



From the President

Winter 2015

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation

GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website

www.geetf.ca

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/GEETF

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Grand Erie Union Contacts:

Contract Teachers—Donna Howey (GEETF President) - pres@geetf.ca

Occasional Teachers—Kevin Utley (GEEOT President) at gedsbot@bell.net.

DECEs -Patricia Hammond at granderiedece@gmail.com.

EAs, Secretarial, Custodial—Jennifer Faulkner (President CUPE 5100) at 226-250-3105 jenn.faulkner@granderie.ca

We Hear You!

Dave Peters (GEETF Collective Agreement Officer) and myself are almost finished this year's tour of Grand Erie Elementary Schools. If you haven't seen us yet, please know that we will re-schedule visits that had to be cancelled.

I am pleased that many teachers made time to hear about bargaining, to ask questions and to let us know significant concerns related to workload and work environment.

Our intention during visits was to provide an update on collective bargaining and to answer questions about the newly legislated bargaining process. We also sought out stories of issues impacting teachers' lives at work.

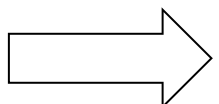
What was clear to us was teachers' commitment to students' academic success and personal development. Of concern, are the stresses and workload issues caused by "paper work" that does not directly support student learning, inadequate support for school technology, and issues arising from student behaviour and aggression. With your support, we are committed to achieving better working conditions.

Despite these serious concerns, I urge you to recognize the intrinsic rewards of teaching. Teachers are witness to the smiles on the faces of children as they discover new abilities and are proud of their own accomplishments. I also urge you to separate your personal life from your work life. Work-life balance is essential for your health, well-being and success over the course of your teaching career.

We hear your concerns. We believe you deserve a safe, and well-supported teaching-learning environment. We are committed to achieving this on an on-going basis.

Work-Life Balance Includes Fun!

Spend some time planning for your wellness and having some fun. Sign up for the GEETF Wellness Workshop being held at our office next Wednesday March 4th, 4:30 to 6:30. Additionally, sign up for the Women of Grand Erie "Fun Night" being held on Friday March 6th. Flyers have been sent out through your steward. **Register** by emailing registrations@geetf.ca.





Our Office

You will find us at our office at 49 Dalkeith Drive, Units 1 & 2, Brantford. Our phone number for local calls is 519 753-9291 and toll free at 888 753-9291. The office is open each day from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Many evenings the office is open much later due to meetings and workshops. We also endeavour to leave Fridays at 3:30 pm.

Legal Assistance for Members

If you are contacted by the police or Children's Aid Society (CAS) regarding an allegation against you:

Do not participate in or consent to an interview.

Make no statement to **anyone** regarding the allegations/charges.

Say, "I am willing to cooperate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel."

Call ETFO professional relations staff (PRS) AT 1-888-838-3836 and state that your call is urgent.

Being a Teacher AND Being a Parent—DO's and DON'Ts

We want the parents of the students we teach to trust and respect our judgement as teaching professionals. We accept and understand our duty to uphold the Ethical Standards (care, respect, trust, and integrity) and the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession.

When parents hear stories of concern from their children, and when parents have concerns about their child's progress or well-being at school, our "please DO" list might include —recognize your child may be telling only part of the story, deal directly with the teacher before making calls to the Principal, Superintendent or Trustees, communicate in a manner that upholds the dignity and respect of all involved, consider your child's responsibility in the situation, model an approach of cooperative problem solving with the school for your child, and please, DO NOT criticize teachers or the school in front of your child.

When teachers are also parents, it is critical that they remember all of these courtesies. Additionally, teachers should NOT speak negatively about their own child's teachers to other teachers. It is not ethical. Section 18 (1)(b) of the Teaching Profession Act also applies to teachers in their role as parents. Section 18 (1) (b) of the Regulation made under the *Teaching Profession Act* states that a member shall, "on making an adverse report on another member furnish him (her) with a written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report."

Teachers may be parents, but they must always conduct themselves in a manner that upholds their ethical responsibilities as a teacher.

Mental Health Issues in the Classroom

Student mental health is a factor in many behaviour and learning issues facing our students. In Grand Erie there is a focus on "mental health literacy". The GEDSB has been offering a series of "Mental Health Monday" workshops that have been oversubscribed. If you are looking for more professional learning, consider Laurier's certificate program, "Mental Health Issues in the Classroom". For information go to:

<http://legacy.wlu.ca/continuingstudies/mentalhealth>

New GEDSB Workplace Violence Policy

Teachers have a right to be safe in their workplace. Teachers should report workplace violence. Yes, student aggression can be workplace violence. Workplace violence forms are now found in GEDSB HR8 (formerly HR123). The new workplace violence reporting form is more comprehensive, yet simpler to complete; and the HR8 Appendices provide direction in responding to violent incidents. Please contact me for assistance as necessary.