



Edition Eighteen

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

Political Participation is Professionally Essential

By Mac Howson

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:

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It was only a few short months ago that we participated in two elections. The Ontario College of Teachers election and Municipal election seemed to come and go with the typical posturing of candidates, proliferation of partisan promotional signs and, of course, the rhetoric. These elections were, to some people, interesting or entertaining or relevant, but to a significant number of people the elections were just not exciting enough to motivate them into the relatively simple act of casting a VOTE.

Here and now I don't want to speculate as to why people don't participate but I do want to emphasize the necessity to VOTE in this election as, at the very least, our professional obligation.

I can recall ten years ago, in October 1997, marching up University Avenue with tens of thousands of colleagues and friends in one of the largest demonstrations in Canadian history. Without recalling in detail the revulsion and abuse that teachers and the Educational Sector as a whole experienced, I have to remind everyone that many of the Harris faithful still exist and are running in

this election. Tory himself is openly debating the restructuring of Public Education. We cannot allow the destruction by that party to occur again. It will be at our professional and personal expense.

Additionally, we have the historical opportunity to improve the electoral system in Ontario. It has been OSSTF policy for several years to support Proportional Representation for elections. We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to actualize our policy through our support of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) referendum. To pass, the referendum must achieve 60 percent of the VOTE overall plus at least 50 percent of the VOTE in 60 percent of the ridings. This is a tall order and it is critical that our District 18 members support and VOTE for this, even in ridings where Tories have won easily for decades. You cannot stay at home for this election and assume that your VOTE does not count. It does. We all stand to benefit directly. The students stand to benefit even more.

There will be a lot of further information forwarded to you as the election draws near. Please consider it and participate with your VOTE.

Summer Draws to an End: Welcome to 2007-08!!

By Paul Rawlinson, Chief Negotiator-TBU

Without relying on too many clichés welcome to another exciting and busy school year. I would like to extend a special welcome to new secondary teachers who we had the chance to meet with on August 30th as part of the NTIP.

This year will again provide familiar issues but require us to deal with new issues as well. The familiar issues will be the annual campaign to sign up new contract teachers and some procrastinators for their RRSP Retirement Gratuity. Application packages and instructions were covered at the NTIP orientation but all impacted members are encouraged to approach their branch CBC Rep with specific questions or contact the District Office. New challenges for this year will be the October 10th provincial election and the preparation for negotiations when our current collective agreement expires August 31, 2008. Later this fall all members will be asked to complete a Negotiations Priorities Survey for the CBC Committee who will be working throughout the year to prepare our negotiating brief. Negotiations may begin next spring but will certainly run into the fall of 2008 due to timelines mandated in legislation.

A thank you to members of In-School Staffing Committees in each school, which include Branch Federation Personnel, that have worked with their school administrations to create supervision schedules that meet the needs of their school, students and staff. Once again supervision duties are reduced from last year so that each full time contract teacher should perform the equivalent of 64 half periods (37.5 minutes) maximum of additional duties which includes a maximum of 25 on-calls. Also, In-School Staffing Committees should have discussed class size issues with their school administration and have been involved in the

distribution of the new teaching sections that were made available to several schools in mid September, well ahead of the deadlines in the collective agreement.

As the semester progresses it is my intention to visit all of our branches at various times to meet with members and answer any questions first hand. I look forward to discussing issues that are most pressing on the “front lines” in each school with you at that time. In the mean time please don’t hesitate to contact me at the District Office or your branch CBC Rep who can also share any concerns or questions at our regular meetings.



A Benefits Reminder

You will find a copy of the Group Benefit Plan Booklet on the District 18 website. To access forms of any kind you can go to the website or www.otipservices.com. If you have any questions or difficulties with claiming benefits over the summer please feel free to email me at jmiddelkoop@d18osstf.com and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Jack Middelkoop
TBU Benefits Officer

TBU on Solid Financial Ground for 2007-08

By Paul Rawlinson, TBU Treasurer

As our first TBU Executive /Council meeting is scheduled to meet on September 27th. I am pleased to report that for school year 2006-07 the Teachers Bargaining Unit has prudently managed its resources resulting in a budget surplus according to preliminary calculations. On September 27th a final report will be presented to the TBU Council summarizing our finances at our year end June 30, 2007 and our new budget for 2007-08 will be presented.

Members should have noticed that the once a year OSSTF deductions for the Teachers Bargaining Unit levy (\$11.20) and the District levy (\$10.00) were deducted. Both levies remain unchanged from the previous year. In particular, the Teachers Bargaining Unit levy, which is used to fund time release for bargaining unit personnel specifically, remains one of the lowest in the province.

Recently, TBU President Mac Howson returned from the OSSTF Leadership with additional good news... and funds. Provincial office has provided additional funds to us for political action to be used to support appropriate candidates in local ridings in the October 10th provincial election. As a result, we should not see any additional strain on our local finances beyond the ordinary annual expenditures.

Thank you for your continuing support. I look forward to updating members on our financial situation throughout the year via branch Presidents/Vice Presidents who receive regular statements at TBU Council meetings.

Credit Integrity Symposium

On December 6, OSSTF District 18 will be sending 2 delegates to attend this symposium in Toronto. It is encouraged that at least one member of the District delegation have extensive background in Student Success Initiatives in Upper Grand. Other participants will include many federation affiliates, People for Education, CODE, OPSPA, OPC among many other education sector interest groups.

If you are interested in attending as a delegate or are interested in offering your experience and information to delegates, please call the district office for further information.

Thinking of Retiring?

This years retirement planning workshop will be held at the District Office on November 26 at 5:30 PM. Ruth Kirkham, our Provincial OSSTF pension officer will walk you through the available resources. Light refreshments will be served. Call the office to reserve your spot. Also if you are thinking of retiring this year you can pick up a retirement kit from your Branch President or call the office and one will be forwarded to you. This kit will take you through the various steps in this important decision.

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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.



CERTIFICATION REMINDER

Because of the changes in certification requirements made by Provincial OSSTF last spring, many Teachers applied for a new certification rating. This created a lengthy backlog of requests. Waiting periods from last spring expanded up to 18 weeks. We are assured by the Certification Department that this waiting period is significantly less now but remains lengthy.

If you have applied and when you get your new rating, forward a copy to the Human Resources Department at the Board Office. Your patience in this positive change over is appreciated. Once again, if you have not had a new certification rating for quite awhile, it is in your best interest to apply. Go to www.osstf.on.ca and download forms from certification.

Many Upper Grand teachers have already benefited from these revised requirements.

HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS

Contact OTIP for Member Benefit
Inquiries at 1-866-783-6847 or
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