

President's Message



School Year Calendar

Already making travel plans for next year's March Break? This information about the 2004 - 2005 school year calendar should interest you . . .

1st pay day:	September 1, 2004
School begins:	September 7, 2004
Thanksgiving:	October 11, 2004
Winter holidays:	December 20 - 31, 2004 - return to work January 3, 2005
March Break::	March 14 - 18, 2005
Easter:	March 25 - 28, 2005
Victoria Day:	May 23, 2005
PA days:	December 3, 2004, February 18, 2005, June 3 & 30, 2005

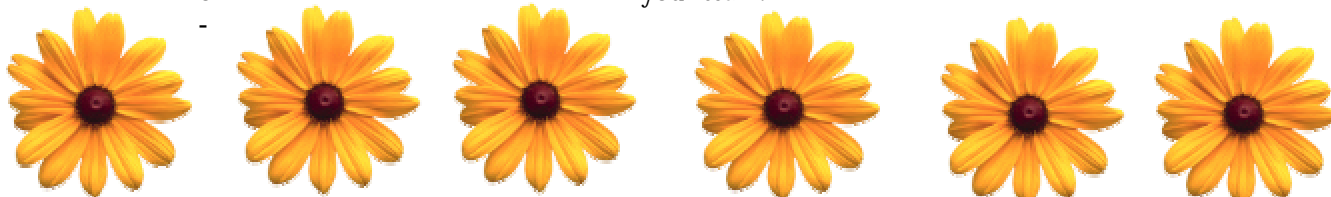
Collective bargaining

Your 2004 - 2007 Durham Local Collective Bargaining Committee has been formed and your representatives are Johanne Blake (C.E. Broughton P.S.), Rachel Gencey (ETFO office), Andrew Jamieson (Dr. C.F. Cannon P.S.), Tom Lazor (ETFO office) and Gerard O'Neill (Sir John A. Macdonald P.S.). Our ETFO provincial staff officer is Harold Vigoda. Our collective agreement will expire on August 31, 2004, and we need to negotiate a 3 year contract. Your C.B.C. is putting the finishing touches on the negotiations survey which will be sent to you at the beginning of May. We encourage **all** of you to complete this survey and return it to your Workplace Steward. The completed surveys help the committee in developing the preliminary submission and assist us at the negotiating table. Our preliminary submission and priorities are also driven by the provincial ETFO bargaining goals. The goals for 2004 - 2005 were approved at Representative Council in February:

- to negotiate real salary increases;
- to negotiate 200 minutes of preparation time per 5 day cycle;
- to negotiate a maximum of 60 minutes of supervision time per 5 day cycle;
- to negotiate enhanced language for pregnancy/parental leave;
- to guarantee and improve working conditions;
- to defend and improve benefit provisions.

There is an excellent article in the spring issue of the ETFO Voice which discusses the history of prep. time for elementary teachers. In Durham, prep. time was not guaranteed in our collective agreement until 1992. At that time, teachers received about 133 minutes of prep. time per week. In 1996, as a result of the Social Contract and to restore teachers to their proper place on the salary grid (the movement up the salary grid was frozen for a few years) prep. time in Durham was reduced to 100 minutes per week. In 1999, an increase was finally attached with 135 minutes of prep. time per week. This still left us at the lowest in the province. It was not until September of 2003 that we reached 150 minutes of prep. time per week, an all-time "high" in Durham. Clearly, 200 minutes of prep. time will be an historic gain for the teachers of Durham!

Your C.B.C. is excited about the upcoming round of bargaining and we look forward to achieving numerous contract improvements on your behalf. As you know, we cannot do this without your support. Member support made **all** the difference in our last round of negotiations, and resulted in many great improvements and an end to the decade of decline - now we want to continue that work and get a **great** contract. We ask for your continued support of your team!



First Vice-President's Viewpoint

In the last Advocate I mentioned the "heads up" I received from Stewards about the Junior Kindergarten surveys. Their calls enabled me to confirm the facts and speak with Board personnel about the unreasonable expectations for teachers. Misinformation and confusion regarding expectations were resolved. I have received the same type of calls from Stewards indicating concerns raised by Junior teachers informed of CASI training sessions after school. I hope that the reason why I only received a few calls was because most members realized that because the workshops were held from 4 - 6 p.m. that they were totally voluntary. I heard that some teachers had felt that they were being coerced into attending by over-zealous principals. I have confirmed with Board personnel that the after school sessions are voluntary and that no teacher should be forced to attend. Thanks again to Stewards for taking care of your colleagues.

The Professional Development fund has almost been depleted, so apply quickly for courses/conferences taking place before the end of June. You may also apply for funding for summer courses once the budget for next year is approved at the May 4th Annual Meeting. After you have taken a summer course, keep your receipts so that you can courier them to me in September and be reimbursed promptly. I have been pleased to approve more courses as PLP providers withdraw their status with the Ontario College of Teachers. Durham teachers have had many choices for Professional Development this year: from local workshops and conferences offered by Provincial ETFO, numerous workshops presented by our Local, the many ETFO credit courses offered by Cloyce Weaver and Brian Wilson, to the various courses and conferences you've attended using Local P.D. funds. Don't forget to call if you have any

Second Vice-President's Report

Teaching today is a very challenging and often stressful job. Teachers are expected to do more and more, with less and less. Some of the frustration teachers are facing include:

- teaching students with varied academic, programming and behavioural needs;
- demanding and assertive parents;
- the plethora of forms and paper work, IEPs and report cards

These factors and expectations have caused heightened teacher stress. I'm not telling you anything that you don't already know! First and foremost, though, you need to look after yourself!

The ETFO - Durham Social Committee has organized various activities throughout the year. These are excellent opportunities to meet and socialize with your colleagues and relieve stress. We have already had four regional Friday Pub Nights, a Casino Rama trip and a scrapbooking night. Upcoming social activities include: an Oshawa Little Theatre trip on May 8th, a Friday Pub Night in Whitby (location TBA) on May 28th, a dinner and dance boat cruise on June 4th and a Buffalo Bills trip in the fall of 2004.

Your Federation is here to listen to you and to support you. Please contact the office if you are having difficulties and feeling increased workload stress. Remember, you are not alone. We are here to help you. We may not be able to solve every problem, but we can lend an ear and try to help. Enjoy the social activities offered by your ETFO local. Take care of yourself!

Durham Annual Meeting

Just a reminder that our Annual Meeting is next Tuesday, May 4th, at General Sikorski Hall in Oshawa. The meeting starts at 4:30 p.m. This will be an important meeting, with the election of the 2004 - 2006 executive officers, approval of the 2004 - 2005 budget, constitutional amendments and committee reports. We hope to see you there!



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