



November 8, 2019

## Provincial Executive Liaison Report

To: District 10 – District Council  
From: Malini Leahy, Executive Officer

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### 1. Update on Central Table Bargaining

Additional central table bargaining dates have been scheduled for November 14, 15, 18, 19, 20 and 21. It has not yet been determined which of those dates will be designated for Support Staff bargaining and which will be designated for Teacher/Occasional Teacher bargaining.

In light of the slow pace of bargaining at both the Support Staff and Teacher/Occasional Teacher central bargaining tables, and the unwillingness of the management teams to engage in any meaningful discussion of substantive issues, the Provincial Executive has determined that central strike votes will be conducted over the next month among OSSTF/FEESO members covered by the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.

On October 18, 2019, OSSTF/FEESO filed for conciliation for both the Support Staff and the Teacher/Occasional Teacher central bargaining tables. Conciliation is a routine step in negotiations when parties have been unable to resolve differences at the bargaining table.

On November 1, 2019, as requested by OSSTF/FEESO, the conciliation officer issued “no-board” reports for both the Support Staff and the Teacher/Occasional Teacher central bargaining tables. This means that OSSTF/FEESO will be in a legal strike position on November 18.

### 2. BargainingForEducation.ca

Full Teacher/Occasional Teacher and Support Staff central table bargaining briefs along with comprehensive summaries can be found on the <https://bargainingforeducation.ca/> website.

### 3. EQAO Math Proficiency Test for New Teachers: Advice for Teacher Members

On August 20, 2019, two regulations were filed: Ontario Regulation 271/19 Proficiency in Mathematics, under the OCTA, and Ontario Regulation 272/19 Objects of the Office under the Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996. With the Proficiency in Mathematics regulation, new applicants to the OCT will be required to pass a mathematics proficiency test if their completed application for registration is received on or after March 31, 2020.

OSSTF/FEESO has concerns about this mandatory, high-stakes math proficiency test for future members. Not only do Ontario students currently rank highly on the world stage in terms of Math scores, there is little empirical evidence that standardized teacher tests are an indicator of teacher proficiency or student success.

Not all details regarding the content and delivery of the test are known at this time, however the regulations state that the test will be developed by the EQAO and administered by Faculties of Education. EQAO will be responsible for communicating the results to OCT. The test will consist of multiple-choice questions, 70% of which will cover mathematical content from grades 3 – 11 curricula, and the remaining 30% will cover math pedagogy. A minimum of 70% on each component will be required in order to pass. In order to be granted an Ontario Certificate of Qualification, all beginning teachers in Ontario – regardless of division or subject specialization – who submit their certification applications to the College of Teachers (OCT) on or after March 31, 2020, will have to successfully pass the test. Whether all Teacher Candidates will write the same test regardless of their qualifications is unclear.

What is clear is that internationally educated teachers will receive a conditional Certificate of Qualification and Registration from OCT and have two years to pass the math test. Interestingly, teachers who certify in other Canadian jurisdictions are exempt from taking the test due to Ontario Labour Mobility Act provisions: they will be considered as having met the requirements for certification in Ontario without having to undergo additional training or assessment. There are also provisions in the regulations for current teachers to take the test voluntarily.

OSSTF/FEESO policies state that:

- 7.17.2. the qualifications and training of teachers should be relevant to the development and needs of the students in the divisions in which they are teaching;
- 7.17.16. any entry-to-profession testing be limited to assessments based on and administered within the normal pre-service courses delivered by an accredited Ontario faculty of education;
- 7.17.17. teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers should not be required to recertify;

OSSTF/FEESO has concerns about the option for members to take the test if they are already an Ontario certified teacher. Some OSSTF/FEESO members may be tempted to take the test voluntarily to test themselves, or as an avenue to leadership.

Members should be advised not to write the test on a voluntary basis.

#### **4. Political Action for November 12-15, 2019**

With the Provincial Legislature resuming business the last week in October, MPPs will be spending more of their time at Queen's Park until early December. This makes local contact with MPPs more challenging for OSSTF/FEESO districts. Other than the weekly Friday constituency day, the only other extended period for local advocacy and demonstration to MPPs is the Legislature's constituency week from Tuesday, November 12 – Friday, November 15.

While on their Constituency Week break, MPPs will have an opportunity to gather information from their constituents. This provides an opening for OSSTF/FEESO to continue to highlight our position to the community and the MPPs. These actions will continue to pressure the Minister of Education and the Ford government to conclude a positive collective bargaining agreement for OSSTF/FEESO and its members.

At the same time, during this week, strike votes may also be occurring in some districts that may stretch each district's capacity. Nonetheless, with bargaining and the release of

the strike vote results on November 15, it is imperative that OSSTF/FEESO continue its political action strategy.

Districts are urged to engage in the following actions during the week of November 12 – 15, keeping in mind that no activities should occur on Remembrance Day - November 11:

1. MPP Rallies – Districts should plan a rally at one or more local MPP offices on any day during the week. For districts with more than one MPP, they may choose multiple days for rallies.
2. Letters to MPP – a fillable template letter is available for distribution to local MPPs to explain the current education climate.
3. Letters to the Editor – a fillable template letter is available for distribution to local media to explain the current education climate.
4. Social Media post and tag your MPP – Districts are encouraged to tweet their local MPP using various themes and hashtags including #fairdealnow, #NoCutsToEducation and include the twitter hashtag communities of #onpoli, #onted, #edchat, #osstf
5. Social Media posts to the Community – Districts are asked to post supportive social media messages using the themes and hashtags such as I'm an Ontario parent, and #ImWithOSSTF

Districts should engage local allies, including parent groups and labour affiliates, to join them in any local actions where appropriate. For more information, contact Paul Kossta at [Paul.Kossta@osstf.ca](mailto:Paul.Kossta@osstf.ca)

#### **5. Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition Meeting – October 16, 2019**

At the meeting, representatives from OSSTF/FEESO, CUPE, OPSEU, OCUFA, and CFS discussed a number of issues. Representatives were updated on OSSTF/FEESO's K-12 provincial bargaining.

OCUFA detailed the Performance based funding proposal by the Ford government that would impact the level of funding for each post-secondary institution. As well, the negative impact of the Student Choice Initiative on student groups was reviewed by the CFS.

A discussion ensued on the introduction of the Ford government's Bill 124, Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, that would limit public sector compensation to one-percent. The bill also aims to pool the benefit plans of the public sector.

#### **6. Joint White Ribbon and OSSTF/FEESO Curriculum Resource on Preventing Sexual Exploitation**

For many years, White Ribbon and OSSTF/FEESO have collaborated on curriculum resources focused on ending gender based violence and sexual exploitation of women and girls.

White Ribbon is a thought-leader in gender-based violence prevention. Through research, reports and work with partners, we inspire changes in policy, practice and culture to address the root causes of gender-based violence. White Ribbon is primarily focused on educating and changing attitudes of men and boys to end violence against women.

White Ribbon will again partner with OSSTF/FEESO in a secondary curriculum resource project which centres on preventing sexual exploitation.

The scope of this project will include:

- Selecting members to write curriculum lessons
- Designing and developing digital resources
- Translating the digital resource to French
- Providing training for secondary educators on using the resource and
- Promoting digital resource to stakeholders.

White Ribbon has received funding from the Government of Ontario to produce this resource. OSSTF/FEESO will assist by creating the lesson plans for the curriculum document, providing input on the entire curriculum document, creating the webinar, providing training for the resource (development and delivery) and promoting the resource through our channels.

## **7. Supporting Students' Mental Health : A Collective Responsibility People for Education**

People for Education's Annual Ontario School Survey focused on mental health supports in publicly-funded schools. 1,254 schools participated in the survey. The survey focused on the following:

- Mental health needs of students
- In-school resources
- Impact of geography on school-based mental health resources and support
- Promoting school-wide mental health

There were few surprises in the report. Principals reported that the mental health needs of their students were on the rise. Those whose schools had access to mental health professionals "identified them as key resources in supporting student mental health" and many said there was a need for "increased full-time specialists."

In contrast to last year's report that focused on the role that guidance counsellors play in dealing with mental health issues, this report highlighted the work of mental health professionals, particularly psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers, and the need for more full-time specialists in schools. The report also identified the work of School Mental Health Ontario in providing resources and support to schools.

Many principals reported that schools "are embedding positive mental health practices across the learning environment." In some cases, these programs are supported through outside agencies. Principals also commented on the need for resources to assist families in discussing mental health issues at home. Cultural and language barriers were identified.

It was heartening to see that many of the quotes from principals contained in the report supported the need for school-based services.

Interestingly, the report suggests that the number of psychologists in schools has fallen in the last two years. 2017 statistics were not provided for other mental health professionals.

Regularly scheduled access to:	Elementary Schools		Secondary Schools	
	2019	2017	2019	2017
Psychologist	30%	38%	36 %	40%
Social Worker	48%	NR	80%	NR
Child and Youth Worker	38%	NR	52%	NR
Other Professionals (e.g. nurses) less than half of which are school-board Employees	28%	NR	62%	NR

Three recommendations were made:

- Continue to revise Ontario curriculum to embed teaching and learning about social-emotional skills and the range of skills and competencies that People for Education and others have identified as The New Basics. Many of these skills and competencies can provide students with the knowledge and understanding they need to promote good mental health.
- Update the Education Funding Formula to ensure that schools in rural areas and the north, as well as French-language schools are able to provide students with equitable access to mental health professionals and supports.
- Consult with principals, teachers, and professionals across the province to develop long-term planning and policy that will support a *whole school* approach to mental health.”

## 8. Shine the Light Campaign

November is Women Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario. Once again, OSSTF/FEESO is collaborating with the London Abused Women’s Centre to provide purple lapel pins to members who wish to order them through our December 6 commemorations. In addition to the pins, we are also offering our own December 6 posters as well as White Ribbon signing sheets for members who identify as men to make a commitment to end violence against women.

The Shine the Light campaign, initiated by the London Abused Women’s Centre, is focused on building awareness, engaging people in breaking the silence and encouraging all communities to speak out against Violence against Women. All proceeds from the sale of the purple pins will go to the campaign.

Dates to note include:

- November 22 – OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Councillors will be asked to wear purple to demonstrate their support
- November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Day 1 of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence
- December 3 to December 7 – Commemorative displays in OSSTF/FEESO worksites
- December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- December 10 – International Human Rights Day
- December 11 – International Day of the Girl Child

For further information on the campaign: <https://www.lawc.on.ca/shine-light-woman-abuse-campaign/>.

## 9. Government Announcements Regarding Funding for French Language Education – September 2019

The first two weeks of September brought a flurry of announcements regarding French-Language Education and Ontario's Francophone students. These included \$26 million in funding for the 2019-2020 school year to be invested in French-language education in the province, an additional \$4 million to be invested and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the establishment of the "Université de l'Ontario français".

While the funding is certainly appreciated, it is neither new, nor coming from the Ontario government. These yearly funds are part of the Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction Protocol for Agreements that are negotiated regularly between the federal government, provinces and territories.

While it is excellent news that negotiations will be going ahead on the creation of l'Université de l'Ontario français, it is relevant to note that the federal government is breaking routine and footing the hefty initial bills for the university because Ontario won't immediately commit to the financial support.

## 10. Recent D/BU Memoranda

- 041 - Political Action Plan
- 040 - Update Newsletter and Updating Member Emails
- 039 - Monday, October 28 - Day of Action at Queen's Park
- 038 - Long Term Disability Advisory Work Group
- 037 - Central Strike Votes
- 036 - Annual Designated Charity - Kids Help Phone
- 035 - Application for Mental Health First Aid Instructors
- 034 - Tracking Changes in Work Days of Occasional Teachers and Support Staff
- 033 - Policy for Approval of Legal Assistance
- 032 - EQAO Math Proficiency Test for New Teachers
- 031 - CUPE Full Withdrawal of Services
- 030 - Status of Women Regional Outreach Workshop - November 8-9, 2019
- 029 - December 6th Commemorations
- 028 - United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 2020
- 027 - October 10 Ontario-wide Walk-Ins for Public Education
- 026 - OMERS Member Engagement Survey
- 025 - Job Posting for EA
- 024 - CUPE Strike
- 023 - Global Climate Strike
- 022 - HSWSIAC Conference 2019
- 021 - OFL Convention 2019
- 020 - Accessing Ed Services Workshops
- 019 - Directory of Services

