

The Sentinel

Realignment of Funding Results in Cuts to Special Education @ YCDSB!!

Heather Manassis, President

Special education is a topic of much concern, and sometimes of much contention. The struggle to provide a program for the diversity of students with special needs, in a classroom setting for all or part of the day, with the support of a special education teacher, and sometimes several others, is increasingly challenging.

In addition to assessing, programming and instructing, which are the work of both the special education and classroom teachers, is the co-ordination of the many other specialists who are often required in the education of students with special needs; speech and language, occupational therapy, hearing, vision, physical management, behavioural and psychological services and the continuous, on-site support of educational assistants and educational intervenors. This list addresses only the human resources required. Additional resources including technology and related materials, like furniture, sensory materials, etc., add to the costs of delivering effective programs.

I could continue for sometime about the challenges facing teachers with regard to special education. On Feb. 8, 2016 the Executive of YCT and several others attended a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) at which Mr. Tony Dias, Senior Policy Advisor with the Ministry of Education, presented information and clarification to the new special education funding model that is being applied to York Catholic District School Board and all other school districts province wide. Mr. Dias did not speak specifically about the implications of the new model on special education funding at York Catholic, but I trust that such conversations will certainly continue with both SEAC members and among the trustees.

Mr. Dias' presentation was both informative and worrisome. The demands of Special Education continue to climb, yet the new funding model will make it increasingly more difficult to meet those demands. Although the message wasn't unexpected, it is very concerning to all stakeholders.

In an effort to "equalize" funding across the province the ministry has realigned the distribution of funding. There are six overall components of Special Education Grants (SEGs), each

addressing specific supports and/or programming for students.

1. The Special Education Per-Pupil Amount (SEPPA) recognizes the cost of providing assistance to the majority of students with special education needs and is allocated based on enrolment.
2. The High Needs Amount (HNA) addresses the variation among boards with respect to students with special education needs and boards' abilities to respond to these needs.
3. The Special Equipment Amount (SEA) is comprised of two components each supporting the purchase of equipment: 1) computers and related devices and 2) other equipment including sensory, hearing, vision, personal care, and physical assist equipment.
4. The Special Incidence Portion (SIP) supports pupils who require more than two full-time staff to address the health and safety needs of both the students who have extraordinarily high needs related to their disabilities and/or exceptionalities and of others at their school.
5. The Facilities Amount (FA) supports education programs for school-aged children and youth in Government approved facilities.
6. Finally, the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) provides funding for the hiring of additional board level Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) expertise to support principals, teachers, and multidisciplinary transition teams. Each of these categories is further divided and more specifically determined.

The ministry maintains that overall funding will remain consistent over the next few years but will be realigned to better equalize the distribution of funds. The funding model is very complex and I am addressing a very small portion of that model in this article. The change to the model, however, will in fact reduce funding to YCDSB. Of particular concern is the realignment of monies allocated under the HNA funding. This allocation provides additional monies to boards that are remote and rural; that are performing below the provincial average on the Grade 3 and 6 EQAO assessments; that have lower success rates in Grade 9, and Grade 10; that have higher numbers of students enrolled in LD and K- courses in Grades 9 and 10; and those that have larger FNMI (First Nation, Metis, Inuit) populations.

York Catholic teachers are dedicated to meeting the needs of students and to ensuring each child reaches his or her potential. This manifests in EQAO results which are consistently at or above the provincial average and in a lower than average number of students in K and/or locally developed courses or students failing to achieve credits in grades 9 and 10. Ironically hard work and commitment to excellence are negatively affecting our Board's ability to access funding, which is much needed in order to continue to be successful in meeting the needs of students. In addition, we will not qualify to receive funds for being rural or for having a large number of students who identify as FNMI. Our ability to continue to provide services to students with special needs will become increasingly more challenging faced with the direction the ministry is taking with regard to funding.

Reduced funding reduces support to boards, schools, teachers and ultimately to students. This results in increased pressures on the same. Attendance at this meeting was terrific and clearly demonstrates a real concern for the delivery of individualized programs to students and especially to those with special education needs. Moving forward it is incumbent on all teachers to speak openly about these concerns with all stakeholders.

Locally, your First VP, Filomena Ferraro and release officer Nelson De Castro, who have forged very good relationship with our local MPPs, will be addressing concerns of special education with them. It is, however, the responsibility of all members, from the perspective of teacher - and parent if applicable - to speak to your MPP about the funding of special education. The message must get back to Queen's Park. The expectation of teachers to meet the needs of students with special needs in our publicly funded Catholic schools cannot be achieved without proper supports, including and most especially appropriate and sufficient funding.



Introducing our New Logo !

See Page 8 to read more about our new logo and website.

Federal Liberals Promise Teachers Tax Credit

Julie Pauletig, Past President

Our pursuit for a teacher tax credit to be applied to a personal income tax report first began here at the local level during the deficit reduction years. At that time during the late 90s early 2000s the YCDSB was faced with a board deficit in the millions and began slashing everything from paper towels, paper for copying, and hand soap. Teachers were digging into their pockets more than ever to purchase items beyond incentive stickers, borders and

the issue of out-of-pocket expenses for work related materials for teachers. Simply advising teachers not to use their own money to purchase items for the classroom and students, was not the only answer.

When one door closed, we found another. We began to lobby for provincial tax credits for teachers as a bargaining goal at the OECTA Annual General Meetings. We were met with

After two decades of lobbying on behalf of teachers, on August 26, 2015 Prime Minister Trudeau, then leader of the Liberal party, announced that if the Liberals were elected they would move forward on a proposed school supplies tax benefit for teachers. Trudeau, a former teacher, understood the issue and promised a tax credit. One thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) spent on school supplies could translate to a \$150.00 tax credit. That campaign promise has finally become a reality for teachers across Canada.

We have learned two things from this experience. First, if you are a teacher and have receipts from 2015 for school-related expenses or supplies totaling up to \$1000.00 you may claim these expenses when filing your personal income tax return. In doing so you will receive a tax credit of up to \$150.00. Secondly, when you as an individual or as a member of a larger group feel strongly about an issue or feel that you are being shortchanged, pursuing fairness is, as in this case, justified. Other employees, in both in the private and public sector, are afforded the ability to claim employment related expenses when filing their income tax returns, why should teachers be treated differently? The federal tax system will now recognize teachers' work-related expenses. Advocating and lobbying for what is fair in the long run brings much satisfaction. Realizing that it is a benefit for the common good makes it well worth the pursuit.

Prior to filing your 2015 income tax return be sure to review the new tax credits for 2015 to ensure you access all the tax benefits entitled to you.

Left: Our President, Heather Manassis, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Aug. 26, 2015. The day he announced the long fought for tax credit for Canadian teachers.



bulletin board display charts to brighten up their classroom. Purchasing items such as staples, tape, glue, photo copying paper, construction paper, and science materials began to be the norm among teachers in order to deliver lessons and engage students. Frustration resulted in some teachers going to Staples to photocopy tests at their own expense. At that time locally, we tried negotiating the possibility of the Board issuing tax credit exempt forms to teachers who were spending their own money to complement the curriculum. The Board refused stating that they were providing adequate resources for teachers to deliver the curriculum to students. The Canada Revenue Agency regulatory requirements included reporting an expense form signed off by the employer for any employee (private or public service) work-related expenses when filing an income tax return. We knew at that point, as teacher advocates, we hit a wall once again and we needed to find other means of addressing

naysayers. Out-of-pocket expenses continue to increase with the implementation of technology and the need for computers, software and internet service to do our job. In 2004 it finally happened. Teachers in Prince Edward Island were the first group of teachers to be granted a school supply tax credit in recognition of the fact that they purchased materials to enhance learning in their classrooms and to further engage students. It was at that time that we were convinced to continue to pursue the same for teachers in Ontario. In 2006 and 2007 York Unit and TECT introduced AGM resolutions calling on the Association to devise a specific plan to lobby both the federal and provincial governments to allow teachers a tax credit for school-related expenses. The plan involved both the Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Teachers Federation lobbying with both levels of government for a tax benefit for teachers.

Mark Your Calendar

YCT Elections
Nomination Forms Due
March 30, 2016

OTPP Annual Meeting
April 7, 2016
Carlu, Toronto
Register at www.otpp.com

Wine Tour & Shopping
May 7-8, 2016
Register @ www.yctoecta.ca

OTIP Benefit Workshop
May 2016
Registration soon @
www.yctoecta.ca

Climate Justice Now!

Filomena Ferraro

1st Vice President

Executive Board Member of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council

The urgency to address climate change is a global concern with environmental, social, economic, and political implications.

The Pope's environmental encyclical titled 'Laudato Sii' (Praised Be You) "On the care of the Common Home, 2015", reiterates the importance of protecting the world God created. These 'letters' were added to the church's social teaching.

In essence God entrusted the world to us. This is a gift that must be protected by all and requires a genuine effort by all to protect our world, as indicated in the following quote by Pope Francis,

"Respect for creation, then, is a requirement of our faith: the 'garden' in which we live is not entrusted to us to be exploited, but rather to be cultivated and tended with respect." (catholicnewsagency.ca).

The church also calls for a change and improvement in lifestyle, and in modes of production and consumption in order to improve our common home. According to church teachings "to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God." (Laudatosi.org)

Pope Francis clearly illustrates that climate justice is the responsibility of all, not only of Catholics. We need to look at both the human element and the technological aspect of climate destruction since those who are most affected by climate change are the poor in developing countries.

The impact of environmental disasters such as tsunamis, flooding and other severe weather occurrences have a devastating impact on the poor in developing countries. They are faced with poor

quality drinking water, premature deaths, illness and exposure to pollutants. These events ultimately are caused by lifestyle choices and economic activities in developed countries. Those who contribute to the problem have a social responsibility to address the problem. Ignoring the consequences of one's lifestyle for the sake of profit is both selfish and unacceptable. Those who have the power to affect change must act now!

Pope Francis' encyclical was embraced by most scientists, philosophers, theologians, civic groups and labour unions, all of whom share this common concern.

The launch of the encyclical coincided with the climate march held in Toronto on July 5, 2015. Approximately 15,000 people marched on this date, including members of unions, environmental groups and concerned citizens. It was inspirational to see so many religious groups holding pictures of Pope Francis join this common front.

A few months later, three dozen delegates from Canada's labour movement attended the United Nations summit on climate change (COP21) in Paris. "Unions came from across the globe to push for ambitious climate targets, Just Transition programs, and adaptation and mitigation funding for poorer nations." We were pleased that our newly elected federal government, under the leadership of Justin Trudeau, also supported these goals. (www.labourcouncil.ca)

Just Transition refers to those policies that support workers in carbon-intensive industries when their jobs are being changed or eliminated. It includes voice in decision-making, retraining, income bridging and unemployment benefits, and community investment for good green jobs. (www.labourcouncil.ca)

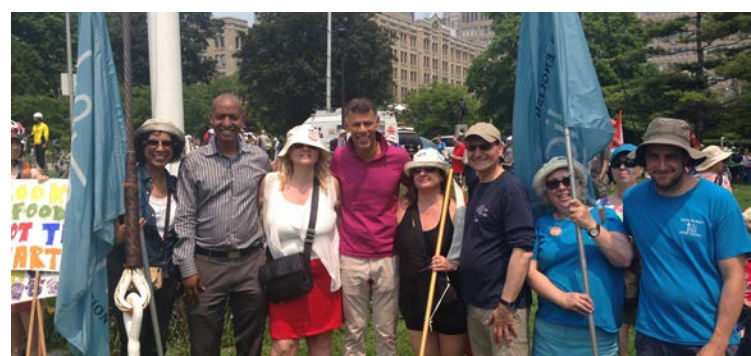
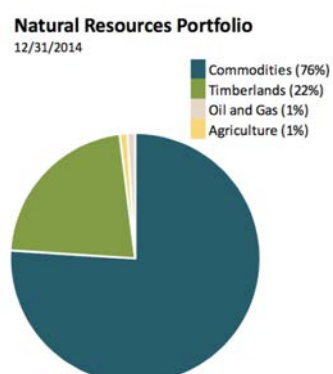
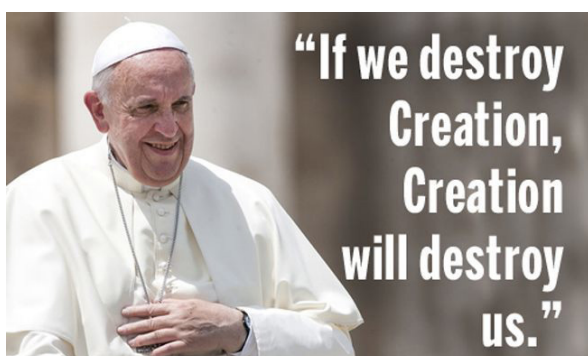
How can we reduce our carbon footprint in the Greater Toronto Area? This can be accomplished by increasing green energy generation, expanding financial support to home and building owners for solar, wind or geothermal installation and by expanding public transit. All levels of government should be providing funding in this area. Urban planning is also key. There should be a requirement to incorporate tree canopies, water conservation and storm-water control systems, walking and cycling infrastructure and local food production in all new subdivisions. (www.labourcouncil.ca)

Unions need to take on the agenda of climate justice. All job opportunities and roles within the workplace must take into consideration the goal of developing a greener economy. "In the UK, unions negotiated a role for Environmental Representatives in thousands of workplaces. These individuals help perform audits and help promote recycling and waste production. (www.labourcouncil.ca)

York members are concerned about the environment and where our pension money is invested. The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) does in fact consider climate justice when investing.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) report titled "Pension Funds and Fossil Fuels: An Economic Case for Divestment". This report called for all pension funds with investments in fossil fuels and 'dirty' industries becoming increasingly aware that fossil fuel company business models are not compatible with a habitable planet. The teachers' pension plan has for many years adopted a policy regarding socially responsible investing strategies which includes consideration for the environment and ethics. (OTF Table Officer's Report, Feb.2016)

Continued on Page 6



Climate Change march – July 5, 2015

Instructions to login to your YCT Gmail ?

1. Go to <http://mail.google.com> and click add account (if prompted).

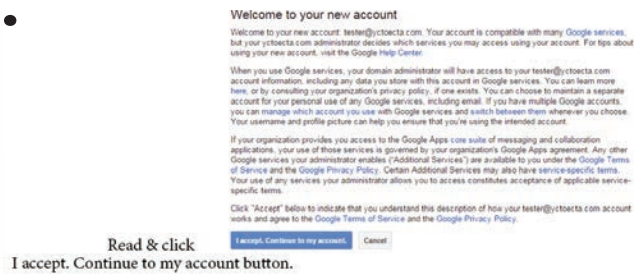
2. Enter your Email Address and click NEXT



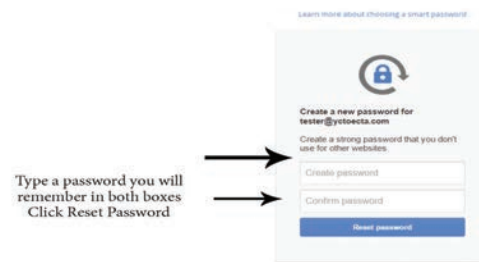
3. Enter your password (Your OECTA Number plus five (5) zeros)



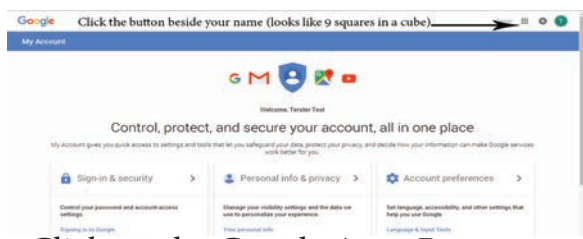
4. Read and accept the terms of agreement.



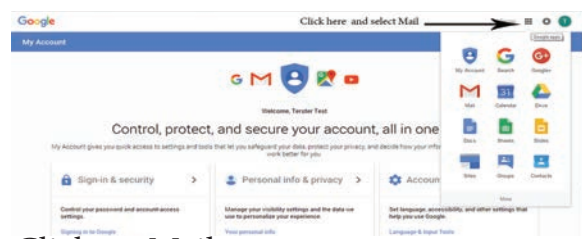
5. Type a new password you will remember.



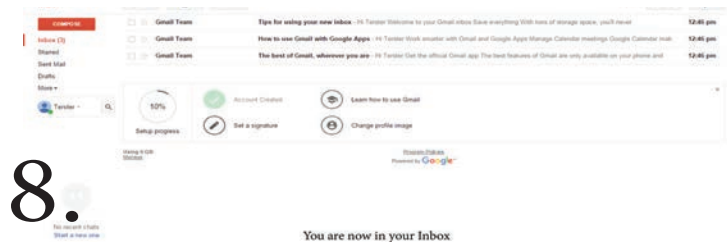
6. Click on the Google Apps Button (looks 9 small squares in a cube)



7. Click on Mail



Your IN ! This is your Inbox.



York Catholic Teachers
Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association

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FeelingBetterNow[®] is an anonymous and confidential tool designed to help you manage stress, anxiety and other common mental health issues, at work or at home.

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Stress Reduction



Helping Others



Are we paid for the summer months?

Monies paid during the summer months were earned during the course of the school year. Through an agreement with the employer, money is deducted from each pay between January and June and is paid to us bi-weekly in July and August. This is also the case if you are receiving pay while on sick leave. You will not receive pay during the summer months if you are on an Unpaid Leave (Personal Leave or Mat Leave) or if you are being paid by a 3rd party (WSIB or LTD (OTIP)).

“I’m off on maternity/paternity leave but am planning to return early, perhaps the last week in June, in order that I will receive summer pay” - FALSE

As noted above pay received during the summer months was earned while at work in the months of January thru June. If your child was born between Jan. and June the monies allocated to ‘summer pay’ were paid out prior to the commencement of your maternity leave. If you return prior to the end of your scheduled leave you will be paid for each day worked - in this example, 5 days.

Why was my pay higher than usual on February 4th?

The Feb. 4th pay included the 1% lump sum payment which was negotiated provincially. In addition if you are still moving on grid you received your increment retroactively to Sept 1, 2015.

Why is it important that I log into and check my YCT Gmail?

It is very important for every member to login to their YCT account as this is a direct conduit of information from the Unit to each member. Several years ago the York Unit was able to setup Gmail addresses for every member at no cost to the membership. The Unit administrates these accounts and therefore we can guarantee that these accounts will continue to exist and will not be shut down. Login instructions can be found on the previous page.

Can I forward my YCT Gmail to another account?

Yes! You can forward your email to any other personal email account with the exception of your board email account. In some instances information sent to your YCT account is confidential in nature and we do not want it disseminated through the Board’s email account.

What is LTD?

The acronym LTD stands for ‘Long Term Disability’ and it refers to the disability insurance plan that supports members suffering from a long term illness or injury which prevents them from full or part-time work.

A member cannot access LTD benefits until after they have used 11 sick days 11 paid @ 100% of salary & up to 120 Short Term Leave days paid @ 90% of salary). It take 10-12 weeks to process an application for LTD. If you feel you may need to access LTD you should contact the unit office.

Am I covered by LTD for my entire career?

Participation in the LTD plan became mandatory in

2012. Members will remain part of the plan until the later of 65 years of age, or a 66% unreduced pension (33 credited years of service). You may opt out of the plan within 100 days of your retirement date, but this is not recommended. Your retirement letter and a copy of your Teachers’ Pension Plan Board statement would need to be submitted to the Board.

How are MoU days accessed?

MOU days can be accessed for the following reasons and in addition to the two 9.06(a) days as outlined in the collective agreement. In total there are five(5) MoU days, one or two of which are personal days. Each member is allocated one personal day each year, if unused it can be carried over to the following year making a total of 2 days. The three or four MoU days remaining can be accessed for the following reasons under 9.06(a);

- caring for immediate family member in case of serious illness
- specialist or dentist appointment
- inclement weather

What is Early Intervention (EI)?

In York, Early Intervention is a two-fold process to support members when needed due to illness or injury. After a member is off for 10 or more days the Board informs the unit office. We then reach out to the member to see if additional support can be provided to that member through the Early Intervention program offered by OTIP. OTIP will also reach out to the member to offer additional supports. We may also remind members of their ability to access support through the Board’s EFAP (Employee and Family Assistance Program) program. Members will also be informed of their ability to access LTD if necessary.

What does your Local Political Action Committee (PAC) do?

Members of PAC participate in a variety of activities and/or events including:

- meeting with local members of Provincial Parliament, including members of the opposition parties
- campaigning for Elections at all three levels of government
- working with local Labour Councils
- working with the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL)
- working with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
- attending rallies, and marches and
- supporting our brothers and sisters on their picket lines

Staffing is just beginning, can I call the unit office to review staffing questions with a release officer ?

You can call the unit office at any time and ask any question. The call volume drastically increases at the time of staffing and we do our very best to answer all questions in a timely fashion. Please remember there are many factors that affect staffing including, but not limited to, split grades, retirements, criteria, preference forms, growth, decline, transfers, seniority and qualifications. The staffing process is very dynamic and one change can result in additional changes in other grades or departments. Staffing is completed on a yearly basis and can be affected by any of the factors listed above,

therefore it is not possible to discuss projected or future staffing assignments beyond the upcoming school year. Please note that it is important to have all the information available at the time of your call. Staffing involves the entire school and not just one grade/subject/or course.

I have submitted a doctor’s note for a sick leave and now the Wellness Coordinator is asking that a medical certificate be completed by my doctor indicating the ‘nature of my illness. Please explain.

Yes it is practice for the Board to ask for a medical certificate when a medical leave is longer than 2 weeks. This note may be necessary for medical accommodations or for clarification of a medical note already on file. Your doctor’s note should suffice but if the employer is asking that a medical certificate be completed it is the responsibility of the employer to cover the cost of the certificate. Members are required to pay for doctor’s notes initially, for additional notes if the initial note is incomplete and for notes required to extend a sick leave. If you have any concerns or questions around the completion of the certificate do not hesitate to call the unit office.

The provincial contract defines “Nature of Illness/injury” as follows:

Nature of the illness (or Injury) suggests a general statement of a person’s illness or injury in plain language without any technical medical details, including diagnosis or symptoms. Although revealing the nature of an illness may suggest the diagnosis it will not necessarily do so. “Nature of illness” and “diagnosis” are not congruent terms. For example, a statement that a person has a cardiac or abdominal condition or that s/he has undergone surgery in that respect reveals the essence of the situation without revealing a diagnosis.

What is “Success Factors” in MyPortal ? Should I complete my profile? Should I set up “job alerts”?

Success Factors is the new online board system through which all new positions (transfers, Department Headships, etc.) will be posted. It is available through the MY Portal system at <http://myportal.ycdsb.ca>.

It is advised that you complete a Candidate Profile in order to ensure that the most up to date information about you is included when you apply to a position using this new system. All jobs will be accessible through the new system as the board is no longer going to generate short lists as per the staffing guidelines. This system will also allow members to set up ‘Job Alerts’ which will allow you to receive notice, sent directly to your York Catholic Teacher’s Gmail inbox, of job postings in which you may be interested. Please note, instruction sheets outlining how to subscribe to Success Factors can be found on the “Bulletin Board” (on the staff page of the Board website).

Climate Justice Now !

(continued from page 3)

The teachers' pension plan has a four pillar approach to climate change: our fiduciary duty to pay pensions, our responsibility to manage investment risks, our engagement with companies and policy makers and our search for climate-friendly investment opportunities. This allows for our plan to address the social impact of climate change while looking at the economic benefits of infrastructure investments for the plan holders. This strategy is evident in the following quote from OTPP in response to 2015 UN Climate Summit. (OTF Table Officer's Report, Feb. 2016).

"Pension funds can also play a vital role in supporting an orderly transition to a low-carbon economy. We believe that climate change will present new investment opportunities as the world adapts to and mitigates climate change effects. However, policy uncertainty makes it difficult to access the potential value of investments and make good investment decisions. These conditions increase and hurdle rate for investors to release capital for investments that could help to adapt and mitigate climate change impacts". (OTF Table Officer's Report, Feb. 2016)

As Canadians, unionists and Catholics we need to drive the agenda for a cleaner workplace, and world. We have a responsibility to care for and appreciate God's creations while seeking justice for the poor and for peace in the world. As Pope Francis indicates:

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (laudatosi.org)

Long Term Disability Plan (LTD) Premium Increase		
Please note that effective March 2016 LTD premiums will increase to 1.33% of salary. This will result in the following increases:		
Salary	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$54,562.00	\$54.56	\$4.55
\$74,624.00	\$74.62	\$6.22
\$94,682.00	\$94.69	\$7.89

York Catholic Teachers
Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association



YCDSB
SCHOOL DAY GAME



RICOH COLISEUM AT EXHIBITION PLACE



VS



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13TH 11:00AM

\$15 TICKETS

1 FREE SUPERVISOR TICKET FOR EVERY 10 TICKETS PURCHASED!

STUDENTS CAN BRING THEIR OWN LUNCH

- BULLY PREVENTION MESSAGES INCLUDED THROUGHOUT THE GAME
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Toronto Maple Leaf Game – February 6th 2016

Michael Totten, 2nd Vice President



York Catholic Teachers recently held their Toronto Maple Leaf road trip to Ottawa on February 6th 2016. The weekend trip was a roaring success, although the Leaf's provided a losing effort for the 3rd year in a row. After suffering through a 6-1 loss to the Senators, both teachers and guests made the best of the weekend by socializing throughout Saturday evening and enjoying the Byward Market and Winterlude activities on the Sunday. Certainly we are looking forward to another road trip next year and can only hope that the Leafs will provide us with a victory that we can all celebrate.

Collective Bargaining

Reg Shepherd, Collective Bargaining Team Member

This year I had the privilege of being a part of the York Catholic Teachers Collective Bargaining Team. At York Catholic we use an alternative type of bargaining called Interest Based Bargaining. Interest based bargaining is more of a discussion leading to a resolution, rather than the “give and take” approach used in traditional bargaining. A positive relationship between the Board and the Association is key and we feel interest based negotiations lead to a quality deal, benefitting both sides.

Prior to meeting with the Board, the collective bargaining committee had the task of reviewing the member surveys, compiling the data and producing a list of items set forth by the membership to negotiate. The bargaining team then further defined this information to determine which ‘issues’ would be addressed at bargaining. This established bargaining priorities for the team.

The Memorandum of Understanding, negotiated at the provincial bargaining table created Part A of our agreement, and in turn set parameters for what could and could not be discussed at the local table. There were many items in our surveys which we had hoped to discuss locally, but unfortunately provincial negotiations removed our ability to do this.

York members were represented by a balance of elementary and secondary

teachers at the bargaining table, as well as members of your local executive, and members at large. The Board was represented by the Director, the Superintendent of Human Resources, Trustees and a superintendent from each of the elementary and secondary panel. Each team had representatives of the stakeholders they represent, each bringing a unique view based on their position and experience.

In interest based bargaining each team, in turn, presents an issue they would like to see incorporated into the collective agreement. Everyone then brainstorms the effects, benefits or implications of that interest, without judgement. Once all ideas are on the table the team works through each, debating why or why not it can or cannot be supported. This process results in a ‘yes’, a ‘no’, and a ‘maybe’ list each has been reached by consensus. The ‘yesses’ are then revisited and written into language that each party has agreed upon. It is through the experiences of each member that we are able to understand the challenges and benefits these proposed changes would present to the system as a whole. We are all tasked with finding a solution that would be mutually beneficial, and at times that may mean status quo.

In the end our team was able to make positive gains for each member. For example, members are now able to take a leave for 1 year and retain the right to

return to his/her position. Teacher-in-Charge and Divisional Chair positions are now two-year terms, the committee to discuss Special Education concerns has reconvened, and our Attendance Management Program is under review.

Edvantage Members,

You contribute a lot of time and effort to the educational community and Edvantage wants to reward your dedication. You could **WIN \$2,500 in cash**, or one of **10 monthly prize draws!**

So go ahead, take a trip, go on a shopping spree or spruce up your home. Just make sure to **treat yourself, because you deserve it!**

Edvantage is a rewards program exclusive to the Ontario education community that gives you access to great savings, contests and special events.

To learn more about the Edvantage rewards program or to enter the contest, visit:

edvantage.ca/win

Enter the “**Treat Yourself**” contest today for your chance to win the **\$2,500 Grand prize** and one of 10 monthly prize draws which include:

- » Roots gift cards
- » Sobeys gift cards
- » Soft Moc gift card
- » Wonderland tickets
- » Shell gift cards
- » Nutcracker Sweet gift card



Enter the Treat Yourself Contest at www.edvantage.ca/win. No purchase necessary. Open to Ontario education employees who are active Edvantage members. Must be Ontario resident and minimum 18 years of age. Win one of 2 - \$50 Roots gift cards; 3 - \$30 Sobeys gift cards; 1 - \$50 SoftMoc gift card; 2 - prizes of 2 tickets to Canada's Wonderland, valued at \$80; 2 - \$50 Shell Canada gas cards or 1 - \$50 Nutcracker Sweet gift card; and 1 Grand Prize of \$2,500 cash. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received by the draw dates and by the Contest Closing Date. Contest closes December 30, 2015. Go to www.edvantage.ca/contest/rules, for full contest rules.

Edvantage

Announcements:

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Tanya Asaro, teacher at St. Mary of the Angels, on the birth of her son.

Carmine D'Ardis, teacher at Cardinal Carter CHS, on the birth of his daughter Jolene Noelle.

Alessia DiIulio, teacher at St. Andrew, on the birth of her daughter Emilia.

Diana Fiorini, teacher at St. Brigid, on the birth of her daughter Audrey Grace.

Kevin Isada, teacher at St. Benedict, on the birth of his daughter Kennedy.

Laura Luff, music teacher at St. Monica, St. John XXXIII and St. Matthew, on the birth of her son.

Cristina Luongo, teacher at St. Joan of Arc CHS, on the birth of her daughter Lia Marie.

Stephanie Marchetti, teacher at St. Veronica, on the birth of her son James Sebastian.

Josie Palmeri, teacher at St. John Paul II, on the birth of her daughter Ava Nicole.

Nicole Tornambe-Romanelli, teacher at St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS, on the birth of her daughter Ava Grace.

Danielle Savo, teacher at Jean Vanier CHS and Luca Savo, teacher at St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS, on the birth of their daughter Arianna Marquesa.

Christina Sottile, teacher at St. Elizabeth Seton, on the birth of her daughter Maria Juliette.

CONDOLENCES & SYMPATHY

Vicky Amato, teacher at St. Veronica, on the death of her grandfather.

Daniela Bevacqua, teacher at Blessed Trinity and Julie Bevacqua, teacher at St. Peter, on the death of their father.

Sara Castelluzzo, teacher at Cardinal Carter CHS and Alba Joubert (Vacca), teacher at St. Augustine CHS, on the death of their aunt.

Tony Cellucci, teacher at St. Joseph the Worker, on the death of his nephew.

Maureen Cicinelli, teacher at St. Cecilia, on the death of her father-in-law.

Gina Creta, teacher at San Lorenzo Ruiz, on the death of her father.

Anne Marie Devine, teacher at Cardinal Carter CHS, on the death of her father.

Melissa Doucette, teacher at Good Shepherd, on the death of her sister.

Sandra Fabris, teacher at St. Agnes of Assisi, on the death of her grandfather (in August 2015).

Robert Fedrigoni, teacher at Blessed Scalabrini, on the death of his father.

Nancy Franzin, teacher at St. Jerome, on the death of her mother.

Kevin Isada, teacher at St. Benedict, on the death of his grandmother.

Vania Mandatori, teacher at St. Elizabeth CHS, on the death of her mother.

Rita Ottobre, teacher at St. Charles Garnier, on the death of her grandmother.

Renata Ozimek, teacher at Holy Jubilee, on the death of her brother and brother-in-law to Elio Pecoraro, teacher at Fr. John Kelly.

Marianna Parise, teacher at Our Lady of Good Counsel, on the death of her aunt.

Kelli Perada, teacher at St. Benedict, on the death of her uncle.

Anna Petrolo, teacher at Fr. Bressani CHS, on the death of her father.

Dora Polsinelli, teacher at St. Charles Garnier, on the death of her mother-in-law (in October 2015).

Josie Romita, teacher at St. Edward, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Vanessa Sarraino, teacher at St. Joan of Arc CHS, on the death of her grandmother.

Erinn Stavrev, teacher at St. Augustine CHS, on the death of her mother and mother-in-law to Linda Cooney, teacher at St. Robert CHS.

Paula Thompson, teacher at OLA, on the death of her father-in-law.

Vanessa Visconti, teacher at St. Padre Pio, on the death of her grandmother.

Out With the Old (Website), In With the New (Website)

Nelson De Castro, Councillor

If you have visited our Unit's website lately, you've probably realized that the website is a bit... dated. As software and browsers have improved, and the way people access the Internet has changed, the staff here at the unit office have realized that our website does not meet the needs of our membership. The design and function problems with the current website has rendered it almost useless. That is why our local executive approved the design of a new website. Working with TreeFrog Inc, a digital communications company based in Newmarket, we are close to unveiling a robust, user-friendly and visually-attractive website.

The new website will include some great features:

- Single Sign-On using our York Catholic Teachers Gmail account
- An improved calendar and registration system to keep members informed when any York Catholic Teachers Committee meeting or when a YCT event is taking place
- The integration of PayPal to give more options for event payment and,
- A mobile-friendly browsing experience to make it easier for smartphone and tablet users to access and navigate the website.

Along with a new website, TreeFrog Inc. has a team of graphic designers who have designed a new logo for York Catholic Teachers. We will soon be retiring what we have lovingly grown to know as "Friar, Friar, Hands on Fire" and revealing a more modern graphic to represent our brand.

I encourage you to visit TreeFrog's website (www.treefrog.ca) to get a sample of their incredible work. Look out for more information regarding our unit's new website in the spring!



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