



The Sentinel



Our newest teachers came in to the Unit Office for the New Teachers Inservice
(See more photos on page 6.)

A New Era of “Revenge” and “Punishment” Politics In Ontario

By Filomena Ferraro, President

The results of the June 6, 2018, provincial election in Ontario may not have been surprising for some. Ontarians were looking for a change and they definitely got a change. Some people however may already be re-thinking that wish for change as they come to recognize that the leadership of Premier Ford has not brought the change they were hoping for.

Throughout the election campaign Premier Ford did not present any clear or significant platform for Ontarians. Party staffers were clever not to allow their leader to speak more than was required. Instead, his campaign consisted of a series of catchy “bumper sticker” phrases and a play on words such as the overuse of the word “efficiencies”. Premier Ford, like his late brother

Rob, used the “retail politician” campaign style to appeal to voters.

Premier Ford seems to be a “one-man” show, but that he is not. He has surrounded himself with advisors and staffers who once worked for Steven Harper or Mike Harris. Their agenda is clear - to continue where Harper and Harris left off. Premier Ford is also supported by a house of “yes women and men”, MPPs who do not question the direction of the party or the ethics surrounding their decision-making process. This, along with Premier Ford’s personal agenda, makes for a dangerous combination.

Although having an inner circle of advisors and policymakers is not a new concept in government politics, what is obvious is that Premier Ford has added his own “street” style to

the mix. No one anticipated this type of governing model leading up to the election. Premier Ford has now included the revenge and punishment tactic, targeting anyone who may have, at some time in the past, crossed him or his deceased brother Rob.

As I watched and listened to the Throne Speech on July 12, 2018, it appeared that the Lieutenant Governor was uncomfortable with what he was reading and he appeared to be having difficulty delivering the speech. It could not have been easy to be reading aloud Ontario’s eulogy.

In an unprecedented move, Premier Ford convened a summer session of the legislature and began his brand of “revenge and punishment” politics. His first target, the inter-

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Teacher Performance Appraisals 101

By Mike Totten, 1st Vice President

New Teachers

NTIP(New Teacher Induction Program)

- NTIP is a requirement for all teachers in their first contract position since becoming certified with the OCT OR any experienced teacher whose prior permanent teaching experience was only outside of Ontario.
- New teachers participate in NTIP for 1 year from their date of hire.
- To complete the program, the new teacher must define and achieve individualized professional development goals. This progress is tracked using the Individual NTIP Strategy Form.
- New teachers can access **2 days of release time** to support the achievement of their professional development goals.
- The new teacher determines how to use this time, but must take the time in half or full-day increments and must access the days prior to May 31st of the school year. Collaboration with their mentor and Principal in determining how to use these days is recommended.
- Possible uses include, but are not limited to, attending NTIP/Board in-services or to provide time for the mentor and new teacher to visit the other's school/classroom and/or to collaborate. All release time must occur on Board property.
- Teachers must complete **2** satisfactory performance evaluations in the 12 month period. Each evaluation will consist of **2** classroom visits/observation periods. This means that teachers will be provided with **2** separate evaluation summaries after **4** classroom visits/observation periods.
- Upon completion, notification is sent to OCT so that a notation can be placed on the new teacher's Certificate of Qualification and the College's public register.
- All NTIP resources and curriculum materials can be found on your computer desktop by clicking on the First Class icon "**New Teacher Induction Program**".

Experienced Teacher Performance Appraisal

- The Teacher Performance Appraisal is a requirement for all academic staff who are experienced teachers and who are either exempt from or who have completed the new teacher induction program (NTIP).
- Legislation requires that each experienced teacher be placed on a five (5) year evaluation cycle. Therefore if you were evaluated in 2009 – 2010,

you would be evaluated again in the 2014 – 2015 school year as this would be the fifth year of the cycle.

- Evaluations are usually done by the principal of the school, although this responsibility can be delegated to the vice-principal. Under certain circumstances, the evaluation can also be conducted by the supervisory officer.
- During the scheduling of the performance appraisal, according to the five (5) year cycle, the following time periods must not be counted as part of the cycle:
 - o A year in which the teacher does not teach at any time in a school governed by the Board;
 - o The time in the evaluation year when the teacher is on an extended leave that has been approved by the Board;
 - o A period when the teacher is on secondment to a non-teaching position with another Board;
 - o A period when the teacher is on secondment to a teaching position outside the Ontario public education system.
- Teachers must be notified within 20 school days of their evaluation and the evaluation must be completed no later than May 31st of the same school year.
- The teacher shall provide long-range plans as per Board documents/policies and day plans (the day before, the day of and the day after) of the unit currently being taught. Teachers must also provide the unit of work.
- Teachers must complete **1** satisfactory evaluation. The evaluation will usually consist of **2** classroom visits/observation periods but could include a 3rd visit.
- A permanent teacher who has received a satisfactory summative evaluation during their evaluation year has completed the evaluation process.
- If a teacher is given an unsatisfactory rating, he/she will be placed under extensive review and provided with on-going support in creating an improvement plan before completing the second evaluation.
- The extensive review evaluation will be done by a Supervisory Officer.
- Any teacher who receives an unsatisfactory rating should contact the unit office immediately for further assistance. (905-508-2008)

Staff Reps Fall Meeting



On September 18th, President Filomena Ferraro, CEO Secondary and 1st Vice President Mike Totten, CEO Elementary welcomed the York Unit Staff Representatives to the first meeting of the 2018/2019 school year. Ab Falconi, YCDSB Director, a guest at this meeting, also addressed the Staff reps and highlighted the importance of their role at the school level. Guests from the Marlies organization were in attendance to promote the YCDSB school day game which will take place on April 4, 2019. Congratulations to Christina Glover of St. Brendan School who won the Tavares Leaf Jersey courtesy of MLSE.



Which Forms do I Complete?

By Reg Shepherd, Certified Worker Member

In our line of work we are often overwhelmed by the volume of paper we receive daily. When incidents occur in the workplace, especially when we are the victim of a violent or aggressive behaviour, teachers are often required to complete one or more of the forms listed in the chart on the following page.

Appendix A (as referred to in the chart)

Important Information

List of Suspendable Offences

Uttering a threat to inflict bodily harm, Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs, Being under the influence of alcohol, Swearing at a teacher, or person of authority, Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to the school, Bullying, Any act name under board policy

List of Expulsion offences

Possessing a weapon, Using a weapon to cause or inflict bodily harm, Committing physical assault causing bodily harm requiring treatment, Trafficking in weapons and/or drugs, Committing Robbery, Bullying (if student has previously been suspended for this, Any activity that is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate, Giving alcohol to a minor, Any other activity listed under board policy

Critical Injury

Places life in jeopardy produces unconsciousness, causes substantial loss of blood, fracture of an arm, leg or more than one finger or two, amputation of an arm, leg or more than one finger or toe. Consists of burns to a major portion of the body causes the loss of sight in an eye.

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	Incident Report	SE50	Conduct Report
Who is this form about	Worker	Special Education Student	Student
Who fills out the form	Worker (with Admin)	Worker	Worker
What is this form used for	Reporting a work-related injury or incident	Reporting a targeted physical aggression towards a staff member	Reporting a behavioural incident to Admin about a student
Who can fill out this report	Any board employee has the right to fill this report out.	Any staff member who is the target of the aggression from a special education student	The staff member who witnessed it or is involved in the behavioural incident
Is this form mandatory	Yes, if you are injured at work and require health care. All other incidents should be reported by the employee	Yes, if there is targeted physical aggression towards a staff member by a special education student	Yes, if the activity may result in a suspension or expulsion **see appendix a**
Who has implemented the form	Ministry of Labour	YCDSB	Ministry of Education
How does this form affect the Worker	Report all workplace incidents that have occurred to a worker, also keeps track of ongoing, recurring incidents in the school	There are three essential boxes to assist the worker: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requesting additional training 2. Requesting additional support 3. Seeking personal protective equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the worker has followed their duty to report, under Safe Schools • Keeps a log of behavioural incidents for particular students
Where does it go?	If the worker seeks medical assistance, this form is immediately sent to WSIB. The Medical Practitioner will also fill out a form, and WSIB will send a form to the worker. This is the beginning of a potential claim If the worker does not seek medical assistance, the board logs the event. If this is a critical injury, the Ministry of Labour is informed within 48 hours, and an investigation begins. **see appendix**	Student Services receives the SE50 and either begins a file, or continues it. If one of the boxes indicated above is selected, the worker is contacted for the additional supports. Student services also uses these reports to help identify needs in the school/system, and update safety plans	The administrator at the school is responsible for following up. Action must be taken, in a timely manner, and a copy of the report must be returned to the staff member. If a suspension/expulsion occurs, the Ministry of Education is notified. The administration should track these, to follow through on the progressive discipline model.

Continued from Page 1

est groups and the former Liberal Party Government. He cancelled both the cap and trade program (aka, the Carbon Tax), and the Green Ontario Fund. The *Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change* has been renamed the *Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks*. The removal of “Climate Change” is reminiscent of a “Trump-like” leader who claims there is no such threat, **that climate change is fake news**.

Next, in the traditional Progressive Conservative style, Ford has declared war on education. He cancelled \$100 million in funding for school repairs, announced a hiring freeze at the Ministry of Education, and cancelled curriculum writing sessions in Indigenous Studies, a key recommendation of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

If that was not enough, the Ford government also announced the repeal of the 2015 Health and Physical Education curriculum; also known as the “sex ed.” curriculum. I can only assume this was his promise to Tania Granic-Allen in an effort to get her to quickly step away during the election. There was an immediate reaction by teachers and parents opposing this decision. Shortly after the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario members protested at Queen’s Park, Premier Ford retaliated by creating a “snitch line” so parents could report those teachers who continue to teach the 2015 curriculum, threatening reprisal and/or discipline. The Premier also used that opportunity to announce his government’s intent to create a Bill of Rights for Parents.

Premier Ford’s revenge and punishment politics have extended to the upcoming municipal elections with the passing of Bill 5, a plan to cut the City of Toronto’s council seats from 47 to 25 and eliminates, province wide, the election of regional chairs by the voters. For Ford this will prevent the possibility of candidates such as Patrick Brown, former Tory and Steven Del Duca, former Liberal MPP, being elected to those positions and posing a threat to the Ford government. This is a very systematic and calculated approach to ensure that the most powerful political positions on regional government are not elected by

the people, rather than appointed politicians who will support his government’s agenda.

Bill 5 was rammed through the legislature without any public consultation just days before the registration deadline for municipal candidates. Many candidates had already fundraised, taken out a loan and given up employment to seek political positions at the municipal level. Any reasonable person would view this as a clear violation of human rights under *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The courts also determined that a violation occurred. However, this did not deter Premier Ford from moving forward with his agenda. He subsequently invoked the notwithstanding clause thus creating a constitutional crisis. The majority of people in Toronto opposed the PC agenda during the provincial election and now it is payback time. It appears Premier Ford is looking toward finding a means of eliminating any progressive thinking city councillors who in the past, either disagreed with his position or his late brother’s politics, while he was in municipal office. He used one of the most controversial weapons ever presented, disregarding democracy, and cut the size of Toronto’s city council, all in the name of revenge.

In only three months the future in Ontario has become quite grim. Those of us who do not agree with the politics of Premier Ford and his inner circle will see laws passed on the premise of revenge and punishment for those who disagree with him, and his government.

It is frightening to think that the future of our democracy and the existence of human rights is in the hands of a lawmaker who wants to carry out his personal agenda and completely disregard public consultation or input. Everyone’s rights are in jeopardy if Premier Ford does not get his way.

Members of his cabinet need to consider whether it is in their own best interest to continue to allow their leader to govern in this manner. We need to send a strong message to our elected MPPs: that we expect better from our government and hijacking the province for a personal vendettas will no longer be tolerated - go to www.ola.org/en/members/current for more information.

October
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York Unit Hosts the New Teacher Inservice - Sept 20, 2018

YORK REGION 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PROGRAM

Labour Council's election program for York Region's nine municipalities combines the key issues that matter to working people for their municipal governments, Regional Council, and school boards. This growing and diverse region can only prosper if there is a strong foundation of public services, a recognition that growing economic disparities need to be tackled, and a strong commitment to equity. Elected representatives at Regional Council or School Boards should be willing to champion:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- Our elected representatives must defend public assets and services, oppose privatization, and end P3 utilization

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- Too much of York Region's growth has resulted in urban sprawl. Zoning decisions are important in ensuring clean spaces, food security, and clean air for future generations.

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

- The foundation of a healthy society is an education system that leads students to succeed. The province needs to fix the currently flawed funding formula and fix our schools.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- Poverty is hidden in York Region with more and more households housing multiple low-income families. All levels of government must deliver the money needed to build new social housing units and keep existing social housing units in good repair.

PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR ALL

- Affordable, accessible transit is crucial for the health of this region. Freezing fares and returning operations of transit lines back into the public's hands would ensure accountability and lower the cost of operations.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Major infrastructure projects should provide good unionized jobs for local residents, access to careers in the trades and professions for marginalized communities, and high environmental standards.

A REGION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Accessible public services and democratic practice are crucial for social justice. The shameful act of stripping public holidays from 64,000 retail workers with no public consultation should never have happened and needs to be repealed. There needs to be a commitment to challenge systemic racism - one that involves the consultation of First Nations communities living in York Region.

The full program is available at labourcouncil.ca/yorkregion

Cancelling Staggered Entry - Not a Wise Decision!

By Julie Pauletig, Release Officer

Last spring the school board made the decision to end the “Staggered Entry” process for those students entering their first year of Kindergarten. Members teaching Kindergarten were dumbfounded and confused by this decision. The notion of 29 three, four and five year olds, along with a parent or parents, all arriving at 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning **sounded** chaotic - not something you would have to see to believe. The rationale: working parents could not be accommodated. There must be a better way to address the issue for the working parent(s), the child and the classroom teacher.

Currently the maximum number of students in a Kindergarten class is 29, with a hard cap of 32. In the past, second year, aka SK students, started on the Tuesday following Labour Day and the “Junior Kindergarten”, or Year 1 students, were staggered in over the remainder of the week. The JK’s would attend a few at a time, for half the day, to afford these young students a smooth transition to their new environment. By the Friday of the first week the entire Kindergarten class, JKs and SKs would attend school for the full day.

The board’s decision to end this practice resulted in unnecessary confusion, distraught children and frenzied teachers in many classrooms across the board. Teachers were left to attend to 29 students, each with one or two parents, all expecting, or in some cases needing, their attention. Teachers and ECEs scrambled to meet and greet students and parents, while at

the same time ensuring that they knew which children would be getting on a bus, and who would be picking up those who didn’t get on a bus at the end of the day. Emergency contacts, specific bus routes, and whether or not there were any relevant or significant allergies were all matters for consideration early that morning of Tuesday September 4th and all-the-while trying to attend to the apprehensive child.

Was it even possible to maintain calm or to even begin to establish routines? How are routines and calmness established with these young children who for many is the first time they have been separated from their parents and caregivers, all dumped into an unfamiliar place with strangers. Many of these young students were traumatized, and our members had to maintain quality control to survive the day. Exhausted is an understatement. At the end of the day cleanup began with the tissues from tears, packing soiled clothes and dumping carpets from the many toileting “accidents”. The additional frustration that there were far too many issues to cope with from dealing violent behaviour without support or noting that some students were entering the system with special needs not identified. In most cases this was the “first day” reality for our Kindergarten teachers.

Many other options could have been contemplated. For instance, the old staggered entry model adding two or three students every half day to the initial SK group

and growing the group to the full class. Another possibility could have been to stagger in students, with stay at home parents or guardians, bringing their children in on the Thursday or Friday. At the very least they could have had only JKs on the first day and have the SKs start the second day, modelling the grade 9 entry at the secondary level.

We all want our students to experience a positive first day start to school. The bureaucrats and decision makers at the board who made the judgement call to scrap the staggered entry only need to walk in the shoes of our teachers to experience the craziness of the first day in a full day Kindergarten classroom. Every student should have the opportunity to experience a smooth transition and a positive learning environment on the first day and that includes our little friends stepping into the school building the first day. It only makes sense! Kudos to all our teachers who strive daily to create a welcoming environment even on the worst of days.



Getting to Know Your LTD Plan

By Patricia Chiarella, 3rd Vice President

Long Term Disability (LTD) is a benefit available to all employees. It is an exceptional service which provides members access to Early Intervention(EI), Feeling Better Now, Best Doctors, and Carepath - all excellent programs which deal with a variety of illnesses including mental health issues as well as medical diagnosis.

Applications to LTD have grown in recent years and our plan has provided the many members who have been approved an opportunity to heal without having to worry about the financial impact they may have had to endure when they were unable to work. Since members pay to be part of the plan, many assume LTD is automatically accessed once their short-term medical leave is exhausted. In actuality, LTD maintains the right to limit eligibility and qualifying is determined by medical information provided to the carrier (OTIP). Many of our members would agree this is money well spent for the peace of mind it offers should they find themselves unable to work due to illness.

Quick Facts About LTD

- ❑ There is a minimum 131 day waiting period (11 sick days + 120 days of STLDP days (Short Term Leave and Disability Plan)
- ❑ Approval can take up to 12 weeks
- ❑ LTD pays members earn 50% of their current year salary, but this payment is non-taxable and includes pension contributions being made on their behalf by the insurance carrier. Therefore, members are actually taking home greater than the allotted 50% of their bi-weekly net salary.
- ❑ Once the initial LTD rate of pay is approved, a cost of living adjustment will be added yearly. Any member still on the salary grid will not see a movement as they would if they were still teaching.
- ❑ While on LTD, members will not be responsible for paying their own benefits as long as their Date of Disability (the date at which a member became unable to work) occurred **after the benefit transition date of February 1, 2017**.
- ❑ Members who reach 65 years of age or accrue 30 credited years of service are no longer eligible to receive LTD and should submit an **LTD Coverage Termination** form to the Benefits Department at the Board (Attention Tiziana Marcelitti) in order to stop LTD premium deductions. **It is the member's responsibility to be aware of these limitations and to notify the employer.** This Board form can be downloaded from YCTOECTA.COM .

The Executive encourages all members to **maintain their LTD benefit while on a leave of absence of any type (eg. maternity, personal)**. If a member chooses to withdraw from the plan, the window of opportunity to rejoin without having to submit an independent medical exam is **30 days** after the return to work date. Applying after 30 days could jeopardize a member for coverage if medical conditions develop or emerge during the leave as these could now be considered pre-existing.

Our role at the Unit office is to serve our members in every way we can. We would encourage anyone with questions about any of these programs to call the office for clarification and support.

How to Prevent Wind Damage to Your Home

High winds can be a dangerous, and costly, instance of extreme weather. Consider the damage incurred by the severe spring wind storm that hit southern Ontario in May 2018, causing over \$380 million in property damage.¹

Though none of us can control the weather, there are some actions that home owners can take to help minimize their potential losses in the event of a wind storm. It's important to be aware of the risk level for high winds in your area, as well as of your home's potential vulnerabilities to wind damage.

To learn more, visit www.otipinsurance.com/article25



Celebrating 55 Years and looking Back

This year the York Unit - OECTA is celebrating its 55th Anniversary. In each edition of the Sentinel published this year we will be republishing articles and photos from archived editions. Take a close look. Can you see anyone you know?



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New teachers

Catholic teachers launch first paper

Incredible, a newspaper from the York Catholic Teachers

... and full of informative, creative, and entertaining features.

teachers

October 1989



New teachers at the OECTA York Unit office during the orientation and social.

Educational Views & News

Finally we're tuning in to media literacy

By Jerome Meharchand

The year is 1989. It's the last week of September and the Jays are about to face the Orioles for the pennant. It's the last regular season series of the year. Chances are there'll be a few Canadians huddled round the television set this weekend. A few. Those who didn't or couldn't get into the Dome, what with scalpers and corporate buyouts and other such disreputable practices! Meanwhile, this same weekend, some lucky student (or perhaps several lucky students) in sunny Toronto (dare I say York Region?) will be dutifully plodding through chapter 10 of *Wuthering Heights* or *Saint Joan* or *Days of Terror* or some other equally worthy work of high cultural merit.

What are the odds on the "homework not complete" columns being just a little fuller than usual on Monday? What if the homework itself was to watch the series and comment on the construction and delivery of a classic media event? What if those students had been following the rollercoaster fortunes of the Bluejays in the local media, from the Dump Williams campaign to George Bell's eloquent advice to those fans who expected more from him? What if all that were tied in with the *Dubin Inquiry* into Drugs in Sport; or *Drugs in Real Life*, as in *Colombia* or *Washington D.C.*, or *High Park*; or the value system that places the construction of a Dome over the housing and feeding of the poor of Toronto; or modern-day titopia as depicted in beer commercials?

If the mass media affect the lives of our students (and our own lives) so powerfully, then surely the curricula in our schools should assist students in understanding the media. Surely media literacy is a much needed focus in the classrooms of today! Surely, a curriculum that enables students to function not simply as media consumers but as media critics is not only desirable, but actually vital!

The necessity for students to have some formal education in Media Literacy has been given new impetus by the release this month of the Ministry of Education's new resource guide for Media Literacy. Written by a team of media specialists and as well as by classroom-based educators, it provides an excellent starting point for those who wish to get involved with this new and exciting area of teaching. It begins with an overview of the key concepts of media literacy, and moves quickly into practical suggestions and activities for dealing with each of the major media genres. (That's right! Genres. Just like "real" literature. Neat eh?)

A quick look at the new resource document reveals that it advocates a serious, practical and pedagogically sound approach to the media. The governing idea is that of an inquiry-based, spiral curriculum which will maintain a high degree of

currency and relevance, while developing skills and concepts that are truly important in our information-packed world.

In actual fact, the need for media studies in our classrooms has been formally recognized as long ago as 1987 when the current Ministry Guidelines for English (still fondly referred to as the "new English Guidelines") were published. To demonstrate its support of media studies, the Ministry made it mandatory for approximately 10% of Language arts time in grades seven and eight to be devoted to Media Literacy, and for the equivalent of two thirds of a credit to be offered between grades nine and twelve. Clearly the Ministry sees media literacy as a high priority. So too do many teachers in York Region. Several of our high schools offer specific courses in Media Literacy at the General and Advanced Levels, and several of our elementary schools have begun actively incorporating media literacy into their Language Arts programs. The response from students has been overwhelming. In every case, students have demonstrated a high degree of motivation and the willingness to work overtime, particularly on the production of films, photo-essays and videos, but also on written projects like school and class newspapers, and oral/dramatic performances. Overall, the enthusiasm has been limited only by the amount of time available, and by the resources at hand.

What do these exciting beginnings mean for the future of Media Literacy in York Region's Catholic schools? The answer is lots more excitement and stimulation - not just for students, but for teachers as well. It means that as more and more teachers discover the motivating power of Media in the Classroom, the demand for resources and training will increase, but so will the relevance of our curricula. It means that increasingly, our students will be equipped to respond critically to the countless explicit and hidden value messages embedded in each of those seductive TV and magazine commercials. It means that students will be able, ultimately, to connect their experiences with Television, Radio, Computers, Books and Magazines with their other experiences of Art and Literature, Science and History, Politics and Religion. By deconstructing and reconstructing media texts, students will develop a wider literacy, one which is essential for intellectual and moral survival.

Nineteen Eighty Four has not fully arrived nor has it passed. More than ever before we are witnessing the reality of McLuhan's "global village". Media Literacy is no longer an expendable appendix to the curriculum. It is essential.



Canadian Teachers Federation: Women's Symposium

By Nina March, President of Halton Catholic Elementary Teachers and Elementary Occasional and Filomena Ferraro, President York Catholic Teachers

We were proud OECTA delegates at the 2018 Canadian Teachers Federation: Women's Symposium (CTF). The theme was "Women in Union Leadership" and as a delegation of seventeen (17) OECTA sisters, it was an incredible experience.

Despite the many advancements that have been made toward gender parity research shows that women are significantly underrepresented on corporate boards and in union leadership positions and significantly over-represented on unpaid, volunteer boards.

We had the distinct pleasure of receiving greetings from the Honourable Antionette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island, and former member of Prince Edward Island Teacher's Federation. A proud Acadian woman and retired teacher, Perry displayed a fierce sense of humour, a deep respect and passion for the teaching profession and a keen understanding of the barriers that women face in attaining leadership roles. Her message was clear, "It is important that you take your space and ensure that your voice is heard".

This memorable beginning was followed by a formidable list of presenters including Lily Eskelsen Garcia, the Latino Woman President of the National Education Association in Washington DC. She represents 3 million American teachers in the USA, including Puerto Rico. Garcia shed light on the stark realities teachers in the United States have faced since the Donald Trump administration including their poor compensation (salaries and pensions), erosion of working conditions and, continued attacks on charter schools where funding was tied to achievement, to name a few. What is most concerning, however, is the re-awakening of racism, misogyny and hate, values previously "buried" and unacceptable to Americans but which Donald Trump now freely expresses.

Garcia went on to discuss American unions and the attacks they are from groups of billionaires like the Coke Brothers, and individuals such as Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Education. The political "right" have organized in such a manner that they have been allowed to obtain personal contact information of union members. They are approaching union members at home, providing "drop cards" which ask "Did you know that you can belong to your union and get all of the benefits of belonging to a union without paying anything? Sign here." Their efforts to "educate" union members actually serve to weaken the ability of un-

ions to properly represent their members since they no longer have the resources necessary to do so, thereby rendering them powerless. Unfortunately, union members do not understand the impact of their signature on that card. Also discussed were the distinct similarities between Donald Trump and Doug Ford and the need for teachers to act and to bring like-minded family members, neighbours and friends to the polls to vote *against* Ford.

Garcia noted that throughout Trump's campaign and even on Election Day "no one expected him to win" and because of that teachers did not organize and were caught "off guard". The underlying message throughout Garcia's presentation was that throughout history women have been seen as nurturers and caregivers, attributes which many consider weaknesses. Garcia suggests that they are actually strengths which contribute to the making of strong, powerful leaders. As women and union members, we need to come together to utilize that power most effectively.

The conference offered several other workshops including: Women in Negotiations, Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Women in Leadership, Building Support for Mentorship, Strengthening Leadership Networks, Inspiring Speeches, Workplace Violence, a 'fireside chat' about the #MeToo Movement, and a Maintaining Work/Life Balance plenary session. Our President, Liz Stuart, participated in a powerful plenary session about the #MeToo Movement.

Throughout the symposium, it became very clear, for whatever reason that women often need to be "tapped on the shoulder" several times before considering taking on a leadership role. Strong female mentors, good networks and space to exchange ideas are the keys to opening the doors for women to pursue greater leadership roles and utilize our unique talents to affect change.

In the fall, OECTA will host their first Women's Conference titled *Fempower*. At this conference, OECTA sisters will have an opportunity to speak and share stories in a safe space and to make connections. We are looking forward to this opportunity provided by our Association.

"Be the change you want to see in the world." Ghandi

Celebrating 25 Years of Service



Congratulations 25 Years of Service!!

On October 15, 2018 over 30 York Catholic members and their guests attended the celebration at Immaculate Conception Church in Woodbridge, recognizing 25 years of service and commitment to Catholic Education. During the homily, Father Eugene Chianain, celebrant of the mass, spoke of the challenges that as teachers we face each day and the importance of maintaining faith and hope throughout our journey. The mass was followed by a buffet dinner and refreshments in the church's main hall that was spruced up with flowers, balloons and two lovely cakes commemorating this milestone in their career. Many thanks to Patricia Chiarella for organizing this special event, to the choir members for their exquisite voices and music selection for the mass, to Father Eugene and to all those who help make the event so special.

This Fall Focus on Gratitude

Fall is a season of change, from the colours of the trees to the weather, but Fall also brings a very special holiday, Thanksgiving. It's a time to show gratitude while spending time with loved ones and enjoying a delicious dinner. Did you know that there are health benefits to being thankful and showing gratitude in your daily routine? According to scientists, counting your blessing year-round is good for your mental health and well-being.

To learn more, visit www.otipinsurance.com/article26



Ontario Teachers' Federation AQ/ABQ subsidy

By Julie Pauletig, Release Officer

The previous government provided a limited amount of funds to the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) to enable the AQ/ABQ subsidy program. Last summer many of our members benefited from the subsidy saving up to \$450 for an Additional Qualifications (AQ) course or an Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ) course. Courses completed after November 1, 2017, were eligible and covered by an application form through OTF available for OECTA members. In previous years subsidies for such courses were processed directly by OECTA. Currently OECTA members applying for a Math AQ/ABQ subsidy will find the application form on either the OTF or the OECTA website and OECTA will continue to process these applications. However, you are able to take courses from other providers accredited to deliver an AQ/ABQ courses by the Ontario College of Teachers. Receipts and proof of completion are required for reimbursement.

Due to limited funds for this subsidy program OTF cannot guarantee a subsidy to every member, however, when the funding comes to an end, all members will be advised. There is still an opportunity for members to benefit from this subsidy program in Fall 2018.

You may apply for up to three subsidies in each of the three areas of Mathematics, Technology and Kindergarten. Please visit www.otffeo.on.ca or www.catholicteachers.ca websites for more information.

The subsidized mathematics courses are

- Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Part 1
- Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Part 2
- Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Specialist
- Mathematics, Grades 7 and 8
- Mathematics, Intermediate (ABQ)
- Mathematics, Senior (ABQ)
- Mathematics, Honours Specialist
- Any undergraduate mathematics course that is prerequisite to the AQ/ABQ courses listed above

The subsidized technology courses are

- Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction, Part 1
- Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction, Part 2
- Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction, Specialist
- Teaching and Learning through e-Learning

The subsidized Kindergarten courses are

- Kindergarten, Part 1
- Kindergarten, Part 2
- Kindergarten, Specialist

You may apply for up to three subsidies in any one area: Mathematics, Technology and Kindergarten.

Note that it may be up to eight weeks before you receive your cheque.

We encourage members to explore this opportunity!



An Active Unit with lots of Activities



York Unit is always on the move with many activities and events for our members. Here is a collage of photos showcasing the following events: Retirees Social 2018, Labour Day Parade, Staff Reps meeting, New Teacher Inservice, Trustee Meet and Greet, World Teacher Day, New Staff Reps Inservice, 25 Years of Teaching Mass and Social and OECTA Beginning Teachers Conference 2018



Banning Cellphones in the Classroom - The Demise of Critical Thinking

By Michael Oyston - Counsellor

Although very little was ever released in the PC platform in the run-up to the June election one item that was buried deep within it and did not gain a lot of media attention was the pledge to remove cell phones from the classroom. According to this platform item the Ford Government has vowed to ban cell phones in all elementary and high schools “in order to maximize learning time.” We would be naive to think that students with cell phones won’t be distracted. Indeed adults with cell phones can become just as, if not more distracted by their devices. Does this mean that they should not be a part of our 21st-century learning environment?

We could debate the merits and detractions of cell phone use in the classroom over and over again and we would likely continue to come back to the same conclusions. Yes, they can be a distraction. Yes, they are a tool that students can use. Yes, we need to adopt a strategy in our classrooms that promotes effective use. We’ve been there and done that and hopefully, by now teachers have found a strategy that works for them to manage device use, just like a teacher would find a way to manage trips to the bathroom, collecting permission forms, and assigning teams for dodgeball.

But maybe we need to back the camera up a bit here. Let’s get the distraction item off the table and look at the idea of banning a technology. Although this ban is being sold as a means to maximize learning time, a key 21st-century learning competency is critical thinking. Thinking critically requires students to “acquire, process, interpret, rationalize, and critically analyze large volumes of often conflicting information to the point of making an informed decision and taking action in a timely fashion” (C21, 2012, p. 10). A cell phone when used as a resource can significantly support critical thinking. It has the ability to provide access to conflicting information which is vital to critical thinking. Thinking critically may mean that some students could have their perspectives shifted, they may alter their points of view, or even decide that they may not agree with a certain perspective that is being given to them. This is what an autocratic regime disguised as a democracy (cough cough Ford Nation) fears. Maximizing learning is a misdirection to the real

issue of controlling and limiting the information that our students have access to. One simply has to look at the PC Government’s production of Ontario News Now or Ford Nation Live to see the start of how this current regime is attempting to control how we acquire, process, interpret and rationalize information.

A cell phone ban is not intended to maximize learning. It is a calculated political move that has long-lasting implications on the critical thinking skills of our students. Denying students opportunities that may allow them to challenge norms, question the status quo and come to their own conclusions after critically analyzing conflicting information ensures a generation of uninformed potential voters. Voters who will, without question, consume content that is broadcast over Ontario News Now. They may even come to believe that use of the Notwithstanding Clause supports their democracy or that one day they will be able to buy beer for a buck. When a magician performs a trick they rely on misdirection. They get the audience to look in a certain direction while they complete the trick somewhere else. Banning cell phones is misdirection. While we get caught up in the idea of “being on task,” and “maximizing learning time” the government is slowly, but purposefully ensuring that their “newly consulted on” curriculum and ideologies are the only ones that students are being exposed to. By allowing one item to be banned the slippery slope to banning more resources begins. The resources you may be able to use to promote classroom discussion or extend thinking could suddenly become very prescribed. Who even knows what discipline would result from deviation of their use as the snitch line looms for those who tend to wander too far from the curriculum.

Regardless of how you feel about devices in the classroom, take a minute to consider what a ban on technology really means to you and the impact that this will have on critical thinking in your classrooms.

C21 Canada (Canadians for 21st Century Learning and Innovation). (2012). *Shifting minds: A 21st-century vision of public education for Canada*.

Retrieved from: www.c21canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Shifting-MindsRevised.pdf



By Greg Bolton, 2nd Vice President

My school administrator wants me to use an app called *Remind* to communicate with my parents. Is this okay?

When Remind first came out it was called Remind 101 and it was a one-way communication tool that could be used to text message a group of users at one time without disclosing your personal phone number. Unfortunately, the software has changed both in name and functionality. It now is a tool which provides two-way communication, allowing parents to respond to your posts, through text messaging. We do not recommend this practice. The school board has moved this from a green app to a yellow app, due to the changes in functionality.

If you still choose to use this app, then we strongly recommend you change the security settings to only allow **ONLY** one-way communication. It is advised that you **NEVER** use an app for which you cannot access the security settings.



Can I access information and forms, the Teacher Calendar, Benefit information and the Collective Agreement etc. without contacting the Unit Office?

The Unit website <https://www.yctoecta.com> has a wealth of information that is accessible to all members. Under the Resource tab, you will find the Collective Agreement, common Board and Unit forms, the Teacher Calendar, and a variety of other resources.

Every member has been provided with an email from the Unit Office. Your email address is firstname.lastname@yctoecta.com and your default password is your OECTA number followed by five zeros. (Note: if you have previously changed the password you will require a reset by the unit office staff).

This email address also grants you access to our website's members-only section. The resources in this area include the Staff Rep Handbook, our local bylaws, a copy of the Benefits plan, and Newsletters and memos. Accessing this email also ensures that you will receive important emails from your president.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Stephanie Busato, teacher at St. Edward, on the birth of her son Carter.
Sara Capulli, teacher at St. Benedict, on the birth of her son Nicholas.
Amanda D'Angelo (Sciulli), teacher at St. Anne, on the birth of her daughter Emma.
Kelly DeGrace, teacher at St. Brendan, on the birth of her son Michael.
Christine Donato, teacher at St. Cecilia, on the birth of her son Aaron.
Jennifer Eramo, teacher at St. Mary, on the birth of her daughter Evelyn.
Gabriella Fanuzzi, teacher at St. Charles Garnier, on the birth of her son Joseph.
Fabiana Faria, teacher at Divine Mercy, on the birth of her daughter Emily.
Maria Fera-Csato, teacher at St. Charles Garnier, on the birth of her son Gabriel.
Denise Hoo, teacher at San Lorenzo, on the birth of her daughter Isla.
Brenda Kung, teacher at Sr. Richard Scott, on the birth of her daughter Kara.
Giovanni Mirarchi, teacher at St. Brother Andre CHS, on the birth of his son Luca.
Barb Mitchell, teacher at Our Lady of the Lake CCS, on the birth of her son Weston.
Mario Naccarato, teacher at Cardinal Carter CHS, on the birth of his son Charles.
Rosaleigh Neal, teacher at St. Brendan, on the birth of her son James.
Amanda Orsi, teacher at Immaculate Conception, on the birth of her daughter Vienna.
Kailynn Ottaway, teacher at St. Brendan, on the birth of her daughter

Abigail.
Christina Perna Vennare, teacher at St. Michael the Archangel, on the birth of her son Jaxon.
Christina Scarpitti, teacher at Fr. Bresani CHS, on the birth of her son Noah.
Gabriella Tarantino, teacher at Holy Name, on the birth of her daughter Olivia.
Michael Teixeira, teacher at Holy Cross CHS, on the birth of his son Joseph.
Josie Vecchiarelli, teacher at St. Veronica, on the birth of her son Christian.

CONDOLENCES & SYMPATHY

The DiFrancesco family, on the passing of Linda DiFrancesco, ESL teacher at Blessed Scalabrini.

The Volpe family, on the passing of Rina Volpe, Grade 4 teacher at St. Justin Martyr.

The Zybala family, on the passing of Mara Miranda-Zybala, French teacher at St. Monica.

Jean Arnold, teacher at St. Nicholas on the death of her father.

Denise Bevilacqua, teacher at St. Marguerite d'Youville, on the death of her mother.

Pat Bucci, Coordinator/Consultant at the YCDSB, on the death of her mother.

Vito Calabro, teacher at St. James, on the death of his sister.

Steve Carraretto, teacher at St. Max Kolbe CHS, on the death of his father-in-law.

Diana Colangelo, teacher at Fr. Fred McGinn, on the death of her grandfather.

Tina D'Arpino, teacher at St. Cecilia, on the death of her father.

Mirella Diodati, teacher at St. Marguerite d'Youville, on the death of her mother **AND** grandmother of Rosella Di Pede, teacher at St. Gregory the Great.

Elena Gortana, teacher at Immaculate

Conception, on the death of her mother. Wanda Hazlett, teacher at St. Nicholas, on the death of her mother.

Sabrina Isabella, teacher at St. Stephen, on the death of her brother-in-law.

Tracey Laliberte, teacher at Sacred Heart CHS, on the death of her father.

Anna Maria Lollino, teacher at Our Lady of Grace, on the death of her father.

Tania Marano, teacher at St. Patrick-Schomberg, on the death of her father.

Pat Mazereeuw, teacher at Our Lady of Hope, on the death of her father.

Suzanne McDonald Cece, teacher at St. Paul, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Sabrina McGillivray, teacher at St. Mary, on the death of her mother.

Daniela Monastero, teacher at St. Margaret Mary, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Jen Nadon, teacher at St. Jerome, on the death of her nephew.

Melissa Paziienza, teacher at St. Brigid, on the death of her grandmother.

Cathy Pellecchia, teacher at St. Emily, on the death of her grandmother.

Lucia Petruzzelli, teacher at Pope Francis, on the death of her grandmother.

Anna Maria Tropea, teacher at St. David, on the death of her daughter.

Lisa Tropea, teacher at Our Lady of Hope, on the death of her grandmother.

Melinda Tedesco, teacher at St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS, on the death of her nephew.

Mary Tomei, teacher at St Peter, **AND** Sally Vivilecchia, teacher at Holy Cross CHS, on the death of their father.

