



OUR SCHOOLS
OUR SCHOOLS
OUR FUTURE
OUR FUTURE
OUR STORY
OUR STORY

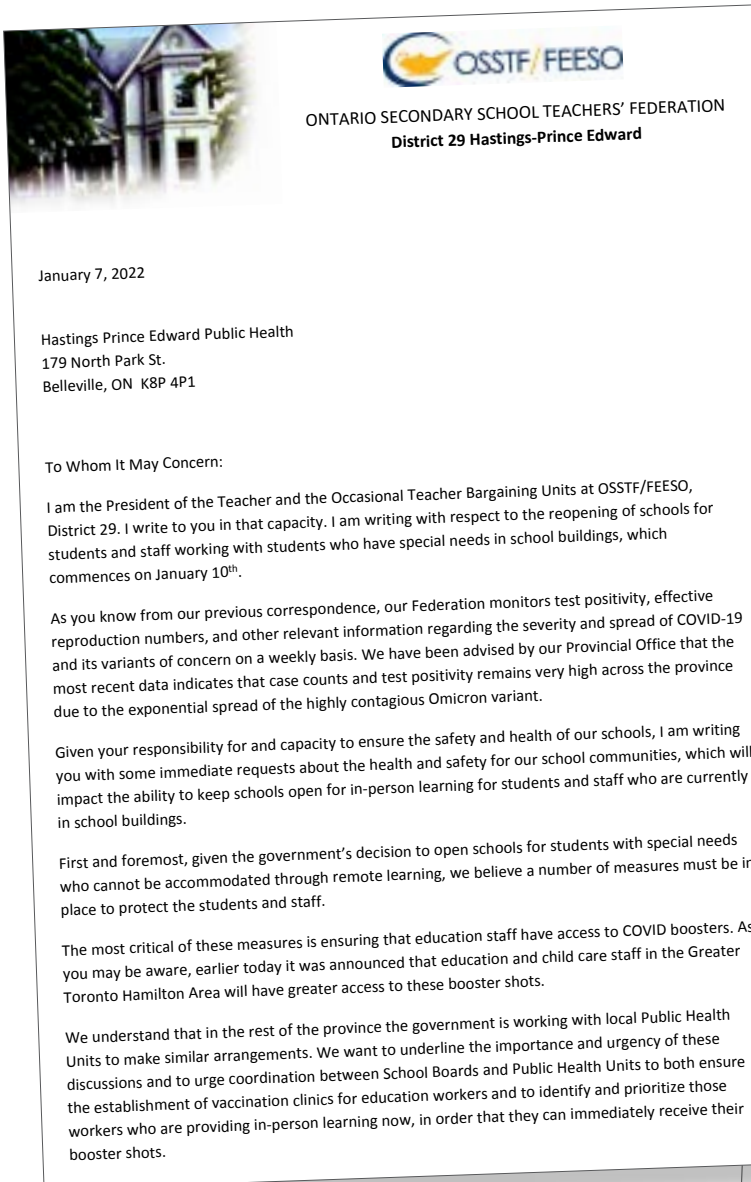


VOLUME 22 • ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2022

CONNECTIONS

District 29 OSSTF Hastings-Prince Edward

OSSTF D29 Letter to *Hastings Prince Edward Public Health and Hastings Prince Edward District School Board*



ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION
District 29 Hastings-Prince Edward

January 7, 2022

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health
179 North Park St.
Belleville, ON K8P 4P1

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the President of the Teacher and the Occasional Teacher Bargaining Units at OSSTF/FEESO, District 29. I write to you in that capacity. I am writing with respect to the reopening of schools for students and staff working with students who have special needs in school buildings, which commences on January 10th.

As you know from our previous correspondence, our Federation monitors test positivity, effective reproduction numbers, and other relevant information regarding the severity and spread of COVID-19 and its variants of concern on a weekly basis. We have been advised by our Provincial Office that the most recent data indicates that case counts and test positivity remains very high across the province due to the exponential spread of the highly contagious Omicron variant.

Given your responsibility for and capacity to ensure the safety and health of our schools, I am writing you with some immediate requests about the health and safety for our school communities, which will impact the ability to keep schools open for in-person learning for students and staff who are currently in school buildings.

First and foremost, given the government's decision to open schools for students with special needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning, we believe a number of measures must be in place to protect the students and staff.

The most critical of these measures is ensuring that education staff have access to COVID boosters. As you may be aware, earlier today it was announced that education and child care staff in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area will have greater access to these booster shots.

We understand that in the rest of the province the government is working with local Public Health Units to make similar arrangements. We want to underline the importance and urgency of these discussions and to urge coordination between School Boards and Public Health Units to both ensure the establishment of vaccination clinics for education workers and to identify and prioritize those workers who are providing in-person learning now, in order that they can immediately receive their booster shots.

We also believe that the following measures must be implemented immediately for the safety of those students and staff working in schools:

- Approved N95 masks must be available for staff
- Immediate implementation of Rapid Antigen testing for students and staff 2-3 times per week
- Deployment of HEPA filtration units in all actively used spaces, including bathrooms
- Utilization of larger spaces and/or smaller class sizes to allow for physical distancing between students and staff where necessary
- Appropriate assessment of students who cannot be accommodated through remote learning, including consultations with staff.

It is important that we all do our part to ensure the health and safety of our schools and we believe that the implementation of these measures will help to curb the spread of the virus and protect school community members. Until these measures are in place, we believe schools should remain closed to all in-person learning.

We appreciate your attention to this letter. We are ready and available to meet with you to discuss the implementation of the measures listed in this letter and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

Scott Marshall
President, District 29 OSSTF

- cc. Director of Education, Katherine MacIver
- cc. Minister of Health, The Honourable Christine Elliott
- cc. Minister of Education, The Honourable Stephen Lecce
- cc. Minister of Government and Consumer Services, The Honourable Robert Bailey
- cc. OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office Protective Services Field Secretary, Stephen Bloom
- cc. Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP

Time changes everything...

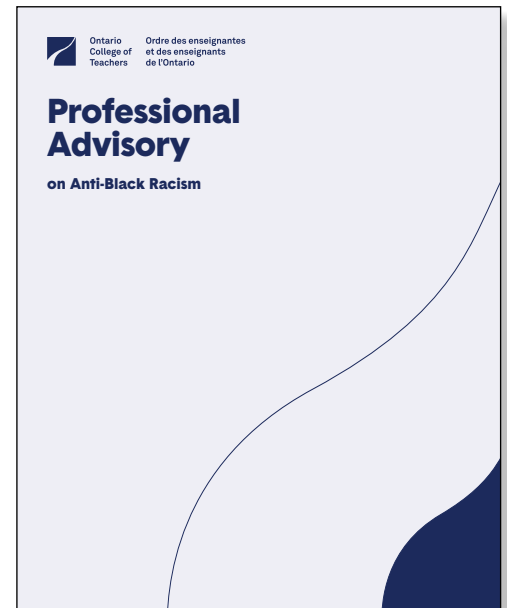
In late November the Ministry of Education announced that secondary schools in Ontario could return to traditional semesters, and that this decision would be left to each school board. Prior to the start of the 2021/2022 school year, OSSTF had signed a letter of agreement (LOA) with the HPEDSB acknowledging that a quadmester model would be implemented semester one to accommodate cohorting recommendations from Public Health. This LOA expired on the 97th day (end of semester 1), but could be continued to the end of the school year should public health still be requiring limited student contacts. Ultimately omicron took hold quickly in our region, and public health sent a letter to our board recommending that they continue to limit student contacts. This was the deciding factor when our school board, along with neighbouring boards (Limestone and ALCDSB) also made the decision to remain in quadmesters for the second half of this school year.

Before omicron took hold here, public health measures were beginning to ease. The option to return to a traditional semester system was one that our members felt strongly about. We conducted a local survey, and 84% of our members (the survey



response was high) preferred a return to semesters. While we believed our LOA was clear that we would return, the HPEDSB still proceeded with a public conversation about this important decision. We wanted to be a part of that conversation as the teachers voice should be front and centre, given that they are with the students in the classroom every day. A group of classroom teachers gathered at the Federation House on December 7th to summarize the rationale for a return to traditional semesters, from a student-centred pedagogical perspective. Their work generated a strong summary document that was then presented to our Director of Education by Sarah Boggett on December 9th. We acknowledge their work and thank by Barb Gillis (ESS), Tammy Groleau (PECI), Sarah Boggett (BSS), Kim Dafoe (CSS), Kate Cockburn (ESS), Katie Cole (CSS), and Michelle Dalrymple (District Officer) for their work on this important issue.

On November 16, 2021, *The Ontario College of Teachers* (OCT) released the Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism. Ontario Certified Teacher Members are required to know this advisory and its contents. It is available online at



<https://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/anti-black-racism>

OTPP Pension Planning and Retirement WEBINAR WORKSHOPS

Whether you are fifteen years from retirement or a few months away, you will discover common sense financial strategies & retirement planning ideas.

Thursday, January 13th, 2022
4:30 – 5:45 p.m.

REGISTER:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1903909254203851788>



Members will also be able to request a meeting to speak privately with an EFG financial specialist assigned to their region when they complete the survey, or they can submit a request through the following web link:
<https://educatorsfinancialgroup.ca>



The Right to Disconnect from Work and Have a Life

It is okay to switch work off after hours, and now there is legislation to back you up. The *Right to Disconnect* Law was passed in Ontario on November 30, 2021 and received Royal Assent on December 2nd. With the added stress of the pandemic, increased awareness of mental health, and blurred lines between home and working remotely, this law requires companies with over 25 employees to make policies about disconnecting from phone and email communications outside of work hours. As of January 1st, 2022, employers must have a written policy in place and communicate it to staff prior to June 2nd.

“Through the passage of this legislation, Ontario is ensuring our labour laws keep pace with the acceleration of new technology, automation and remote work,” said Monte McNaughton, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, in a press release. In recent years, Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Philippines, and Slovakia have enacted right-to-disconnect legislation. Most recently Portugal initiated a new law which outright bans employers from contacting staff outside their working hours. It goes even further to stipulate that employers must help pay for hydro and internet bills of staff and forbids the use of digital tracking software. In 2012, Volkswagen blocked non-management employees from accessing emails from the evening until the morning. Employees at BMW are allowed to register time spent working outside their hours responding to emails and could potentially be paid overtime.

Disconnecting from work means not engaging in any work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of any other work messages, but replying to work emails after hours is simply seen as part of the job for many Canadians. A 2015 Angus Reid Institute survey found that 41% of

those who regularly used technology at work, checked their emails outside of office hours on an almost daily basis, 28% regularly answered phone calls or text messages outside of office hours, and 31% did actual work outside of office hours. Furthermore, the survey stated that 40% indicated that technology had increased the amount of time they spent working.



This new bill sounds good in theory, but it doesn't specify what that company policy must say, only what topics it must address. Experts warn it could be ineffective without clear rules and incentives. In 2018, Rentokil, a company in France, was ordered to pay 60,000 euros for violating the rules of communicating with employees after work hours.

Back in Ontario, there is concern about enforcing the legislation. Lior Samfiru, a partner at a Toronto law firm, worries about inequities and repercussions if some employees disconnect while others choose not to. “It's nice as a public relations move and not beyond that,” Samfiru notes. “Employers are going to implement these policies and they're going to post them and then people are going to forget about them.” The new law is a good start, but a change in workplace culture is required.

What can you do to disconnect? Have work email as a hidden icon on your phone so you don't see notifications unless you actively look for them. Use a scheduling assistant when sending out emails. Use out of office notifications when not in work hours. Ensure you have separate personal and work email accounts, using your work one only for work correspondence. You can also set up email rules that provide text notifications for messages only from individuals you want to respond to immediately. If you do not get a notification, then it can wait until morning. Take care of yourself and your family — as the saying goes, no one is going to write on your tombstone about your work ethic.

*Eleanor MacNiven
D29 Communications Officer*

Joint Staff Development Funding — NEW online form process!

NEW: Request approval from your school Educational Services Rep. ONLINE

STEP 1 To be filled in PRIOR to the start date of the activity.

NOTE: There is a limited amount of funding available to each school site for JSD, don't forget to get your activity funding approved well in advance, so your school Ed. Services Rep can set aside the funds for you.

[JSD - STEP 1: APPLY FOR APPROVAL](#)

STEP 2 To be filled in AFTER activity is completed.

Applicants upload receipt(s), proof of completion, and approval of funds in order to have their JSD recovery processed.

[JSD - STEP 2: APPLY FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS](#)





2022 Student Achievement Awards

Although the pandemic has caused unprecedented challenges and tremendous risk and hardship, many communities rallied and found ways to connect, and support those in need. The events of the past year have highlighted numerous flaws and gaps in critical public services and supports. As a result, many have begun the call for an evaluation of our priorities both at the individual and community level. Going back to the “way things were” doesn’t seem like an option, instead, more and more, people are coming to the realization that we must advocate for a new and improved way forward. The time has come for renewal, rebirth and reinvention.

LOCAL WINNER Category A-3: Senior, 11-12 University

Sarah Lake (CHS), “The Impact of Two Weeks” (Teacher: Tara Prance)

It was March 13th, 2020, when lives across Ontario were changed forever. The government shut down our province for two weeks in an attempt to control the COVID-19 cases that were rapidly increasing. Those two weeks gave Canadians a lot of time to think, to ponder. Two weeks was more than enough time for people to realize that the world needed to change, and it needed to long ago.

When our schools were shut down, some children had no choice but to stay in their abusive households. When businesses were forced to close, people lost their jobs and could barely afford to feed themselves. There were people dying on the streets and in their homes due to hospitals brimming with COVID-19 patients, therefore reaching maximum capacity. The list goes on, but when does it end? It was announced that our province would undergo a state of lockdown for two weeks nearly two years ago. Now, people have had enough. The world has had enough. With these issues that arose during the pandemic, society, (especially Generation Z), came to terms with the fact that our world will never be how it once was. However, we have our own battles to fight.

When the pandemic caused human life to reach a standstill, planet earth was given a chance to breathe. Global carbon dioxide emissions fell by 6.4%. A NASA satellite noticed a drastic decrease in air pollution for many countries, including China and the U.S.. There was a reduction in the discharge of wastewater as public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, and malls closed their doors. Once we curtailed many of our pollution-causing activities, our earth slowly began to heal itself. Some of these statistics unveil big issues in which we have become the root of.

More issues within society were addressed online during the lockdown. The murder of George Floyd caused the Black Lives Matter movement to resurface as people protested through the streets. The murder of Trystan Bailey showcased how women are not safe in society and are taken advantage of on the daily. People started blaming the spread of the Corona Virus on China, and they took their frustration out on Asian culture, despite the fact that a virus like COVID-19 could have come from anywhere.

Those 'two weeks' helped society to realize that people have been doing things wrong for a long time. Those 'two weeks' were especially long enough for today's youth to realize they should be putting the blame on the generations before us, for leaving the world in its current state. Over the past two years, we have taken action. We have marched, and we have protested for equality and change, yet they tell us that we riot and terrorize with no cause. Black Lives Matter; Eat the Rich; No Uterus, No Opinion. All of these causes were designed to help fight injustice that our ancestors were the root of. Yet they tear gas us, taze us, and even shoot us, despite the fact that we are simply trying to fix their mistakes, and for trying to make the world a safe place. A place with no secret concentration camps, a place where people won't be shot for being themselves, a place where we can breathe clean air without having to share it with the small-minded people who refuse to welcome diversity.

They have ignored this problem for so long, and it has gotten to the point where their children, and their grandchildren, are picking up after them.

So many people, most of them much older than myself, have congratulated me, and told me how excited they are for the future I have ahead of me, yet it was them who contributed to making the world an unsafe place, one that I cannot have a future in.

They stole millions of futures, but those two weeks encouraged us to fight back, and we won't stop fighting until we don't have to anymore. This is our moment in time, and a reinvention of this world is long overdue.



LOCAL WINNER

Category B-1: Visual, Intermediate, 9-10

Emily Cohen (NHHS), "Suspended"

(Teacher: Leaf Worsley)



"Suspended" was inspired by what I refer to as the "time warp" during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically quarantine. During the lockdowns, I attended online school, and life seemed like a continuous cycle to me; get up, go for a walk, do school work by myself in my room, go to sleep repeat. There was never anything new or particularly exciting about that schedule, especially considering social interactions. Because of that, my mind often groups lockdowns into one memory and skips over them, leaving me feeling like there's a sizable gap missing in my life. This pattern of life is what the moon cycle along the outside of the face represents: Time going on around me, but in a jumbled way, seemingly happening all at once. The leaves changing on the tree are also a nod to that.

The way the tree is floating in space represents how I felt: a living entity that is supposed to change but has nothing around it to compel that change. I think that it is also symbolic of the transitions occurring in our society that come across as so dramatic, but in reality, do not affect the big picture of the universe.

Lastly, the silver eyes represent seeing the bright side (or silver lining) of this pandemic, such as forming a stronger bond with my grandma or developing a greater appreciation in nature.



Category B-1: Visual, Intermediate, 9-10

**Kay'Lee Lucio (THS),
"What the World is"**

(Teacher: Jenn Uilly)



Category B-1: Visual, Intermediate, 9-10

**Grace Mouck (CHS),
"Thriving in the Possibilities"**

(Teacher: Tisha Francis)



Category B-1: Visual,
Intermediate, 9-10

**Zoya Wannamaker (ESS),
"Blank"**

(Teacher: Janeen Ferriss)



Category B-1: Visual, Intermediate, 9-10

**Sunee Baing (NHHS),
"Our Moment in Time"**

(Teacher: Tara Prance)





LOCAL WINNER

Category B-2: Visual,
Senior, 11-12

**Megan Pearson (CSS),
"The Invocation"**

(Teacher: Christine Christos)

The Invocation

Canada is a nation founded on public services and equality. Education, healthcare, infrastructure, employment insurance and others are public institutions that are part of the Canadian identity. Over time, these public services have been neglected and underfunded. They are close to failing us in times of crisis. Some governments have bled them until cracks have appeared. Fewer nurses, fewer EA's, aging highways, hospitals filled to the brim. When a crisis appears it may be the breaking point. The solution to this problem must come from younger people that value these institutions and believe in the public services that we hold dear.

The young woman in the bottom centre of the picture faces a looming cityscape as her eye follows up to the tops of the buildings, she sees the cracks, the damage from the years of neglect of the buildings that are our public services. They are now strained and warped under the pressure of COVID and societal changes. If they are stretched any further, they may collapse. Her will to change the situation is depicted in the double helix of bright leaves that rises higher and higher into the grey unknown future that is the sky and the source of the stress on the skyline. Doubly, the helix represents her DNA or blueprint for change, from DNA, RNA is made into vaccines that are combating the COVID threat. The buildings themselves are needle tipped to deliver her vaccine to the future, perhaps saving themselves in the process.

"The Invocation" is a drawing that expresses this young woman's will to change, preserve, and renew a world that will protect, heal and educate all of us in a time that seems so dark and uncertain. That instant, is our moment in time.

Megan Pearson
Centennial Secondary School, Belleville, Ontario



Category B-2: Visual, Senior, 11-12

**Emma Brand-Edwards (ESS),
"We Live on Turtle Island"**

(Teacher: Lise Lindenberg)

Category B-2: Visual, Senior, 11-12

**Ella Wagner (CHS),
"A Birthday You'd Never Forget"**

(Teacher: Tisha Francis)



Whether you're in the middle of a move, downsizing, hanging on to a loved one's belongings, or just looking to free up some space at home, you might find yourself storing items in an offsite storage unit. Whatever the reason, the items you've chosen to store are likely important to you. That's why it's equally important to know that your precious belongings have the proper coverage to repair or replace them if they were damaged or stolen while in storage.

Does my home insurance cover items in storage?

Read more at www.otipinsurance.com/article133.

Investing, interest rates, and the inflation correlations

Your investments are affected by interest rates, which, in turn, can be influenced by inflation.

As for how those two market forces potentially impact your portfolio, well, that naturally depends on the types of assets you have and where we are in our economic cycle.

This is where cause, effect, and the Bank of Canada (BoC) all come into play.

"If the economy is growing too fast, this can lead to rising inflation. This is when the Bank of Canada may step in and raise interest rates to cool down spending (*by making it more expensive to borrow*)," explains Educators Certified Financial Planner professional Robert Johnston. "Whereas if the economy is growing at a snail's pace, the BoC will lower rates to encourage spending. However, a booming economy isn't necessarily the only contributing factor to rising inflation. In the case of the past year, global supply issues (*due to the pandemic*) and high energy costs have played a part in Canada's inflation rate rising to the highest it's been in 18 years."

So, what does it all mean when it comes to your investments?

First, inflation (*if higher than zero*) will always reduce any investment's return. If an investment has a return of 3% and inflation is 2%, then that investment's 'real rate of return' is 1%. The higher inflation is, the less the 'real rate of return' an investment provides.

"If inflation has taught us anything, it's that putting all of your money in a savings account will actually erode your savings year-over-year. Equities, on the other hand, have delivered returns that have been historically higher than inflation. In fact, during the past two decades, the average inflation rate in Canada has been 1.93%*, while the average annual performance of the S&P/TSX Composite Index was 5.74%**.

To continue reading this article visit:

<https://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/affiliate/article005>

For financial advice, contact us today:

<https://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/affiliate/F2201/get-started>

Local Federation Leaders at Work

All local OSSTF committees and councils have resumed their work this year. In December our District Council held their first in-person meeting since the start of this pandemic. This meeting was held at the Belleville Banquet Centre instead of the Federation House to allow additional spacing and required safety measures to be in place (prior to recent changes). We thank all of our school leaders who volunteer their time to work on your behalf, this work is important and is always on top of their regular teaching duties!





From the Desk of the
District Officer
Michelle Dalrymple

IMPORTANT SECOND SEMESTER STAFFING DEADLINES

March 31, 2022

Members intending to retire effective June 30th should submit their notice in writing by this date.

Members wishing to request **x/y** leave in which the y counts begin September 2022 should have their letters in by this date.

Members wishing to request a full/partial **leave** for the upcoming school year.

Contact the District Office if this is a possible need/wish for you in 2022-23.

June 30, 2022 Members wishing to apply for an unpaid leave of 5 days or less for personal reasons in order to have payroll smoothing should submit their requests by this date.

FOR STAFFING PURPOSES, EARLIER NOTICE OF LEAVES OR RETIREMENTS IS PREFERABLE.

May 20th In order to put your name on the regular **Voluntary Mobility** list, you should have completed the form by this date (form available at www.district29.on.ca). Contract teachers whose entitlement is split between schools will want to submit a mobility request if they want to be at one school.

PHONE THE DISTRICT OFFICER IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS/CONCERNS BENEFITS INFORMATION

Members who have submitted their retirement letters to the Board should contact the District Office if they wish to discontinue LTD premiums.

They must have notified both the Teachers' Pension Plan and the Board of the scheduled retirement date, which is within 110 working days. (Note: Members are eligible for coverage up to the date of retirement, and are not required to cancel simply because they have notified the Board of their intention to retire.)

Documentation required – copy of Teachers' service credit statement from OTPP, a copy of the retirement letter, and a completed form for OTIP (available from the District Office)

The District Office submits the completed request directly to OTIP.

OTIP Benefits Memoranda

1. T4 slips will be issued by OTIP for Life and AD&D premiums. Previously this taxable benefit was reported on the employer's T4.
2. The new semester means a time of benefits-related changes due to new hires, starting or returning from leave, FTE changes etc. Affected members should watch for emails from OTIP. If members have not received anything by the end of February they should contact OTIP Benefits Services Department at 1-866-783-6847 or contact Donna Morrison at donna.morrison@osstfbenefits.ca for assistance.

D29 Educational Services Committee

2021-2023 Committee Members: Jeff McDougall (THS), Mary Rewekamp (ESS), Greer Koutroulides (PECI), Sharalee Foster (BSS), Chris Lee (CHS), Lynne Weinert (NHHS), Shannon Alexander (CSS/CHAIR), Executive Liaison: Kristin Wannamaker

Our Responsibilities:

- to administer the Joint Staff Development Funds
- to assist in the planning of workplace-related and District staff development opportunities
- to make recommendations to the CBC for improvements to staff development (planning, funding, opportunities)



The Provincial Education Services Committee met on December 3, 2021, and part of their agenda included a preview of the new *Allyship* workshop, presented by D29 member, Sarah Boggett. The workshop explores possible ways of being a good ally to individuals and groups, and was enthusiastically received by the committee. It will be part of the workshops available for booking by districts (see link below).



Also representing D29 is Emily(Bya) Narayan, who is a presenter of both *Allyship* of the other new workshop, *Addressing Anti-Black Racism*, in both English and French, as well as Michelle Dalrymple, who is a presenter of *Managing Conflict*.

LINK: <http://www.osstf.on.ca/pd-training/workshops-and-presentations/educational-services-workshops.aspx>

OSSTF/FEESO Statement—Ford fails to fortify the public school system to protect students and communities

January 3, 2022—Despite the fact that today's announced restrictions and measures are necessary to help address the Omicron variant's impact on our health care system, Premier Doug Ford and his government have, once again, failed to recognize all that is needed to keep schools safe. We have known about the virulence of this variant for over a month, and yet, even last week the Premier failed to acknowledge its impact and implement a meaningful plan for schools.

Premier Doug Ford told us today that we need to "brace for impact" but has failed to fortify the public school system to keep communities safe. Today's announcement does not go nearly far enough. Without increasing access to COVID-19 testing, providing full access to enhanced PPE, guaranteeing priority access to booster vaccines for educators, ensuring HEPA filters are in place in schools, and reducing class sizes to allow for physical distancing, the Premier cannot say he is doing everything he can to protect students, staff, and communities.

Ford acknowledges, "that online learning isn't ideal." We are entering the third calendar year of the pandemic, and yet urgent and direct action to implement the required safety protocols to get students back to in-person learning has not happened. With the extended pause of in-person learning, the government has additional time to finally step up and protect students, staff, and communities.

Special education teachers and other education workers, including some educational assistants, custodians and other support staff, are returning this Wednesday to school buildings without assurances that proper safety measures will be in place on time. When students return to in-person learning in the coming weeks, they are still returning to large classes with limited ability to physically distance, varying access to PPE, inconsistent ventilation, and a lack of pro-active rapid testing and reporting.

The government has failed Ontario's schools by:

- Cancelling contact tracing;
- Reducing access to PCR testing;
- Ending transparent reporting of case counts in schools;
- Excluding schools from occupancy caps similar to those for households and businesses;
- Failing to reduce class sizes to ensure REAL cohorting and physical distancing can be established and maintained;
- Failing to have N95 masks ready for deployment;
- Leaving education workers and teachers without priority access to vaccinations and boosters.

If the Ford government had implemented these protocols months ago, they would not be in this position. Instead, Doug Ford is lurching from crisis to crisis, and continuing to see the erosion of the public's confidence in the government's ability to handle this pandemic. We need the Premier to initiate lasting, effective actions to get us through these challenges. Our hope is that this government will provide more information and details to the public in the coming days. Today's announcement, while necessary, insufficiently addresses what is required to make schools safe.

OSSTF/FEESO will continue to advocate for the safety of students, communities and its members.