



From the President

February, 2017

Shawn Martin, GEETF President – smartin@geetf.ca

ETFO In the News

ETFO issued a call to action in January to inform the public about the increasing violence we face in our schools. Not only has ETFO made public our concerns, but has called on the Ontario government to take steps to address the issues and to put in place adequate funding for special education. Among its recommendations ETFO is calling on the government to:

- adequately fund special education programs
- set up inter-ministerial supports to build capacity for children's mental health services
- reporting of incidents
- training related to health and safety legislation and policies.

Locally we can continue to fill out the incident forms so we have a record of violent incidences and as always you may contact the GEETF office for support.

Important Transfer Dates

In Grand Erie we have two kinds of transfers available to teachers looking for a change of school for the following year: mutual exchange and voluntary transfer.

1] Mutual Exchanges/Transfers

Teachers may request to exchange assignments with another teacher prior to the staffing process. In this exchange, you and one other teacher agree to trade positions. Information about mutual exchanges/transfers was sent to members through the union steward on Friday, January 27th. If interested in participating in the mutual exchange, follow the survey link that was included in the email.

2] Voluntary Transfer

One of the gains in our last round of bargaining was a voluntary transfer. Unlike a mutual transfer, if you put your name in for a voluntary transfer, you will be teaching in another school the following year. It does not, however, preclude you from applying for postings during the staffing process. If you do not accept a position through the staffing process, then you will be placed in a position based on seniority and preferences for grade assignment and/or location. The Voluntary Transfer Request Form is due to HR by March 1st.



ELHT Update

On April 1st our board will be transitioning into the new provincial benefit plan.

I've heard the concerns by our membership, both the negatives and positives with the way in which our local transition has occurred. I appreciate those comments and I expressed concerns to the appropriate people. As we move over to the new plan we can expect that there will be questions and issues to solve. Along with mailings and email updates, you can search for information about the benefit plan online at www.etfo.ca/benefits. And you always have the GEETF office to contact for assistance. Thank you for your patience throughout this challenging and complex process.

An Early Reminder of GEETF Awards

Each year the GEETF presents awards at our year end celebration and retirement dinner. We have outstanding and committed teachers going above and beyond every day. Let's celebrate those contributions by nominating one of our colleagues for the innovative projects that they take on. The categories that we award are:

- the arts
- the environment
- humanitarian projects
- anti-poverty initiatives

The due date for the application isn't until May 15th so there is plenty of time to consider nominations.

Mental Health for Teachers

One of the benefits we all have as members of our LTD plan is that we have access to an online mental health assessment tool. After logging in, the site asks a series of specially designed questions that are designed to provide you with a general report on your

mental health. The report is designed to help you and your doctor identify, prevent, and manage problems before they become more serious. This free assessment tool is available as part of our group LTD insurance.

www.feelingbetternow.com/otip

Teacher and Early Childhood Educator School Supply Tax Credit

Starting in 2016 the Federal government is providing a tax credit to teachers and early childhood educators for the costs they incur to purchase school supplies. This measure will allow an employee who is an eligible educator to claim a 15% refundable tax credit based on an amount of up to \$1,000 of purchases of eligible teaching supplies. You will need to use the claim form to list the purchases you made. The Board provides the claim form. More information can be found on the CRA website at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gncy/bdgt/2016/qa03-eng.html>

The GEETF - Trustee Dinner

The annual GEETF and GEDSB Trustee Dinner is scheduled for February 27th. This event provides an opportunity for our Local to discuss important issues with elected board officials. If you have an issue that you feel should be discussed at this meeting, please contact Cory Judson at cjudson@geetf.ca

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

April 6 – Pregnancy/Parental Leave

April 12 – Pension

April 19 – Retirement Benefits