachers Federation

After engaging in job action (sanctions), the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) was able to reach a mediated settlement with the provincial government and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) in August of 2011. At the end of September, about two-thirds of teachers (66%) voted to accept the agreement. Over 12,600 teachers participated in the ratification vote.

Some of the key features of the settlement include:

- **Term of the agreement:** September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2013
- **General wage increase:** 1.5% (2010), 2.0% (2011), 2.0% (2011)
- **Market adjustments** at the beginning and end of the first year of the agreement based on Class IV equivalent salaries of teachers in western Canada. The western Canadian average was agreed to through the mediation process, and includes British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. The total percentage increase over the term of the agreement varies from 6.82% to 10.89%, depending on the teacher's position on the wage grid.
- In year two of the agreement, Step 15 of the salary grid will be collapsed to step 11. Increments "will be realigned so that they are equal with each increment," according to the STF summary of the agreement, resulting in a salary increase of 4.47%.
- **Supplemental Employment Benefits Plan:** the period of benefits increases from 12 weeks to 17 weeks; medical evidence will no longer be required to access benefits and instead benefits will commence at the estimated time of the birth of the child or delivery date, whichever is earlier.
- **Dental Plan:** effective September 1, 2012 the dental plan will cover up to 50% of adult orthodontics to a lifetime maximum of \$2,000 per teacher
- **Health Care Plan:** effective April 1, 2012 the government is to fund the plan based on a monthly payment schedule rather than on a quarterly basis. An increase in teachers' salaries will require additional funding for the health plan and group insurance.

Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan

The Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) also took strike action this year to bring pressure on the government and SAHO to conclude their agreement, which had expired March 31, 2009. In July of this year, the HSAS and SAHO reached an agreement which was later ratified by HSAS members (87% in favour).

The term of the new agreement is from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2013. General wage increases follow the pattern of other health care unions: 2% (2009), 1.5% (2010), 2% (2011) and 2% (2012).

HSAS was also able to negotiate an increase in the educational base rate of pay, market supplemented wage rates and negotiated new adjusted market wage rates. The market adjusted wage rates do not apply to all classifications.

Crown Corporations

The major crown corporations and their unions also reached settlements this year, after lengthy periods of bargaining. In January of 2011, the unions representing workers at the crown corporations formed a 'Common Front' to coordinate their efforts to push back concessions and get fair collective agreements.

SGI/COPE 397: after 18 months of bargaining, COPE 397 reached a tentative agreement with SGI at the end of July. The union agreed to a four year agreement with the following economic increases: 1% (2010), 3% (2011), 1.5% (2012) and 2% (2013). The new agreement expires December 31, 2013.

SaskPower/IBEW 2067: IBEW reached a two-year agreement (January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2011) with the crown corporation in mid-June, after 90% of its members rejected the company's offer in January of this year. IBEW members will receive wage increases of 1.5% (2010) and 2% (2011).

SaskPower/CEP: CEP reached a tentative agreement with SaskPower on September 30, 2011. No details of the settlement are available as of the writing of this report.

SaskEnergy/CEP: in mid-August of this year, after almost two years of bargaining, CEP reached an agreement with SaskEnergy. The agreement provides for wage increases of 5.5% over three years, plus 0.25% for pension and an additional 0.25% for wages in exchange for "efficiencies." The new agreement is in effect from February 1, 2010 to January 31, 2013.

SaskTel/CEP: CEP concluded an agreement with SaskTel in mid-June. The term of the agreement is from March 21, 2010 to March 16, 2013. CEP members will receive the following wage increases: 1.5% (retroactive to March 21, 2010), 2% (retroactive to March 20, 2011), and 2% (March 18, 2012).

WCB/SGEU: SGEU, representing 365 members at the Workers Compensation Board, reached a settlement on August 17, 2011. The new three-year agreement runs from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012. In line with the public sector wage mandate, WCB workers will receive 1.5% (2010), 2% (2011) and 2% (2012) in general wage increases. SGEU also secured an increase in pension contributions from 7% to 7.25 % and an increase to wellness benefits from 1.4% to 1.6% retroactive to January 1, 2011.

CUPE Settlements in Saskatchewan

There were 26 CUPE locals in the province that concluded collective agreements in 2011, as of the end of September. Of the 26 agreements, the average wage increases negotiated per settlement were: 2.8% (2010); 2.5% (2011); 2.5% (2012); 2.6% (2013). Overall the wage increases have been above the public sector wage mandate, with the exception of CBO (Community Based Organization) locals who were funded by the government for increases of a mere 1% in 2010 and 1.5% in 2011.

Bargaining in the education sector

There were nine settlements concluded in the education sector between November 2010 and September 30, 2011.² The nine collective agreements cover just under 2,900 CUPE members.

The average wage increases (per settlement) for the education sector in the last year were: 3.1% in 2010, 2.67% in 2011, 2.75% in 2012 and 3.0% for 2013 (see Table 2).

Education locals this year did not make many gains in language, benefits or other areas. Most of the agreements achieved wage increases above the provincial wage mandate, but did not make many other major achievements in the collective agreement. The “notes” section of Table 2 highlights the additional gains made in bargaining by education locals.

It has also taken longer than usual to conclude a collective agreement in the education sector, as was the case in the rest of the public sector. A number of large locals are still in bargaining with agreements that expired December 31, 2010 – Local 1125 (Regina RCSSD), Locals 650, 3766 and 4643 (Regina Public), and Local 2913 (PA RCSSD). Local 5506 (Prairie South) has been without an agreement since August 31, 2009.

Local 4784 achieves an average provincial wage rate

One important highlight this year is the agreement reached between Local 4784 and Good Spirit School Division at the end of this summer. The collective agreement had expired July 31, 2010 and the parties were not making much progress at the bargaining table. After a wage proposal from the employer that was barely above increases to the CPI, the local took a strike vote in May and received a strong strike mandate.

The employer returned to the bargaining table and responded more favourably to the Local’s proposals. The Local had pointed out how many of their classifications had wage rates that were significantly lower than the CUPE provincial average. The employer and union then collected additional wage rates and job descriptions from across the province, and mutually agreed to a

² The reporting in this document covers a time period shorter than one year because last year the EWSC conference was held in November and we were able to review settlements up until the end of October 2010.

provincial average. The settlement was reached on the basis of achieving wage rates equal to the provincial average.

In the first year of the agreement, the four major classifications (educational assistants, administrative assistants, caretakers and maintenance, and library technicians) will receive wage increases of 3.69% to 11.84% at step 1 and increases of 8.21% to 11.52% for those at step 5 of the wage schedule. Those members who are at steps 2, 3 and 4 of the wage schedule will receive an average percentage increase of the top and bottom increases and maintenance workers receive a 10% increase.

There are a number of classifications, with only 7 people in the positions, that were already close to the provincial average wage rate. They will receive 1.5% in the first year of the agreement.

Using a weighted average calculation, the average CUPE member at step 1 will receive a 5.7% increase and the average CUPE member at step 5 will receive a 9.1% increase retroactive to August 1, 2010. In year two and three of the agreement, all classifications receive a 2% wage adjustment.

This settlement is significant for many reasons. The Local was able to convince the employer of the need to dramatically increase wage rates to a provincial average by appealing to their sense of fairness. Secondly, the local membership was unified and provided its bargaining committee with a strong strike mandate that forced the employer to withdraw its initial position.

Future Bargaining

As mentioned previously, there are a number of CUPE education locals that have been in bargaining for some time with agreements that expired at the end of 2010 or 2009. We are hopeful that they will be able to reach good settlements for their members in the next few months.

There are a few of our collective agreements that had tied our members' wage increases to the increases that the teachers negotiated. Now that the STF has ratified its new agreement, CUPE locals may want to look to their agreement to help achieve gains at the bargaining table. The improvements to the STF's Supplemental Employment Benefits (SEB) Plan is one example. A number of CUPE Locals had the same benefit period of 12 weeks that the teachers had. Now that the STF has negotiated a SEB of 95% of salary for a period of 17 weeks, CUPE Locals may want to include an expanded SEB as one of their bargaining goals.

Table 2: CUPE Education Wage Settlements in Saskatchewan – 2011

Local	Employer	# of members	Wage Increases	Term of Agreement	Notes
832-04	Good Spirit SD	FT: 37	2010: 2.0% 2011: 4.0%	Aug 1, 2010 to July 31, 2012	Vacation improvement, increased bus premiums and mileage premium. The Local has since decertified.
2268	St. Paul's RCSSD	FT: 513 PT: 60	2011: 3.0% 2012: 3.0% 2013: 3.0%	Jan 1, 2011 to Dec 31, 2013	Added "sexual orientation" to no discrimination clause. Employers pay \$5,000 for union to reimburse wages or run union office.
3730	St. Paul's RCSSD	FT: 126 PT: 11	2011: 3.0% 2012: 3.0% 2013: 3.0%	Jan 1, 2011 to Dec 31, 2013	\$2.50/hr adjustment for carpenters and painters. Increase in glasses coverage to \$350; removed benefits cost cap.
4254	Prairie Spirit SD	FT: 167 PT: 73	2010: 2.0% 2011: 2.0%	Sept 1, 2010 to Aug 31, 2012	Job security – restrictions on use of volunteers
4754	Chinook SD	FT: 102 PT: 15	2011: 2.0% 2012: 2.5% 2013: 3.0%	Jan 1, 2011 to Aug 31, 2013	
4784	Good Spirit SD	FT: 195	2010: 5.7-9.1% 2011: 2.0% 2012: 2.0%	Aug 1, 2010 to July 31, 2013	Local took strike vote which pressured Employer to agree to an average provincial wage rate for four major classifications. First year of agreement employees will receive an average 5.7% (Step 1) to 9.1% (Step 5) depending on classification.
4802	Sun West SD	FT: 316 PT: 109	2010: 3.0% 2011: 3.0% 2012: 3.0%	Sept 1, 2010 to Aug 31, 2013	Hourly wage increase of \$0.45 Sept 1, 2010, \$0.35 Sept. 1, 2011, and \$0.35 on Sept 1, 2012. Equivalent 3% per year. Employer share of benefit premium costs increased from 50% to 60%.
4869	South East Cornerstone SD	FT: 34 PT: 224	2010: 2.8% 2011: 3.0%	Sept 1, 2010 to Aug 31, 2013	For Student service Counsellors additional wage adjustments of 9 to 25% in first year.
8443	Saskatoon Public SD	FT: 775 PT: 125	2011: 2.0% 2012: 3.0% 2013: 3.0%	Jan 1, 2011 to Aug 31, 2013	New boot allowance; superior duty pay for caretakers replacing bldg operators on day 1; introduction of a prescription drug card.
<p>Average Wage Increase per CUPE Settlement 2010: 3.1%; 2011: 2.67%; 2012: 2.75%; 2013: 3.0%</p>					

APPENDIX I

CUPE Education Local Settlements Reviewed October 2010 – September 30, 2011

	Local	School Division	Date Ratified	Term of Agreement
1	832-04*	Good Spirit SD	May 31, 2011	August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2012
2	2268	St. Paul's RCSSD	Sept 14, 2011	January 1, 2011 to Dec 31, 2013
3	3730	St. Paul's RCSSD	July 5, 2011	January 1, 2011 to Dec. 31, 2013
4	4254	Prairie Spirit SD	June 7, 2011	September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2012
5	4754	Chinook SD	March 31, 2011	January 1, 2011 to August 31, 2013
6	4784	Good Spirit School Division	Sept 10, 2011	August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2013
7	4802	Sun West SD	March 17, 2011	September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2013
8	4869	South East Cornerstone SD	Dec 16, 2010 (CA settled)	September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2012
9	8443	Saskatoon Public SD	June 22, 2011	January 1, 2011 to August 31, 2013

*832-04 decertified September 2011 and is no longer a CUPE local.

Appendix II

Locals Currently in Bargaining or with Expired Collective Agreements

	Local	School Division	Classifications	Collective Agreement Expiry Date
1	650	Regina Public SD	Caretakers, Maintenance	December 31, 2010
2	3766	Regina Public SD	Support Staff, EAs	December 31, 2010
3	4643	Regina Public SD	Clerical	December 31, 2010
4	4797*	Northwest SD*	All classifications	December 31, 2010
5	5252	Prairie Valley SD	All classifications	August 31, 2011
6	5506	Prairie South SD	All classifications	August 31, 2009
7	1125	Regina RCSSD	Caretakers, Maintenance	December 31, 2010
8	2913	Prince Albert RCSSD	Caretakers, Maintenance	December 31, 2010
9	885	Riling Bus Drivers	Bus Drivers	June 30, 2011
10	4678	Riling Bus Company	Bus Drivers	August 31, 2011

*settlement reached for Local 4797 but not ratified as of the writing of this report

Appendix III
CUPE Education Agreements Expiry Dates (2009-2013)

2009		Expiry Date	# Members
5506	Prairie South SD	August 31, 2009	297
2010			
Local 650	Regina SD #4	December 31, 2010	195
Local 3766	Regina SD #4	December 31, 2010	400
Local 4643	Regina SD #4	December 31, 2010	52
Local 2913	PA RCSSD #6	December 31, 2010	20
Local 1125	Regina RCSSD #81	December 31, 2010	96
			763
2011			
Local 885	Riling Bus	June 30, 2011	16
Local 5252	Prairie Valley SD #208	August 31, 2011	294
Local 4678	Riling Bus Co.	August 31, 2011	27
Local 4875	North East SD	December 31, 2011	223
Local 5506	Holy Trinity RCSSD	December 31, 2011	120
			680
2012			
Local 4195	Sask Rivers SD #119	July 31, 2012	650
Local 4618	Christ the Teacher	August 31, 2012	16
Local 4607	Ile a La Crosse SD #112	December 31, 2012	33
Local 4254	Prairie Spirit SD	August 31, 2012	240
Local 4869	South East Cornerstone SD	August 31, 2012	227
			1,166
2013			
Local 4747	Living Sky SD #202	August 31, 2013	585
Local 4799	Horizon SD	August 31, 2013	376
Local 4802	Sun West SD #207	August 31, 2013	425
Local 8443	Saskatoon SD	August 31, 2013	1025
Local 4754	Chinook SD #211	August 31, 2013	358
Local 4797*	Northwest SD #203	December 31, 2013	95
Local 2268	St. Paul's RCSSD #20	December 31, 2013	573
Local 3730	St. Paul's RCSSD #20	December 31, 2013	150
Local 4784	Good Spirit SD	July 31, 2013	195
			3,782
TOTAL			6,688

*pending ratification of agreement

Appendix IV

Annual Average Percentage Change for Consumer Price Index (Not Seasonally Adjusted), All Items

Canada, Saskatchewan, Regina, Saskatoon, 1990 – 2010

YEAR	CANADA		SASKATCHEWAN		REGINA		SASKATOON	
	INDEX	% CHANGE	INDEX	% CHANGE	INDEX	% CHANGE	INDEX	% CHANGE
1990	78.4	4.8	76.0	4.4	75.2	4.2	76.6	4.4
1991	82.8	5.6	80.0	5.2	79.3	5.3	80.6	5.2
1992	84.0	1.5	80.8	1.0	80.3	1.3	81.2	0.8
1993	85.6	1.8	83.3	3.0	82.9	3.2	83.6	2.8
1994	85.7	0.2	84.8	1.8	84.4	1.9	84.9	1.7
1995	87.6	2.2	86.4	1.9	86.1	2.0	86.6	2.0
1996	88.9	1.6	88.1	1.9	87.7	1.9	88.2	1.8
1997	90.4	1.6	89.2	1.3	88.9	1.4	89.2	1.1
1998	91.3	1.0	90.4	1.4	90.5	1.8	90.5	1.5
1999	92.9	1.7	92.0	1.9	92.1	2.0	92.1	2.1
2000	95.4	2.7	94.4	2.6	94.4	2.6	94.5	2.6
2001	97.8	2.1	97.2	3.1	97.3	3.1	97.2	2.9
2002	100.0	2.7	100.0	2.8	100.0	2.7	100.0	2.8
2003	102.8	2.8	102.3	2.3	102.3	2.3	102.2	2.2
2004	104.7	1.8	104.6	2.2	104.6	2.2	104.3	2.1
2005	107.0	2.2	106.9	2.2	106.8	2.1	106.7	2.3
2006	109.1	2.0	109.1	2.1	108.9	2.0	109.0	2.2
2007	111.5	2.2	112.2	2.8	111.7	2.6	112.7	3.4
2008	114.1	2.3	115.9	3.3	115.2	3.1	117.1	3.9
2009	114.4	0.3	117.1	1.0	117.2	1.7	118.2	0.9
2010	116.5	1.8	118.7	1.4	118.9	1.5	119.6	1.2

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