

The Ottawa-Carleton

The official newsletter of OSSTF D25 Teachers

December, 2014



Collective Bargaining Update

Chris Goodsir, Chief Negotiator, brings us up to speed regarding our current contract negotiations.

May 31, 2014

Delegates at the Special Meeting of the Provincial Assembly voted unanimously in favour of the following motion: Be it resolved during or subsequent to a period of strike by or lockout of a bargaining unit, a supplemental fee will be levied:

- The percentage amount and duration of the supplemental fee shall be submitted for approval to Provincial Council as recommended by the Provincial Executive;
- The supplemental fee shall be set to recover only the cost of the related strike or lockout;
- The supplemental fee shall be imposed on all members employed by public-funded school boards and the Provincial Schools Authority; and
- Notwithstanding the above, the supplemental fee will not be imposed on those who are/were on strike or locked out.

June 3, 2014

OSSTF issued notice to bargain.

August 13, 2014

The first meeting between the OSSTF provincial bargaining team and the “management” bargaining team (The Ontario Public School Boards’ Association and the Government of Ontario representatives).

September 2, 2014

The Provincial government and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board freezes movement on our salary grid in violation of the OSSTF Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Also, the OCDSB denies all VLAP request in violation of the OSSTF MOU.

September 22, 2014

A District Information Strike Meeting was held where our provincial Bargaining Strategy was discussed in detail.

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NEW CONTEST FOR OSSTF D25 TEACHERS!

Do you like money? Of course you do! Well, we’re not going to give out cold, hard cash, but we can do the next best thing: give out a bunch of gift certificates!

How to Enter

Simply e-mail the answer to the **Contest Question** to Andy Wilson at: andy.wilson@d25.osstf.ca. Please put “contest” in the subject heading. Please use your board e-mail account and identify which school you work at. Entries will be accepted until Dec. 31st, 2014.

Contest Question: Which two schools did the EFG’s Smart Money Tour visit in Ottawa?



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September 22 & 23, 2014

OSSTF D25 Teachers vote 89% in favour of a local strike mandate.

October 14, 2014

OSSTF made an application to the Ontario Relations Labour Board following four days of discussion where it became clear that an agreement was not going to be reached without OSSTF being forced to compromise its list of issues.

October 17, 2014:

89% of OSSTF teacher members voted in favour of a provincial strike mandate.

Late October—through November 2014

As part of the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) process, OSSTF continued to meet with the “management” team in order to reach an agreement and avoid litigation; however, it became obvious that a resolution was unattainable and that formal hearings at the OLRB will be required.

Where are we now?

Provincial and local bargaining can only commence once the Central Table Issues have been determined. This is a new process under the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act. We are extremely disappointed and concerned with the “expeditious” timelines set by the OLRB that will delay bargaining until May 2015, at the earliest. Our Provincial Executive will continue to explore all avenues to expedite this lengthy delay.

The overwhelming endorsement of strike mandates (89%) for local and provincial bargaining from our members sends a clear message that we are serious about reaching a fair and reasonable agreement.



OSSTF President, Paul Elliott, expects to get real improvements for our next contract.

Getting to Know Your Collective Agreement

Supervision Facts:

- Full-time teachers (FTE) may be assigned up to 50 half-period blocks (37.5 minutes) duties per school year and 40 blocks for department heads.
- Full-time teachers may be assigned up to a maximum of 22 half-period on-calls per school year.
- On-calls are included in the up to 50 maximum supervision blocks per school year.
- A monthly summary of on-calls should be posted each month.
- This works out to less than 3 half-period duties every 2 weeks.
- **Every teacher will perform duties** (all teachers should be on the supervision schedule).
- For Teacher-librarians, guidance teachers, and special education resource teachers, assigned supervisions may be assigned in their subject area.
- **Assignment of supervisions shall be equitable.**
- Duties should be spread out **evenly throughout** the school year.
- Supervisions cannot be administrative tasks.
- **On-call duties are to replace a teacher.**
- Part time teachers will have their duties pro-rated according to their FTE status.
- **Extra-curricular activities shall not be assigned to any teacher.**

Lunch and Prep Facts:

- Every full time teacher's timetable should include a **lunch period and a prep period**, as well as instructional periods or equivalent (e.g. Guidance)
- **Unless assigned a supervision duty, the preparation period shall be available to each teacher for preparation and marking.**
- **Every effort shall be made to limit the number of class preps for each teacher.**
- The lunch break shall be a minimum of **40 consecutive minutes every day**, free of any assigned duties.
- The lunch break must start after 10:00am and must either be concurrent with a student lunch period, or in the period immediately preceding or immediately following the student lunch period.

The Creeping Mandate of the Ontario College of Teachers

When the Ontario College of Teachers was created in 1996, its primary role was to regulate the teaching profession. Over time, the OCT has increased its mandate in a number of ways that have probably led to increases in membership fees paid by teachers. Mandate creep is a term used to define the changing role that the OCT has chosen to play in the province of Ontario. It is a role that has steadily been increasing over the last decade without any legislated change to its mandate or 'objects' as defined in the legislation that created it. I have compiled a list of the top ten activities the OCT is involved in that are outside its mandate.

Top 10 things the OCT does (arguably) outside its mandate:

10-Landlord

The OCT owns (or partly owns) a shiny building in downtown Toronto. That building is the second largest expense the OCT reports on after employee compensation.

9-Publisher

The OCT produces a glossy magazine that includes the greatly sought after 'blue pages' while also, in the College's own words, "providing for the ongoing education of members of the College". The blue pages are an understandable inclusion based on the mandate of the College. The provision for the "ongoing education of members of the College" was a role that was removed from the OCT's mandate by legislation when Dalton McGuinty cancelled the mandatory learning plan tracking for teachers.

8-Baby Show Propagandist

The OCT has been visiting GTA and London baby shows with a manned OCT booth which includes interactive tablets to get out the message of the Ontario College of Teachers. One needs only view the OCT's twitter feed to see this activity. They've also been visiting university career information shows and a Toronto private school information show.

7-Library

The OCT runs a mail-out lending library. Thinking of government austerity and the paucity of teaching books available in schools, this could be a good thing. I just don't feel it's necessarily something I want to pay for. As the OCT website says, you can return most materials for free with the enclosed Canada Post labels. It's not free. We're paying for the books and the postage.

6-Rewards Program

This is definitely one of the strangest issues of mandate creep. The OCT runs something called OCT Memberperks. It looks like an OCT copy of OSSTF's own Edvantage program. I'm sure this saves all members money, but someone must administer it.

5-OCT Membership App

Download this wonderful app for your iOS, Windows phone, or Android device. Seriously, does the OCT really need an App?

4-OCT Website

I can see the importance of the Public Register in the OCT mandate and how easily it can be accessed on the web. I'm always looking up my colleagues during my prep period. The website does however contain a great deal of information that is unrelated to the mandated role of the OCT. The website is also a repository for back issues of "The Standard", the OCT's e-newsletter for parents.

3-Umbrella under which to house all future and past teachers

The OCT has plans to reach out to retired teachers as well as teacher candidates. They already charge unemployed teachers the full membership fee. Why not go after the student teachers and the retirees too?

2-15+ Committees

Under the legislation, the OCT has the power to create as many committees as it sees fit. Four or five are mentioned in the legislation as being core committees. This has ballooned since 'creation' to over 15. Expenses are paid by members of the College of Teachers through their fees.

1-Disciplinarian and Advocate

In legislation, it is clear that the Ontario College of Teachers is to act as a disciplinarian for the profession and not as an advocate. As reported lately by the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the advocacy role that the OCT is taking on directly conflicts with the legislated role of the Ontario Teacher's Federation whose role it is to advocate for teachers. The OTF is supposed to advocate for us; the OCT is supposed to discipline and regulate us.

These ten examples of the OCT doing more than its mandate account for a large part of the membership fees that Ontario teachers are paying into this organization. This is an organization in which 14 of the councillors are appointed by the provincial government and 23 of which are elected by teachers representing different boards, languages, and regions. In many of these cases I don't see how the OCT is doing its duty to serve and protect the public interest.



No, it's not the Ministry of Love; this is the OCT's headquarters in Toronto.

Stephen Hoogenraad, Teacher, Nepean High School

Why the EdCamp Model Works: Professional Development Remixed

The room at the Confederation Education Center in Ottawa is buzzing. Teachers are rolling in with their Bridgehead coffee and their laptops. It's just after 9:00 a.m.

And it's a Saturday.

What might drive a teacher to give up a Saturday and come into school? It's simple: EdCamp.

We've all been there. Professional development days put on by our school, our department, or our school board. We've paid out of pocket to go to conferences, stayed nights in hotel rooms, and picked out workshops with impressive guest speakers. There are many similarities between these two events. Both PD Days and conferences are usually planned by organizers or sponsors. As a teacher, we go as a participant, pick workshops from a pre-planned schedule, and listen to experts throughout the day to improve our own professional learning.

Is there anything wrong with this method of learning? Probably not. Could there a better use of our time? Absolutely!

Educational research throughout time has shown us over and over again that the lecture model is not the most effective way of learning. Even Plutarch had the right idea when he said that "the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled". When our brains are being "filled" during professional development, when is there time for the fire to burn?

Educational juggernaut Grant Wiggins explains in a recent blog post what happened when a veteran teacher shadowed two high school students for two days. At the end of the two days, the teacher was exhausted. Other than walking between classes, the teacher reported that the students rarely moved or spoke. The teacher observed that this passive role in the classroom led students to be absorbing information but not often grappling with it.

Now rewind to your last PD session. How much time did you spend moving around? Was there ample time for discussion and collaboration? How would you rate your overall engagement?

Enter EdCamp, or sometimes called the Unconference. This professional development model leans largely on Constructivism, and perhaps even the unschooling movement of the 1970s. The key is that students learn from life/work experience, elective classes and social interaction. Students choose what they would like to learn about, and seek rich learning opportunities to answer their questions.

It doesn't cost anything to attend EdCamps. Educational stakeholders (including teachers, administrators, parents, board members, and anyone else interested) learn and share with others with like interests. By building your own professional learning network, you can



Participants create their own schedule based on their own interests, questions, and specialties.

access resources and information that you could never dream of finding on your own.

The most important part of EdCamp is that sessions are chosen, created, and run by the participants. The schedule is created that morning with participants sharing and organizing their areas of interest

Amy Bower, the co-organizer of Ottawa's 3rd EdCamp is a strong proponent for this professional development model. Her favourite part of planning is "providing educators with an amazing event of 'Choose-Your-Own-PD". As an attendee, she is "always learning something new, sharing and supporting others" in her professional learning network.

Similarly, Dan Callahan (the co-founder of the EdCamp model) saw something missing in the professional development he was attending. He wanted professional development to be led by educators focused on their specific, individual needs. During the first EdCamp, he witnessed how various educational stakeholders had the time to work together in a hands-on, collaborative way.

As an educator, PD days are most valuable to me when I can have conversations with my peers, pool resources, and experiment. While I understand and respect the need to review policy and board initiatives, I think that we can tackle these projects in a more organic way.

In the Achieving Excellence document, put out by the Ontario MOE, the following words are used on multiple occasions in reference to students - engaged, contributors, relevant learning experiences, collaboration, communication, problem solving. If we are supposed to be providing these opportunities for students to increase their learn-

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ing, then should we not model this during our own learning opportunities? It is unfortunate and insulting that educators are not afforded the chance to create their own professional development within working hours. Top-down system and administrative priorities usually take precedent over meaningful, engaging activities. As teachers, we already spend our evenings and weekends marking student work and prepping engaging lessons. Wouldn't it be nice to create our own learning opportunities, while getting paid to do so?

Nevertheless, even on Saturdays, EdCamp and other inquiry-based, participant-driven events are clearly working for Ottawa-area educators. Ottawa's own EdCamp is in its third year, and there are similar events held all over Ontario throughout the school year. I encourage you to check one out, and see the benefits of this professional development model for yourself.

Amanda Anderson, Teacher, OCDSB.

For more resources:

Storify of the 2014 Ottawa EdCamp (pictures and twitter feed)
<https://storify.com/ClassCollect/edcamp-ottawa-2014#publicize>

Grant Wiggins's article on student participation
<http://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2014/10/10/a-veteran-teacher-turned-coach-shadows-2-students-for-2-days-a-sobering-lesson-learned/>

Introduction to EdCamp
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/about-edcamp-unconference-history>



The Canadian Labour Congress' new "Retirement Security for Everyone!" campaign advocates for the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan as a way to extend defined-benefit pensions to all Canadians. Read more at: <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/retirement-security-for-everyone>



Many OSSTF members contribute to the annual United Way Ottawa fundraiser drive through direct payroll deductions—sometimes donating directly to the Education Foundation of Ottawa. Over the past five years, staff and students with the OCDSB have raised over \$1.4 million. For more information, visit: <http://www.ocdsb.ca/com/pship/Pages/UNITED-WAY.aspx>



OSSTF D25 supports United Way Ottawa.

On Oct. 28th, the Educators Financial Group's "Smart Money Tour" visited Glebe Collegiate and Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School. For more information about financial services from the OSSTF-owned Educators Financial Group, visit: <https://educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/>



Getting to Know GEM—Part 1: Keeping Private Information Private

As we all know, the OCDSB has made the transition to the newly minted “GEM” Email system. While this change has been a welcome upgrade over the old BEAM system, it hasn’t been without its share of growing pains. This will be the first in a series of articles designed to help members with the transition to GEM. In today’s article, I’ll give a basic overview of privacy in the new GEM system and how to sign in properly using your “@ocdsb” address.

A Public Mail System

Google is a massive and comprehensive system of apps, which has some terrific benefits. All members, however, need to remember that it is a system administered by the OCDSB. All emails, documents, calendars, bookmarks and settings are accessible by the board and should be treated as public. Any confidential, personal, or sensitive information should be kept out of this service, including OSSTF communication. This is similar to the BEAM system, which was administered by the OCDSB as well.

Signing In

To use Google Apps, you must sign in. To do this, visit google.com and click “sign in” in the upper right corner. Once you’re signed in, your email will appear to let you know which account you’ve signed in with.

You’ll see your email in the upper right hand corner when you’re signed in to Google. While signed in, you can access Google Apps by

clicking the number pad symbol beside your email.

Another option is to sign in to the Chrome Browser with your GEM account. This is done by clicking the menu, which appears as 3 bars beside the star in the search box. In the menu, click “sign in” and enter your Gmail account.

A Serious Privacy Note

When signed in, your history is logged as part of your profile. This includes browsing history and search history. If you want to keep your personal browsing private, **be very careful to log out of your GEM account and avoid logging in to Chrome Browser on a personal computer.** You can check any time by clicking on the menu- if it reads “signed in as” with your GEM account, be sure to click it and click “disconnect your Google Account”.

For an extra layer of privacy, you can do your browsing in an Incognito Window. You can do this by clicking the 3 line menu and selecting “New Incognito Window” or by hitting Ctrl+Shift+N. An Incognito Window will keep your browsing and search history off your Profile.

Coming Soon: Information about Gmail, Google Drive, Google Groups and more. Questions or suggestions for topics please feel free to email me at david.belcher@ocdsb.ca.

Dave Belcher, Teacher, West Carleton Secondary School.

From the News Desk

Merging education workers’ unions

At the last Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly, OSSTF D25 TBU brought forward a motion calling for the creation of a workgroup to analyze the question of merging education workers’ unions in Ontario; namely: OSSTF, ETFO, OECTA, and AEFO. The motion was passed and the workgroup was formed. Dan Maxwell, our bargaining unit and district President, is a member of the workgroup. The workgroup has begun its meetings and will report to Provincial Council in January. There is some precedent for such mergers in the past. The Canadian Energy and Paperworkers union merged with the Canadian Autoworkers to form Unifor. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) was formed in 1996 by merging the Federation of Women Teachers’ Associations of Ontario with the Ontario Public School Teachers’ Federation.

Our District Office

If all goes according to plan, our office on Jamie Ave. will soon be sold, and we will be moving to our new office on 9 Corvus Ct. in the new year.

OCDSB Trustee Elections

OSSTF D25 endorsed the following school board trustee candidates: Donna Blackburn, Theresa Kavanagh, Chris Ellis, Keith Penny, Shirley Seward, and Michael Urminsky. All but Michael Urminsky were elected.



The OC provides a forum for discussion and exchanging information on educational issues, but does not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of District 25 or OSSTF. Submissions from members including articles, letters, photographs, or drawings are always welcome. Submission from non-members will be considered. The OC Editorial Board reserves the right to publish and edit submissions.

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