



# Edition Eighteen

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**We invite comments, questions and submissions from members. Please feel free to contact us at:**

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This newsletter was produced by the Communications Committee of the Teachers' Bargaining Unit, District 18 OSSTF  
Editor: Evelyn Brown

*Teachers' Bargaining Unit, District 18, O.S.S.T.F./Upper Grand*

## Historic OSSTF Lobby Day at Queens Park

By Mac Howson

OSSTF history was made on March 27 as approximately 75 OSSTF members entered Queens Park to lobby MPPs about Educational issues. After several months of organizing by the provincial Political Action Committee, 46 MPPs accepted requests for interviews, and appointments were established for teams of 3 to 6 OSSTF representatives to meet with these MPPs from every party throughout the Queens Park complex. This exciting day represented the third phase in an 18 month political campaign leading up to the Provincial election in the fall.

This campaign, the *STUDENTS FIRST PLAN*, was introduced at the 2006 Summer Leadership Conference. This 4 point plan emphasizes: 1) More course options 2) Smaller classes 3) Support programs and 4) Positive environment. Phase one of the *STUDENTS FIRST PLAN* was the distribution of the details and suggestions for implementation to all MPPs in the fall of 2006. Phase two was a presentation of the Plan to all of the Boards of Education in Ontario. All trustees and senior administration in the Upper Grand DSB received the information package at the February 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. They were encouraged to

keep this information in the forefront of their educational and political activities during the next few months. The information and action plan was positively received.

For this third phase, I was thrilled to participate within the actual building because all of my previous experiences at Queens Park had occurred on the front lawn, usually while I was waving a banner and shouting protest chants with a few thousand of my closest colleagues. This interior, face to face approach was different. We had been briefed on the appropriate protocol and information that could be presented directly and in a positive, productive manner.

I met with four MPPs throughout the day including the local notables Liz Sandals and Ted Arnott. (John Tory was interviewed by a larger team separately.) Liz was interviewed with Ted McMeekin, the other Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, by a team of six OSSTF members. The concerns about the funding formula, and inadequacies in the number of support staff were the main topic of conversation there. Another interview brought me to Ted Arnott's office. This was personally challenging because Ted was a member of the Harris Common Sense Revolution.

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## Historic OSSTF Lobby Day at Queens Park - continued

The simmering disgust that I still feel about this was just under the surface, but I wanted to stay positive. Because the Conservative Party has not yet released their Education platform, we focused on the possibility of considering some of the OSSTF ideas in their discussions.

In debriefing the day's activities with others, there was a positive sense that this had been very worthwhile. Future actions are planned for Education Week and the weeks leading up to the election.

### My First Year at AMPA

For the first four days of March break, I attended the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) as a delegate for the Teachers' Bargaining Unit of District 18. While you might think I'm crazy for sitting around and debating in a hotel in Toronto with other teachers for four days of my winter break, I actually found the whole experience very interesting. It was amazing to see so many education workers in one room and to know that they were all interested in protecting public education.

One of the impressive aspects of the conference was the professionalism and efficiency with which the meetings were orchestrated. More than five hundred members debated, questioned, and voted on an over-whelming number of motions that affect our constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures. At AMPA, we put policies in place to improve our working conditions and to maintain the integrity of high school credits and diplomas. We also discussed contentious issues such as zero mark policies, the use of cell phones in schools, safe working conditions, Bill 52 and dealing with harassment of our members.

I must admit that, at times, I was lost. The process of moving through motions, amendments, and amendments to amendments can become confusing. Luckily, you need only ask the person sitting beside you for help, and he/she will be glad to put you back on track. At times the debate was heated and at one point, the membership refused to vote on a motion demanding clarification from our Federation lawyers. It was reassuring to see that delegates seriously considered issues before voting.

As well as dealing with Federation business, we heard a fascinating and compelling speech by Maude Barlow who reported frightening information about depleting water resources. We also heard from Kathleen Wynne, the Minister of Education. Teachers and other education workers questioned her and challenged her to change the funding formula and also demanded the repeal of Bill 52. In addition, we saw the presentation of the Marion Drysdale Awards to some extremely talented and deserving students from across the province.

With our heavy workloads and busy schedules, it's easy to justify not attending a meeting; I urge you to think again. This year at AMPA, the results for our Provincial Executive Vice President was within five votes. Because of this, I feel even more strongly about the importance of attending all OSSTF meetings. At AMPA, I felt that my vote did count. I'm glad I attended, and I would encourage others to do so in the future.

Clare Richards - TBU Vice President and teacher at John F. Ross C.V.I.

## Spring 2007 – Rain, Snow and Secondary Staffing

By : Paul Rawlinson  
Chief Negotiator-TBU

### **Collective Bargaining Committee:**

School Reps. will continue to meet (April 12<sup>th</sup>) to review local and provincial priorities for negotiations in 2008. A member survey will be conducted in the fall of 2007 to establish the key priorities for our members and to align those goals with provincial priorities. If you have concerns or suggestions share them with your branch rep. so they can be brought to our committee for discussion. Member input is always welcome... not just at survey time!

### **Grievances:**

Although several grievances are usually ongoing between the Board and the Federation to provide clarification on issues such as contract language, an important arbitration hearing will likely take place later this month. The case involves the transfer of accumulated sick leave credits to Upper Grand with teachers hired from outside of Ontario.

### **Staffing:**

With the completion of the PAR renewal/hiring process and the deadline for teachers requesting transfers and changes to contract time passing secondary staffing can formally begin. Based on early projections it appears that Board wide enrolment will remain stable for 2007-08. This means at the secondary level a small decrease in the ADE (Average Daily Enrolment) will not lead to any layoffs of teachers

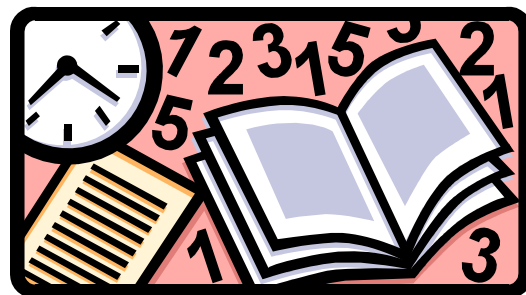
system wide. Individual schools may find they are overstaffed slightly due to their individual enrolment changes, but transfers and retirements still to come will hopefully help resolve any surplus-to-school situations. We will update our members on a regular basis throughout the spring as the process unfolds.

## Treasurer's Report

By : Paul Rawlinson  
Treasurer-TBU

Motions for the TBU Annual General Meeting should be posted in your school. I have put forward two motions for 2007-08:

1. The TBU levy will remain the same for next year (2007-08) as it was this past year (2006-07). The TBU levy would therefore remain at \$11.20 per member for the year.
2. The amount of time release for Federation personnel in the TBU remains the same for 2007-08 as in 2006-07.



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Contribute to the newsletter. Submit articles, letters, poems, ideas for contests, etc.

This is an opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions with teachers across the District.



## **OSSTF** **Family Bursaries** **2007**

This program is designed to financially assist children of OSSTF members to enter post secondary educational programs. Application forms and information are available at [www.osstf.on.ca/services](http://www.osstf.on.ca/services). The deadline is April 30, 2007.

### **Benefits information**

Recently, new benefit limits were added to our plan. The hard copy booklets containing the new information will be available soon. If you want to see the new limits to various claims now, go to [www.otip.com/onlinebenefits](http://www.otip.com/onlinebenefits) login L7018-902-AI Password 4621278

## **OSSTF Dates** **to Remember**

April 18  
OMERS Retirement Planning workshop

April 26  
TBU Annual General Meeting,  
Belwood Community Hall

May 15  
District Annual General Meeting  
St. Joseph's School - Fergus

May 30  
Retirement / Awards Dinner,  
Wellington County Museum

### **Benefit or L.T.D Questions:**

Contact Benefits Officer –  
[jackmiddelkoop@d18osstf.com](mailto:jackmiddelkoop@d18osstf.com)

### **HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS**

Contact OTIP for Member Benefit  
Inquiries at 1-866-783-6847 or  
[www.otipservices.com](http://www.otipservices.com) or  
[jackmiddelkoop@d18osstf.com](mailto:jackmiddelkoop@d18osstf.com)

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Warren Shepell  
1-800-387-4765

confidential counseling and  
information services for  
employees and their families

You can view this newsletter on our District  
Website. Go to [www.d18osstf.com](http://www.d18osstf.com)