

ESPecially Yours

Volume 16, Issue 2

February 2016

Message from Your President

I hope everyone had a restful holiday break. We entered the break with spring-like weather and then winter arrived with a bang!! And it looks like it's here to stay for a while. Stay safe and warm!

After a difficult fall, OSSTF reached a Central Agreement for support staff members, which was ratified. More info about that will come from Leif Walther in his report. Thanks to all the members of the OSSTF Support Staff Advisory Committee for their hard work, including Leif, who participated on this committee.

We are now waiting for ratification of the tentative Local Agreement for ESP with the OCDSB. Please be sure to read the report from Leif with details regarding the ratification vote. A big thanks goes out to our ESP Bargaining Team - Leif Walther - who took the lead and worked very hard on your behalf, Nancy Akehurst, Margaret Elson, Saul Mogelonsky and Kelly Mills as well as our Provincial Negotiator, Kerri Ferguson.

Our next big hurdle will be the OCDSB Budget. The Board is forecasting a \$14 million shortfall. The public reports have discussed cuts between 100 and 200 positions in the Board. There will be tough decisions that need to be made. I will be advocating on the behalf of ESP members. I do not believe that our bargaining unit can take more cuts

without seriously compromising the work required. In 1998 at amalgamation, our in-school support FTE was 507 FTE, as of 2015 we were down to 325. Since then our members have had to deal with additional tasks and workload due to initiatives including but not limited to ONSIS, Ministry Report Cards, Safe School Initiatives, changes to Financial procedures, and the implementation of the school buzzer security systems. Our members both at schools and in central departments are feeling the strain and I don't believe we

can take much more. I will be attending OCDSB Budget meetings on your behalf, but it would be very helpful for members to sit in so that the trustees can see the faces of those who will be impacted by potential cuts.

I have been kept very busy dealing with many other issues including members trying to deal with stress in their workplace. Morale in the workplace is low, workload is high and members are feeling the impact. As I said in the last newsletter, it is important to take

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From the President



President Nancy Akehurst and ESP Executive Officer Shelly McQuillen at the Ottawa District Labour Council dinner

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care of yourselves, but to also be aware of others in your workplace. It is important to recognize that everyone is feeling stress and we should all be making every attempt to be supportive and respectful to all colleagues.

Our colleagues at OSTA continue to work hard to meet the expectations of the Ministry Effectiveness and Efficiency Report. They are on track to ensure that the OCDSB meets its goals in order to increase Ministry funding by \$5 million. This will certainly make a difference to the OCDSB Budget.

School office staff have been concerned about the OCDSB concussion policy. I am waiting to hear from Associate Director Norah Marsh to have a conversation about the role and responsibilities of office staff in reporting on concussions. If you have input you would like me to share, please email me.

The EOAA (Elementary Office Administrators Association) had its first meeting cancelled due to our sanctions but were happy to finally get together at their first meeting in December. They have now invited Secondary Office Administrators to join them. Thanks to Linda Ludlow and Karen Green who have taken on the role of Co-Chairs for their hard work to provide meaningful information for all at the meetings.

I have also spent time in Toronto working on behalf of our members. All OSSTF Bargaining Unit Presidents are now

Provincial Councillors who meet 6 times a year to do the business of OSSTF between our yearly Annual Member Provincial Assembly (AMPA) meetings. I am also a member of the OSSTF Education Services Committee, starting a 3 year term this year. As a newbie to this committee, I am still finding my way, but am enjoying the work as well as the ability to work with other OSSTF members across the province.

OSSTF District 25 purchased and moved into our new location last year at 9 Corvus Court. Because things have been very busy, we haven't had an open house yet - but we will! We have also begun the process of planning an addition to the building which will provide us with meeting areas that can accommodate training and workshop sessions as well as some larger meetings. Work should start this spring. Stay tuned!

Winter will be over in a few months. For those of you who enjoy winter sports - have fun. For those of you who aren't so fond of winter - hang in there!

If you have questions or concerns, you can always contact Leif or I by email at:

Nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca

Leif.walther@d25.osstf.ca

Or you can call us at 613-729-7211. Please call ahead if you wish to meet at the office as we are often out at meetings.

ESP RATIFICATION MEETING

**A meeting will be held to
present and vote on the
tentative local agreement for
ESP. Please plan to attend.**

**Thursday, February 4, 2016
6:00 pm
Confederation Education Site
1645 Woodroffe Ave
Cafeteria**

Leif talks Negotiations

NOTES ON THE 2014 ESP - OCDSB NEGOTIATION PROCESS THE END IS IN SIGHT!

By the time you are reading this, you will no doubt be aware of the tentative Local Collective Agreement between your ESP Bargaining Unit and the OCDSB and it will have been sent out to you for a chance to review.

In signing the tentative agreement, your local negotiations Table Team is endorsing this deal as the best achievable outcome in this round of negotiations. With the endorsement of the full ESP Collective Bargaining Committee and the ESP Executive, the deal will be formally presented to the membership at a special Membership Ratification Meeting on Thursday, Feb. 4 where you will be able to ask questions and seek clarification before you will be asked to approve or reject the deal.

If approved, the tentative agreement will become our active Local Contract, to be combined with the Central Contract (which, though already ratified, does not come into effect until the Local Contract has been approved by the membership). At that point, we will finally again have one single document in which the terms of our employment with the Board can be referenced after the considerable confusion over the last three and a half

years after the 2012 negotiation process that left us with several different documents to track.

It has been a long and difficult haul getting here since your ESP 2014 Collective Bargaining Committee first convened back in February 2014 to begin reviewing Member priorities, grievance history, contract issues and improvement goals and begin the process of writing a bargaining brief.

Development of the Local Bargaining brief was forced to occur in fits and starts over the next 14 months as the Central negotiating process became bogged down for various reasons and we waited to know what items in our local contract we would actually be able to negotiate under Ontario's new School Boards Collective Bargaining Act which mandates our two-stage process. After our Table Team was finally able to meet with the Board in May 2015, we managed to get in

three days of direct negotiations with their team in before the Central process began to fall off the rails again in June and Local negotiations throughout the Province were largely put on the back burner for the summer and into the fall.

Finally over four intensive bargaining dates with the Employer in November, December and January, we were able to reach tentative agreement on all outstanding contract language that would be agreeable to both sides of the table such that the Board's team is able to make recommendation for approval to the Board and our ESP team is able to make the same recommendation to our Members.

For getting us to this point, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the ESP Bargaining Table Team: Nancy Akehurst, Margaret Elson, Kelly Mills and Saul Mogelonsky. Each of them brought

See More Leif - page 4



Support Staff Rally in front of MPP Yasir Naqvi's office - November 2015

More Leif



Leif waving the flag at the Support Staff Rally, November 2015



Nancy at the Support Staff Rally, November 2015

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the insight of their full working experience with the OCDSB to the table, along with their dedication to striking a deal in the best interest of their fellow ESP members. I would also like to thank the two additional ESP members who made up the remainder of the full 2015 ESP Collective Bargaining Committee, Harry Smith and Judy Soifer, who showed truly honorable commitment to the process of developing the goals and bargaining positions for our

negotiations and the bargaining brief that would take us there, despite the many delays in the process.

We are hopefully approaching the end of a long and complicated saga in the history of the ESP Bargaining Unit, with our members voting either to accept the deal as offered or to send us back to the table to finish up the process to their satisfaction. One way or the other, we should soon be able to take a break from the insecurity

and anxiety many of us have felt over the last two years and be able to concentrate fully again on what we do best, providing the best education and school experience we can for Ottawa's public school students.

And to all of our ESP colleagues who work for the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA), we look forward to starting up your 2016 Contract Negotiations process in a few short months...



It doesn't matter how often you get knocked down; what matters is how often you get back up."

- Vince Lombardi (1913 - 1970)
American Football Coach

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Suggested by Shelly McQuillen

Ontario Labour Federation (OFL)



L to R: Patti Coates, Nancy Akehurst, OSSTF President Paul Elliott discuss strategy

An Interesting Week!

By Nancy Akehurst

In my role as the ESP President I take part in a lot of activities promoting labour. I am a delegate to the Ottawa District Labour Council (ODLC) and have taken part in political rallies and other events to promote better working conditions for our members.

From November 23 -27, 2016 I was lucky enough to be one of 6 OSSTF D25 delegates to the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Biannual Convention in Toronto, representing the ODLC. Fifteen hundred members of unions from across Ontario attended.

The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers in Ontario. These unions are from all sectors - the trades, education, steel, health care just to name a few. The convention is an opportunity for these unions to come together, hear each other's needs and make resolutions to take action to support each other.

This was an election year. You may have heard of Sid Ryan, who was the President of the OFL for many years. His tenure was

peppered with controversy and as a result there has been some discord within the OFL. He decided not to run for re-election, so the doors were open for a new executive team. The winning team was a slate called #FEDFORWARD, made up of Chris Buckley for President, Ahmad Gaied for Executive Vice President and Patti Coates for Secretary Treasurer. The election of Patti Coates was strongly supported by OSSTF as she has been a long time OSSTF support staff member as well a President of her Bargaining Unit in the Simcoe County District School Board. She will represent us well!

There were keynote addresses from speakers such as Hassan Yussuf, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (which represents unions from across Canada) and Tom Mulcair - leader of the federal NDP. One of the most poignant moments was after the speaker addressed the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The lights were dimmed and all delegates of the

convention used their cellphone flashlights to light the room, similar to what happens at our December 9 "Light the Night" events.

This was certainly a unique experience for me and one which I enjoyed for the most part.



D25 delegates Richard Brown, Jeff Adams and Nancy Akehurst

The Editor of *ESpecially Yours* is Margaret Elson. Comments, suggestions and contributions may be sent to her by GEM anytime. Next issue - April 2016

Status of Women and Human Rights Committee

Invites you to join our committee!

Next meeting: Feb. 4, 2016

4:30 PM

9 Corvus Court

Please RSVP to Beth.Wallace@d25.osstf.ca
by Feb 2nd, 4 pm



What makes you thrive? Come and find out!

Our PD Day is fast approaching! Over 200 members have registered so it is going to be a great day for networking and meeting new people. We will start the day with Jennifer Clark who is known for her lectures on Emotional Intelligence, Personal Leadership, Personal Integrity and then finish the day with a draw for two gift certificates from Best Buy. You must be in attendance in order to win. We have some new workshops this year such as NIA, which is a cardio-dance workout, and another about Mental Health.

I would like to thank the committee for their help in preparing this PD Day for our members. The committee and ESP Exec would also like to thank the Staff at Longfields-Davidson Heights for letting us take over their school.

Judy Soifer, Education Services Officer

Registration

8:00 to 9:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast - Foyer

Keynote speaker

9:00 to 10:15 - Auditorium

Break

10:15 to 10:30

Group activity

10:30 to 12:00 Group Activity

Lunch

12:00 to 1:00

Workshops

1:00 - 3:00

Door Prizes!

3:00 - 3:30 Wrap up – Auditorium



Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School, 149 Berrigan Drive, Nepean
Directions - <http://tinyurl.com/z7amcfy>



Everyone uses Google for random queries, but it's way more powerful than a traditional search engine.

Try this trick: exclude certain words from a google search by adding a minus sign (-) followed by the words you want to exclude.

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Amir Ismail*

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Health and Safety – Everyone's Business



“My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She’s ninety-seven now, and we don’t know where the heck she is.”

— Ellen DeGeneres

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE ...



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