



Occasionally Yours



Lakehead Occasional Teachers' Local

September 2020

From the President:

Welcome back to the start of what is definitely an unprecedented school year! Whether it is the virtual or physical classroom, there are so many things that are new. I know OTs are very flexible and adaptable to situations, but now there is an added level of stress as we get familiar with the changes. I know everyone will do the best they can, and that will be enough. The schools should be providing support when it is needed. As there has already been a shortage of OTs, and flu season hasn't started yet, I expect schools will appreciate OTs willing to accept assignments. Each of you will be making your own decisions as to your availability, whether it is taking a leave for part or all of the year or only accepting assignments in certain schools or classrooms. Some will feel comfortable accepting all assignments offered.

I will try to share any information that I receive from the Board, or ETFO, to keep you as informed as possible throughout the year. The Local will likely be conducting surveys throughout the year to gain an understanding of the work environment.

I wish everyone the best as we work through this together.

Nancy

Fall General Meeting:

There will be a membership meeting this fall, whether virtual or in-person, which will include elections for the 2020-21 executive. More information will follow once definite plans are in place.

Calendars:

The Local has ordered a limited supply of calendars (agendas) again this year. They should arrive next week. If you are interested in receiving one, please let me know. The dimensions are 26 cm x 18 cm and are medium blue.

Professional Learning:

Our Local PL came to a halt last school year due to work-to-rule and strike days. The goal this year is to provide workshops, likely virtual to start. This is not the ideal environment for learning, sharing and social interaction but the committee will work with the opportunities that are available. Stay tuned.

Resources for Virtual Classrooms:

Gino Russo, IT Resource teacher, has provided 2 online sessions for OTs on the Microsoft Teams platform and links to resources in his emails. It is a lot to take in for those experiencing teams for the first time. Navigating the technology and managing a class can seem overwhelming. If you accept a virtual class assignment, there should be support provided. The virtual elementary school principal is Maggie Rutter.



Friday, September 25, 2020 - Virtual Gathering (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

Since the mid-1970s, Take Back the Night events have been held internationally to raise awareness of gender-based violence and the right to feel safe in public spaces, particularly at night. The events serve as an important reminder that gender-based violence continues to impact the lives of many within our communities, workplaces and schools. This year, ETFO provincial office will be hosting a virtual gathering to acknowledge the work of survivors, activists and ETFO members who have mobilized to end gender-based violence.

Registration link: [events.etfo.org/conference/Take Back the Night](https://events.etfo.org/conference/Take%20Back%20the%20Night)

Registration ends on Sept. 22, 2020

ETFO Virtual Learning:

In these unprecedented times, ETFO is offering the following professional learning opportunities for members:

- On-demand webcasts on a variety of topics that can be accessed anytime.
- Live webinars that members can register to attend in real time. Some of the webinars will be recorded and links provided for members who wish to view the sessions after the fact.
- Online resource documents that can be accessed anytime.

<https://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/ProfLearning/Pages/distancelearning.aspx#/> This page will be updated as more opportunities become available.

ETFO Resources:

ETFO Health & Safety Website: Includes information on COVID-19. <http://etfohealthandsafety.ca/site/>

Protection from the Coronavirus and Influenza:

<https://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Employees/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Occasional Teachers' Website: <http://etfo-ots.ca/>

Ministry Resource:

Reporting and Responding to Incidents: A Resource for Occasional Teachers

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/OccasionalTeachers.html>

As part of Ontario's *Action Plan to Address Systematic Racism in Schools*, the Ministry of Education has created new regulations that change how student behaviour is addressed in JK – 3. These students can no longer be suspended at the discretion of the principal. It is important for OTs to be familiar with these changes and the reporting obligations.