



## President's Newsletter March 2022

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Dear GEETF Member,

I hope that our membership is feeling more optimistic as spring approaches, with a return to nice weather and getting outdoors more often, combined with what looks to be a return to pre-pandemic conditions. The expected spike in absences due to omicron took place when we returned to in-person teaching in January and we are now experiencing a decline in absenteeism. I certainly hope we see a continuation of fewer absences, prep time being received when it's supposed to according to schedule, and a quick pay back of missed prep. The Board has hired many occasional teachers and the number of OT members is higher than it has been in years. The data gives me hope that our members will experience a continued decrease in no-fills for the rest of this school year and into the next.

ETFO Provincial has restarted off-site in-person programs. The ETFO office is expected to return to hosting in-person events by mid-April. The GEETF is also starting our return to in-person events. We are taking things cautiously. We'll begin with smaller group meetings and workshops and gradually schedule larger in-person events. The situation is in constant flux, so we must base decisions on the situation at the time.

### 2022 is an Election Year

Not only is there an Ontario provincial election this year, but this is also an election year for your Local. All Executive Committee positions, including the released positions of President, First Vice and Second Vice President will be open for the 2022-24 school years.

At this point, we are planning an in-person membership meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup> during which we'll hold elections and vote on proposed amendments to our Constitution. Due to the COVID situation in 2020, we couldn't hold an in-person election, so we used online voting. Our Constitution requires an in-person election unless it's not possible to do so.

The due date to submit a nomination form to run for a released position is April 15<sup>th</sup>. The GEETF office will send out more details and the nomination form later this month. A member may run for a non-released position 'from the floor' at our Annual Meeting. A member running for a released position must submit their nomination form by April 15<sup>th</sup> to get their name on the ballot. If you have any questions about our Local elections, please reach out to the GEETF office.



## **GEETF Executive Endorses Local NDP**

On Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, your GEETF Executive voted to endorse Brantford-Brant NDP candidate Harvey Bischof. Harvey has a strong record of supporting teachers and Public Education in his former role as President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. Your Executive believes that Harvey will work to ensure the needs of our schools, students, families, and educators remain at the forefront when Education decisions are made at Queen's Park. Your Executive also feels that Harvey is best positioned in Brantford-Brant to defeat the Progressive Conservative incumbent.

ETFO's priority is to defend Public Education. As we head into bargaining this spring, it's essential that we do everything we can to elect an Education friendly provincial government committed to restoring the funding and supports so desperately needed in our schools.

Your Executive values your right to make your own democratic decisions. Whichever candidate you support, we encourage you to get involved in the election campaign and to vote on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

If you would like to support Harvey Bischof's campaign, please see the attached flyer for an upcoming Labour Canvass on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Have a Very Pleasant March Break!**

On behalf of Nancy, Carolyn, Jeannette and the GEETF Executive Committee, I wish you and your family a wonderful March Break.

## **EQAO Update**

Grade 3 and 6 EQAO spring assessments resume this school year for in-person students. EQAO tests will be done online. Currently, we do not have the administrative guide and many concerns and unanswered questions remain. I've expressed the main concerns to our Board with EQAO testing this year, and in a new digital format. The concerns we have locally are the ones all ETFO teachers have across Ontario. We are waiting for clearer direction from EQAO and the government. We may face several issues as the test approaches and during testing days. Please work with your principal to solve any problems. If you require assistance, please contact the GEETF office for support.

ETFO firmly believes that EQAO, in any format, should be eliminated and that teacher training is to take place either at a staff meeting or with release time.

### **Upcoming GEETF Events**

Please refer to our online calendar at [geetf.ca](http://geetf.ca) for event details and to register.

March 28 – Pregnancy & Parental Leave

March 31 – Provincial Election Training

April 4 – ETFO New Member Welcome Program "Union 101"

April 5 – Resume Writing workshop

April 7 – ETFO Pension workshop

April 12 – Interview Skills workshop

April 20 – OTIP "Walk into Retirement with a Plan" benefits workshop