



From the President

December 2015

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation

GEETF Meetings and Events are listed through our GEETF social media.

www.geetf.ca

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/GEETF

Twitter: @geetfo

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

****GEETF Members Recommend.....

If you are looking for a Learning Skills comment builder tool that is a time saver, produces individualized comments, and is based on Growing Success check out Student Evaluator at <http://www.studentevaluator.com/>

Quickly generate "unique and accurate Learning Skills comments" that are meaningful to parents and educators.

Note: This is NOT an official GEETF endorsement.

Changes in your GEETF Executive

It is with mixed feelings that I announce I have accepted a staff position at ETFO Provincial Office, in Professional Relations Services. It has been an honour to serve Grand Erie Elementary Teachers as your President since 2009. I have a great deal of respect for GEETF members. Your passion for teaching and commitment to students is always evident, even when confronting the challenges of our profession.

Our GEETF Executive is following the GEETF Constitution to determine who will be the GEETF President for the duration of the term (<http://geetf.ca/geetf-constitution-annual-report>).

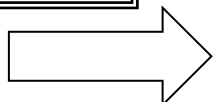
An announcement can be expected by December 18th. The current term ends June 30, 2016. GEETF members will be electing a new GEETF Executive in May 2016.

At the recent GEETF Representative Council, stewards were informed that prior to the 2016 GEETF Executive Elections, the GEETF Executive will be presenting changes to Constitutional language which will provide for an **additional .5 released officer at GEETF**. Currently, the released Executive members are the President and Collective Agreement Officer. Information about the role of this new released officer and any other changes to the GEETF Executive roles will be presented to the membership in time for members to consider whether or not to support the proposed changes and to consider running for election to the GEETF Executive.

Calling in Sick

We can promote handwashing endlessly, eat our veggies and get plenty of sleep yet, sometimes we get sick. It's not surprising given the nature of our work. GEDSB Procedure HR115 Employee Absenteeism outlines the procedures to be followed. It can be found on the website under, "Board", or on the portal under, "Links and Resources". If you are uncertain about what you are asked to do to call in an absence, please check section 8. Responsibilities of the Employee; or call our office.

The sooner you book your supply with ADS, the more likely an OT will be able to fill the absence. Avoid, "no-fills" by booking through ADS as soon as you know about an absence for any reason.





Wellness

There are both internal and external factors impacting a person's wellness. Despite our best efforts, stress and changes that are out of our control can get the better of us and put any of us at risk for a mental health illness. GEETF members have two helpful tools available through our OTIP LTD Plan.

Feeling Better Now is an on-line tool to help yourself build mental health skills, to self-assess, and to help others who may be struggling. Go to www.feelingbetternow.com/otip **PosAction Plus** provides 12 hours of totally free professional confidential counseling. Call 1-800-668-0193. Our OTIP LTD contract number is 48079; division number is 901.

Reports and Forms

It may seem like additional work but, ...completing the appropriate forms following an incident is critical to ensure that legislated duties are complete, to ensure that insurance benefits will be in place, and to ensure that follow up supports will be provided. Here are a few key forms that teachers need to be aware of:

Incident/Injury/Disease—every time there is a workplace accident or injury incident; no matter how small.

Safe Schools Incident Report (SSIR) - every time a student exhibits a behaviour for which suspension must be considered.

Workplace Violence HR8 - every time there is an act or threat of violence against a worker.

GEETF Supports in Our Communities

In alignment with our organizational values, the GEETF Executive and Committees have made many donations to support those who are most vulnerable in our society. In this school year so far:

Executive— \$1008 to Brantford Cares Syrian Refugee sponsorship, \$1000 to Operation Christmas Cheer providing grocery gift cards to Ontario unionized workers currently on strike, \$200 Haldimand Food Bank, \$200 Norfolk Food Bank, \$200 Brantford Food Bank.

Status of Women Committee—\$500 Nova Vita, \$500 Out of the Cold, \$500 Sexual Assault Centre of Brant, \$500 Haldimand Norfolk Women's Services, \$500 Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services, Haldimand Norfolk REACH, \$200 Kids Can Fly

Social Justice Committee—\$200 Kids Can Fly, \$115 Labour Cares

Political Action/Public Relations Committee—\$115 Labour Cares,

I know GEETF members make personal donations to causes that are close to their hearts. The United Way supports many community programs that benefit our students and their families. **I urge you to consider supporting the United Way campaign in your school's region (Brant, or Haldimand Norfolk).**

More Resources for Students With Special Needs

Prior to the 2014 Provincial Election, ETFO presented their education agenda, entitled, "**Building Better Schools**". This six part education platform was meant, "to contribute to public discourse about how to make our public schools the best they can be". Building Better Schools still represents the issues that ETFO members believe are important for improving our public education system. "More Resources for Students With Special Needs" is number four of this platform.

Grand Erie teachers contact me regularly to discuss the needs and circumstances they are faced with trying support the students with special needs in their classrooms. I know there are many classes with high numbers of IEPs. No matter how hard someone works, or how much experience or expertise in special education someone has, no one teacher can meet the varied and complex needs that present in some of our classrooms. I am extremely concerned about the high number of incidents of student aggression. To successfully integrate students with special needs into our classrooms, we need increased services from educational support workers. ETFO is lobbying for these changes.

Aboriginal/FNMI/Indigenous—What's in a Name?

Educators know that words matter. Over time, language evolves to ensure that terms do not offend, disadvantage or exclude any particular group. To that end, the GEETF Aboriginal Initiatives Committee is considering a name change to the GEETF Indigenous Initiatives Committee. Indigenous is a more inclusive term. Two current initiatives this committee supports are the Pen Pal Project and **free admission to the Woodland Cultural Centre for GEETF members**. The committee encourages you to continue to grow in your understanding of Aboriginal/FNMI/Indigenous learners and perspectives. Many resources are available through ETFO, GEDSB, and OTF.