



President's Newsletter April 2021

Shawn Martin – smartin@geetf.ca

Dear GEETF Member,

As we finally approach a much needed Spring Break, I want you to know that your Local Released Officers continue to do all we can to support you. We discuss the larger issues with the Board such as health and safety, cases, testing and availability of vaccinations but these are primarily provincial issues that require provincial solutions. However, where we can improve conditions in our Local, we do all we can to work with the Board to find solutions while keeping the system operating as best it can under these extremely challenging circumstances.

You've received much highly deserved praise from your Federation because of the extent you go to keep the Education system functioning. But we know you require more than appreciation. We know you need real improvements in your working conditions. ETFO and your Local will never stop working on your behalf. We certainly wish we could get everything you need now, but that's not possible. Still, that does not stop us from pushing ahead all we can.

Please keep up-to-date by reading ETFO Provincial media releases sent to your personal email and through the main ETFO website at etfo.ca.

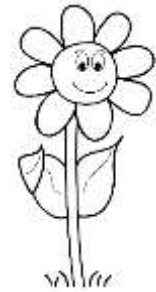
Thank you for all you've done and continue doing as frontline workers keeping one of our most valued public institutions operating

during one of, if not the most challenging moments in Canadian history.

Please focus as much as you can next week on your needs. You put so many others before you, but please give yourself a break and try to find enjoyment next week.

When we return to work on April 19th, we know that the end of the school year will be approaching, and the weather will get even nicer.

Wishing you a relaxing, enjoyable and so well-deserved Spring Break.



In Solidarity,

Shawn

Ford Government's Education Plans

My monthly newsletter doesn't have the space to provide you with all the details, but members have received ETFO emails that provide more information. I want you to be aware of two major potential issues:

More than \$800 million in cuts to Ontario's public schools next year and budget freezes for the following two years and...

Starting in September of 2022, the government is planning to make online classes a permanent choice so a student could go from Kindergarten to Grade 12 without ever setting foot inside a school.

As the Ontario provincial election draws closer, it will be imperative that we do all we can to stop a second term Ford government. If not, the future of public Education will be one of chronic underfunding, cuts to services and the start of privatization.

Latest Update on Vaccines

ETFO members were sent COVID bulletin #26 and GEDSB staff were provided an update on local vaccinations on April 8th. Beginning the week of April 10th, education workers who provide direct support to students with special education needs and all education workers in select hot spot areas will be eligible to register for vaccination. This will be followed by vaccinations across the province as supply allows.

Because the responsibility for the implementation of the vaccination plan has been downloaded to public health units, there will be differences in how things are done based on local factors.

ETFO continues to lobby the government and PHUs to ensure all education workers and other essential workers have immediate access to the COVID-19 vaccine. You can find a letter to send your MPP on **BuildingBetterSchools.ca**.

Spring Staffing Timeline

Members were sent an email on March 24th from the GEETF office on the staffing process. Just a quick review of the dates:

By April 19 – If you're contemplating retiring, if possible, please submit your notice to reduce the number of members declared surplus to school or redundant.

Week of April 26 – Surplus/Redundancy notices go out.

April 29 – Virtual meeting for members declared surplus to school/redundant.

April 30 – Vacancy List #1 expected.

May – subsequent vacancy lists will be issued as the staffing process unfolds.

Ministry of Education Updates

The Ministry updated school boards on the following health and safety measures:

- Vaccine roll-out to begin for eligible education staff in hot spots, and staff who support students with complex special education needs.
- Asymptomatic testing starting during the April break. Members received an email on April 6th from the Board regarding local details.
- On-site confirmation of self-screening to help ensure students with symptoms do not enter schools.
- Refresher training upon return from break. Teachers are to review best health and safety practices with their students upon return to school.
- Outdoor instruction more often.
- Enhanced cleaning during the break.
- Letter to parents promoting best practices for a safe April break.

Next Member Telephone Town Hall

GEETF members are invited to attend ETFO's next member town hall meeting on Tuesday, April 20th from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Details will be emailed closer to the date. If ETFO Provincial does not have your correct contact information, please email **trecords@etfo.org**.