



# Occasionally Yours



February 2021

## From the President:

The challenges of 2020 are continuing into 2021. We expect this experience will be behind us eventually, but that may be of small comfort as we struggle with our own situations due to the pandemic. In this newsletter there are links to mental health supports that you may find helpful for yourself, students, family members and friends. If you would be willing to share other resources you think would be useful to members, please let me know.

Speaking of mental health supports, the government has indicated that it is considering other options for the March Break. It seems like another strategy to distract the public from other issues. Many students, parents and teachers are needing a break. ETFO has sent a [letter](#) to the Minister of Education expressing the concern over any change. There is also a petition [here](#) (BuildingBetterSchools) to express your concern to the government.

The Local executive is looking for input as to the interest of a Zoom get-together occasionally for members to share concerns, ask questions or renew and make new connections. Is this of interest to you?

We also look forward to seeing members at our virtual General Meeting on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns, 472-4208 or [nnix@tbaytel.net](mailto:nnix@tbaytel.net).

Nancy

## February General Meeting:

Our meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, February 24 at 4:30 pm. I will send out an email the week before for members to register. Those who register will receive a Zoom link to join the meeting. Those who have attended will be provided with a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

## Board Protocol Reminders:

Board Protocols and Guidelines: This link from the LPS website provides a list of documents that may be helpful. <https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/protocols-and-guidelines/>

Staff PPE Protocol Memo:

[https://lakeheadschoools.sharepoint.com/Lakehead%20DSB%20Staff%20Portal/hs/Shared%20Documents/Staff%20PPE%20Protocol%20Memo%20\(DEC2020\).pdf](https://lakeheadschoools.sharepoint.com/Lakehead%20DSB%20Staff%20Portal/hs/Shared%20Documents/Staff%20PPE%20Protocol%20Memo%20(DEC2020).pdf)

Staff PPE Protocol:

[https://lakeheadschoools.sharepoint.com/Lakehead%20DSB%20Staff%20Portal/hs/Shared%20Documents/Staff%20PPE%20Protocol%20\(DEC2020\).pdf](https://lakeheadschoools.sharepoint.com/Lakehead%20DSB%20Staff%20Portal/hs/Shared%20Documents/Staff%20PPE%20Protocol%20(DEC2020).pdf)

According to provincial guidelines, schools must ensure that all staff entering the school sign in and confirm that they have completed the provincial screen. Each school determines where the sheet is located. The screen is available on the Staff page of the Board website. There is a link near the top, left hand side.

## Tax Deduction:

For the 2020 tax year, employees can claim \$2 for each day worked at home due to the pandemic. It is a temporary flat rate that can be used instead of the usual home office claim. No documentation is needed from the Board. This may be of use to OTs who were doing LTO assignments virtually after the March Break in 2020. More information is available [here](#).

## Health & Wellness Links:

OTIP: <https://www.otip.com/wellbeing>

School Mental Health Ontario: <https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/educators/>

LPS Website Resource: <https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/mental-health-resources-for-students-staff-and-families/>

Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario: <https://ontario.cmha.ca/provincial-programs/>

CMHA Thunder Bay: <https://thunderbay.cmha.ca/>

## Black History Month:

Every year ETFO marks Black History Month with a [poster](#) and an accompanying [description](#). The ETFO website also provides [Black History](#) resources for teachers.

## Next Provincial Election:

Ontario will likely have an opportunity to elect a new government in June 2022 (unless the government changes the election schedule). For those concerned about the direction this government is leading regarding education, health care, and the environment, to name a few, it is not too early to start preparing for the election. Over the next weeks and months, more information will be provided as to what the government is doing now, what they plan to do in the future and actions we can take if a change is needed. This can be a time where many feel overwhelmed and discouraged as we live through this pandemic. Voters cannot let the government use the distraction of the pandemic to make detrimental changes to priorities like education and health care. If we, as educators, want to maintain and improve a world-class public education system, we must be prepared to take some action before it is too late.

## ETFO Provincial Conferences:

**Arts Conference:** Apr. 17, 2021 9:30 – 3:30

The 2021 Arts Conference (new) will provide a learning and networking opportunity for Arts educators, both generalist and specialist. The keynote speaker will be Andrew Mercer, a pioneer in online music education. Participants will have a selection of workshops (one will be offered in French). Registration deadline: February 16, 2021 at 5 pm. [Register here](#).

**Protect Yourself! A Women's Legal Conference WP:** March 3 (evening) - 4 (9:30 – 3:00), 2021. This PRS conference focuses on women's rights and responsibilities in relation to employment and professional responsibilities. [Flyer](#) Registration deadline: February 11, 2021. [Register here](#). Registration fee: \$30. Release provided.