



President's Newsletter January 2021

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Local Tentative Agreement Ratified

The GEETF membership and the Grand Erie Board of Trustees both voted to accept the Local Tentative Agreement. The Agreement in place from 2014-19 will be amended by the terms of the Tentative Agreement to become our 2019-22 Local Collective Agreement. Work has already begun to update the Collective Agreement and make it available to you. Thank you again to our Local Collective Bargaining Committee for all their hard work these past several months.

Education Sector Unions Continue to Pressure Ford Government to Improve Safety in Schools

On January 8th, ETFO, AEFO, OECTA, and OSSTF called on the government to convene an advisory table of all Education stakeholders immediately to develop a clear action plan for Ontario's return to schools. Affiliates stated that specific benchmarks must be in place for triggering any moves between virtual and face-to-face learning.

Unions continue to push the Ford government to improve safety standards in schools. The opening of self-contained Special Education classes during a strict lockdown is of serious concern. This plan is inequitable, and most would consider this an illogical move considering the province is in lockdown and we have been encouraged to work from home.

Grand Erie Schools Closed to Most Students During Lockdown

The Ontario government updated lockdown protocols that take effect on January 14th. GEDSB schools are closed to all students except for those returning to their in-person self-contained Special Education classrooms. GEETF members may work from their school if needed. At this time, elementary and secondary students in Windsor-Essex, Peel Region, Toronto, York, and Hamilton are expected to return to in-person learning on February 10, 2021. By January 20th, the Chief Medical Officer of Health will advise the Ministry of Education on which boards may resume in-person instruction as of January 25, based on the most up-to-date data and modelling. Masking will now be compulsory for all students in Grades 1-3. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply. Students in Kindergarten will continue to be encouraged but will not be required to wear masks. Masking requirements will also be in place for specified outdoor activities where physical distancing is not possible.

GEETF Office Hours

Just a reminder that during this lockdown and closure of almost all classes, the GEETF office remains closed, however, Jeannette and your Released Officers are working normal hours. Please contact us by email rather than calling the office during this time. Our contact information is on our website: geetf.ca

Mental Health Support Videos

The Psychiatrist in Chief at Sinai Health and her team developed a series of videos in response to the pandemic that offer practical tips and strategies that can be shared with educators and also model strategies that adults may use with students. These videos are available at: <https://www.sinaihealth.ca/school-educator-videos/>

Term One Report Cards

On January 8th, the Board emailed members an addendum to the report card writing instructions. Due to the change in reporting on Mathematics from multiple strands to one overall grade, the current report card template in PowerSchool is not up to date. The Board does not expect the vendor of the program to get updates done until later in January. This delay is the fault of the vendor of PowerSchool. Members may enter marks and comments for all subjects except Mathematics. Once the update is complete, then Math marks and comments can be entered.

Emergency Child Care

The government announced an extension and expanded eligibility for emergency child care for front-line workers. A staff member of a school who provides in-person instruction at a school to pupils with special education needs are eligible for this program. Contact information for this program can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/web/siteServiceManagers.html>

Support for Learners Funding

The Ontario government is offering one-time funding of up to \$250/child for parents and guardians to help offset costs and provide financial support for children and youth during the 2020-21 school year. Details of this program and application are found at: <https://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/SupportForLearnersWeb/public/index.xhtml>

Tax Credit for Home Office Expenses

Members who worked from home may be eligible to claim their home office expenses using a simplified tax credit. Details of this temporary support measure can be found on the Canada Revenue website (form T777S).

OTIP Teaching Awards



OTIP recognizes and celebrates teachers who make a difference... teachers who light a spark in students.

Winners are hosted at a fall awards ceremony in Toronto where they are presented with a personal award of \$1,000 and a Certificate of Recognition. Their schools also receive a \$1,000 prize. Details can be found at: teachingawards.ca

ETFO Provincial LTD Plan Renewal Rate

The Long Term Disability plan renewal date is March 1, 2021. There is no premium increase for the 2021 year and there are no plan changes being made to the LTD benefit.

