



President's Newsletter June 2021

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Dear GEETF Member,

As we finally approach the end of a school year that I imagine most of us will not miss, I thank you for everything you have done to keep the system operating. I can't imagine there has ever been a time in our history when teachers have had to adapt more than we have this year. We know that everyone has gone through very challenging times, and indeed continue to. The amount of flexibility and patience teachers have shown to meet the ever-changing standards are historic.

At this moment, no one can say with absolute certainty what next school year will bring. Planning for the 2021-22 school year has been relatively better compared to last year at this time. School boards and unions faced ongoing uncertainty at this time last year, and into the summer of 2020, which made planning very difficult for the current school year. A far more proactive and organized approach is in place this time. The plan for continued virtual learning has been determined for next year. The locations of virtual classrooms have been determined and staffing for these positions is taking place this month.

I'm quite pleased by the amount of planning for next year. We have a good idea of what we'll be doing in September, but we know details can change with little notice these days. As such, your Local Released Officers

will keep current on Ministry of Education directives and our school board's decisions over the summer. If action needs to be taken on behalf of our membership, we will be there as needed. I certainly hope that this summer we just enjoy a relaxing vacation. But I assure you that your Local will take action to advocate and support if needed this summer. I will monitor my work email over the break but will only respond to time-sensitive emergency issues.

ETFO Provincial will keep members up-to-date through personal emails and media releases.

Pay Period Update

The last pay of this school year will be August 26th and the first pay of the 2021-22 school year is September 9th. We'll have a normal 2-week gap between the last pay of this school year and the first pay of next school year.

1% Pay Increase

The next 1% increase to salary will begin with the September 9th pay. This is the final yearly pay increase of the current Collective Agreement which expires in August of 2022.

No Local Levy for 2021-22

At the GEETF Annual Meeting in May, members voted to not collect the \$26/year per member local levy in years when our assets exceed \$400,000. This is the case, so a local levy will not be deducted next year.

Ford Government's Desperate Actions to Silence Criticism



On June 14th, the Ford government passed legislation that overrides an Ontario Superior Court decision to strike down certain election

restrictions made by the Ford government because they violate freedom of expression under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This is the first time in Ontario's history that the notwithstanding clause has been used. Overriding the court's decision is a flagrant abuse of power but it will not silence Ontarians.

ETFO's message to Ontarians is this:

- Ford passed legislation that tramples on our democratic Charter rights, but we are not going away.
- Together, we will elect a new Premier in June of 2022.

Instead of using the legal avenue of appeal, Ford chose to exercise an abuse of power to override the law. By going around Charter rights, this government shows that it does not value democracy, and will take extraordinary measures to crush dissent and criticism.

Members are mobilizing across Ontario, working with families and community groups to highlight the Ford government's failures. Next June, Doug Ford will not escape the judgement of Ontarians. We can, and we must, replace this government with one that works for all citizens. Ontarians have had enough of Ford's cuts, chaos and rewarding his friends. Ford and his caucus have given us yet one more reason to vote them out.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

Each year, members volunteer their time to support our Local in so many ways. Our Union Stewards, committee members, and individuals who step up for special tasks make it possible for our Local to offer the services and support we do. On behalf of the entire membership, THANK YOU to each one of our members who volunteered this year.

First Ever Virtual Celebration Event

On June 16th, the GEETF hosted its first ever virtual retirement and awards celebration. The annual Celebration Banquet is our signature event when we gather to enjoy dinner with friends, family, and colleagues and to honour our retirees and award recipients. An in-person event was not possible this year and we couldn't host a banquet last June either. But this year, we determined that our retiring members and award winners would be recognized.

Participants were entertained with music, comedy, speeches, and a slideshow of retirees. This was the first time we tried an online event, and even though it was a success, I sincerely hope it's the last time!

Have a Wonderful Summer Vacation!

It gives me great pleasure to wish you a safe and happy summer vacation. I'm so glad we made it to the end of this school year. I'm sure you feel the same.

Please take care, stay safe and enjoy your incredibly well-deserved summer break!

