

## Provincial Executive Liaison Report

To: District 10 Council  
From: Harvey Bischof, President

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### 1. OSSTF/FEESO Work to Dismantle Racism and Oppression

OSSTF/FEESO recognizes that structural and systemic discrimination within society and our organization provide us with both the opportunity and the responsibility to make foundational changes locally and provincially. The process and practice of the dismantling of systemic racism, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, and all forms of discrimination and oppression within our organization, must incorporate the input from members and the commitment of all leaders within the organization. While this is not new work for our Federation, we acknowledge and embrace the fact that there is much more to do.

Based on the advice of many members, several initiatives and programs to address inequity within our union have been implemented. Using equity, diversity, inclusion anti-oppression discourse, education, and training as the centre of our practice, the following initiatives and programs have been developed in addition to the many pre-existing initiatives and programs that are already in place:

- Action Plan to Support Equity and Anti-Oppression
  - this living document creates a path to identify and eliminate discriminatory organizational practices, systemic barriers, and bias within OSSTF/FEESO; it was approved at AMPA 2021
  - the plan includes a commitment to undertake a demographic census of the membership during the 2021/22 year
- Provincial Advisory Work Groups (advise the Provincial Executive)
  - members apply and are selected on the basis of experience and expertise
  - Work Groups advise the Provincial Executive
  - the provincial office covers the wages and expenses of the member to release them for the day(s) from their employer in order to participate
  - the provincial office provides a meal, transportation, and child care allowance for eligible expenses
  - the advisory work groups include,
    - First Nations, Métis and Inuit Advisory Work Group
    - Equity Advisory Work Group
    - The Black Persons and Persons of Colour Advisory Work Group
- Equity caucuses
  - time allocated for equity caucus at all provincial meetings
  - open to all members who are attending the provincial meeting

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- the members of the equity caucus determine the agenda and topics of conversation
  - the equity caucuses are open to members who self-identify as,
    - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
    - Black
    - Racialized
    - Women
    - Francophone
    - Members with Disability(ies)
    - LGTBQ2SI
  - Provincial Committees
    - Human Rights Committee
    - Status of Women Committee
  - Equity Officer – a provincial office staff position that was created by AMPA.
  - In-house Equity Team – made up of four (4) provincial office staff, including the Equity Officer, who have the promotion of equity within the union included in their portfolios (Est. 2021)
  - Equity Mentorship Program (Est. 2017)
    - Created to increase access to leadership opportunities through the mentoring of individuals who are members of equity seeking groups
  - Professional Development and Training
    - OSSTF/FEESO written and delivered workshops and resources include,
      - Truth and Reconciliation
      - Combating anti-Black racism
      - Allyship
      - History of Canadian Black Lives
      - Canadian's Women History
      - Racial Justice
      - Challenging Misogyny
      - Addressing Homophobia and Transphobia
  - Advocacy, Outreach, Support
    - Outreach to a number of organizations, including but not limited to:
      - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
      - Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses
      - Anishnawbe Health Network
      - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance
      - Black Youth Helpline
  - Annual Donations
    - Donations and financial support annually to a number of organizations, including:
      - Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
      - Common Frontiers
      - Migrant Rights Network
      - White Ribbon Campaign

- Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
  - EGALE
  - Workers Action Centre
- Partnerships in development
    - Ontario Black History Society (OBHS)
    - Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators (ONABSE)
    - Facing History and Ourselves
  - Have nearly completed the process of hiring an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Coordinator
    - an individual who is an expert in developing a culture of representation and value in equal opportunity
    - will advise the provincial organization on improving policy and practice to support EDI
  - In the process of updating a tool for voluntary self-identification
    - Information will be used to monitor the equity performance of initiatives and design new measures that achieve greater equity, diversity, and inclusion

The Provincial Executive will continue to look inward to address systemic racism while challenging discrimination in all of its forms. Collectively, OSSTF/FEESO has an opportunity and responsibility to move this organization forward employing anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices. The first step in this process is engaging in thoughtful conversations around racism and discrimination, listening to each other.

As one of the founding members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, OSSTF/FEESO has been actively engaged in the work of advocating for universally accessible, affordable, high quality inclusive child care since the inception of the coalition in 1981. We have a seat (and a say) at both the Provincial Council and the Board of the OCBCC.

Along with our fellow members – child care centres, educators, trade unionists, parents, grandparents and concerned citizens – we are pleased that childcare received national attention within this year’s federal budget. The plan includes many of the components necessary to build a national child care and early learning system that is long overdue.

Next, we will continue our work to follow this budget through adoption in Parliament and encouragement to the provincial government to collaborate with the federal government to ensure that every piece of this plan is available to Ontarians. Right now, we can celebrate that our persistent, consistent and collaborative advocacy works.

## **2. District & Bargaining Unit Records Management – Strategic Plan Update**

At September, November, and February Provincial Councils of this school year, councillors received information regarding Records Management. While recognizing that leaders have many other very pressing matters at hand and the fact that it is unlikely for us to be in the position for a fall 2021 roll out of a provincial pilot on a records management data system, the Records Management online workshop has been completed, piloted, edited, and is now ready to be delivered.

The intention was to offer 3-4 sessions of this workshop this spring (Phase 3 below) and have Bargaining Unit executive members sign up to attend in order for locals to begin this work and then announce to June PC (Phase 4 below) that a provincial pilot is on the way.

With all that is happening this spring, however, we are recommending that the process continue with a slight change to the timing. Using Leadership to launch the Records Management workshop would enable all Bargaining Unit presidents to participate. The follow up in the fall would be offering 3-4 online sessions for which executive members could register. Hopefully by then, we would be able to further update regarding the timing of the roll out for the remaining phases.

<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Deliverable: September 2020 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: retention	Records Retention Quick Reference document (include in PC package and onscreen for speaker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce records management in a simple, relatable and effective way</li> <li>• Get Districts thinking about the records they have and how long they need to be kept</li> <li>• Encourage thinking and practicing records retention</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Deliverable: November 2020 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: records management system	Four Steps for Managing OSSTF/FEESO Records document (include in PC package ([postcard size]) and onscreen for speaker)	Introduce records management methodology
<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Deliverable: February 2021 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: introduction to effective record keeping practices, relating to meeting minutes, and agenda	Webinar availability date announcement, including checklists and templates (visual featuring an image of vinyl record and the records management symbols used throughout training package)	Provide an online tool to help Districts learn how to deploy record keeping methods and procedures in a strategic and proactive way
<b>Phase 4</b>	<b>Deliverable: April 2021 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: Provincial database for record keeping	Share with PC “discussions currently happening with IT for a pilot 2021-2022 school year”	Introduce the concept of a Provincial database for uploading District meeting, minutes, and agendas, as an effective means of communication and retention
<b>Phase 5</b>	<b>Deliverable: June 2021 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: effective meetings	Webinar availability date announcement for “Conducting Effective Meetings”	Provide an online tool to give Districts key points of how to - and/or continue to - run effective meetings
Concept: Provincial database pilot	Share with PC the three Districts that will pilot the record keeping database	Encourage all Bargaining Units and Districts to think about the opportunities/requirements of the record keeping database

<b>Phase 6</b>	<b>Deliverable: September 2021 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: Provincial database pilot	Share with PC an update on pilot  Estimated cost of pilot: \$ _____	Promote discussion and thinking among the Bargaining Units and Districts about the database and what they might need in terms of training
<b>Phase 7</b>	<b>Deliverable: November 2021 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: implementation goal	Share with PC the timeline for full implementation (goal: September 2022)	Receive feedback from pilot participants and all re: training needs and scheduling
<b>Phase 8</b>	<b>Deliverable: February 2022 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Concept: province- wide training	Share with PC the training plan/schedule to prepare for September  Estimated cost of training for full implementation: \$ _____	Provide training to Bargaining Units and Districts by winter/spring
<b>Phase 9</b>	<b>Deliverable: April 2022 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Province-wide training	Share with PC an update on training; any tweaks/changes	Seek feedback/input into any changes needed to reach full implementation for September 2022
<b>Phase 10</b>	<b>Deliverable: September 2022 Provincial Council</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Full Implementation	Share with PC any updates to system for rollout	Have all Bargaining Units and Districts fully utilizing/uploading records to the database

### 3. OTF/Affiliate Meeting with Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE)

A meeting of the Teacher Education Staff Work Group and the OADE was held on April 9, 2021. This meeting included representatives from OTF, each of the four teacher affiliates, and the Deans of Ontario Faculties of Education. Assigned staff from the Educational Services Department attended the meeting on behalf of OSSTF/FEESO. The meeting agenda included the following items: a review of the 2020 – 2021 academic year; an update on the Math Proficiency Test; OCT Temporary Certificates; plans for in-person learning for 2021 – 2022; and whether or not the Deans were interested in a joint review of Initial Teacher Education programs.

#### Items of Interest

Faculties of Education reported a range of experiences finding practicum placements for their Teacher Candidates this school year, ranging from placing everyone to focusing on placing graduating Teacher Candidates and shifting first-year practica until next year. The Deans expressed their thanks to the teacher affiliates for their efforts to encourage and support willing Associate Teachers during this challenging year.

OTF and the teacher affiliates reiterated that requiring the Math Proficiency Test (MPT) for certification with the Ontario College of Teachers is problematic and unreasonable during a pandemic. A letter was sent from OTF to the Ministry in February expressing federation concerns. Teacher Candidates who graduated last year were given until this

summer to complete the MPT successfully. OTF estimates that between 5,700 – 6,700 Teacher Candidates and newer teachers will need to take the test by August 31, 2021. Deans who sit on the Ministry Steering Committee have little new information. The most recent information provided was that the Ministry was still looking for a provider, as no one had put a bid in to offer the MPT online. That was months ago, and there is still no word. Faculty members on the Ministry Steering Committee asked the Ministry to at least postpone the requirement.

#### **OCT Temporary Certificates**

The Registrar of the OCT provided OTF with the following information regarding the current status of Temporary Certificates issued to Teacher Candidates: The total number of Temporary Certificates issued by OCT as of April 6, 2021, was 924. The College will be able to track when the temporary certificates issued transition into general certificates. These individuals have provided all documentation except their final transcript from the university, so the process will be streamlined and easily tracked. As most initial teacher education programs are completed in April, most of the Teacher Candidates with a temporary certificate will soon be eligible for their full OCT Certification, provisional on passing the MPT.

#### **4. Education Technology – Privacy, Marketing and Approval Processes for Ed Tech Apps**

The Educational Services department continues to monitor the Education Technology (Ed Tech) sector. The department is conducting research into how Ed Tech apps are approved by boards and how teachers and education workers can identify board-approved Ed Tech apps. In PE#159 2019/2020, Friends, Enemies and Frenemies: Canadian Leadership in Ed Tech, staff identified a need to monitor both the Ed Tech sector generally and direct marketing to teachers and education workers specifically.

As part of this monitoring, staff attended the 2021 Bring IT Together conference hosted by Educational Computing Organization of Ontario (ECOO) and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO). The conference featured a number of panels in which teachers from public and catholic boards, representing both elementary and secondary panels demonstrated a range of Ed Tech apps. At least some presenters had a formal ‘coach’ relationship to the vendor. That is, they had a formal relationship in which they act as ambassadors for Ed Tech companies to promote use of their projects. In that role, the coaches assist teachers with becoming more comfortable with relevant apps, thereby creating demand on behalf of the vendors. Participants in the Bring IT Together Conference were encouraged to use free versions of the software, but to advocate at school and board levels for group purchases of the premium version. In sum, this is an example of how the Ed Tech industry is marketing directly to teachers and education workers.

Staff also attended a Bring IT workshop in which panelists (John McCormick, Associate CIO Upper Grand DSB; Sally London, Manager of Research and Analytics, Hamilton-Wentworth DSB; and Luis Gomes, Senior Manager IT Services, Wellington Catholic DSB) described privacy concerns about Ed Tech apps. These concerns include lack of security, inappropriate collection of personal information, and inappropriate disclosure of personal information. The panel also outlined steps being taken to formalize and standardize evaluations of Ed Tech apps through the Educational Computing Network of Ontario Vetting Applications for Security and Privacy (ECNO VASP) program. There are currently no province-wide mechanisms or consistent standards for Ed Tech evaluation. ECNO VASP vets apps that boards submit upon their own review for pedagogical value. The ECNO VASP review focuses on evaluating the privacy and security measures

features of board-submitted Ed Tech apps.

Educational Services department staff contacted this workshop's panelists in pursuit of further information. As a result, department staff have been invited to meet with the ECNO VASP Steering Committee as part of the committee's efforts to connect with education stakeholders and explore mutual concerns. An initial meeting will take place as soon as scheduling allows.

#### **5. LTD – Life Works Counselling Plans**

At the April 1, 2021 meeting of the LTD Advisory Work Group, members received information from OTIP about the changeover from Posaction Plus to Life Works, as part of the Provincial OSSTF/FEESO LTD plan and some of the education worker LTD plans through OTIP. In 2016, Morneau Shepell bought Posaction Plus and have now rebranded the service as "Life Works". Information was sent out to local leaders about the changes. Included in that information was a new poster with access information in both French and English. Life Works is included in the provincial OSSTF/FEESO LTD plan and also some education worker plans around the province, as part of the premiums paid by members.

Along with the continued 12 hours of counselling in a school year, the service now has additional features, including access to articles, videos, podcasts, assessments and toolkits. The service can be accessed via phone or online. The website is <https://otip.lifeworks.com> and there is an app available for both Android and Apple devices.

The utilization rates have historically been low, hovering around 1% for the past several years. The LTD Advisory Work Group believes that instead of accessing other services, such as Starling Minds, that OSSTF/FEESO should work with OTIP to boost awareness of members of the services.

The work group provided information to OTIP representatives around some of the confusion members have between their employers' EAP and the Life Works service through the LTD plan.