



From the President

Winter 2014

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation

GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website

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

Just dial

211

Community Information
Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk

Thanks for the welcome!

Over the last few months, Dave and I have been visiting all of the schools. These visits have been informal, but they have been informative. We both have a strong sense of the concerns that are common for all GEETF teachers. Common issues raised were related to technology, making required professional learning activities meaningful for student learning rather than just documentation to prove accountability to the system, "no-fills", communications and relationships. Thanks for welcoming us into your school and for keeping us in touch with your work experiences in the schools. This ensures we are applying our advocacy in the right direction.

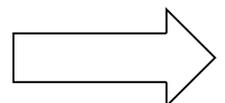
Thanks also for the welcomes that you extend to others involved in education. Sometimes it is as simple as a smile. Speech pathologists, social workers and others who support our students appreciate our welcome. Occasional teachers love to accept jobs at schools where they have previously felt welcomed, included and supported. Faculty of Education pre-service students and high school co-op students enjoy making contributions and learning about education from GEETF teachers. NTIP teachers (new contract teachers and LTOs) appreciate our encouragement and help as they learn the ropes. We are all part of the village that raises and supports the child.

Do you know about 211?

At a recent GEDSB Board meeting, the United Way made a presentation on 211. Dial 211 is a simple suggestion teachers can make to refer families to community supports. 211 is the go to number for anyone to find out about locally available programs and services. Whether the need is housing, food banks, health services, children and youth services, mental health services,211 can provide information about the community services available 24 hours a day!

This is one way teachers can refer people without invading their privacy and while maintaining their dignity and respect in the situation. It may be a way to offer help without having a conversation families may not be ready for or comfortable with yet.

As well, by referring families and students, teachers can protect themselves from engaging in behaviours that are beyond the duties of a teacher. Teachers at times run into professional problems when it is deemed they have become too personally involved with a student by acting as a confidant or a counsellor on personal issues. Please don't put yourself at risk of this.





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.

Together Fairness Works—Come out for some “Teacher Talk” - on us!

The GEETF PA/PR Committee is hosting after school regional get togethers—March 27th in Norfolk, April 3rd in Brantford and April 10th in Haldimand. Details will be sent out after March Break.

I would love to see people use these gatherings as a way to meet up with other school friends. Invite someone from within your school, someone you know from another school, a system teacher, an LTO, a DECE. We are all ETFO members.

GEETF will buy your snacks and drinks (non-alcoholic). This is not a whole group formal discussion or a time for harmful gossip. This is an informal social time to catch up with colleagues, get to know each other, share your school stories, talk about what really motivates you in your work, and talk about what you believe could make your work life better.

March 7th Professional Activity Day

March 7th is now a paid PA Day for elementary teachers who have not booked it as a VLAP day. Teachers determine their own priorities for professional learning in the afternoon. This is time for you to work with your colleagues, or independently, doing things you deem to be professionally relevant. It could be anything; from researching strategies to support student needs, to learning how to create mail lists on Outlook.

Supporting Minds

A phrase that keeps popping up in education is, “necessary for some, good for all”. I was recently introduced to a great document which helps teachers to understand and support children’s mental health—both illness and how to build good mental health. For those who are interested, I thought I’d pass on the link—<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf>

Send us your “goodwill” news.

GEETF wants to acknowledge important life events of members.

Tell us about births, adoptions, extended illnesses, bereavements, and marriages.

Contact Maggie at mbailey@gefed.on.ca

Upcoming Agenda Item

Stewards and Principals spent a day learning about the requirements related to Safe Schools Incident Reports and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline. The aim was to develop a common understanding of the reporting procedure and progressive discipline. In relation to student behaviour, it is important that schools are pro-active, responses are communicated clearly, and decisions respect the rights of everyone involved (the student with behaviour concern, classmates, and staff). Expect to see this as an agenda item from your steward and principal at an upcoming meeting.