

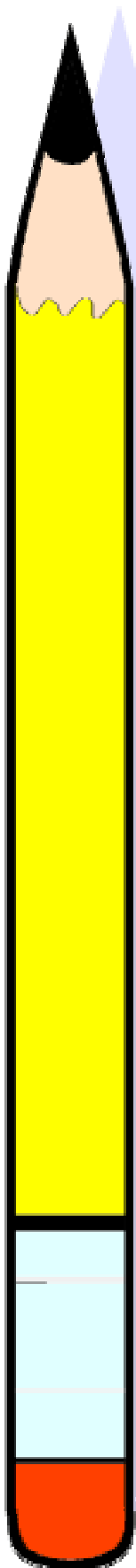


## President's Message

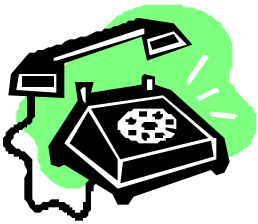


- It's hard to believe that it's the end of October already, and summer is a distant memory! Politically, it has been such a busy fall, thanks in part to the recent provincial election and, of course, the upcoming municipal elections. The Durham ETFO Political Action Committee, under the leadership of chairperson Gerard O'Neill, did a fantastic job keeping members informed through numerous newsletters, mailings and events, and in their work to support the four endorsed candidates (Garry Minnie - Durham, Sid Ryan - Oshawa, Dennis Fox - Whitby/Ajax, Wayne Arthurs - Pickering/Ajax/Uxbridge) in the Durham Region. Despite all the education affiliates' combined efforts, Pickering/Ajax/Uxbridge was the **only** Durham riding in which a Tory was defeated... former Education minister and now outgoing Finance minister Janet Ecker lost to Wayne Arthurs. We are thrilled about Wayne Arthurs victory! My only regret is that the tide of change did not continue eastward all the way to Northumberland riding. But of course, there is one very large silver lining in this cloud, and that is that the Liberals will very soon be forming our new government, and with this, we know that we can expect numerous positive changes in education. YOU can help make more positive change, here in your own backyard, by voting for good trustees for the Durham District School Board in the municipal election on November 10<sup>th</sup>. You haven't heard the last of your Political Action Committee... they will be letting you know shortly which trustee candidates are endorsed by the Durham Local.
- The Durham District School Board has been "pink listed" by ETFO since January 13, 2003. Although we, the Durham Teachers' Local, settled our labour dispute in May of this year, our sister local, the Durham Occasional Teachers' Local, remain in a strike position and despite their valiant efforts, still have not reached settlement with the board. It is for this reason that the pink list remains in place. Pink listing means that all ETFO members are advised not to apply for or accept an elementary teaching position with a board until the dispute is settled. Pink listing applies to regular classroom, casual occasional teaching and long-term occasional teaching assignments. Only those within the bargaining unit prior to the pink listing are permitted to apply for and accept positions with the board (e.g. occasional teachers cannot accept "permanent" employment while a pink list is in place). This means that only permanent teachers who were employed by the DDSB before January 13 may accept other permanent positions within the board. Teachers who violate the pink listing, even inadvertently, will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the federation.
- Any day now, you will be receiving a letter from our provincial President, Emily Noble, outlining the ETFO position on recertification. For now, you are asked to hold the line and continue to boycott Professional Learning Program courses and providers (including the Durham District School Board's evening courses) until further advised by the federation. At the Local office, we will continue to deny professional development funds for PLP courses. Clearly, recertification is at the top of the list of issues that ETFO will bring forward to the new Liberal government and the Minister of Education (yet to be named at press time). The Liberals did commit to ETFO, in writing from Dalton McGuinty, that they would cancel the recertification requirements legislated by the Tories. ETFO will help in this regard by collaborating with the other affiliates to present a plan of action for the new government. In the meantime, it is vital for ETFO members to continue to present a united front by boycotting these courses, so that the new government receives a clear message that it has a problem that must be resolved.
- In all of our newsletters, we try to cover a broad range of topics within a manageable number of pages (we know you're all too busy to read a lengthy newsletter). We'd love to hear how you think we're doing. If there is a topic that you would like to see covered, let us know. We welcome any constructive criticism (and praise, too!), so drop us a line. Our contact information is at the back, on page 6. Happy reading!

**Rachel Gencey, President**



## Vice President's Viewpoint



Welcome to the 2003 - 2004 school year. As predicted, it already has its own issues and challenges. Many of them are Board-wide and some involve just a few of you.

There are schools we never hear from because they are safe, healthy, collegial work environments. For those of you who don't work in that type of environment, for whatever reason, please let us try to help you. Don't assume that we know about the problems at your school. We only know if someone calls.

There is a clause in our Collective Agreement which says that a member may not be disciplined because of their involvement in the Union. Over the years, we have received many calls from members who have been encouraged to call by their Principals. Ignore anyone who intimates that calling ETFO will cause more problems for you.

We have received a number of calls from members who have suffered physical abuse at the hands of students. Whether you teach in a regular classroom or in a special education class, this behaviour must not be tolerated. Your administrator should be informed immediately. Your school's discipline policy and the Board's discipline policy should be implemented at once. You must complete a violent incident report. Your safety and the safety of your students is paramount. Think about the advice you give your students about an intolerable situation such as teasing or bullying. You advise them to tell someone in authority who can help. You should do the same.

**Anna Huston, First Vice-President**

## Pregnant or Adopting? Taking a parental leave?



Taking a pregnancy and/or parental leave is a confusing process! To better meet your needs, our pregnancy/parental leave workshop will be held twice this year. The first workshop will be held in late November (information will be sent to schools by early November) and the second will be held in the spring. If you are pregnant, adopting, or just in the planning stages, keep this workshop in mind - lots of good information and a great chance to network with other moms and dads-to-be.

At any time, our pregnancy/ parental leave kit is available from the local office - call us and we'll send you a copy. You don't have to wait for the workshop to get the information!



## TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Susan Hall of Sunderland Public School, who was selected as ETFO Durham's "Teacher of the Month" for September 2003! Susan was nominated by two of her colleagues, Connie Dunlop and Karen Ovenden, for her exemplary teaching practices and her commitment and contributions to her students and school community. Consider nominating one of your colleagues for our Teacher of the Month award. Forms are available from your Workplace Steward or by contacting the Local office.

### Dealing with Parent-Teacher Conflict

We continue to receive phone calls inquiring about how to deal with assertive, difficult and persistent parents. Effective parent-teacher relationships have become increasingly important. This report will explore some useful strategies teachers can implement to sustain productive relationships with parents.

First, teachers should lay the groundwork for positive relationships. Some strategies that may minimize conflict include: making early and frequent contact, inviting suggestions and information, maintaining professionalism, communicating how you would like concerns to be raised, explaining your disciplinary practices and sharpening your interview skills. A proactive and educational approach to dealing with parents can prevent future difficulties.

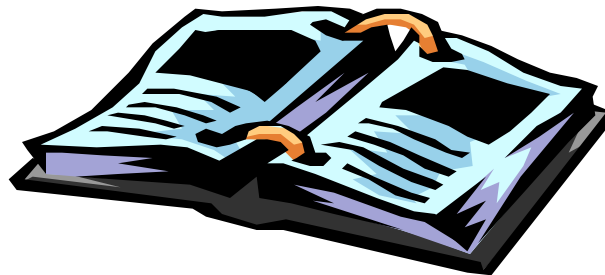
Second, teachers should continue to communicate successfully with parents. This is where new or ongoing concerns can be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Some suggestions include: listening and trying to put yourself in the parents' shoes, keeping an open mind, adopting a problem-solving approach, keeping calm/remaining confident, seeking confidential advice from your principal and other experienced colleagues, documenting decisions made and setting meeting ground rules and time frames.

Third, teachers should ask for help if the difficulties with parents continue to escalate. If the parent's behaviour threatens your professional reputation, disrupts your ability to teach, or becomes a danger to your health, teachers should seek assistance from the following sources: ETFO-Durham office/Protective Services, principal, Employee Assistance Program or your medical doctor. In these cases, a coordinated plan needs to be developed to deal with escalating parental problems.

For additional and more detailed information, consult the ETFO publication "Parent-Teacher Relationships: Putting the Pieces Together." A copy was distributed to every Workplace Steward two years ago. Contact the ETFO-Durham office if your school requires an additional copy. You can also download the PRS Fact Sheet "Parent-Teacher Relationships:

### P.D. Reminder!

Please read the Professional Development Guidelines before applying for funding. Members will not be granted funding for courses given by PLP providers (e.g. the Durham District School Board).



### Dates to remember . .

- November 5:** Executive Meeting
- November 10:** Municipal Election
- November 12:** General Meeting & Fall Dinner
- December 1:** Awards Deadline
- December 1:** 1st term reports sent home this week
- December 5:** P.A. Day
- January 21:** General Meeting
- February 20:** P.A. Day (half day prep)
- March 4:** Teachers submit 2nd term reports
- March 12 - 21:** March Break
- March 25:** General Meeting & Election of 2004 AGM Delegates
- May 4:** Annual Meeting & Election of 2004 Executive
- May 21 - 24:** Victoria Day - note 4 day weekend
- June 4:** P.A. Day (full day prep)
- June 28:** P.A. Day & last day of work

## Get Involved!

Many of us took part in the Terry Fox Run, the Mother and Daughter Walk for Heart and Stroke and/or the Run for the Cure. A pat on the back for all who participated!

A number of our members were actively involved in the campaigns of the ETFO endorsed candidates in the Provincial election. Your efforts were much appreciated and your participation made a difference.

On November 12th you will have the opportunity to participate again - in your Union. Our first general meeting of this year will be held at Le Gala Banquet Hall in Whitby. Attendees will be given reports from members of the Local ETFO Executive and will hear first-hand about Local and Provincial initiatives. Of course, if you buy a ticket, you may stay for the Annual Dinner honoring retirees which immediately follows the meeting. This is always a very enjoyable event. The tickets sell quickly so get your name on your school's order form.

**Anna Huston, First Vice-President**

## More prep time, better benefits . . .

### **This year's salary increases:**

- You received a 2.5% salary increase on September 1, 2003. The top grid salary (A4 maximum) is now \$74,947. Your next salary increase will take effect on February 1, 2004, when you receive a .6% increase. A4 maximum salary will be \$75,397. The final salary increase of the year will take place on the last day of our contract, August 31, 2004, with a further increase of .8%. This will equate to an A4 maximum salary of \$76,000.

### **All benefit changes took effect on September 1, 2003, and include the following:**

- The Board assumed 90% of the premium rates (up from 80%) for life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, and medical/dental benefits. Group life insurance is still 3 times your earnings, but the maximum has increased to \$240,000.
- Dental rates are now covered at 2001 Ontario Dental Association rates. This means that when you visit the dentist, you will pay the difference between 2003 rates (what your dentist charges) and 2001 rates (what insurance covers). This is an increase from 2000 ODA rates.
- Yearly and lifetime dental benefit maximums have increased: basic dental, major services and prosthodontics, and orthodontics now have a \$1200 yearly maximum, up from \$1000 per year. Orthodontics are capped at \$3600/lifetime, an increase from \$3000.
- The vision care plan now provides up to \$300 in any consecutive 24 month period for glasses and contact lenses, an increase from \$250.

### **Preparation time also saw improvements, effective September 1, 2003:**

- Every teacher who has instructional duties is entitled to a minimum of 150 minutes of preparation time per 5 day cycle (180 minutes/6 day cycle). This is not an average - you should receive your minimum required prep time over one cycle, not a combination of cycles or longer period of time. As always, prep time must be provided in blocks of at least 20 minutes and must be scheduled, not provided in a haphazard fashion.
- Half of the February PA day and all of the first PA day in June are allocated to teachers for the purposes of preparation time. You must be present in the school or on board premises on that day.
- Each classroom teacher is entitled to a .5 release day per school year for prep time. Teacher-Librarians, SERTs, ELRTs, and ESL teachers are excluded from this time, but if part of your assignment involves providing coverage or sharing a classroom, your release time should be prorated (e.g. if you are a .5 SERT and a .5 grade 1 teacher, you should share a half day of release time with another teacher who is .5 on your staff). You should consult with your Principal regarding when you would like to take your half day. You must be present in the school during this time.
- Be sure that you are receiving all of the preparation time to which you are entitled! If you are not, speak to your Principal and contact us at the Local office.

In the next newsletter, we will highlight the changes to leave plans, QECO programs and working conditions. Watch for it!

## Teacher Annual Learning Plans



The Annual Learning Plan is part of the teacher performance appraisal process, “Supporting Teaching Excellence”, introduced by the Ministry of Education in response to Bill 110, the “Quality in the Classroom Act 2001”. Following are some tips to help guide you in the process of filling out your Annual Learning Plan this year:

- If it is your evaluation year, consultation with your principal must include a meeting as part of the performance appraisal process. The Annual Learning Plan must be finalized during the post-observation meeting, and should be signed by both you and your principal. Each of you should retain a copy.
- If you are in a non-evaluation year, it is up to you and your principal to decide how to review the learning plan you have created. The regulation does not require a meeting, but the Ministry recommends a meeting as a “best practice”. Both you and your principal must review and sign your Annual Learning Plan.
- Don’t forget that it is **your** plan! Keep it simple (submit only the form given - don’t write an essay!) and choose an area that you are interested in pursuing. The regulation requires that you choose at least one objective each year, so it is appropriate to pick just one. The area of professional growth that you choose should be achievable, realistic and related to your daily teaching practice. Some examples include: to expand the ways I can communicate with parents of students in my class; to enhance my grade 4 math program by using a new resource; to increase my understanding of using rubrics in my instrumental music program; to expand my knowledge of Early Literacy strategies for the grade 1 program.
- In the “rationale” section, explain in a positive way, without listing your weaknesses, why you selected this objective and what you hope to achieve this year.

- In the “Strategies and time lines” section, describe a practical strategy that is aligned with the school year and reflects the resources available to you. Make June 30 the completion date for any strategy you might list.

Possible strategies are: \*contributions to ETFO, other professional or subject associations (e.g. writing team)

or in \*reading educational books, journals or articles (visit DDSB’s media library on-line person)

\*take a course (college, university, art school)

\*attend a conference or workshop (any courses mandated by the Board or your principal should be held during the school day and within the school year)

\*visit another classroom or school to observe exemplary practices

\*mentor another teacher or choose and work with a mentor if you are a new

teacher

\*share resources with colleagues or engage in team planning for a particular subject

or strand

\*investigate educational research or plan and conduct a research activity

\*participate in a committee or serve on the school council

\*pilot a new initiative or new material (e.g. science, music or math program)

\*develop new technological skills



- The final section of the Annual Learning Plan includes a section for principal and teacher comments. If you don’t agree with the comments your principal has made on the plan, note this in your comments section.

- Your plan is not carved in stone - your personal and professional circumstances might change in the course of a school year. Your plan should be flexible and you have the right to change it.

- The ETFO website ([www.etfo.ca](http://www.etfo.ca)) is an excellent resource for completing your Annual Learning Plan. Click on the “Teacher Performance Appraisal” link on the homepage to access a myriad of information, including advice and “make your own annual learning plan” link that allows you to complete and print your Annual Learning Plan.

PHOTO GALLERY



Contact us:

Durham ETFO

phone: 905-666-1122 or 1-800-220-6912

fax: 905-666-5293

website: [www.durhametfo.ca](http://www.durhametfo.ca)