

Provincial Executive Liaison Report

To: District 10 Executive and Council

From: Jeff Denys, Treasurer

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1. Community Organizing Ad Hoc Work Group

The Community Organizing Ad Hoc Work Group began with the first meeting on October 1, 2022. With nearly everyone in attendance from the selected applicants, the work group was able to begin the conversation and build the core themes for discourse.

The meeting started off with a welcome from OSSTF/FEESO and a short discussion of National Truth and Reconciliation in reflection of the day before and the ongoing work we must all do as members in our communities.

First on the agenda was a short presentation from the Vice-Presidents on the Strategic Action Plan as it pertains to the creation of the work group. Questions arose from the members of the work group on *Here for Students* and its integration with this work, what deadlines will look like between our upcoming AMPA and the work of the group, how CPAC relates to this work group, and how OSSTF/FEESO can centre their strategic approach around cultivating an environment to influence the political realm.

The rest of the meeting proved that we have indeed brought together some of the best members for the vision of this work as each member was able to contribute to a very thoughtful and decentred approach to how OSSTF/FEESO’s position on community organizing practices.

Work Group members were asked to define “Community Organizing” as a whole which led to a significant foray of themes that were necessary to further unpack. The rest of the meeting following lunch was left to try and answer the questions as written in the Strategic Action Plan. Although the work group could not answer in finality, they were able to

determine focuses that we would like to further delve into for the purposes of the work group.

Topics like labour councils, new member engagement, local coalitions, board advisory committees, school councils, supports and infrastructure needed to conduct community outreach, as well as the need for developing a political culture within our membership. We will be developing tasks or items for review and take home work. There are also several key opportunities for members of this work group to work with other provincial committees and work groups. More to come and we are off to a great start!

2. **Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care**

OSSTF/FEESO is a long-standing member of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC). The OCBCC has a five-person Executive, elected from a Board of Directors, chosen from, and reporting to, a Provincial Council that meets throughout the year. There are numerous and varied representative members on the Provincial Council: organizational, geographic, regional advocacy, childcare centre, francophone, private, individual.

Regardless of how they came to be affiliated with the OCBCC, all representatives ascribe to the founding principles and objectives. The coalition strives to be a central advocacy group for the sector, specifically “for a universal, affordable, high quality, public and non-profit system of early childhood education and care.”

In light of the difficulties in Ontario’s implementation of the CWELCCS (Canada-wide early learning childcare system), OCBCC is currently exploring how to best support the entire sector. Communications with the Director of Policy of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), Pam Uppal, have just begun in hopes that there might be some collaboration. Assigned Educational Services Staff will continue to be engaged with the Board of OCBCC as these relationships evolve.

3. **Freedom of Information Request – Government Advertisement Spending for Ontario’s *Plan to Catch Up***

In August, OSSTF/FEESO submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Ministry of Education to determine the cost of government ads promoting their *Plan to Catch Up* messaging. To date, the ads have appeared on television, radio, digital platforms, social media, and print.

We requested the amount spent from July 25 to August 30. On September 30, we received a response from the ministry. The data provided were only estimates as invoices have not been paid to the government’s vendors.

The estimated cost of the ads running from July 25 to August 30 totals \$1,122,817. Ads have continued to run into September and October. We will make additional FOI requests to get the final amounts as the ad campaign winds up.

4. **FAO Report on Ontario Public Sector Employment and Compensation**

On September 28, 2022, the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) released a report on Ontario Public Sector Employment and Compensation: Historical Trends, Projections and Risks. The report, briefing deck, and media release are available at <https://fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/public-sector-compensation>.

The FAO report analyzes Ontario Public Sector (OPS) employment and compensation. It

A) provides an overview of public sector employment in Ontario; B) discusses upcoming collective bargaining negotiations and the application of wage restraint under Bill 124; C) projects provincial spending on employee compensation over the next five years; and D) discusses three key risks to this projection.

This document may provide a context for the current School Board Collective Agreement Act central negotiations. Note that there is limited information on university sector employees in this report.

A. Ontario Public Sector (OPS) Employment Overview

The FAO estimates that OPS employment has grown by 66,500 workers, with an average annual growth of 1.1% from 2011 to 2021. Nearly 286,000 of OPS workers in 2021 were employed in school boards and over 126,000 were employed in universities. From 2011 to 2019, employment levels in school boards increased by 1.3% per year, on average. In 2020, school board employment declined by 5.3%, followed by a partial recovery of 2.0% in 2021. This largely reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in lower student enrolment and intermittent school closures in 2020 and 2021.

Since 2011, the average annual salary for OPS employees has increased by \$10,385 (or 1.6% on average annually), which is lower than the public sector (\$11,943 or 2.7% annually), federal government employees (\$14,562 or 1.8%), municipal government employees (\$22,442 or 3.9%), and the private sector (\$14,582 or 2.9%).

B. Ontario Public Sector Collective Bargaining

From 2011 to 2019, settlements for base salary increases in collective agreements for OPS unionized employees averaged 1.2% per year. This lagged behind average annual base salary increases in collective agreements for employees in the federal government (1.7%), municipal government (1.9%), and the private sector (1.9%).

In 2020 and 2021, OPS base salary increases for new collective agreements averaged 1.0%. The 1.0% rate of increase in 2020 and 2021 for new collective agreements for Ontario Public Sector employees continued to lag behind settlements in the federal government (2.0%), municipal government (1.6%) and the private sector (1.8%).

Importantly, the FAO estimates that 70% of unionized Ontario Public Sector employees have either completed or are under an existing collective bargaining agreement subject to wage restraint under Bill 124. This includes all 258,379 unionized school board employees and about 18% of the over 180,000 hospital employees.

C. Provincial Spending on Ontario Public Sector Compensation

The FAO estimates that \$48.2 billion (28% of total program spending) was spent on salaries and wages (excluding pensions and benefits) for OPS employees in 2021-22. This includes \$19.1 billion for the wages of school board employees. Ontario's total salaries and wages spending has grown from an estimated \$36.3 billion in 2011-12 to \$48.2 billion in 2021-22, representing average annual growth of 2.9%.

Going forward, the FAO estimates that the government's total spending on salaries and wages, including wage increases and workforce growth, for OPS employees, will reach \$56.9 billion by 2026-27, representing an average annual growth rate of 3.4% over the five years. This forecast is the FAO's "base case" projection and represents a status quo outlook for spending on salary and wages for OPS employees.

Importantly, the FAO costed the impact of Bill 124 and estimated that it will save the

government a cumulative total of \$9.7 billion for both unionized and non-unionized OPS employees as compared to a long-term historical average growth rate of 2.9%. Overall, the FAO's base case projects an average annual wage growth of 1.7% to 2026-27.

FAO estimates that 56,974 (1.7%) workers will be added to the OPS from 2021-22 to 2026-27. School board employment is estimated to grow by 13,654 over the period (0.9% per year), reflecting projected student enrolment growth and no change to current class size ratios.

For school board employees, the three-year period of wage restraint under Bill 124 expired on August 31, 2022. Overall, the FAO projects that the average salary for school board workers will grow at 2.1% per year on average from 2021-22 to 2026-27. This projection is higher than the OPS average of 1.7% and other OPS employee groups, such as hospitals (1.2% average annual salary growth) and colleges (1.6%).

D. Risks to the FAO's Base Case Projection

The FAO considers three risks to the "base case" projection.

First, continued higher-than-usual inflation could lead to higher wage increases. The FAO projects that inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) will average 4.6% per year, compared to a historical average of 1.9%. This includes an expected annual inflation rate of 4.4% in 2021-22, 6.1% in 2022-23 and 3.2% in 2023-24, before returning to the Bank of Canada target of 2.0% in future years. For comparison, on February 8, 2022, in its Budget Outlook Update, the FAO projected inflation for the same period to be 3.8%, 2.2%, and 1.9%, respectively.

Over the same three-year period, under the FAO's base case projection, average salaries for Ontario Public Sector employees are expected to grow by 0.9% per year. This means that from 2021-22 to 2023-24, average salary growth for Ontario Public Sector employees is projected to significantly lag behind inflation, resulting in a cumulative 11.3% decline in real wages over three years.

This above-average wage growth inflation adjustment scenario includes an annual 1.7% inflation adjustment for each of the three years, based on the inflation adjustment observed to date for unionized private sector employees in 2022. Collective bargaining settlements with private-sector unions in 2022 have started to account for higher inflation, with yearly base wage increases averaging 4.4% over three years.

The second risk is a successful challenge by Ontario unions to Bill 124. Given the potential cost to the government if this lawsuit is successful, the FAO developed a Bill 124 challenge scenario in which:

- Ontario Public Sector unionized employees are compensated for Bill 124 wage growth restrictions that have applied since 2019; and
- going forward, wage restraint under Bill 124 would no longer apply to all Ontario Public Sector employees.

Based on the assumptions underlying this scenario, if the legal challenge to Bill 124 is successful, the FAO estimates that provincial spending on Ontario Public Sector employee salaries and wages could increase by a cumulative total of \$8.4 billion over the five years from 2022-23 to 2026-27, including an estimated \$2.1 billion retroactive payment in 2022-23.

Overall, wage growth remains below inflation for employees in the Ontario Public Sector, resulting in real wage declines. As higher wages attract entry into the workforce from other sectors, provinces or countries, or by those recently retired or out of the workforce due to other reasons, the government may need to increase wages beyond the FAO's base case assumption, to ensure sufficient staffing to maintain existing public services and meet program expansion commitments.

If the government's intention remains to underfund and underspend, a strategy of continuing to resist OPS compensation increases would provide significant savings, both by keeping wage growth well below inflation, and creating staff shortages that would restrict spending across all programs. As well, the government may be withholding engagement on salary with unions at central tables due to the significant financial risk associated with a successful Bill 124 challenge.

5. Public Accounts of Ontario – Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2021-2022

Each year, the Treasury Board Secretariat releases the Public Accounts which show the consolidated financial statements of the government, including overall revenue, spending, and highlights from various government programs and initiatives.

The government reported a \$2.4 billion surplus for 2021-22. This contrasts with the deficit of \$13.5 billion projected by the government and the \$8.1 billion projected by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario. The vastly improved financial position is primarily a result of \$185.1 billion in revenues, a staggering increase of \$31.1 billion or 20.2 per cent from budget projections. There was also a decrease of \$2.5 billion in program spending.

The government attributes these changes to prudent planning and projections. However, since revenues had already recovered significantly by the end of the 2020-21 financial year, budgeted revenues could have been forecasted significantly higher than was done. This suggests the government intentionally downplayed its financial position, possibly to put pressure on spending in order to justify reductions.

Revenue has grown by 22.8 per cent, or \$34.3 billion, compared to 2017-18, primarily driven by taxation growth, but also showing growth in all areas. Taxation, which forms about 71% of all revenue, increased by 32%, or \$32 billion during this period. Average annual tax revenue grew by 7.2% from 2017-18 through 2021-22, much higher than the nominal GDP growth of 4.1%. In fact, almost all key financial ratios reflect an economy that is stronger than it was pre-pandemic, including the net debt-to-GDP and net debt to total revenue, which reflect that total government debt has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

As has been reported previously, government spending for 2020-21 of \$170.5 billion is less than budgeted by \$2.5 billion (1.4%), though spending has increased by \$1.5 billion (0.9%) as compared to 2019-20.

Education spending decreased by \$1.4 billion (4.5%) as compared to the previous year, mainly due to transfer payments to parents in 2019-20. Compared to the budget, there was also a decrease of \$1.4 billion in expenses, primarily due to lower school board spending resulting from a decline in non-government revenue sources, such as fundraising, community use of schools, international student tuition, and lower-than-projected enrolment.

Postsecondary expenses were \$0.8 billion (0.9%) above 2019-20, as students returned to

on-campus activities. Compared to the budget, postsecondary expenses were \$0.1 billion (0.9%) below plan due to a lower-than-expected student uptake on the need for financial assistance, offset by an increase in spending as campuses reopened.

Health spending increased by \$6.2 billion (8.9%) compared to 2019-20 and \$0.8 billion (1.1%) above budget plan amid an increase of base spending as operations surged following two years of pandemic restrictions. The spending also reflects investments in long-term care for the retention of nurses, and to increase in personal support worker compensation.

Spending on Other programs increases by \$7.1 billion (6.5%) as the government implemented new spending initiatives announced prior to the June 2022 provincial election.

Capital infrastructure spending was \$17.7 billion, \$2.3 billion (15%) higher than in 2019-20. This was \$0.9 billion less than planned amid project delays and it was partially offset by accelerated construction timelines and spending in the transportation and health sectors.

The Public Accounts generally show a good financial position for the Government of Ontario. The growth in revenues illustrates the effect of inflation, as the labour force expands and workers are paid more. Despite a \$2.4 billion surplus and a staggering growth in revenues, the government continues to restrict the growth of program spending and employee compensation.

6. OSSTF/FEESO Research Grant for Emergent Issues and Priorities

Staff assigned to the Research Partnership Review Committee met to consider themes to recommend to the Provincial Executive for the 2022 – 2023 Research Grant for Emergent Issues and Priorities.

Input was sought from all departments and from a number of provincial committees.

Recruitment and Retention of Workers in Education

Employers have had difficulty in retaining education workers and teachers in some contexts for years. Recent events, including the pandemic, rocketing inflation, and labour shortages have only exacerbated the situation. Retention of education workers and teachers have long been issues due to a variety of factors: violence in the workplace, precarious employment, uncompetitive salaries, toxic workplace environments, difficult working conditions, income disparities, and stress and wellness issues. In recent years, retention issues have been reported across the province leading to many unfilled positions. These vacancies lead to increased workload for the remaining Members, and potential for ongoing outsourcing of education worker jobs. More recently, we have experienced a reduction in Member participation in OSSTF/FEESO events, such as workshops, committees, and conferences, as Members are unable to be released from their employment when there are no replacement occasional workers available.

OSSTF/FEESO is interested in research around issues about, and solutions to, attracting new workers in education, the retention of employees in education, from an Ontario, as well as national and international perspective.

The call for applications will be shared with Ontario Universities through their research services offices and faculties such as labour studies and Education. The grant application will go live in October 2022, with a deadline of November 30, 2022. One of the three grants awarded will be reserved for researchers who identify as Indigenous, equity-

seeking, or oppressed groups.

7. Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS)

The PWGHS met on September 9, 2022, to discuss COVID-19 and return to school issues. This one-time without prejudice meeting was scheduled following the objections of Union and Association representatives to Ministry of Education's earlier announcement that the PWGHS was not going to meet during education sector central negotiations. Those present at the meeting included several representatives from the Ministries of Education (EDU), and Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), and employer representatives from OPSBA, OCSTA, ACEPO. On the Union and Associations side there were representatives from AEFO, CUPE, ETFO, OECTA, OPSEU and EWAO.

Issues raised at the meeting included the posting of school ventilation reports, notifications of COVID cases, the existence of an absence threshold for 2022-2023, any planned programs in the education sector by the MLTSD for 2022-2023 and vaccine clinics in schools.

Unfortunately, the only communication flowing from the meeting was a B memo, 2022 B15, which reminded Directors of Education to "actively share the school-specific ventilation improvement measures already available publicly with each school community (parents/guardians, staff) by Friday, October 14, 2022".

In the memo, the MLTSD confirmed that ventilation reports should be shared with the JHSC as required under Section 25 (2) (l) of OHSA and that workers should be receiving notices of confirmed cases of COVID-19 at their workplaces as per Section 25 (2) (d) of OHSA. EDU representatives indicated that there is no absence threshold for 2022-2023 and vaccine clinics in schools may occur but only if the local public health unit takes the lead on them.

At the meeting, the MLTSD also confirmed that there is no planned program or "blitz" for the education sector relating to COVID, but that such a program relating to workplace violence is planned for the spring of 2023, although details were not yet available.

Union representatives also registered expressed their considerable disappointment that the PWGHS was being unilaterally suspended during central negotiations and as mentioned earlier, there are no further meetings of the PWGHS scheduled at this time.

8. Addressing Corporate Intrusion in Public Education Task Force

The Addressing Corporate Intrusion in Public Education (ACIPE) Task Force met on September 26, 2022.

In attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Provincial Executive were Malini Leahy and Colin Matthew, on behalf of the Communications and Political Action Committee (C/PAC) were Gary Fenn and Ryan Harper (D.19); on behalf of the Educational Services Committee (ESC) were Jenny Chen, Daniela Melo (D.12), and Michelle Dalrymple (D.29); on behalf of the Protective Services Committee (PSC) were Dave Barrowclough, Lamia Sabbagh, and John Bernans (D.11), along with Chris Samuel and Jen Ojalammi.

Each of the representatives provided an update on the work of their respective committees relating to addressing corporate intrusions in public education as of their September committee meeting.

The Task Force discussed the continuation of the mandate in items 4, 5, and 6 of the

originating motion at AMPA 2018: to raise awareness about corporate intrusions in public education, to develop a plan for the protection of public education, and the identification of potential related bargaining issues. Out of this discussion the Task Force discussed:

- Interim Policies for AMPA 2023.
- The coordination of committee work.
- Ways to raise awareness among Members and the public through a simple entry point.

Raising awareness was viewed as key to the plan for the protection of the public education system.

The next and final meeting of the Task Force will be held on November 28, 2022, and subsequent to that a report for AMPA will be prepared.

9. Bill 124 – *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act* – Charter Challenge

When the government passed Bill 124, OSSTF/FEESO, along with other affiliates in the Education sector, nurses' unions, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union and UNIFOR filed a Charter challenge, coordinated by the Ontario Federation of Labour (the Applicants). The Bill 124 hearing was scheduled for 10 days, starting Monday, September 12, 2022, and continuing each business day until Friday, September 23, 2022. OSSTF/FEESO and the other teachers' affiliates made our main submissions on Thursday, September 15, 2022, and made our reply on Friday, September 23, 2022.

What follows is an overall, short summary of the 2-week hearing respecting Bill 124.

Throughout the hearing, Justice Koehnen was very engaged in the issues and clearly understood the arguments and evidence presented to him.

The Applicants coordinated their submissions with each Applicant focusing on the circumstances of their clients so that the judge was presented with seamless legal submissions which avoided repetition. As well as the main argument, which objected to the interference of Bill 124 in the process of free collective bargaining, there were several other themes presented such as the significant impact on low-wage earners and the disproportionate impact on women and racialized workers.

The Crown's argument centered around their perception that costs for public services will continue to outstrip growth in revenues, in part because of population growth and aging in Ontario. They also relied on a Manitoba decision to counter the argument that the limited wage restraint in the bill could never substantially interfere with free collective bargaining. The Crown also brought up the fact that the federal government imposed the Expenditure Restraint Act during the economic crisis in 2008.

In the reply from the Applicants on Friday, they remarked on the coincidence that the Crown had commented on the need to reduce taxes and eliminated the \$1B license plate sticker fee while Bill 124 was being introduced. OSSTF/FEESO asked why school boards were included within the scope of Bill 124 but did not receive a response from the Crown.

An issue that was not anticipated was raised during the hearings. The judge asked whether unions could strike for an exemption to the Act or strike for compensation above 1%. The Crown took the surprising position that Bill 124 does not prohibit an otherwise lawful strike for compensation above 1%. In the response by OSSTF/FEESO, we remarked on how this was not an issue that the Crown had presented in their factum and

highlighted how we tried to get an exemption from the Crown but were not successful in getting any information on this or any information to suggest we could strike to get more than 1%. We noted that the legality of the strike was uncertain, if not doubtful, as the school board employers could argue that, as legislation, Bill 124 was not an issue that was at the bargaining table. We further observed proposed that if we had to strike for an exemption first and then strike for a wage rate, this would effectively mean that unions would have to strike for the right to strike, significantly interfering with the process of free collective bargaining among other issues.

It will most probably take Justice Koehnen several months to issue a decision.

10. **The Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas (IDEA)**

[The Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas \(IDEA\) Network's](#) coordinating committee met in Oaxaca Mexico on October 10 and October 11, 2022. As a member of IDEA, OSSTF/FEESO provincial staff was present at the meeting.

IDEA Network Meeting Overview

Network Composition

The Coordinating Committee includes representatives of the National Teachers' Organization of Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil and Canada, the regional organizations Federación de Organizaciones Magisteriales de Centroamérica (**FOMCA**), the Mexican Section of the Tri-National Coalition in Defense of Public Education, the Indigenous Educators' Network, the Education Research Network, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO), and the Caribbean and Latin American Students' Organization (OCLAE).

An invitation was extended to the Chicago Teachers' Federation to join the IDEA Network. The acceptance of this invitation is pending.

This network meets once every three months to discuss and address the needs of the member organizations.

The IDEA Network's Objective

The IDEA network carries out research, establishes communication networks, publishes documents and organizes conferences and seminars related to neo-liberalism, trade agreements and the defense of public education in the Americas.

"Defending public education is international and is a social right that transcends national borders requiring broad social alliances." (IDEA Network)

The IDEA Network October Meeting Summary

The meeting agenda included:

- a discussion around the current political situation in each respective region,
- a discussion related to the impacts of neo-liberalism on public education,
- a discussion related to collaborate efforts to maintain systems of public education that maintains the dignity of students, families, education workers and teachers (i.e., education workers/teachers who are the social movement leaders continue to be kidnapped and murdered on mass across the regions),
- a discussion related to the impact that COVID-19 had on teaching and learning across the regions (i.e., some regions have experienced a high dropout rate/students that have not returned to school as their families have to recover financially for the economic crisis caused by COVID-19, which has forced many students into the workforce/crime)

- the identification of common trends and concerns related to the defense and enhancement of public education in each respective region and in the Americas (i.e., union, and organizational demands for increases in salaries and improvement in labour conditions),
- a review of regional environmental and climate change concerns (i.e. [Maya Train Project](#) – continues to raise concerns from the Indigenous communities within the Yucatan Peninsula)
- a review of the current research relating to the mental and physical health of education workers, teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic and post COVID-19 pandemic,
- review of the pending tasks of the 2022 IDEA Network Action Plan and review of the Draft Action Plan for 2023,
- a discussion relating to how IDEA Network initiatives/projects can be more widely promoted outside of the IDEA Network magazine publication, and
- a discussion relating to the IDEA Network’s campaign theme for 2022-2023.

The IDEA Networks Next Steps (for upcoming meeting)

- Analyze the existing research from each respective region related to the threats to public education post-COVID-19 (how has the effects of the pandemic influenced the invisibility of the threats of privatization to public education?)
- Train social leaders (i.e., parents, students, education workers, teachers, etc.) on the effects of neo-liberalism on public education.
- Create calls to action/projects for each region to undertake relating to the IDEA Networks 2022-2023 Campaign Theme (TBA shortly).
- Create linkages between the Caribbean and Latin American Students’ Organization (OCLAE) with student leaders in British Columbia and Ontario.
- Define the 2022-2023 research topics and priorities for the IDEA Network.
- Define the roles of international organizations within the IDEA Network.

Staff will work collaboratively with the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) to formalize a connection between student unions in Canada with the Caribbean and Latin American Students’ Organization (OCLAE) such as, [The Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario](#).

The next scheduled meeting for the IDEA Network will be held in December 2022. “Public education transforms the world.” (IDEA Network, 2022)

11. Election Report

After the 2018 Provincial General Election saw the election of Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservatives as the new provincial government in Ontario, OSSTF/FEESO immediately began deliberations on developing a plan for the 2022 Ontario general election. With new Premier Doug Ford and the Ontario PCs implementing policies neglecting publicly-funded education in Ontario, OSSTF/FEESO became acutely aware that the 2022 election would be extremely important in righting the province and its education system. In addition, the PCs inadequate management of the health and safety protocols regarding COVID-19 reinforced OSSTF/FEESO’s determination to see a change in Ontario’s government.

While cognizant of the need to change governments, OSSTF/FEESO was keenly aware that Ontario’s election history favoured another PC government in 2022. At our Election Readiness Conference in October 2021, our keynote speaker, polling analyst Eric Grenier, reminded us of the Underhill Theory of Ontario elections that indicate that in almost every

Ontario election since 1919, Ontario elections have given the most seats to a different political party than the one governing in the Federal Parliament. As well, since 1919, there have only been two one-term governments in Ontario.

As well, heading into the 2022 Ontario Election, the Conservatives held a commanding lead of more than 10 points on the opposition parties. In addition, the two main opposition parties, the NDP and Liberals, were neck-and-neck in support with neither indicating a potential to break away from the other and offer a clear alternative to the PCs. Also, in voter approvals, the Ford government had an approval rating that was similar to their approval rating after the 2018 election. Hence, the prospects for success in dethroning the PCs looked bleak.

Heading into the election, the PCs determined that they had to dismantle and soften any third-party opposition to their rule. First, they enacted legislation to limit third-party advertising in Ontario. When the Ontario Superior Court ruled against their legislation, they invoked the Notwithstanding Clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to override the court's decision and enacted the legislation. This draconian legislation severely limited the impact that third-party advertising could have on an election. Second, realizing that their past efforts to limit and/or eliminate union involvement in elections, the PCs pushed an aggressive charm offensive with private-sector unions that resulted in decoupling those unions from the anti-PC union coalition that had existed in Ontario since the Mike Harris days. The historically successful Working Families coalition had been neutered.

Another challenge that OSSTF/FEESO faced was a union membership and local leadership that was exhausted, physically and mentally, by COVID-19 and its impact on their working and personal lives. Many members were overwhelmed and while they may have not been happy by the response of the Ford government, the dismay and anger rarely reached a boiling point. As well, the fact that many did not have their pay disrupted during COVID-19, helped ameliorate direct anger with the Ford government.

Despite all these challenges, OSSTF/FEESO was determined to work diligently to unseat the PCs.

Actions undertaken to implement the OSSTF/FEESO Election Readiness Strategy included the following:

Strategic Action Plan

- Election readiness strategy approved by AMPA 2020 and AMPA 2021

Election Organizers

- Selected in fall 2020
- Worked with districts and bargaining units with limited release time through to January 2022
- Worked full-time from February 2022 to June 2022
- Engaged in many tasks, including facilitating meetings with local leaders and candidates, developed resources to engage members in the elections, and supported local leaders in creating election readiness events to engage members
- In a survey of local leaders, a majority felt that the work of the Election Organizers was very helpful, and the assistance was greatly appreciated

Education Platform

- Developed through consultations with local leaders, members, and community groups
- Created and released a full year prior to the provincial election; earlier than in past years
- Opposition political parties, community groups, leaders, and members gave us very positive feedback
- Opposition political parties adopted most of our platform positions as their own, with some even quoting our positions verbatim in public forums, including the Leaders Debate in May

Advertising

- Bill 254 and subsequent Bill 307 severely limited our ability to engage in third-party political advertising
- OSSTF/FEESO registered as a third-party and did put out some broadcast and print advertising, including in ethnic media publications
- Made some expenditures on issues-based advertising that focused on highlighting our platform, which grew our supporter base in our *Here For Students* campaign

Training, Conferences, Regionals, Lobby Day and OFL May Day Rallies

- Resources were dedicated to election readiness preparations to assist local leaders and to engage members, which included but were not limited to:
 - CPAC Conference – November 6-7, 2020
 - Education Platform Consultations – January 29, 2021
 - Riding-by-Riding Consultations – May 12-13, 2021
 - Election Readiness Conference – October 29-30, 2021
 - Lobby Day – January 28, 2022
 - CPAC Regionals – March 25-25, 2022
 - OFL May Day Rallies – Sunday, May 1, 2022

Pre-Election and Post-Election Poll of the Membership

- Pre-election poll of over 3,000 members taken in February 2022 indicated very few member supported the PC Party and wanted a change at Queen's Park
 - Members were receptive to voting for candidates endorsed by OSSTF/FEESO
 - About half of members said that they planned to engage in the election in some form beyond voting
- Post-election poll of members taken in late June 2022 after the provincial election
 - Members showed a strong awareness of the OSSTF/FEESO platform, the "Vote, Volunteer, Donate" messaging, and of OSSTF/FEESO endorsed candidates in their ridings
 - Most members felt informed about the candidates running in their ridings
 - Only one in ten said that they were well-engaged in the election, while one quarter said that they were moderately engaged
 - Only six per cent of members indicated that they volunteered for a campaign
 - About one quarter of members said that they did not engage in the election because they felt the PC party was going to win
 - There was strong awareness of OSSTF/FEESO candidate endorsements, and a majority of members approved of the federation's involvement in the election
 - Members did not offer any clear assessments of what went well or what needed improvement in the OSSTF/FEESO election strategy

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Funding for Districts, Bargaining Units, and Active Retired Members Chapters

- Provincial Office provided funding to Districts, Bargaining Units, and ARM Chapters to support local member engagement activities for the election
- There were 42 requests for funding received overall

Presidential Media Tour

- President Karen Littlewood held many press conferences with local leaders in attendance in many ridings leading up to the election to announce the endorsement of candidates
- This helped to garner support for our endorsed candidates and reinforced with those candidates that we were prepared to publicly state our confidence in their ability to protect publicly funded education

Endorsements

- OSSTF/FEESO continued its tradition of endorsing education-friendly candidates; 97 in total
- 37 of those candidates won – 30 NDP, 6 Liberal, 1 Green

Municipal and Trustee Elections

- Election Organizers and Provincial Office continued to provide support for the Municipal and Trustee Elections to local leaders
- Resources and funding for member engagement were made available to local leaders

12. DBU Memos Issued Since Last Liaison Report

- 34 Vacancies on the Mediation Services Resource Bank (MSRB)
- 35 Starling Minds - Mental Health Fitness Webinar Available to all OSSTF/FEESO Members
- 36 ESO Regional Training Session - November 4-5, 2022
- 37 Funding for Members to Improve their French-Language Skills
- 38 Common Threads VII
- 39 OTF Communications - Win a Free Ticket to a Virtual Conference on Learning Disabilities
- 40 Application for Educational Services Workshop Presenter Training
- 41 OTF Communications - Deadline Approaching! OTF's ici on parle français program
- 42 JUMP Math Pilot 2023 - Call for Participants
- 43 Green Party of Ontario Annual General Meeting – October 28-29, 2022
- 44 Ministry Correspondence - Level Up! Unlock Your Future in the Skilled Trades
- 45 Ministry Correspondence - Release of 2021-22 EQAO Provincial Results and Next Steps in Plan to Catch Up
- 46 Registration Now Open for the Communications/Political Action Committee Conference