

President's Message



PLP, Rest in Peace: I hope you enjoyed one of the best Christmas presents that teachers have received in years (it sure beats another holiday mug!), when on the last school day of December, Education Minister Gerard Kennedy announced that the provincial government would introduce legislation in the spring to repeal the Professional Learning Program. It was the collective effort, over several years, of 65,000 ETFO members, along with the efforts of members of the other teacher unions in Ontario that resulted in that good news. Local and provincial lobbying of PLP providers and the Ontario Liberal and NDP parties long before they came into power, the passive resistance of teachers in **not** taking PLP courses, and other strategic efforts combined to sound the death knell for recertification. Last week, we sent to schools a copy of a letter that I wrote to Director of Education Craig Burch, requesting that the Durham District School Board rescind their PLP status. Should the Durham Board honour our request, they would join a growing list of educational institutions who have recently rescinded their status in anticipation of the end of recertification. These include the District School Board of Niagara, Halton Catholic District School Board, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB, Nipissing University, Peel DSB, Toronto DSB, University of Windsor (Faculty of Education), and York Region DSB. We will keep you posted on the outcome of our request.

Violent Incident Forms: Workplace violence is a serious health and safety hazard that must be addressed. More and more, we hear stories from members who have been victims of violence in their schools or their own classrooms. For teachers and education workers, violence at work - even violence from students (special needs or not) - is NOT part of the job requirement. You do not need to be seriously injured to be a victim of workplace violence: threats of physical injury, "near misses" and verbal abuse are all incidents which should be considered violent in nature. At our January General meeting, I introduced ETFO's new Violent Incident form and several copies were provided to each Workplace Steward. If you are the victim of a violent incident, be sure to fill out this form, make a copy for your own files, and send it to the Durham ETFO office. We will not act on your behalf unless you ask us to - we are gathering these forms for statistical purposes only. Also, be sure to complete the Board's violent incident form, part of the "Discipline for Durham Schools" Board procedure. We will continue to advocate for a workplace free of violence for our members and you can help us by letting us know what's happened to you.

Campaign 200: On page 4, you will find information about Campaign 200, a campaign recently launched by Provincial President Emily Noble. This campaign highlights the bargaining priority for the negotiation of the 2004-2007 collective agreement, namely the achievement of **200 minutes of preparation time per week** for every teacher in ETFO. Getting 200 minutes of prep time is not just an item on a "wish list"... it is a requirement for the next collective agreement and an attainable goal. In 1987, 10,000 teachers in Metro Toronto went on strike to achieve 150 minutes of prep time per week. In Durham, it took us another 16 years to get to 150 minutes. I can promise you that it will not take another 16 years to reach 200 minutes!!! I am excited about forming our next Collective Bargaining Committee after the March break... I know that your new CBC will be able to count on the same incredible level of support that you offered in the last round of negotiations.

And finally... always best to end with more good news! I have received the endorsement of our Durham ETFO executive to run for provincial election at this summer's provincial Annual General Meeting. I will be seeking election as a provincial executive member, which would permit me to continue here in Durham, doing the work I love to do. I am proud to have the support of the Local in my pursuit of this goal. I am committed to being a tireless representative of **all** Durham teachers at the provincial level, and will represent every member - every man and woman who is a member of ETFO - and will fight for equal opportunities for all members, regardless of gender or years of experience.

"If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided all will fail." Winston Churchill

Vice President's Viewpoint



In January, we advertised a workshop at our office titled "School for Aspiring Union Activists". As only two teachers registered, it was cancelled. I'd be willing to bet that part of what kept people away from the workshop was the name. "Activist" conjures up images of emotive protest speeches and picket lines. Teachers know that they can be an effective part of those scenarios because they have been in the past, but the thought of a workshop about activism didn't seem to pique the membership's interest.

At Representative Council this month there was a report on the results of several focus groups involving teachers. These ETFO members were asked about various aspects of their Union. Although the results of these focus groups were not representative of all members, one of the interesting facts which the presenter shared with us was that the majority of the teachers answered questions about ETFO by referring to the Union as "they". Really, the Union is "we". We are, all of us, the Union's voice in our schools. We all provide the support for Local and Provincial initiatives. We all elect the colleagues who will attend the Provincial Annual Meeting in August as delegates and who will elect our Provincial leaders. We all provide our Local Collective Bargaining Committee with direction before we begin bargaining with the Board and we, the members of our Union, form the committee. The power to affect change is within our organization. **We** are the Union - not they.

I took a phone call this week that reminded me of the positive effect that Unions have had on teachers' lives, even many years ago. A woman was trying to find the organization which had sent her mother a pot of flowers for Valentine's Day. Her mother had been a teacher in the Durham Region so she tried us first. We chatted about her mother's teaching career. She began teaching in 1929 and had to resign in 1944 because she got married! Working to have this practice overturned was one of the major accomplishments of the Union of the time. It was interesting to hear, rather than just read, about a teacher's working conditions in those days. The daughter said that she was going to share our conversation with her 93 year old mother and that she knew she'd be delighted to hear that someone was very interested in her work of so long ago. Teachers and their Unions have gone through major changes over the years. Working conditions and compensation have improved because of the efforts of our teacher colleagues who came before us. However, the bottom line has not changed: teachers have earned the right to be treated with respect as they work with children in a safe environment and should be fairly compensated for doing so. We, the Union, support and defend this right of all teachers.

"Occasionally" Yours . . .

When you are absent, the following helpful hints will make the day much more rewarding for all, and less stressful for the occasional teacher.

- **An absolute must is current class list for each class you teach, including the classes for which you do regular prep coverage.** Should an emergency arise, it is the occasional teacher's legal responsibility to know who is in the classroom. They also use the class list to track work progression, completed assignments and marks.

- **Daybook** - The detailed daily plans which you leave are the easiest to follow. But, as long as your daybook from the previous few days is there, we can usually figure out what to do. If you keep your daybook on your computer, please make sure that someone knows how to access it. Your daybook should also indicate your regular duties, regular coverages and teacher and class timetable.

- **Prep time** - Unless you have indicated that there is lesson preparation or you have left the work that you normally would have done during your prep, in all likelihood, your administrator will take that prep away. The occasional teacher replacing you will be placed in another classroom and will not be able to complete such tasks as marking or photocopying seat work.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 905-668-0411 or 1-888-665-6611 or e-mail at durhamotlocal@yahoo.com or through Lotus Notes.

2004 ETFO Annual General

The 2004 ETFO Annual General Meeting will be held from August 16 to 19, 2004, at the Westin Harbour Castle hotel in Toronto. The Annual meeting is an excellent opportunity to meet teachers from all across Ontario and to influence the future direction of your Provincial Federation. Our local may bring 20 delegates to the meeting, members who will represent Durham teachers during the four days of debate, dialogue and voting on resolutions. If you ever wanted your voice heard in the debate, this is your chance. The Provincial Executive for 2004 - 2005 will also be elected at this meeting. As mentioned in her article, our President, Rachel Gencey, has been endorsed by the local Executive to run for a position on the Provincial Executive this year. Applications for AGM delegates are in schools now. Completed forms are due at the ETFO-Durham office by February 27th. The list of applicants will be distributed to schools by March 2nd. Election of AGM delegates will take place at the March 25th General Meeting at the Royal Ashburn Golf Club.

Teacher of the Month Award

The Teacher of the Month award is a peer recognition program initiated by the Political Action Committee of ETFO Durham. This award aims to raise awareness of the outstanding efforts of Durham’s Elementary Teachers. Nominees for this award should be: 1) elementary teachers (working either part-time or full-time); 2) presently employed by the Durham District School Board; 3) statutory members of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario – Durham Teachers’ Local. With the teacher’s permission, the award and photograph will be posted on our local website. The recipient will receive a gift package and a certificate of recognition, presented to them at their school.

Consider nominating a colleague for this award. Let’s recognize the wonderful efforts of the 2,500 members of our local. Nomination forms were distributed to Workplace Stewards in the fall, and are also available on our website (www.durhametfo.ca). The deadline for nominations is the last day of every month.

Great March Workshops

ETFO-Durham has organized the following workshops to assist you in refining and improving your résumé and portfolio:

Résumés... It’s Tough to Stand Out in the Crowd	March 23 rd or March 24 th	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Portfolios: Résumés of the Future	March 25 th	4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Look for the flyers for these workshops which arrived in your school last week.

CAMPAIGN 200



On Friday, February 6th, I attended a Presidents' Forum in Toronto. During the meeting and the press conference which followed, Provincial President Emily Noble introduced 'Campaign 200 - Planning Today, Building For Tomorrow', a campaign to negotiate 200 minutes of preparation time per week for every elementary teacher in Ontario in our next collective agreement. For the next several weeks ETFO will launch a massive media campaign to educate the public at large, as well as educational stakeholders, to the unsatisfactory working and learning conditions that exist in our schools. As you travel throughout the Durham region, you will notice Campaign 200 billboards. These represent the first stage of our information campaign. Available for download at our own local website www.durhametfo.ca or the Provincial website at www.etfo.ca is the "200" screensaver, which features a second hand that moves - you'll find it on the front page of the Provincial website. Here is the press release issued by ETFO on February 6th:

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS DEMAND 200 MINUTES OF PREPARATION TIME IN NEXT CONTRACT

"Preparation time is our primary goal in the next round of negotiations. Introducing new curricula, new student reporting systems, and new testing initiatives without increasing preparation time is a recipe for system overload and teacher burnout," said Emily Noble, President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) at a press conference called today to unveil 'Campaign 200'.

"Elementary classrooms are more diverse. Special needs students are integrated into regular classrooms in increasing numbers. For each of these students, teachers must prepare individual education plans. Elementary teachers do not have sufficient time to effectively meet the expectations that have been set for them," said Noble.

Elementary collective agreements expire August 31, 2004. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario represents 65,000 public elementary school teachers and education workers across Ontario and is the largest Teacher Federation in Canada outside of Quebec.

Here is a list of billboard locations for our region:

- Oshawa: King St. West, 10 metres east of Midtown Dr., northside, facing west
Ritson Rd. N., 26 metres north of Adelaide Ave. E., eastside, facing south
Simcoe St. S., north of Olive Ave., eastside, facing north
Whitby: Brock St. N., north of Maple St. W., westside, facing north
Thickson Rd. S., north of Tricont Ave., westside, facing south
Pickering: Kingston Rd., 300 metres west of Dixie Rd., southside facing east



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