

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we head into staffing for next year, declining enrolment continues to be a major concern for all of us. As everyone is well aware, we had an unprecedented number of teachers (81) declared redundant last year and while many had been recalled by the beginning of second semester, tragically, 47 people still remain on the list. We sincerely hope that the situation will improve for next year. In order for this to happen we would need to have no further declines in enrolment, new retirements/resignations and/or more funding allocated to our board for staffing. We therefore remain hopeful, but are not holding our breath. If further redundancies occur, we will continue to review the processes used last year and try to encourage the board to improve upon them as we were able to do this year, by altering the process to better honour seniority for recall. We recognize that there are still many concerns around the placement of teachers who are not recalled and we will continue to discuss processes that might be more successful. These are indeed stressful times for many. Please feel free to call us with your questions or concerns.

Another major concern for us and many of our members has been the disappearance of Jeffrey Boucher, a long-time member of the staff at Bowmanville High School. As you are aware, Jeffrey has not been seen or heard from since January 12th. Despite an extensive search and investigation by the Durham police there are still no answers to what happened to Jeff. As you can imagine, this has been a terrible situation for Jeff's family and his colleagues at BHS. We truly hope for Jeff's safe return and will continue to reach out to both the BHS Staff and Jeff's family during these most difficult of times. None of us are immune to unforeseen and difficult circumstances and when they do arise, the uniting of staff and gestures of support to each other and the family help everyone to better cope with life's challenges. It is important to reach out to each other in times of need and tragedy. We wish to remind each of you that we are here to offer support and assistance. If you or someone in your school is going through a rough time, please give us a call. We will do whatever we can to help.

As you are aware, Friday, March 7th is an Unpaid Day. Please be sure to use this day and your March Break to rejuvenate and do the things that you enjoy with family and friends.

Be Safe and Take Care,

Janie

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INSIDE STORY HEADLINE

This year's delegation consists of:

Aileen Fletcher (BHS), Dave Warda, Deb Barsanti (KCVI), Ellen Hinan (LDSS), Janie Kelly, Lynne Rae (CSS), Nancy Edwards (OTBU), Norm Tompsett (OTBU), Stephen Hel-leiner (CHS), Kevin McFadden, Tracey Hughes and Vanessa Vidler (TAS).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

REIMBURSEMENT FUNDS

A reminder to OSSTF District 14 TBU members:

In lieu of the annual OSSTF Professional Development Day, the Educational Services Committee has made available funding to assist District 14 TBU members who are pursuing their own professional development.

Members may submit receipts for reimbursement to a maximum of \$150 per school year.

On February 6 2014, 23 members received reimbursement totaling \$2992.42. The next deadline for



reimbursement is June 15 2014.

For more information, and to locate the Reimbursement Claim Form, visit the OSSTF District 14 website.

By Kevin McFadden (TAS)

DISTRICT 14 HEADS TO AMPA

Once again, members from District 14 will be eagerly making their way to Toronto at the start of March Break in order to represent the membership at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (known as AMPA). This yearly meeting is one of the most exciting events of the union year, as it is the place where some very important work is done by over 700 delegates representing our 35 districts.

OSSTF/FEESO represents about 60 000 members in different job classes (including, teachers, occasional, office-clerical staff, custodial and plant personnel, personal support workers, speech and language pathologists, support personnel, child and youth workers, and many more).

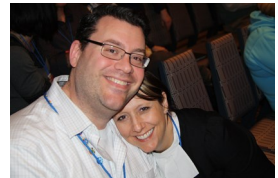
AMPA is the place where the policies and direction of our Federation takes shape. At the 4-day meeting, members are engaged in discussion and debate about a number of specific details of the Federation. We vote on motions that will set the tone for the future of OSSTF/FEESO, pass the annual working budget, and direct our elected Provincial Executive members to undertake a variety of jobs on behalf of the whole membership.

AMPA is a place where democracy rules and where Roberts Rules of Order are on the daily menu. It is also a place where your local representatives have the opportunity to address issues that will affect each and every one of us. Our members have a history of "going to the mic" and asking valuable questions of our leaders and of making relevant and important comments about motions on the floor.

Your representatives were elected to attend AMPA in the late fall and will be arriving at the meeting with a solid understanding of the motions that are coming to the table from districts, provincial committees, and the Provincial Executive. By the end of the four days, much will have been accomplished and the direction and tone of Federation work will be set for the 2014-2015 year. The days are long for our delegates, but the experience is one that leaves all those who attend engaged and empowered.

We look forward to representing the district and of reporting back post-AMPA.

By Tracey Hughes



DON'T FORGET FEBRUARY 28!

For any member of our bargaining unit, February 28 is an important day to mark on your calendar. Under our Collective Agreement, it is a deadline for many items, including certain requests to the Employer. Those requests for the following school year that must be submitted by February 28 under the Collective Agreement include,

- Change of FTE status (Article 24.09)
- Transfers (Article 24.08)
- Unpaid Leave (Article 16)
- Self-Funded Leave (a.k.a. X/Y Plan - Article 14)
- Recall from Surplus to Original School (Article 24.05.04)

Once these requests have been made, a teacher may withdraw their request up to the May Placement Meeting, however the earlier you withdraw the request the better. Once teachers have been placed for the next school year, the request is considered irrevocable.

If a teacher makes a request for one of the above items AFTER February 28, there is no obligation for the Employer to consider or grant those requests.

Some of these requests, such as Change of FTE Status and Transfer Requests, are only done electronically through my KPR. The others are done with a letter to HR. Be sure you give yourself plenty of time to complete these requests and submit them well before the deadline.

Teachers who have submitted a letter of intent to retire at the end of the school year should contact the District Office to withdrawal from their LTD premiums by February 28. This process takes a few minutes and can save you a few hundred bucks in your last semester of teaching.

Be sure to put February 28 on your calendar!

DISTRICT 14 EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AWARDS

It's time to think about nominating someone in your school community who has personified the OSSTF/FEESO motto:

Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another.

We are now accepting nominations for the *Excellence in Public Education Awards* and for the newly minted "My Federation" award. We will be hosting a BBQ in June to celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of the award winners.

If you wish to nominate someone from your school community for either of these awards please visit our website at d14.osstf.ca

DID YOU RECEIVE YOUR PASSWORD?

Protecting and Enhancing Public Education

YOU WILL NEED IT TO ACCESS IMPORTANT OSSTF/FEESO MEMBER-ONLY INFORMATION. MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS AND PASSWORD WERE MAILED OUT IN OCTOBER AND JANUARY.

DIDN'T GET A PASSWORD?

CONTACT PROVINCIAL OFFICE
OSSTF-MEMBER-HELP@OSSTF.CA
1.800.267.7867 ★ 416.751.8300

BENEFITS INVESTIGATION PROJECT

OSSTF/FEESO

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY

NOW, UNTIL FEB. 28/14

Feb 28

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting—May 13

OSSTF Provincial Standing Committees & Councils applications due on March 1st.

OSSTF Scholarships, Awards & Bursaries next due date is April 15th.

OSSTF Family Bursaries to assist children of OSSTF members entering college university or apprenticeship programs due at the end of April.

OSSTF call for Presenters applications continue to be accepted.

District 14 Retirement Workshop on April 3rd.

Members Only Website is still running the surveys for Provincial Priorities and Benefits, but this ends Feb. 28. Use the password mailed to you on the bright orange paper to access the survey on the Provincial OSSTF website.

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ONE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The call for "One Public School System" is long overdue.

Members from our District experienced the negative impact of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association's (OECTA) actions when they backed down to the government last year during negotiations and signed the Memorandum of Understanding. While we were fighting Bill 115, the Catholic schools in our District actively recruited our students and further divided the community against us. While we battled for our right to bargain collectively, they remained silent. Locally, every school felt this frustration. We never want to be in that weakened position again! In response grass roots members from our District and others supported motions at AMPA last year which have borne fruit already. The Provincial Executive has delivered by putting One Public System into the public arena for open debate.

OSSTF published their Education platform in the fall. It had six planks, and all the media was interested in discussing was the plank about *One Public System*. MPPs from all parties expressed interest and even support for our position, but no courage to carry this agenda forward. We have learned that if this issue is going to matter to anyone, that OSSTF must give it life. The response from the Catholic system has certainly helped to keep this issue on the table.

OECTA is very agitated by our actions. Since launching our education platform OECTA has both tried to dismiss the conversation and taken the offensive. To their own membership they minimized the issue by sandwiching it in media release on December 9, 2013 which reads "Feedback received from Liberal and NDP MPPs was that OSSTF led with the anti-Catholic issue and the issue was not well received by any of the three main parties."

(www.oecta.on.ca) This is simply untrue. The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association: (OCSTA) have gone to great pains to produce and release several online videos which promote the Catholic System as the one system where students can learn in an environment which is grounded in values. These videos have directly characterized our school system as valueless and inferior. The videos entitled *Faith in our Future* have drawn criticism and at least one of them has been withdrawn. OECTA has also launched a campaign to misinform OSSTF members working in Catholic schools. Education workers (who were not welcome in OECTA) were sent literature which attacks our ability to represent them, and attempts to convince them that wanting to discuss "one public system" is anti-Catholic.

Obviously the Catholic system is deeply troubled by our actions. OSSTF District 14 believes that our members and the greater community deserve to have this conversation. We do not want to wait or back down because we are being painted as anti-Catholic. We want to frame the conversation about what is right and responsible. A recent document written and circulated by the OSSTF, for its members working in the separate Catholic system, states unequivocally: "OSSTF believes the way to safeguard good union jobs is to stop wasting money on duplicate management and senior administration positions and on competing for student enrolment." We continue to believe that one public system for our common future will allow all students in this province to be treated equally, and then multiple systems can stop fighting one another. If you are interested in keeping this issue alive follow District 14 on Twitter, and keep posted for new developments.

More information about the OSSTF education plan can be found at osstf.on.ca



One School System.
Publicly Funded. Two Official Languages.

Want a button or a bumper magnet?
Call Daniel McLean
705 748 3444