



### *As We Head Into Winter...*

This Council meeting signals the one-month mark to the winter break. While the saying is true that “time flies”, it is also true that there are enduring challenges faced in delivering the excellent programming and services that District 10 members provide. Despite the continual “add-ons” without any noticeable “take aways”, a restful break on the horizon is much deserved. At the risk of it being early, a sincere hope is extended to you and those you love for a truly peaceful and recharging winter break in a few short weeks ahead.

### *Local Leadership Vacancies*

Many vacancies remain unfilled at the local level, as has been communicated to all members via email throughout the fall. At this time, the following positions are unfilled within District 10:

#### *District Executive*

- Treasurer (voting)
- Executive Officer (voting)
- Equity, Anti-Racism, & Anti-Oppression Officer (non-voting)

#### *District Council*

- Communication and Political Action / Excellence in Education Officer (non-voting)
- Educational Services Officer (non-voting)
- Branch Presidents/Representatives, if your Branch requires them (voting)

#### *Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly*

- Delegates and Alternates

#### *Women's Advocates*

-One position remains (Members interested in this specific position are encouraged to contact the District Office for more information.)

If you are interested in union involvement, we want to hear from you! If you are reading this message, you're already engaged at some level and you are encouraged to spread this engagement among your peers. We'd love to have you join us in federation work at the District level.

### *Negotiations for the 2022-2026 Collective Agreement*

Members continue to receive confidential updates regarding both central and local bargaining directly through the non-employer email address provided to the District 10 office. If you are not receiving these important updates, please contact the office.

While OSSTF members across the province voted to approve the Voluntary Binding Interest Arbitration (VBIA) pathway earlier this school year, the negotiations processes continue both locally and centrally. With this in mind, “transparent” bargaining has not been a strategy employed by OSSTF during this round of negotiations to date.

### **Educators Financial Group Workshops**

Thank you to the members who attended the ETFO and OSSTF offices earlier this month for the Educators Financial Group (EFG) workshops that had been advertised through the fall.

Some members have asked about upcoming retirement workshops, and the OSSTF-specific in-person workshop for District 10 has been arranged by the Federation Officer for the spring. In the meantime, EFG has partnered with the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) for workshops entitled “**Walk Into Retirement with a Plan**”. In-person events were held locally earlier this fall; however, the workshop is available in webinar format:

>November 29, 2023	4:30pm – 6:00pm	<a href="#">Register (click here)</a>
>December 4, 2023	4:30pm – 6:00pm	<a href="#">Register (click here)</a>

From the EFG and OTIP websites:

*“In partnership with OTIP, this webinar focuses specifically on pension/retirement planning and retirement benefits and insurance. Whether members are 15 years from retirement or six months away, they’ll discover financial strategies and retirement planning ideas.*

*Can't attend a live webinar? Now you can watch select webinars on-demand.” [\(click here\)](#)*

### **Additional Mental Wellness Resource – Starling Minds**

The following is an excerpt from the all-member D/BU #46:

*“In 2021, OSSTF/FEESO announced a partnership with Starling Minds. Starling Minds is a confidential, self-guided digital program that helps to identify the thoughts and feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression. It helps to build the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to better manage personal mental health through checkups, exercises, educational videos, guided training sessions, and a peer community. As well, Starling Minds has provided other programs, such as Mental Health Fitness webinars.*

*These services are available to all OSSTF/FEESO Members and their families. Many Members have accessed these services and have provided very positive feedback.*

*Members and their families can access Starling Minds services by registering on the following landing pages and using the appropriate access code:*

English: <http://info.starlingminds.com/osstf>

- Member Access Code: MEMBER
- Family Access Code: FAMILYMEMBER

French: <http://info.starlingminds.com/fr-ca/feeso>

- Member Access Code: MEMBRE
- Family Access Code: FAMILLE

**REMINDER: Health Benefits Changes**

This is once again a reminder to long-term occasional (LTO) members that effective September 1, 2023 there was a change to direct billing for the OSSTF health benefits plan. Applicable members are now required to enroll in direct billing via pre-authorized withdrawals during the benefits enrolment process.

This is another reminder to permanent members as well that effective February 1, 2024, direct billing of plan member contributions (rather than payroll deduction) for all permanent OSSTF members will be implemented. Information will be communicated by OTIP to plan members on the process to enroll in pre-authorized withdrawals prior to the February 1, 2024, transition date. These member-paid contributions will be taken on the 10th of each month, beginning February 10, 2024. All new permanent secondary teachers hired effective September 1, 2023 AND any new LTO teachers with assignments longer than 90 calendar days should have been notified by the employer that they will receive an enrolment email from OTIP to their LKDSB email address. Please follow the steps in the email from OTIP to complete the enrolment process. Be sure to watch for this email closely—there is a very limited sign-up window for those eligible. Members with any questions or concerns about health benefits can contact the District Office or OTIP directly for further information.

*Yours in solidarity,*

Jennifer Kumpf, President  
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