

ESPecially Yours

Volume 14, Issue 2

November/December 2013



Message from Your President:

The school year is well under way, and we are all settling in to our jobs and dealing with our challenges.

Thanks to support from our Elementary Office Administrators, the Board has decided to review the workload of office staff. Gradually over the past years, work creep has been occurring. This means tasks have been added little by little, with the individual tasks not appearing to be onerous. However, once you add them all up, the workload is becoming unmanageable. An Office Workload Focus Group has been initiated and we have had our first meeting. The OCDSB presented some new initiatives that will hopefully reduce the time spent on certain tasks. These include the use of Synvoice at the elementary schools on a daily basis to report and make calls not only on attendance, but to allow schools to send important messages and updates via both phone messaging, email and text messages throughout the week. The implementation will involve updating data to ensure integrity, but we have been assured that

assistance will be in place to input and update current

data. The other initiative will be a new leave request form. It will be available on-line or in a printable PDF form. All staff will be able to access the form specific to their Bargaining Unit, enter their requested leave and forward the request to their Principal for approval. The form will include the appropriate absence codes and will make it easier for office staff to input entries once the leave has been approved by the Principal. Further meetings of the focus group will be scheduled in the new year.

On a good note, Leif and I have had some successes in ensuring that the Board meets their contractual obligations. We have settled some competition grievances in our favour and we have provided much needed support to many of our members.

We have seen a lot of members dealing with stress, either from workload or interpersonal conflicts. B<, Payroll and HR members have been the target of many angry and abusive calls from staff. This is not acceptable. We all need to work together to maintain a respectful and caring workplace. Be nice to one another and treat each other with kindness. While you do not have to take abuse from anyone, I ask that you continue to maintain your professionalism. Remember: We are Educational Support PROFESSIONALS.

As always, please feel free to call either myself or Leif regarding issues you may have in your workplace. We try to do our best to ensure that you have a happy, respectful and safe workplace. You can contact us at the OSSTF District Office by phone at 613-729-7211 or in person at 67 Jamie Ave by appointment.

NOTE: Our email addresses have changed.

Nancy: nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca

Leif: leif.walther@d25.osstf.ca

On behalf of the ESP executive, I wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday season. Take the opportunity to enjoy some relaxing time off with family and friends!

Nancy

News to Use



Our OSTA members

have been in contract negotiations. Because their employer is the Ottawa

Student Transportation Authority they are not bound by Bill 115 and therefore the same conditions have not been imposed on those members of our bargaining unit. We have been bargaining with the employer with a deadline of December 23 for a possible lockout or strike. A last minute deal was reached on December 18th thanks to the hard work of the negotiating team: Kerri Ferguson, Paul Elliott, Leif Walther, John Grochot, Rob Masterson and Nancy Akehurst. For more information about OSTA members, please see the article on page 6 in this newsletter.

December 6 was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. To mark this day, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), in partnership with the University of Western Ontario's Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children (CREVAWC), is launching the first nation-wide survey on the impact of domestic violence on workers and workplaces.

Canada's national survey will gather data about the prevalence and the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. It will provide made-in-Canada research that will help unions, employers, advocates and governments develop good public policy as well as negotiate workplace supports including paid leave, flexible work arrangements or women's advocates through collective bargaining.

The survey, available in English and French, is online at <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/DVatWork/> until June 6, 2014. Any worker over the age of 15 is encouraged to complete the survey, whether or not they have personally experienced or witnessed domestic violence. Participation is voluntary, is completely anonymous and takes between 10 and 30 minutes to complete. Neither union representatives, nor employers will know whether or not someone has participated. Upon completion of the survey, respondents have the option to enter a draw for a tablet computer.

All OSSTF/FEESO members are encouraged to complete the survey.

Sick Leave

It is important that each member monitor their sick leave, to make sure that the correct number of days are allotted and deducted. This information is available at www.ocdsb.ca. Look under Staff, Employee Inquiry. Sign in using the same username and password that you would use when logging on to a computer. Click on Employee Services. Click on Employee. Click on Personal. The Absence tab will show your current sick leave allotment (**Current SickLv**), your number of short term disability days paid at 100% (**STD Topup**) and your number of short term disability days paid at 90% (**STD**).

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board Employee Inquiry Website

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Absence Profile

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EMPLOYEE ID: 1000000000

Absence Group	Absence Amount	Approved	Unapproved	Unapproved	Unapproved	Unapproved	Last Absence
Absence Group 1	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 2	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 3	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 4	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 5	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 6	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 7	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 8	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 9	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 10	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 11	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 12	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 13	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 14	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 15	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 16	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 17	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 18	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 19	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013
Absence Group 20	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	September 10, 2013

Approved Transactions

Unapproved Transactions

History

Unapproved

Ontario's House of Labour

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) held its 12th Biennial Convention in Toronto on November 25th - 29th, and I had the pleasure of attending the convention as one of the official delegates for the OSSTF.

The OFL is Canada's largest labour federation, representing over 50 affiliated unions with delegates from each, as well as from over 40 local Labour Councils throughout the province. All told, the OFL represents over 1 million Ontario workers from both the public and private sectors. The Biennial Convention is the governing body of the OFL, with delegates electing the Federation's President, Vice-President and Treasurer and setting the Federation's goals and policies for the next two years by submitting and voting on resolutions on the assembly floor.

As Ontario's "House of Labour", the OFL uses the power of organized labour to champion common interests regarding such issues as employment standards, workplace safety, worker's compensation, gender equity, human rights, pension security, etc., and to ensure that the regulatory foundations that workers of the past fought so hard to achieve are maintained, strengthened and expanded for the benefit of society as a whole.

Along with a range of resolutions put forth calling for action on specific issues, the assembly was presented with a more broadly encompassing two-year action plan which was endorsed unanimously by the delegates. Under the title "**Rising Together**", the plan seeks to forge firmer bonds not only between labour unions themselves but between the labour movement in general and other community organizations and activist groups with similar goals. The plan thus seeks to foster an alliance of interest capable of charting a long-term vision of the future that is not afraid to move out of the defensive mode of the last few decades and back into a movement capable of presenting "big, bold ideas about the kind of society we would like to live in."

Between business sessions, delegates at the convention enjoyed speeches from a number of well known Canadian public figures including Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress; Maude Barlow, Chair of the Council of Canadians; Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Ontario NDP Party; and Thomas Mulcair, Canada's Leader of the Official Opposition.

However, it was the speeches from the international

guests from Argentina, Spain, South Africa and Bangladesh which had the most honest impact. These labour leaders offered heartfelt testimony to the fact that there are still places in the world where workers are jailed for attempting to organize, where there is almost no effort to disguise the fact that business makes the laws, and where human beings are often valued less than the clothing, electronics or other products that they are producing for far away markets. While offering inspiration through the courage they have shown to persevere in the struggle for positive change in their own countries, these leaders also offered a sober reminder that it is only through our own solidarity that we have achieved the gains that we have here in Canada. They urged us to remain vigilant and strong at a point in history when things sometimes seem to be slipping backward into the past.

In an era where international corporate agendas strive to present themselves as the only possible reality and where governments have increasingly attempted to serve those agendas by presenting austerity budgets as the only reasonable course of action available, the OFL reminds us that there are other realities and other common human values that most of us wish to maintain and build on.

If you are interested in the OFL's Action Plan, or any of the wide range of projects, campaigns and specific issues that the OFL is involved in, their publications page is a good place to start: <http://ofl.ca/index.php/publications/>



Leif

"History is a great teacher. Now everyone knows that the labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them."

Martin Luther King, 1961.

ESP ON THE ROAD

Cairine Wilson Secondary School

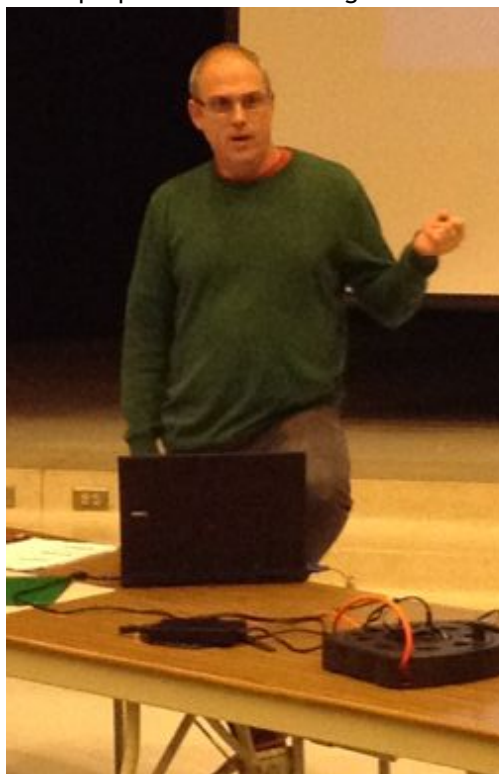
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). OSSTF was a signatory in April; our Board only signed it this



In the first week of December the ESP bargaining unit held four general membership meetings. Instead of having members come to a meeting, the meeting came to the members. They were held at the following locations:

- Cairine Wilson HS
- Earl of March HS
- Longfields Davidson Heights; and
- Sir Guy Carleton.

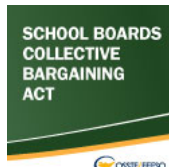
The purpose of the meetings was to



relay information regarding the conditions negotiated by OSSTF and the government to improve the conditions imposed by Bill 115, the

September.

We also took the opportunity to update members on future bargaining. Bill 122, The School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, is the legislation that will govern how negotiations proceed. It has passed second reading and is now at the committee stage. This is the stage where all parties get a chance to suggest amendments. The bill does not currently guarantee a central negotiation table for support staff, which is something that OSSTF is pushing for. Click on this button found on www.osstf.on.ca to get the latest information.



The meeting slideshow will be posted in the new year on the ESP webpage on the District website. However be aware that the members who attended each meeting asked good questions and expressed concerns that were only heard by those in attendance. At each meeting members seemed to have a different focus, which we found very interesting. It showed us that while holding separate meetings may impact how many members attend, it really does not give us or the members a chance to hear all issues at the same time.

Out of the approximately 800 members in ESP, only about 100 took advantage of the opportunity to attend meetings and get the information. While I understand that after a long day at work, it can be difficult to motivate yourself to

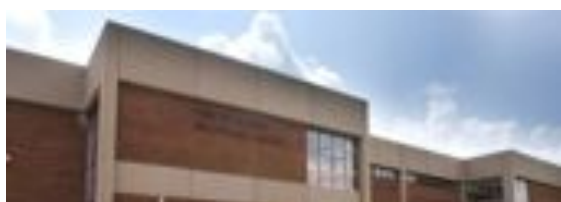
come to meetings, the lack of involvement of our members raises some concerns. Leif and I



do our best to support you and have been successful in many ways, but you need to take part in activities and meetings that are available, to ensure that your concerns are understood and addressed.

Thanks to those who responded to the *ESP Membership Meetings Follow Up Survey*. In general people were appreciative of having meetings in their neighbourhood. We will take all the comments into consideration when planning similar meetings for next year.

Nancy



ESP in the Community



OTTAWA
NETWORK FOR
EDUCATION

RÉSEAU
D'OTTAWA POUR
L'ÉDUCATION

OTTAWA LECTURE
READS OTTAWA



Do you love to read? Did you love having stories read to you as a child? Do you enjoy working with children? Are you looking for volunteer opportunities?

If you answered yes to 2 or more of these questions, read below!

The OttawaReads program needs you! This program matches a corporate group of volunteers to an elementary school near your place of work, home or school and invites you to visit the school for one hour every week, or every few weeks to spend some time reading stories aloud to children one-on-one. This fun, stress-free hour provides children with much needed exposure to books, the English language and most importantly a caring role model helping boost their literacy skills and sense of self-worth.

Getting started is easy! Just follow these steps:

1. Let Shelly McQuillen know that you are interested by Friday, December 20th.
2. Then, fill out this [application form](http://www.onfe-rope.ca/programs/ottawareads/how-program-works/volunteer-form).
3. Follow the steps in the email you receive to complete a Police Record Check for service in the vulnerable sector (if you have completed one in the last 6 months, it is not necessary to get a new one). Don't forget to bring the letter you will receive in the mail to waive the cost.
4. Attend a training session at 133 Greenbank (time and date to be determined).
5. Attend an initial meeting at your designated school.
6. Start Reading!

<http://www.onfe-rope.ca/programs/ottawareads/how-program-works/volunteer-form>

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One of the outcomes of Bill 115 is the impact on our PD Days. You may have noticed that we no longer have a Board wide PD Day in February as we have had in the past. This was a result of the 3 unpaid days imposed on the teachers and the Board rescheduling the

remaining PD Days to meet teacher

contract obligations. Our only remaining opportunity after the holidays in December will be on March 7, the day before the March Break. We are hoping to invite a speaker to talk about Mental Health and Wellness, then to have some facilitated discussion groups. We do need some assistance with planning the day. Please contact Judy Soifer, ESP Educational Services Officer, via BEAM if you are able to help us out.

The other PD Day we have lost is the one usually offered on the last day of the school year. This particularly impacts our 10 month office staff members who will not have time available to complete year end tasks. The Board has told us they will be putting processes and plans in place to assist. Stay tuned for updates!

WHO'S WHO IN DISTRICT 25



A small group of members of the Educational Support Professionals Bargaining Unit do not work for the OCDSB. They work for the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and are located at the Confederation Education Centre. Since their contract expired in August 2012 they have struggled to negotiate a first contract with their employer. They have finally managed to reach a tentative agreement which will be taken for ratification very soon.

The main role of OSTA is to provide school transportation services in Ottawa to all students attending schools in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) and the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB). In addition to this OSTA provides all transportation to residential students attending Provincial and Demonstration schools in the Province of Ontario.

OSTA is its own legal entity. The two school boards and the Ministry of Education purchase transportation services from OSTA.

There are currently 15 ESP-OSTA members.

The job classifications are:

- transportation assistant;
- transportation coordinator;
- administrative assistant;
- Safety and Accessible Transportation Coordinator; and
- Provincial and Demonstration Schools' Transportation

Coordinator.

OSTA has established four transportation zones within the City of Ottawa. These zones are: West, Centre West, Centre East, and East. Each zone has a dedicated telephone extension, and now has a dedicated email address that parents may also use to communicate any concerns they may have regarding their children's transportation arrangements.

The busiest time of year at OSTA is between May and October, with the month of September being the peak of activity.

OSTA transports approximately 62,000 students on all modes of transportation (car, taxi, bus, highway coach, public transit, trains and yes---even airplanes).

The management team at OSTA is

- Vicky Kyriaco, General Manager & CAO;
- Blyth Helman, Assistant General Manager; and
- Jeff Redmond, Controller.

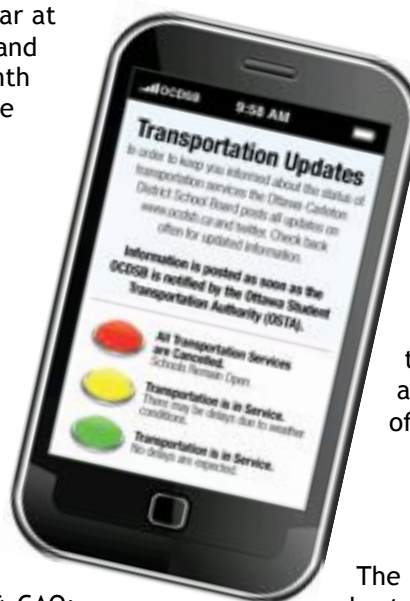
There are also two IT staff.

Staff at OSTA most enjoy knowing that they have made a difference in the lives of the students that they transport. They care deeply for the safety and well being of the



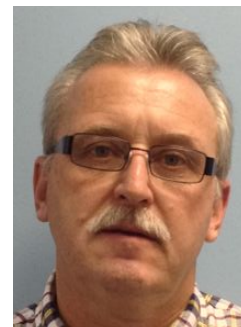
students in their care.

One thing that staff would like to have is a better electronic interface with its stakeholders (schools, parents, operators, parents and school boards). We would also like to get into a better and more suitable office environment.



The best

thing about belonging to ESP is the support that staff continues to receive as we go through some very, very trying times.



*John Grochot
ESP-OSTA member,
Executive Officer
of the ESP
Bargaining Unit*

Health and Safety - Everyone's Business

At a Health and Safety Conference, I Picked Up a Prescription for Happiness!

This fall, as your ESP Health and Safety representative and a member of the Board's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC), I attended the Workplace Safety and Prevention Services Conference. This year's theme was **Re-energize> Optimize>Inspire (R.O.I.)**.

The keynote speaker during our lunch was Dr. Timothy Lau. His talk was on "The Prescription for Happiness."



Timothy Lau
Director of Undergraduate
Education, University of
Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine,
Department of Psychiatry
Geriatrics, The Royal Ottawa

According to Dr. Lau, "We all want



to be happy. Whether you are a Buddhist looking for it in the moment, a Christian seeking eternal happiness, or someone searching for a better tomorrow, it is a universal part of our human experience. We all strive to accomplish things, or acquire things, or win things to make us happy. But winning the lottery isn't the answer to life's woes.

Many people think that success is the key to happiness. Actually, the reverse is true. Happiness is the key to success. It doesn't depend on your circumstances or someone else. As a psychiatrist, I have learned many things from both my patients and their struggles which I will share with you. The answer to the question "how to find happiness" may actually surprise you."

I learned that sometimes we lack happiness because we don't know what happiness is. We don't know what we're looking for or what will make us happy. Our generation and our children have things backwards. We love stuff and use people. We need to love people and use stuff!

We spend one third of our day at work. It's where we spend most of our waking hours. Happiness at work will make you happy in life, and you'll perform better. A happy and engaged workforce will raise the economic status of everyone. To be happy at work, you must be filling a purpose; you must feel valued for yourself. Your job should allow you to be creative and productive. If you

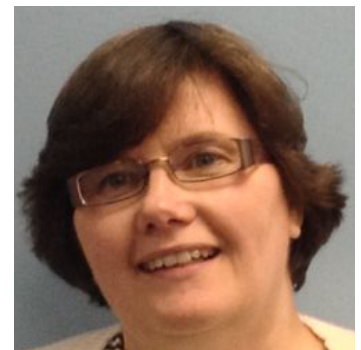
feel happy, you will feel successful. However one of society's problems is that four out of five people are unhappy with their jobs. Despair is on the rise. The rate of depression is growing at an alarming rate and is ten times what it was in 1945.

Happy people are resilient. As the saying goes, "You don't drown by falling in water. You drown by staying there." When you can't change your job or your work, change yourself. Ghandi said, "Someone can not take your self-esteem, you have to give it to them."

The prescription for happiness is:

- Live with integrity;
- Be authentic;
- Follow your conscience;
- Strive for excellence;
- Seek justice;
- Have courage ; and
- Practice self-control.

You are who you are and you can't change that, but it doesn't mean you can't improve your life. Share your joy and it will double, share your sorrow and it will be halved. Be kind to one another and you'll find happiness!



Bev Charles
ESP Health and Safety Officer
OSSTF District 25

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE ...



Christmas Carols for the Dysfunctional

SCHIZOPHRENIA: Do you Hear What I Hear?

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER: We Three Kings Disoriented Are.

NARCISSISTIC: Hark the Herald Angels Sing About Me.

MANIC: Deck the Halls and Walls and House and Lawn
and Streets and Stores and Office and Town and Cars
and Busses and Trucks and Trees and...

PARANOID: Santa Claus is Coming to Get Me.

PERSONALITY DISORDER: You Better Watch Out, I'm Gonna Cry, I'm Gonna Pout, Maybe I'll tell you Why.

[illegible]

BIGTIME PERSONALITY DISORDER: Thoughts of Roasting on an Open Fire



Disclaimer - Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this publication, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions and views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of OSSTF or District 25.