

WELLINGTON WORKS

The final edition for this year will be sent to schools before year end– and posted to our website as of the same date.

SCHOOL REP FOR NEXT YEAR

Now is the time of year to start thinking about arrangements to elect school reps for the next school year. Often this is not done until early in the next school year, but it does vary from site to site. If you know that you are not returning we would ask that you encourage others to consider taking on this important role in OECTA. Remember that this person is the rep of the teachers at each site and therefore should be (s)elected by the members. This is not an administrative appointment.

YOUNG AUTHORS

Many thanks to all those teachers and students who participated in this year's Young Authors Contest. Local winning "authors" will receive a certificate and a gift certificate to Chapters. Names have been published in Wellington Works. We had one Provincial Award winner this year.

QUIET PERIODS DURING REPORTING PERIODS

We have an understanding with the Board that every effort will be made to minimize workshops, meetings etc for a "quiet time" during elementary report card preparation and secondary examination and evaluation periods. Principals have also been asked to consider these time periods when scheduling staff meetings and other school activities. The local unit also makes a concerted effort to avoid this time when scheduling meetings and workshops.

With the changes to the elementary reporting periods, there have been a number of concerns. Next year, in spite of our objections, there will not be a "Quiet Period" prior to the progress report.

OECTA will continue to honour the period and monitor the Board's activity during this period.

We are also particularly disappointed to discover (mostly after the fact), that some schools held staff meetings and "fun nights" during what was supposed to be "Quiet Week" June 6 to 13. It is imperative that these things be brought to our attention in a timely fashion.

PENSION CHANGES

Information has been sent out with regards to changes to the Teachers Pension Plan.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario government have agreed to a tentative three-part plan to address the projected \$17.2 billion funding shortfall in the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

The plan, which is subject to final approval by OTF and the government, includes:

- A 1.1% contribution rate increase, phased in over the next three years
- Slightly smaller annual cost-of-living increases for teachers who retired after 2009
- Recognizing the current contribution rate as the permanent base rate

More information can be found at www.fundingyourpension.com.

OECTA POLITICAL ACTION

OECTA's Political Action campaign "Who Speaks for Children?" is an issues-based campaign which encourages all voters to examine the educational platforms of all Ontario's political parties to determine party support

Locally, the fee return to our unit will be used exclusively for local political action, including joint activities with both of our sister affiliates (ETFO and OSSTF).

We will be recommending/endorsing specific local candidates both locally and provincially – some may be Liberals, some NDP and who knows there may be others. We are not telling people how to vote but will be actively encouraging members to become active and aware of the issues and concerns that should be important to educators.

More to follow soon.

SCHEDULES, SCHEDULES, SCHEDULES

It is extremely important that we be provided with school schedules (supervision and planning time) as early as possible in the new year. We believe that a number of questionable scheduling practices may have been in effect at a number of schools this year and we will be addressing any concerns as early as possible. This is particularly important given that next year is the final of the current collective agreement.

BALANCED DAY PILOT

The Board has announced its intentions to "pilot" a balanced day schedule at two schools beginning in September. (St John (Arthur) and St Francis)

Wellington OECTA has advised the Board of its concerns about the process used in developing the pilot, specifically the lack of input by the unit and/or teachers. We have also identified several areas of concern around the implications of the proposed schedule on contractual rights under the collective agreement.

The following is an excerpt from a letter to the Director voicing our concerns:

First, I want it to be noted that the extent of OECTA's input into this project has been very, very limited. I hope that the level of OECTA's involvement (very limited) and support (skeptical) was accurately presented to Administration, the Principals/Vice Principals, and to the Board. No meaningful discussion of any of our concerns has occurred at Program Meetings or at all at any Joint Staff meetings (where staffing and/or contractual concerns should be addressed). This is disappointing.

Rightly or wrongly, we expected that we would be given some opportunity to respond to a draft before it went as far as it appears to have already gone.

We remain leery of many of the unsupported claims on the value of the so-called balanced day. Our information, far more scientific than information garnered through a couple of public school visits and one dated study, would seem to paint a different picture of the value of this model. I hope you can understand my skepticism about one statement in the document in particular. It is noted that no teachers were surveyed but both principals interviewed reported "extremely high satisfaction from teachers". This is certainly not supported by information provided to me by ETFO which surveyed all teachers in balanced day models, province-wide and locally.

Without going into greater detail at this time, we would welcome a "balanced" discussion on the real merits.

We are very concerned that very little is addressed in the report on how the model will meet legal requirements of the Education Act, the PDT and our Collective Agreements around such things as

- 40 minute lunch period*
- teacher planning time - including the increases to be provided over the next two years*
- level of supervision - specifically the caps imposed in our CA and the PDT agreement*
- bell times and the length of the school day*
- Extra-curricular/ intramural programs - impact on these programs and the voluntary nature of these programs*
- the impact on part-time contract teachers, in particular those at more than one site,*
and
- 1/2 day occasional assignments*

Although we do have a meeting initiated by the HR Manager scheduled for June 21, to this point, the Board's response to our concerns has been inadequate, largely dismissive and very disappointing.

STAFFING

As previously communicated to you, OECTA and the HR Department met on June 1st and essentially resolved all surplus, unassigned and redundancy situations. All surplus, unassigned and redundant teachers have been placed and advised. There remains a small number of minor "tweaks" to some assignments but for the most part things went as well as could be expected. It should be noted that with the number of retirements, some staffing allocation increases, some creativity, and a lot of hard work, this was accomplished with only minimal impact on potential LTO positions. A third posting was issued (on time) with a small number of permanent positions and significant number of LTO positions.

We had optimistically hoped to reach this point by the end of the school year. We are in fact about a month ahead of that "optimistic" goal.

This year the Board (HR and site administrators) and OECTA have managed together to meet the timelines for our posting process, something that has been accomplished maybe only once before in the past ten years. This was achieved through a massive amount of co-operation and hard work from all of us.

Any teachers who may wish to be considered in the event that positions become available between now and the beginning of the next school year should identify themselves to Susan Paoli. There is no formal posting process over the summer months.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

All members should have received a brochure from the Board outlining the Board's new Attendance Management Program. This has become a province-wide concern as many Boards have revised their programs and implemented new practices as they assert their rights to "manage" employee absences. While the programs are couched in terms of providing "support" rather than disciplining people for certain absences, OECTA remains skeptical. Locally, we have been reassured by Board admin on the goals of the program.

In consultation with Provincial OECTA, we will be monitoring the implementation of this program locally. We will object to, and grieve where necessary, any actions under the guise of this program which violate any member's rights under the collective agreement and the rights of members to privacy and confidentiality.

All members need to be aware that this program in no way changes anything with regards to the confidentiality of medical information. Under no circumstances should any member be asked, nor should they offer, to share private medical information with their principals or vice-principals.

GRADE 8 AWARDS

Elementary reps are reminded to submit the names of Grade 8 OECTA awards winners to unit office as soon as possible. The unit pays for a gift certificate for each winner and the engraving on the award. If the engraving is done at Champion's Choice or Key Centre (Stone Road Mall), it can simply be charged to our accounts there. For more information contact the unit office.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING AS AN OECTA REP THIS SCHOOL YEAR. YOU PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN PROVIDING SERVICE AND SUPPORT TO OUR MEMBERS.

Have a great summer!