



# Edition Eighteen

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Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this document, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation or the Teachers' Bargaining Unit, District 18.

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

OSSTF District 18  
265 Bridge Street  
Unit 1  
Fergus, Ontario  
N1M 1T7  
Phone (519)843-4043  
Or 1-866-264-4425  
Fax (519)843-6260

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*

## Bill 212

By Mac Howson

### Safe and Inclusive Schools

Bill 212 and its affect on teachers has been anticipated in the several months leading up to its implementation at the start of this semester. The Bill seemed as if it was being implemented in a hurry. It was. The board in consultation with many local stakeholders, including OSSTF, met several times throughout the fall and January in order to make the transition as smooth as possible. Principals and VPs received their in-service just days before the deadline. There were many questions and concerns brought forward by the principals at that time. Most were explained by several of the Board members while others may take awhile to unfold.

Included in the whole Bill 212 package are outlines for a School Code of Conduct, Character Education and Policies and Procedures on Discipline. These are some of the changes.

Administration "may consider" instead of "must" suspend or expel students in several clearly defined circumstances. This places responsibility on the school administration to consider 'mitigating factors'. The concern here is the possibility of

inconsistencies or perceived inconsistencies of discipline by students and staff.

A major change in thinking from all levels of administration, parents and staff will be expected. Although we already use 'progressive discipline' often and effectively, this is now the expected norm, which helps to facilitate the learning process. As mentioned at the in-service, by following this it is hoped and expected that the number of suspensions will actually decrease.

A serious concern for teachers is that there 'must' be a plan and program for a suspended student. Initially this caused OSSTF a lot of concern. Who was going to do this and when? The board has hired staff, from ministry allocated funds, to run a program for longer term suspensions. Basically there is no real difference to what we already are doing as teachers because the program for short term suspensions is at our professional discretion. We can, according to our administration, "mediate the absence" similar to a student illness. We know that homework does not parallel the value of attending class but, for example, reassigning missed work does constitute a program and in most cases is in the best interest of the student.

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## Bill 212 - continued

The teacher workload of following through with this should be no different than it was before the Bill's introduction. The administration will contact you personally, and ask for work that you deem to be appropriate for that pupil. This does not need to be extensive but must be appropriate in your professional judgment. OSSTF will continue to monitor the implementation of Bill 212. Let your Branch Rep know if you have questions or concerns.

### **Dates to Remember:**

TBU AGM April 9, 2008  
District AGM May 15, 2008  
Retirement Banquet May 28, 2008



## **Welcome to Semester II .... At Last!!**

Paul Rawlinson  
Chief Negotiator-TBU

### **Attendance Management Program (ASP)**

The Board has unilaterally begun its Attendance Management Program (ASP) at two pilot schools. Teachers at GCVI and JF Ross may be required to attend an interview with their Principal regarding attendance patterns if their absences exceed the threshold. The Board will be using attendance information provided by SEMS from semester I. The Federation continues to oppose this initiative despite attending several consultations with the Board. Provincial Office continues to advise us that

many Boards implemented similar programs sometime ago and that our best course of action was to influence the policy in favour of teachers as it was formulated, to ensure representation of members at interviews and to maintain the right to file grievances should any disciplinary action be taken against a member. Ensuring a members privacy and access to their accumulated sick leave is paramount. Mac and I will have visited GCVI and Ross the week of February 11th to further brief teachers in the pilot schools. Obviously, attendance Management will be a significant issue in negotiations in 2008.

### **Inclement Weather**

Again bad weather raised lots of questions regarding time lines and responsibilities during exams. In most cases the Board simply delayed the schools schedules by a day each time buses were cancelled. In some schools, time lines were extended for mark entry as teachers were not able to access school computers on no bus days although they ended up with additional days for marking. We will continue to protect the limited but precious marking and turn around available to teachers by participating on the Board's calendar committee and reviewing provision in the collective agreement.

### **Pay Cheque Changes**

You will all have realized that your net pay cheques were smaller with the return of deductions like CPP and EI. However, the good news is that a 1.4 % pay increase is arriving as per the collective agreement. Your pay increase will be effective on your March 4th pay.

## **Increases in Time / Transfer Requests/ Leaves**

A reminder that March 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit applications to your Principal for a change to your contract time or a change in location for next school year. Board forms are available on the Board website or through your Office Co-ordinator.

Teachers are reminded when applying for transfers that the more specific a request is the more difficult it will be to accommodate. Also, should a teacher turn down a transfer offer they would remain on the list for other possible transfers.

Requests for Leaves of Absences are also due March 15<sup>th</sup>. Types of Leaves include the following as outlined in the collective agreement:

### **Fixed Term Leaves:**

Unpaid for up to one academic year in duration. Teachers return to same school in a similar position for which they are qualified.

### **Teacher Funded Leaves**

Teachers may take one (1) year off in a five (5) year cycle. Teachers would receive 80% of their pay in each of the 5 years.

### **Special Leave at Reduced Salary:**

Teachers may take a full semester leave and receive 50% of their pay. On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of their leave they would receive an additional 10% of their salary.

Members are reminded to check the collective agreement for specific criteria and terms for each type of leave.

## **E Learning**

The Board has launched a limited E Learning program. A small number of teachers have stepped forward to deliver a handful of credits to students from around the province electronically. The Federation has been working closely with the Board to avoid any pitfalls implementing the program especially in relationship to teacher workload, class size and technology. E Learning will be yet another new topic requiring our attention at the bargaining table in 2008.

## **Negotiations**

Preparations are occurring at both the provincial and local level for contract negotiations to begin. Our current collective agreement expires August 31, 2008. A team of OSSTF Provincial Executive members have begun discussions with other educational affiliates and the provincial government to identify key issues for upcoming negotiations and to lay the groundwork for successful local negotiations. Locally, your CBC Committee has begun the process of formulating our Brief for negotiations following completion of our Member Survey. If you have questions or concerns please feel free to approach your Branch Rep or contact me at the District Office.

“Experience may not be worth what it costs but we can’t seem to get it for any less.”

“47% of all statistics are useless”

## *Edition Eighteen*

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.



## **SHOULDER TO SHOULDER CONFERENCE IN TORONTO – NOVEMBER**

**By Bev Hitchman**

The drive down to Toronto was exciting in the driving rain and dark. Then I hit something and had a flat tire. Whew! It was worth it, though. The conference was one of the best I have ever attended. I signed up to take a conference on teaching math (I have taught math for 35 years). The message was loud and clear that we need to make sure the students know we care.

A seminar on racism seemed interesting, but the speaker spoke as though the only racism was against blacks. My elbow partner was a very interesting black woman who was offended by the fact that the speaker never mentioned any race other than blacks. I understood. If I had known more about the proposal for an all-black school, I might have asked more questions. It certainly was interesting to talk to my elbow partner about the situation. Of course, conferences are often best if we meet and discuss education with colleagues who offer a different point of view on the current issues.

The most interesting speaker was Heather Clayton. She spoke to the whole crowd about differentiated instruction. Then she gave seminars for another 4 hours about differentiated instruction. It certainly convinced all of us of the value of differentiated instruction as she showed us a wide variety of strategies to keep the interest of all of the students in the classroom. We were up and around the room, then called back to our seats

by the music ‘Come together... right now’.

There were 2 important uses of her message. One was that we need to teach to ALL of the learning styles. We also need to evaluate in all of the methods possible in order to see if students are actually capable even though our usual evaluation methods are not finding those capabilities.

Another is that we need to tell students that they must continue to learn as they age.

Now, when I teach and want to do group or partner work, I use one of Heather’s techniques. I make up a page of an appointment book and have the students make 5 appointments with one other person. There are numbers down the side. I take a small photocopy of all the appointment pages and when it is time to do pair-share, I say “Find your appointment # 4 and .... “

The students love the time spent finding their appointments and all of them made up an appointment card for the students who were absent. They never complained at all about doing group work.

I also will use a wider variety of evaluation methods from presentations to assignments and investigations. I will also make up my exams and tests with a wider variety of question types from multiple choice to matching to ‘fill in the blank’ and long solution.

In conclusion, I recommend the conference for the advantages of learning best practices of teaching and classroom-tested techniques to help your students learn better.

### **HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS**

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