



President's Newsletter December 2021

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Dear GEETF Member,

As we approach the end of yet another historic year, marked by such difficult and unprecedented events, it is with the greatest hope that 2022 will be remembered as the turning point that brings a return to more normal living. We've all been doing, and continue to do, our best to get through these very demanding times. We need to experience more positive events and see hopeful signs for our future.

Compared to the frequent disruptions and confusion of last school year, this year has delivered a somewhat more stable and predictable teaching and learning environment. I certainly hope that this positive direction continues into the second half of the school year and conditions continue to improve and normalize.

As we enter a time of year that has traditionally brought much joy and connection with others, I hope that the magic of the season lifts your spirits and that you end this challenging year on a joyful note, first with your students, then with family and friends during the upcoming holidays.



Update on OCT Mandatory Program

The Ontario College of Teachers announced a mandatory online course called the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP), legislated by the Government of Ontario. I can provide the following main points of information that we know at this time:

- SAPP includes an assessment component, but members who are unsuccessful may complete the course and assessment again until successful.
- SAPP should take around three hours to complete but does not need to be done in one sitting.
- Completion of the course will be noted on the teacher's Certificate of Qualification.
- There is no cost for this course.
- SAPP will be made available on January 3, 2022 and must be completed by August 31, 2022.
- ETFO has begun advocating that members be given time within the instructional day to complete this mandatory program.

More information will come from the OCT and I anticipate much discussion, both provincially and locally, as SAPP rolls out. Details can be found on the OCT website.

Political Action Ramping Up

The next Ontario provincial election is set for this June. The long list of issues facing Public Education that have been created, ignored, or made even worse by the Ford government will only continue and likely worsen if this government wins a second term. Much work needs to be done before the election, and you can play a direct part in that effort.

ETFO will be arranging political action training for Union Stewards plus one other person in February and May. The purpose of these meetings is to plan and take action to ensure the Ford government is not re-elected. Meetings will take place after school due to no-fills. Further details will be communicated when plans are finalized.

If you can see yourself taking on a leadership role in your school, in concert with your Union Steward, to help organize and lead the way for others to help defeat the Ford government and elect an Education friendly one, please consider volunteering as the 'plus one' at the upcoming meetings. If helping in other ways is more to your liking, many options will be provided.

ETFO Social Justice Resources

ETFO provides a wealth of information and resources on equity and social justice issues. Below is a link to ETFO's anti-oppressive framework and links to organizations and resources on social justice issues.

<https://etfo.ca/socialjusticeunion/frameworks>

EQAO 2021-2022 Update

Grade 3 and 6 EQAO spring assessments resume this school year for in-person students. EQAO plans on modernizing by digitizing the tests. ETFO has yet to see the design of elementary assessments but has already presented the following key concerns to EQAO and to the Ministry of Education:

- Mental health impact on students and teachers during the pandemic;
- Potential misuse of data (i.e. expanding the reach of EQAO to other subjects, inaccurate assumptions based on data, etc.);
- Ministry's poorly executed launch of the revised Mathematics curriculum impacting student achievement;
- Inadequate school internet and/or access to technology;
- Technical challenges that could be time consuming to address;
- The discrepancy between expectations for in-person and students learning remotely;
- Privacy concerns.

ETFO firmly believes that EQAO, in any format, should be eliminated.

Have a Very Happy Break!

On behalf of Nancy, Carolyn, Jeannette and the GEETF Executive Committee, I wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas Break and a very Happy New Year. It's safe to say that everyone involved in Public Education truly needs this break!

Happy Holidays