



From the President

September 2019

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Central Strike Votes and Bargaining

For those members who entered our profession in the past seven years, you've not yet had the experience of working under expired Collective Agreements, participating in strike votes, attending mass membership meetings, ratifying preliminary submissions and eventually voting on new Collective Agreements. Other than our acceptance of the Extension Agreement that prolonged the life of our just-expired Collective Agreements, you may not have experienced 'full on' Central and Local bargaining.

For those ETFO members who were teaching prior to 2012, many would have memories of this process. Mass meetings, voting, participating in work-to-rule actions and protest rallies, and eventually getting to the day when the majority voted 'yes' to a new deal were part of the bargaining cycle. We are back to what was 'normal' prior to 2012.

Please make sure that both the GEETF and ETFO Provincial have your personal email so you receive Central and Local Bargaining bulletins. This will keep you up-to-date on the progress being made at both tables.

Your local will keep you informed of Local Bargaining. Our GEETF First Vice President, Nancy D'Aurora, is also our Chief Negotiator. Nancy will send out information bulletins as we progress through the Local Bargaining process this year.

Your released officers will be doing school visits this year to meet with you, answer questions and to hear your concerns. Please contact the GEETF office if you have any questions about bargaining, strike action, or any other concerns or questions regarding this process.

After Hours Access to School

Since the decision was communicated by the Board to discontinue the practice of allowing staff to work in their schools on weekends and to stay later than 9 p.m., many members expressed the need to have this access reconsidered. Family responsibilities, managing workload, inadequate internet in rural areas, and other legitimate reasons were expressed. Although we must maintain a healthy work-life balance, for some in our membership, being able to spend time on weekends to get tasks done is essential to their mental health and stress-management.

Your local was successful in working with the Board to agree to not entirely lock out teachers from their schools on weekends as is the case in other boards. As outlined in the email sent to you by the Board on September 13, you may work in your school on weekends or stay past 9 p.m. if you get prior approval from your principal. This will be a new practice so I anticipate further issues. Please let your Union Steward or me know if you face issues after discussing your needs with your principal.

ETFO Summer Annual Meeting

Your local sent ten delegates and five alternates to the 2019 Annual Meeting in August. Delegates debated a wide variety of motions and elected the 2019-21 Provincial Executive. One of the new members elected to the Executive was GEETF member Sabrina Sawyer. Sabrina is the Grand Erie Indigenous Lead - Teacher Consultant and is a member of your local Executive Committee. On behalf of the GEETF membership, congratulations to Sabrina on her election to the Executive Designated Position-Open.

Our retired past local President and ETFO First Vice President, Susan Swackhammer, received the ETFO Honorary Lifetime Membership award. On behalf of our membership I wish to congratulate Susan, thank her for her many years of service to our local and to ETFO, and wish Susan a continued wonderful retirement!

Federal Election on October 21st

Canada's Federal Election will take place next month. The platform of the NDP aligns most closely with the goals of ETFO, therefore your local Executive Committee passed a motion to endorse the NDP. GEETF member Sabrina Sawyer is running as the NDP candidate for the riding of Brantford - Brant. Your Executive endorses Sabrina's candidacy and we wish her success!

Wear RED for Ed

The 'Red for Ed' campaign to defend public education continues from last school year. Every Friday, please wear something RED for public education. It is one way to express our commitment to students and our demand for investments in Education, not cuts.

Changes to LRT Role in Grand Erie

Our Board is changing the special education model. LRTs will attend several training sessions this school year. Sessions are designed to provide LRTs with the skills and knowledge to implement a model where they provide support for classroom teachers to implement programming for students in the classroom, and a move away from withdrawing students. That description is a very simplified summary of the new model but provides you with the overall vision.

I plan on attending all the LRT training sessions in order to learn first-hand the new model and to provide feedback to the Board as this revised role is implemented.

Teacher Performance Appraisal

It is a requirement that teachers on their 'TPA year' be informed of this within 20 school days of the start of the year. I recommend members read the Professional Relations Services (PRS) bulletin on the TPA that can be found on the ETFO website.

If you have any questions or concerns about the TPA process or the Annual Learning Plan (ALP) please speak to your Union Steward or contact me.

GEETF Calendar of Events

Your local offers a wide variety of PD and other events to help meet your professional needs. Please consider joining one or more of our committees. Our events calendar is updated regularly and is on our webpage geetf.ca. Currently, committees are planning events so the calendar will soon fill up with options. Simply click on the event to view the details and to find registration instructions.