



# From the President

Spring 2013

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation

**"A teacher's professional judgement is the cornerstone of assessment and evaluation"**

## PPM 155 Diagnostic Assessments

PPM (Policy/Program Memorandum) 155 was issued by the Ministry of Education on January 7, 2013. Its subject is the use of diagnostic assessment in support of student learning. Its purpose is to, "outline how diagnostic assessment tools may be used effectively to inform teaching and learning practices in the classroom in support of student learning and achievement." At the end of January, I forwarded the ETFO Advice for Members - Diagnostic Assessments. The full document, PPM 155 is also available on the ETFO website (Advice for Members section).

The requirement is that teachers use diagnostic assessment according to their professional judgement. The document outlines how teachers use their professional judgement related to diagnostic assessment.

### Teachers decide:

- "which assessment and/or evaluation tool(s) from the board's list of pre-approved assessment tools is applicable"
- "for which student(s); and"
- "the frequency and timing of the use of the tool."

This ministry memorandum establishes firm requirements that teachers must use diagnostics from the board's approved list. The diagnostics must be conducted judiciously, and the data analyzed to inform instructional practice. So, although teachers have been given authority to use their professional judgment, the expectation that diagnostics are used is clearly stated.

The implementation of this PPM is significant for teachers. I encourage every GEETF member to make sure that their work in relation to diagnostic assessments is useful, not onerous. If in your professional judgement it is not necessary or beneficial for the teaching - learning process to conduct the board's diagnostics for certain students at certain times, assert that judgement. Provide the data that you have in the manner that is useful to you. Do have evidence of where your students are at. Be prepared to be accountable and demonstrate how you make use of diagnostic assessment to inform your instructional practice for all students. I know that GEETF members have good professional judgement. It is positive that the Ministry of Education issued PPM 155 as a tool to empower teacher professional judgement and to prevent excessive requirements by boards on the use of diagnostic assessments.

## Lock Down Procedures - Keys

GEDSB schools which do not currently have front door security will benefit from the recent influx of funds from the Ministry of Education. GEDSB indicated that those schools not currently equipped will all become equipped. Teachers have a role to play in school security. Make sure you know the lock down procedure in your building. Bring any concerns to your principal, and include lockdown concerns on the monthly H & S report. If the concerns are not addressed, you can request corrective actions through JHSC, and/or contact me for support.

**GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website**

[www.gefed.on.ca](http://www.gefed.on.ca)

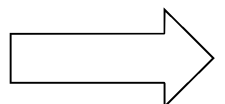
**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grand-Erie-Elementary-Teachers-Federation-of-Ontario/218009294961984>

**Twitter:** @geetfo

**Please take a moment to "LIKE" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter**

## 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.





## Brantford and District Labour Council

The BDLC Annual General meeting was held Sunday April 21st. Guest speaker, Marc Laferriere pointed out that unions need to be proud of the good work they do not only for their members, but also for the community and for the benefit of all workers. An interesting read related to this is at: <http://broadbentinstitute.ca/unions>>

I have agreed to sit on the BDLC Executive for a one year term.

GEETF members can participate in BDLC events. There is a "Labour Day of Caring" community clean-up event, Saturday April 27th, 9am, meet at the Labour Centre. As well, the Workers Day of Mourning, is Sunday April 28th. Details at: <http://www.brantfordlabourcouncil.ca/day-of-mourning.html>

### Upcoming GEETF Events— Plan to attend

April 24—Retirement Benefits workshop

April 29—Resume writing workshop

May 2—Interview workshop—Jarvis

May 6—Interview workshop—Brantford

May 10, 11, 12— Women's Wellness Retreat

May 13—Financial Planning Workshop

May 13—Post-partum Depression Dinner/Speaker Event

May 15—Mindfulness for Educators workshop

May 22—GEETF Annual General Meeting and dinner

May 27—Pregnancy/Parental workshop

June 13—GEETF Retirement Celebration Banquet

### Teacher Workload Study is Part of the ETFO/Government Understanding

As you know, the "Duties of a Teacher" go well beyond the duties as defined in the Education Act. Justified or not, teachers are expected to play a role in addressing student needs well beyond merely academic needs. A few that come to mind are student mental health, physical fitness, nutrition, social skills, character education, and financial literacy.

Teachers are also asked to take on responsibilities that are additional to meeting the needs of their students. Some of these include: Safe and Accepting Schools Team, School Improvement Team, BCESSA Rep/HNSA Rep, NPSAA, School Learn Team, Key Contacts (literacy, numeracy, FSL, Library, DPA/Health/Physical Education, Information Technology, Spec.Ed., Report Card), book room maintenance, equipment room maintenance, volunteer appreciation, education week planning, and graduation planning.

As well, some teachers volunteer to carry out extra-curricular teams and clubs. Certainly, school communities have come to expect this—again, justified or not.

Annual Health and Safety Training required of all teachers includes WHMIS, Anaphylactic and Violence and Harassment in the Workplace.

GEDSB teachers are also asked to carry out learning cycles, write newsletters, keep a page on their school's website, ....

My point is that workload is an issue. ETFO will be part of the workload study. Please ensure that authentic voice of teachers is heard by responding to surveys and/or questionnaires that are sent to you. This year has resulted in teachers using their professional judgement when reporting and being given the right to use professional judgement related to conducting diagnostics. Let's keep going and get a handle on the demands that can be placed on us.

### Your School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Ed Act was amended by the Accepting Schools Act passed September 2012. This Act creates the requirement that every school has a bullying prevention and intervention plan. Note that it is an expectation that "evidence-informed strategies and practices" are used in schools. Professional development is to be provided for staff. What that will look like in GEDSB is not yet established. It might be beneficial to have this put on the next staff meeting agenda. You can view the legislation at this web address:

[http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549&isCurrent=false&ParlSessionID=40%3A1](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549&isCurrent=false&ParlSessionID=40%3A1)

There is a definition of bullying right in the Education Act. This definition may be helpful to distinguish between conflict and bullying.