

Voice

ETFO 10 FEED



ETFO at 10



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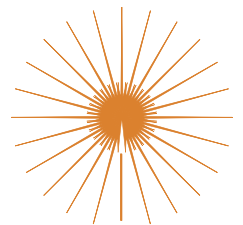
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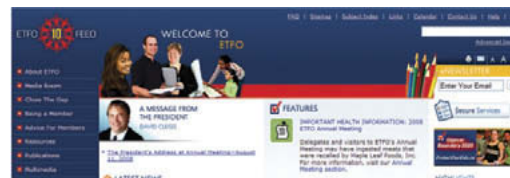
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Voice

Celebrating 10 Years of ETFO

This year Canada's largest teacher federation celebrates its 10th anniversary.

ETFO was created when the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF) came together in 1998 to create one federation for public elementary school teachers.

How ETFO has changed and grown in those 10 years is the focus of this special issue of *Voice*. The articles in this issue outline the developments in the services ETFO provides to members.

In the year ETFO was formed, Vera Teschow began teaching. She describes her journey in education that finds her today back where she started – in a primary classroom but one that's not quite the same as the one she first entered. (Page 25)

To mark the anniversary ETFO has produced a new book on the history of public elementary school teachers and their federations. Barbara Richter's *It's Elementary* pulls together the four chapters published as inserts in *Voice* in 2006-2007 and adds additional material about the role of women leaders in education. The book is available from shopETFO (shopETFO.etfo.ca.) ETFO has also produced a history poster. Look for it in your school.

The changes in *Voice* mirror the development of the federation. The contributions of ETFO members and staff have ensured the magazine's continuing success and relevance. I also want to acknowledge our designers, Ofelia Infante and Juan Escareno of Artifact Graphic Design, and the work they have done for ETFO during the past 10 years.

Ten years in, ETFO members have a great deal to be proud of. It's a time to celebrate both your federation and the work you do.

Johanna Brand
JOHANNA BRAND



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President - David Clegg, York Region

First Vice-President - Sam Hammond, Hamilton-Wentworth

Vice-President - Hilda Watkins, Greater Essex

Vice-President - Barbara Burkett, Ontario North East

OTF Table Officer - Hilda Watkins, Greater Essex

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Rachel Gencey, Durham

Shelly Jan, Peel Occasional Teachers

Martin Long, Elementary Teachers of Toronto

Mike Lumb, Limestone

Rian McLaughlin, Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teachers

Deb St. Amant, Kawartha Pine Ridge

Susan Swackhammer, Grand Erie

Maureen Weinberger, Halton

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letters to the editor

Re: Poverty and Learning

(June 2008)

THANK YOU very much for this issue. I appreciated the balance of academic research, data, and theory with personal teaching stories. As a teacher in the inner city, I understand that however grim the statistics may appear, it is the individual (sometimes) day-to-day victories that we cherish and celebrate.

Of special mention was Ainsworth Morgan's article, "Beating the Odds." It was a relief to read words of honesty and hope: words of honesty because, as Mr. Morgan writes, teaching does sometimes leave us feeling "depleted and void of answers" and despite our best efforts, our sacrifice of personal time, money and emotions, we are not "guaranteed success"; words of hope, because, unlike a pep talk from one's administrator or minister of education, they were coming from a former student who has lived what he wrote.

I do believe it is every teacher's (secret) wish to be remembered in the hearts of students. If not by all, then at least by one or two! That Mr. Morgan still holds dear his teachers from elementary school and remains in touch with them some 20 years later is truly a testament to the teaching profession.

Unlike some other issues of *Voice*, I will keep this one on my coffee table. Whenever someone asks what I do or what it's like to work in the inner city, I will give them this issue.

Hilary Hahn

ETFO member, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

I WANTED to let you know how much I enjoyed reading the June 2008 issue of *Voice on Poverty and Learning*! I found it to be one issue that I read from front to back in a few hours. Congratulations to ETFO on putting together an excellent magazine! The ETFO provincial staff, members, and schools who have worked on this project should be commended for their efforts to make a difference for children and their families. I know that many members in the field appreciate your efforts to highlight poverty and ways to address it.

Adam Peer

ETFO member, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Re: "Math that Matters,"

Reviews (April 2008)

SELDOM HAS news about a so-called teaching resource invoked such an overwhelming feeling of fear and trepidation in me as has this review of David Stocker's *Math That Matters*.

Topics such as racial profiling, workers' rights, and exploitation of the environment are all highly politically charged and, dare I say, subject to scrutiny and fair-mindedness, which, on first glance, appear to be missing from Stocker's narrow leftist agenda. It's one thing to "spark discussion" among students, quite another to inculcate one's personal biases. In my view, this book has no place in an elementary classroom, where grade 6, 7, and 8 students would benefit more from balanced objective instruction than from misguided social engineering. If that means embracing what Stocker derisively terms the "pizza party math" of current resources, then make mine pepperoni and mushroom.

Michael Boyko

ETFO member, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local



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DAVID CLEGG - President, ETFO

ETFO at 10: Celebrating achievements

This year ETFO celebrates its 10th anniversary. It's an opportunity for all of us to reflect on how far we have come since this federation was founded.

The success we have enjoyed is the result of the collective efforts of hundreds of individuals who have served as local leaders – from stewards in schools to local presidents. It has occurred because hundreds of members helped deliver professional training to their colleagues, while still others made valuable contributions as provincial committee members. It is the involvement and support of ETFO members like you that has moved this federation forward.

ETFO was founded in an era when public education, teachers, and teacher federations were under attack. The Conservative government denigrated our professionalism and undervalued our work. Cuts to funding undermined education throughout the province. Not surprisingly there was considerable strife in the education sector in those years. In the fall of 1997, months before ETFO held its first annual meeting, teachers across the province staged a two-week protest at Queen's Park.

In 1998, the year ETFO was founded, I was the chief negotiator for the York Region Teacher Local when we were locked out, and subsequently went on strike in order to reach a fair collective agreement. That year there were also strikes in Simcoe County and Waterloo Region, and there were numerous locals where work-to-rule was the order of the day.

At the same time Phyllis Benedict, our first president, was taking on the challenges of bringing together members of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School

Teachers' Federation (OPSTF). These two organizations had a long history of working to improve the lot of public elementary teachers in this province, a legacy that ETFO has proudly continued.

Under the leadership of our second president, Emily Noble, ETFO became active in the broader labour movement, affiliating with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. It was also under her leadership that we negotiated the historic 2004-2008 provincial framework agreement, which provided significant improvements in members' working conditions. This included 200 minutes of preparation time and limits on supervision duties for teachers, as well as timetabling provisions for occasional teachers.

Today we are once again immersed in contract negotiations. We have again set a goal that challenges us all to extend our reach: our campaign to *Close the Gap* is about nothing less than achieving equal funding for elementary education. When we achieve that goal we will have obtained, once and for all, recognition of our important role in shaping the citizens of tomorrow.

We have achieved much in the past 10 years. We are now the largest teacher federation in Canada. Together, we can improve the learning conditions for students and working conditions for elementary teachers in Ontario. It will be our legacy to those who follow.



GENE LEWIS - General Secretary, ETFO



ETFO at 10: We're not there yet

Many ETFO members have fond memories of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF), the two organizations that came together in 1998 to create ETFO. But for about half of all our members ETFO is the only teacher federation they have known. That alone speaks to the tremendous change that we have witnessed in the past 10 years. ETFO has grown in influence and in sophistication. Our membership has increased and we are the number one teacher federation in Canada.

Some members lived through and remember vividly the turmoil of the years Mike Harris and Ernie Eves led Conservative governments in this province and their attacks on teachers and their federations. For others these are events from a history book, something they did not personally experience.

But even our newest members will appreciate the change in climate that occurred in 2003. With the election of the McGuinty Liberals we have experienced a government with a more positive commitment to the social and educational welfare of Ontario citizens. Today teachers and their federations are seen as partners in the education system. The government has provided increased resources for education and has shown its commitment to teacher professional development.

But we're not there yet.

The work that elementary teachers do is critical to the well-being of our society and the economic success of our province. We are shaping the citizens of tomorrow.

Research shows that it is children's learning experience in the early years that sets the foun-

dation for lifelong academic success. That's one reason the government has committed to creating full-day Kindergarten programs beginning in 2010. ETFO is working hard to ensure that the government understands these programs must be of the highest quality: they must be located in schools and staffed by fully qualified teachers.

But even though the importance of early learning is widely recognized, when it comes to funding elementary schools still come second in our education system: the funding the government provides annually for each elementary student is some \$700 a year less than what it provides for secondary students.

This is a historical inequity. For years it was assumed that secondary education was more important and deserved higher levels of financial support. What we know today about the importance of early learning should make increased support for elementary education a given. It is not something we should have to fight for.

Because we're not there yet, ETFO's priority in this round of bargaining is to *Close the Gap* in funding. We intend to obtain learning conditions for students and working conditions for members that are the best they can be, and certainly no less than those in the province's secondary schools.

The federations that preceded ETFO had a long proud history of fighting for elementary teachers and for public education. ETFO has continued that tradition. Our challenge now is to ensure that elementary teachers are respected and fully equal partners in the public education system.



ETFO Aims

Photos: Anne de Haas

CLOSE the GAP

ETFO President David Clegg

told delegates to the 2008 annual meeting that the federation is determined to *Close the Gap* in this round of collective bargaining. Clegg noted that the government provides \$711 per pupil per year less for elementary students than it does for secondary students, an unjustified discrepancy.

ETFO's vision is to "build an education system that would be the envy of the world and would clearly establish Ontario as the leader in the intellectual economy," Clegg stated. "Since elementary education lays the groundwork for all future success in learning and work, it should be self-evident that it makes little sense to shortchange elementary education.

"There is no rational reason for the current underfunding of elementary education . . . We have to ask employers at both the local and provincial level why they believe that our students are worth less. We have to ask why they believe elementary teachers do not deserve the same working conditions as secondary teachers."

Clegg also warned that "no long-term collective agreement will be signed that does not address those goals."



During and after the 2008 Annual Meeting, President David Clegg outlined ETFO's position as he conducted numerous interviews with radio, television, and newspaper reporters.



Kathleen Wynne, Ontario's minister of education told annual meeting delegates that ETFO and the government need to continue to discuss how best to measure the equality or lack of it between elementary and secondary schools. She reminded delegates about the positive changes, including increased funding, that her government has put in place in the last five years and noted that "there is now a strong constructive relationship" between teacher federations and the government. "We share concerns and belief in public education," Wynne said. "Our conflicts are not intractable." But, she added, "Peace cannot come at any cost."

CLOSE the GAP

to Close the Gap

Howard Hampton made his last appearance at an ETFO annual meeting as leader of the New Democratic Party. Hampton, who announced in June that he is stepping aside, criticized the Liberal government's handling of education saying, "It's time to stop talking about being a little bit better than [the Conservatives] and start talking about the needs of kids and parents." Hampton stated that in its five years in power the government has had time to fix the funding formula and do away with standardized testing. Attention needs to be paid to students with special needs, to providing full-time teacher librarians and other specialists, and to addressing the roots of violence in schools, he said.



Howard Hampton made his last appearance as leader of the New Democratic Party.



ETFO Gift Supports Teacher Training

Dr. Jean Augustine (centre) is shown with Alice Pitt, dean of education at York University, and ETFO President David Clegg, as she accepts ETFO's \$100,000 donation to support the Jean Augustine Chair in Education in the New Urban Environment. The purpose of the endowment is to study social justice and equity issues such as homelessness, racism, poverty, and violence, and their impact on the academic performance of urban students.

Dr. Augustine, Ontario's Fairness Commissioner, outlined to delegates some of the challenges facing foreign-trained professionals in Canada who are unable to find work in their field. The Fairness Commission works with regulatory bodies to ensure that the credentials of internationally trained professionals are evaluated fairly and transparently.

"We all have to recognize our responsibility to build the kind of Canada that we want," Dr. Augustine told delegates. A former teacher and elementary school principal, Dr. Augustine was an MP for 12 years, and served as the minister of state for multiculturalism and women's issues from 2002 to 2004.

Community Activists Honoured



Heather Menezes received the **Humanitarian Award for an ETFO Member**. Menezes, a Toronto teacher, founded Horizons Children's Centre to help orphans and street children in Sandema, Builsa District, Ghana. More information about the centre is available at horizonscentre.org.



Carrie Sinkowski was recognized for her community work in sexual violence prevention, anti-poverty activism, and community development. She is a member of RISE (Rural Initiative for Social Equity), and a founder of BUMP (Busting Up Myths about Poverty) and Spotlight on Poverty. Sinkowski received the award for **Women Working in Social Activism**.



The Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home and School Associations created Walk-In Closets to provide clothing, toiletries, school supplies, and food for students and families in need. They have raised funds to help high school students living on their own, and have also set up a Graduation Walk-In Closet to provide students with formal wear and accessories. Representing the council, Sandra Binns accepted ETFO's award that recognizes **Innovative Projects on Behalf of Children Living in Poverty**.

Fred and Bonnie Cappucino received ETFO's **Humanitarian Award for a non-ETFO Member**. The Cappucinos helped found Child Haven International, which works in four countries to assist children and women who are in need of food, education, health care, shelter, clothing, and emotional and moral support. In addition to raising their own two children, they adopted and raised 19 children. Information about their work is available at childhaven.ca.

Celebrating



Judy Perkes, first vice-president of the Waterloo Teacher Local, received the **2008 President's Award**. She "gets the job done," said President David Clegg in presenting her with the award. Since 1999 Perkes has served on the Waterloo ETFO Local executive in a number of capacities; she has been first vice-president for five years. She chairs multiple local committees, is a member of the local collective bargaining committee, and has been a location manager for the ETFO Summer Academy. She chairs the teacher education liaison committee for the new faculty of education at Wilfrid Laurier University. In that position, she showed "such skill, tact and dexterity she won the accolades of OTF for her work in [a] difficult situation," said Clegg. Perkes began teaching in 1980 and spent most of her years as a French immersion teacher.



OTF Fellows

ETFO First Vice-President Sam Hammond and retired ETFO staff member **Jan Moxey** were named Fellows of the Ontario Teachers' Federation for 2008.

Contributions to ETFO

Honorary Life Membership Awards were presented to: **Wendy Matthews**, ETFO Executive staff; **Peter Andrusco**, Keewatin-Patricia Teacher Local; **Eileen Markwick**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local; **Gayle Manley**, Algoma Teacher Local. Not shown: **Bill Getty**, ETFO Executive staff.



ETFO Membership Awards

Occasional Teacher of the Year: **Vassa van Tol**, Peel Occasional Teacher Local.

Local Leadership Award: **Terry Card**, Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local.



Newsletter Editor's Award (multisheet): **Karen Brown**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local; Newsletter Editor's Award (single-sheet): **Sandra Emery**, Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local; Website of the Year Award: **Blaine Labelle**, Upper Canada Teacher Local.

Other award winners

Anti-Bias Curriculum Development Award: **David Stocker**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Arts and Culture Award: **Sumona Roy**, Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local

Curriculum Development Award: **Ann-Marie Anie** and **Grace Mathieson**, Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local.

Multimedia Award – Women's Program: **Krista Harris**, Peel Teacher Local.

New Teacher Award: **Vana Pistiolis**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local.

Teachers Change Your Life

Neli Brady (left), a teacher with the Greater Essex County District School Board, created the winning design for this year's poster for World Teachers' Day. Brady is shown with Emily Noble, president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, which sponsored the contest. The poster is used in schools throughout the country to celebrate World Teachers' Day, October 5.



Health and Safety Activist Award: **Nicholas Moxam** and **Andrea Murik**, Simcoe County Teacher Local.

2008 Scholarships and Bursaries*

Aboriginal Women in Education Bursary – Women's Program:

Lindsay Goheen, Adelle Lewis, Elementary Teachers of Toronto;

Suzanne Methot, Brenda Marie Schonnop, Renfrew County.

Bev Saskoley Anti-Racist Scholarship Award: Brian Puddicombe, Peel.

Doctoral Scholarship Award: Katherine Wainman, Upper Grand.

Doctoral Scholarship Award – Women's Program: Sharon Ballantyne, Kawartha Pine Ridge.

Educational Support/Professional Support Person Bursary: Lori Cress, Rainy River District ESP Local.

ETFO Bursaries (for sons and daughters of ETFO members): Tracey Allen, Waterloo Region; **Sarah Boisvert**, Ontario North East; **Laura Cherry, Laura Farnworth, Emily Lynch, Mireille McBride**, Upper Grand; **Andrée Coutu, Phillipe Coutu**, Durham; **Anna Richards**, Ottawa-Carleton; **Racquel Théberge**, Near North.

ETFO Bursaries (Persons with a disability; visible minorities; Aboriginal persons; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender persons): James East, Ryan Gibson, Jerome Trevena, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

ETFO Bursaries – Women's Program (women with a disability; visible minority women; Aboriginal women; lesbian, bisexual, transgender women): Sekhon Neeru, Karen Naik, Kim Philaranh, Lynn Wilkins, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Master's Scholarship: Mark Andrews, Corey Jackson, York Region; **Patrick Fitzgerald**, Ottawa-Carleton; **Melanie Markin**, Halton; **Cara McCrae**, Thames Valley; **Jennifer-Mai Peterson, Kenneth Scott**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Master's Scholarship – Women's Program: Rebecca Codack, Peel; **Patricia Douglas, Nastassia Subban, Connie Tait, Natalia Kostiw**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto; **Amy Moulton**, Thames Valley; **Jennifer Watt**, York Region.

Women's Studies Scholarship: Michele Murphy, Durham; **Jacque Pinard**, Ottawa-Carleton.

**Unless otherwise indicated, recipients are members of teacher locals.*

ETFO's awards program:

Details about deadlines for applications for ETFO awards are available from Mark Fallis at provincial office; mfallis@etfo.org.

Or visit our website:

etfo.ca ► [Being a Member](#) ► [Member Services](#) ► [Awards and Scholarships](#)

Or watch for the Awards flyer in the steward mailings.

ETFO 2008-09 BUDGET

General Fund

REVENUE \$ 62,779,490

fees from Teachers, Occasional Teachers,

ESP/PSP & associate members + investments

Defense Fund (11,959,895)

Political Action/Public Relations Fund (1,543,212)

OTF/CTF/EI Fees (3,588,567)

QEEO Fees (1,126,833)

OFL/CLC Fees (847,326)

NET REVENUE \$ 43,713,658

EXPENDITURE

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS \$ 124,400

GOVERNANCE 2,711,704

annual, executive, & representative council meetings

& released executive costs

ETFO LOCALS 18,558,597

fee rebates to locals, local release time, training &

materials for locals & stewards

COMMITTEE, TASK FORCE & WORK GROUP

MEETINGS 220,550

two meetings for each

ASSISTANCE 550,750

awards, donations, scholarships & project overseas

EQUITY & WOMEN'S PROGRAMS 1,431,702

race relations, employment equity, anti-violence

& women's programs*

PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR MEMBERS 1,980,100

collective bargaining, professional relations services,

health & safety, pensions & legal costs

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 1,219,551

PD programs, teacher education & conferences, publication

& distribution of VOICE, & other communications

PROVINCIAL OFFICE 2,466,300

rent, maintenance, taxes, phones, equipment, printing,

postage & members' records

STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS 13,315,952

provincial staff salaries & benefits

ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES & SUNDRIES 670,450

website, consultants, insurance & auditors

TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED FUNDS 1,042,109

transferred assets to be accumulated in separate

funds to meet long term goals

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$ 44,292,165

Surplus (Deficit) of Expenditure Over Revenue \$ (578,508)

**Each year, ETFO allocates 6% of the annual budget*

(\$2,564,900) to programs for women. Some of these

programs are in the Equity & Women's Programs section but most are spread throughout the budget.

ETFO celebrates 10 years of success

2008-2009 is the year of ETFO's tenth anniversary.



On July 1, 1998 the two federations representing elementary public school teachers joined together to create ETFO. The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF) had a proud, 90-year history of working to improve teachers' working conditions and professional status. ETFO has continued that tradition.

Some 800 delegates attended ETFO's first annual meeting in August 1998. It was a time of turmoil in education. The Conservative government of the day denigrated teachers and their federations and cut education budgets dramatically. How ETFO responded to those challenges and what it has done to meet members' needs is described in the pages that follow.



top picture

Since 1998 ETFO has had three presidents: Emily Noble, 2002-2007; Phyllis Benedict (now Phyllis Lennox), 1998-2002; and current president David Clegg, elected in 2007. From 1998 to 2005, members of the ETFO Executive were elected annually. Biannual elections began in 2005.

bottom picture

Gene Lewis (centre) has been the general secretary of ETFO since its inception. Joan Westcott was the executive director of FWTAO and David Lennox the general secretary of OPSTF.



TEN YEARS *of* Collective Bargaining

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

CLOSE the GAP

In 1998, delegates to the first ETFO annual meeting unanimously passed the following motion:

That the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario work to restore free and full collective bargaining rights to teachers and education workers.

This motion speaks volumes about the context in which this new organization was formed. ETFO was born during the Common Sense Revolution – the slogan of Mike Harris's Conservative government – and as with all revolutions, there were lasting effects. We should never forget, however, that revolutions also result in unintended consequences. By denigrating educators, eroding their rights and ultimately forcing them onto the streets in a province-wide, two-week political protest in 1997, the Harris government inadvertently created its own worst nightmare. At that same annual meeting, delegates also passed a motion that “ETFO work to defeat the Harris Government in the next provincial election.”

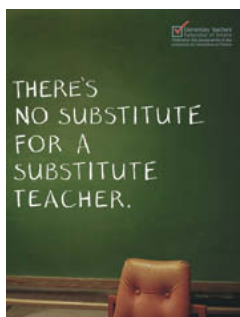
ETFO's history falls neatly into two very different eras: the Tory years and the Liberal ones. In public sector negotiations, the nature of the government of the day, while not the only factor that influences the course of collective bargaining, is of course particularly important.

The Tory era: Years of turmoil

In that first year ETFO local negotiators were working with three historically unprecedented challenges:

- The forced amalgamation of school boards created an artificial calendar for bargaining and, more importantly, gave boards an excuse to strip collective agreements by attempting to level down to the lowest common denominator.
- Bill 160, the Harris government's *Education Quality Improvement Act*, changed the bargaining framework with intrusive incursions into teachers' working conditions and professional development.
- A dysfunctional new funding formula and the removal of local school boards' ability to levy taxes tied the entire system up in knots.

It is truly amazing that collective agreements were reached at all, let alone that the much-anticipated rout never materialized. Some of those early agreements did contain strips, but others included provisions that were groundbreaking at the time, and that 10 years later have become entrenched. Waterloo teachers made inroads on supervision; Ottawa-Carleton teachers won 200 minutes of preparation time; numerous locals forced their boards



Christine Brown is ETFO's coordinator of Protective Services.

to recognize the voluntary nature of extracurricular activities.

Achieving these provisions took more than just hard bargaining, however; it took teacher strikes, specifically in Simcoe County, Waterloo Region, and York Region. The York Region District School Board also locked out its teaching staff.

This pattern of strong action in defence of working and learning conditions would continue. In 2000, Hamilton-Wentworth teachers were legislated back to work following a one-day strike and a 16-day lockout. That same school year, York Region and Toronto teachers engaged in a work-to-rule job action while Keewatin-Patricia and Lambton-Kent teachers worked to rule, withdrew their teaching services, and were locked out. The following school year, there were two work-to-rule job actions by teachers. In Renfrew County, three ETFO bargaining units – educational assistants, school support counsellors, and occasional teachers – went on strike simultaneously. The next school year, 2002–2003, nearly a third of ETFO teacher bargaining units engaged in work-to-rule actions.

The Liberal era

We could create a Hollywood ending by suggesting that job action was no longer necessary once the Liberals were elected in October 2003, but it would be fiction. There *was* an eventual impact on collective bargaining, but ETFO members are employed by school boards, not the Ministry of Education. Yes, education funding now comes exclusively from the province, but it is the boards that are the employers, pass budgets, formulate policy, allocate resources, hire school administrators and supervisory officers, and shape the day-to-day working lives



Members attending the Peel Teacher Local's strike vote in 2005

of educators. The skill level of Ontario's public school boards in the complex business of labour relations varies widely.

The numerous legislated changes to the duration of collective agreements have complicated ETFO's bargaining history. In 1997, Bill 160 dictated both a start date and a term limit for all teacher and occasional teacher collective agreements. The infamous *Stability and Excellence in Education Act* of June 2001, which created compulsory teacher recertification, had buried within it a tiny section mandating a common expiry date of August 2004 for all teacher and occasional teacher collective agreements. It further stipulated that all subsequent agreements must run for three years.

After they were elected in 2003, the Liberals repealed the recertification process and changed, yet again, the term of collective agreements, which may now run for either two years or four. Since 2003 there has only been one ETFO full withdrawal of services strike – that of Near North occasional teachers in 2006. There have, however, been widespread work-to-rule job actions.

TEN *of* YEARS Collective Bargaining

Negotiating the first provincial framework

At the 2004 Annual Meeting, delegates supported concerted action toward achieving 200 minutes of preparation time for teachers, and occasional teacher timetables that reflected those of the teachers they were replacing. *Campaign 200* and *There Is No Substitute for a Substitute Teacher* were the two most ambitious collective bargaining campaigns ETFO had ever undertaken. In addition to mounting a massive public relations effort, ETFO placed all locals in “provincial takeover” simultaneously – the first time this had ever happened. While the provincial office has always been involved in local negotiations, provincial takeover is a mechanism for providing significantly enhanced financial and staff resources to locals in bargaining.

In December 2004, Education Minister Gerard Kennedy initiated provincial talks involving the ministry, the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA), and ETFO. Teacher locals took strike votes in the winter of 2005; these were followed by province-wide work-to-rule actions. The four-year framework agreement signed in April 2005 included phased-in salary increases, a cap on supervision time, and 200 minutes of preparation time. Local collective agreements for teachers were concluded within the next three months.

In the following year, occasional teacher agreements that included provisions for timetabling were negotiated in all locals. This too, required some work-to-rule actions, as well as the Near North strike. Salary gains for occasional teachers were particularly dramatic this round, with roughly one third of locals achieving increases in excess of 18 per cent.

Four-year agreements have meant a slowdown in bargaining-related activity, but no more than that. Enforcing these collective agreements has been an enormous challenge for locals. There has been the added layer of the Provincial Stability Commission, established under the four-year framework to deal specifically with supervision issues.

We now have a government that has invested in such vital areas as primary class size, professional learning, and physical plant upgrades. Yet there is a long way to go before we have an elementary education system that is truly all that it can be. That requires the foresight to recognize that investing in elementary education is every bit as important as investing in secondary education.

This past winter, ETFO again participated in provincial discussions with government officials and representatives from the OPSBA in an effort to reach agreement on key bargaining issues. These talks were not successful. The government was not willing to work with elementary educators to close the funding gap and to phase in much-needed improvements to the system.



Phyllis Benedict, ETFO president, and David Clegg, then chief negotiator for the York Region ETFO local, hold a news conference in 1998.



Members of the Lambton Kent Teacher Local on the picket line in 2000.



Hamilton-Wentworth occasional teachers take a strike vote in 2004.



How collective bargaining has changed

There have been many changes over these past 10 years, but we can single out five in particular: the role of stewards, the shift in board management philosophy, the altered role of school administrators, the improvements in collective agreements, and the increasing resolve among members.

Vibrant stewards' networks have replaced the looser system of school-level contacts that ETFO's two predecessor organizations had. This achievement is due to much hard work and dedication on the part of stewards and local executive members. Stewards are the backbone of any union; ETFO's stewards cannot possibly be thanked enough for all the work that they do. ETFO's success in the current round of negotiations hinges on their solidarity and support.

School board management practices have undergone a significant shift. Even before the teaching profession was brought under the purview of the *Labour Relations Act*, boards had the legal authority to impose lockouts, yet they did not exercise it in public elementary schools. Prior to 1998, there were no lockouts in the public elementary panel. Between 1998 and 2001, there were four. The 2001 collective bargaining report to the annual meeting states: "There were approximately 52,300 'person days' lost to job action this school year – some 5% of which were caused by strikes, and 95% caused by lockouts." Today, school boards use tactics they would not have dreamed of years ago. They have every legal right to impose lockouts, of course, but it does signal a change in philosophy. Boards have also become much more willing to spend large sums of public money in pursuing petty grievances that could be resolved more easily at an earlier stage.

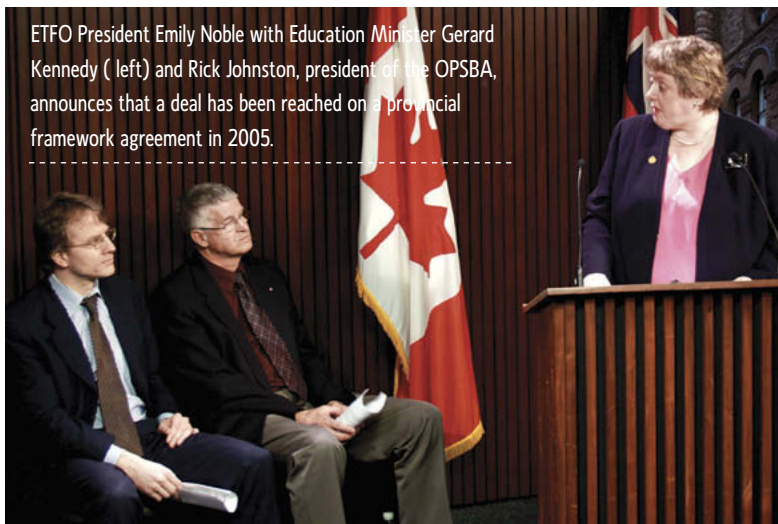
The role of principals was forever altered when Bill 160 removed them from teacher bargaining units. This change transformed the face of labour relations in the education sector. The 2000 collective bargaining

report noted that "while Ontario is blessed with a great many school principals who are decent individuals capable of correctly interpreting a collective agreement, members sometimes have to deal with the other kind." The principal's function changed from that of a teacher-leader to that of a manager, and the transition has not been smooth. Having managers in schools is not a bad thing; when they are given the time and resources to do their jobs properly, it can make the rest of the staff's jobs that much easier. But it definitely alters the workplace dynamic.

The improvement in the quality and level of sophistication of ETFO collective agreements has been dramatic. Ten years ago, many working conditions and rights that we view as fundamental today were barely addressed in the agreements. Defined parameters for instructional, preparation, and supervision time, health and safety clauses such as protection against Fifth disease, greatly improved pregnancy and parental leave provisions, improved protections around personnel files and disciplinary procedures – the list is long. Improvements in collective agreements are never given; they are won, at a cost. Or, in the words of the 1999 report to the annual meeting, "The past year has proven time and again that oldest of negotiator's maxims: at the end of the day, bargaining is a question of political will."

The increasing resolve of ETFO members that has resulted from being "forged in the fire" over the past decade is the final and most important change. Good collective agreements do not happen unless local members support the bargaining process. In 10 years of very hard bargaining, ETFO members have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to improving their own working conditions and their students' learning conditions. In bargaining, the outcome hinges far less on the discussions taking place at the negotiating table than on those occurring in the staffroom. This school year, those staffroom discussions will matter like never before. ■

ETFO President Emily Noble with Education Minister Gerard Kennedy (left) and Rick Johnston, president of the OPSBA, announces that a deal has been reached on a provincial framework agreement in 2005.



From Placards to YouTube

A decade of political activism

BY VIVIAN McCaffrey

ETFO was born into one of the most tumultuous periods in Ontario education history. In October 1997, 126,000 teachers staged a two-week walk-out to protest the assault on teachers and public education by the Conservative government of Mike Harris. ETFO's first annual meeting took place a few months later. Delegates to that 1998 founding meeting voted unanimously to work to defeat the Conservative government in the next provincial election. From its beginnings, political action has played a vital role in ETFO's growth into an influential and powerful entity.

Ontario teachers have a long, proud history of working for social and political change. The formation of ETFO was preceded by nine decades of activism that, among other gains, resulted in standard contracts for teachers, statutory union membership, professional recognition, the right to strike, pay equity for women teachers, and equal partnership in managing our pension. The intensity of the Harris government initiatives, however, meant that teachers and other education workers had to commit unprecedented attention and resources to political action during ETFO's first decade.

Years of Turmoil

At the time the federation was founded, ETFO members were experiencing the dizzying throes of the Tories' so-called Common Sense Revolution: school board amalgamations, funding cuts, strips to bargaining rights, creation of the new regulatory body, the Ontario College of Teachers, province-wide student testing, and a new elementary curriculum and standard report card imposed without consultation, resources, or training for teachers. Bill 160, the *Education Accountability Act*, which prompted the massive teacher walkout in the fall of 1997, removed principals and vice-principals from the teacher federations, cancelled five of the nine professional activity days, and prevented teachers from negotiating class sizes. These policies were aimed directly at undermining public confidence in our school system and weakening the influence of teachers and their unions. John Snobelen, the first education minister during

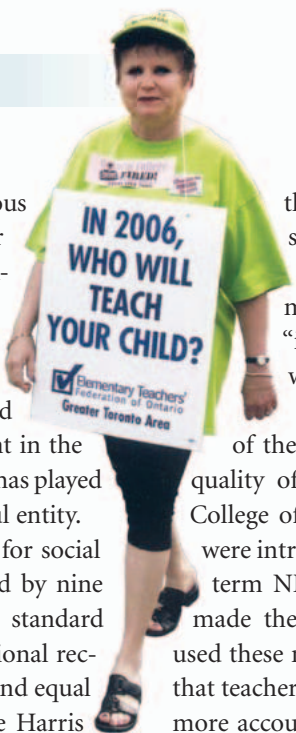
the Harris regime, called the public system "mediocre" and summarized his agenda by his infamous comment that the government needed to "invent a crisis" in order to open the way to reforming the system.

There was no evidence that any of the Tories' policies would improve the quality of education. Although the Ontario College of Teachers and standardized testing were introduced in the dying days of the one-term NDP government, the Tories quickly made these two initiatives their own. They used these measures to attack teachers, arguing that teachers needed to be more productive and more accountable, much as right-wing Republicans were doing south of the border.

Continuing "Reforms"

The end of the Tories' first term in office did not mean an end to their education "reforms." Shortly after they were re-elected in June 1999, they moved to mandate teacher recertification, legislate extracurricular activities, and fund private schools through a tuition tax credit.

ETFO's response to these initiatives was multifaceted and included extensive public relations initiatives, direct lobbying, member engagement, training of political activists, and involvement in elections. What were the results? Looking back over the past 10 years, it is clear that ETFO achieved a number of important gains through political action and public relations, working both on its own and in collaboration with



Vivian McCaffrey is an ETFO executive assistant responsible for government relations.

other education and social justice partners. In addition to joint actions with our sister teacher federations, ETFO has worked within the labour movement and with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the Ontario Health Coalition, antipoverty groups, and organizations committed to women's equality.

Lobbying the government and opposition parties

Throughout the tenure of the Conservative government, ETFO responded to the myriad initiatives with reasoned, researched positions. We developed position papers on education funding, teacher testing, student assessment, special education, kindergarten, split grades, and loss of equity from the curriculum. These positions papers were shared with the government and with the public. They added to our federation's credibility and convinced the opposition parties that changes had to be made. The government of the day didn't often embrace ETFO's position, but the federation's lobbying paved the way for the 2003 election and Liberal and NDP commitments to repeal many of the Tory initiatives. A number of ETFO proposals were ultimately adopted by the newly elected Liberal government.

Solidarity makes a difference

As with collective bargaining, mobilizing members to support the federation's leadership is key to our political effectiveness. In spring 2000, in response to the government's plan to make teacher involvement in extracurricular activities mandatory (Bill 74), ETFO members participated in an all-member ballot indicating that they believed the legislation was a direct attack on their professionalism and bargaining rights. They then withdrew from providing extracurricular activities. These actions sent a resounding message to then Education Minister Janet Ecker. She blinked. When the bill came up

for the final vote, she announced that the provision related to mandatory elementary extracurricular activities would not be put into effect.

Fighting recertification

A year later 97 percent of ETFO members voted against complying with the professional learning program (PLP) that required them to enrol in 14 courses approved by the College of Teachers every five years. The vast majority of members backed up this vote by continuing with their professional development but boycotting PLP courses. Local presidents lobbied PLP providers, including school boards, to withdraw from the program. They held school-based meetings to keep members informed about the federation's position and strategy. The extent of our members' determi-



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- Increased funding to education to significantly address Harris cuts and partially reduce the elementary gap
- Repealed teacher recertification program
- Cancelled Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test and introduced New Teacher Induction Program
- Streamlined teacher performance appraisal process
- Established teacher majority on Ontario College of Teachers governing council
- Restored two of five eliminated PA Days



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nation sent a clear message that the recertification program was unviable and at the core of teacher discontent. Both opposition parties promised to repeal the measure if elected. In December 2003, one of Gerard Kennedy's first acts as the new Liberal education minister was to write an open letter to teachers announcing his intention to legislate the end of teacher recertification.

Ontario College of Teachers

Member action was also crucial in building pressure to reform the Ontario College of Teachers' governing council. Unlike many other similar professional regulatory bodies, teachers did not have a majority on the governing council of the college. Thousands of ETFO members signed petitions and postcards, contacted their MPP, and attended a June 2002 rally outside the college to send a clear message that reform was a high priority. This member action laid the groundwork for lobbying efforts by teachers' federations during the Liberals' first term of office. The reform was eventually achieved through Bill 78, passed in June 2006.

Election involvement: The ultimate political action

Ultimately it's through participation in elections that ETFO has had its most direct political impact. During the 1999 provincial election campaign, ETFO was part of a coalition of labour and social justice groups that worked to defeat the Conservative government. Although the coalition was unsuccessful in limiting the Harris Conservatives to a single term, the lessons from the 1999 election taught us a lot about the importance of communications, planning, and mobilization. Delegates to the ETFO 2000 Annual Meeting approved the creation of the Political Action/Public Relations Fund, a specific membership levy that has been used to sponsor public relations campaigns, make donations to political parties and candidates, support ETFO candidates, train political activists, and support members working in election campaigns.

In spring 2002, ETFO held a series of regional training sessions to prepare members to work in strategically targeted ridings – ridings where we believed the Tory candidate could be defeated. In the 2003 election, ETFO (in partnership with its locals) paid the salaries of 75 members who worked in 30 ridings. In 23 of those ridings the Conservative incumbent was defeated. The federation also joined the Working Families Coalition, a union-based group that sponsored a series of highly effective television ads that prompted the public to conclude it was time for a change of government. During the 2007 election, we expanded our support by sending 92 members into 37 campaigns, 26 of which were successful. This election was also preceded by extensive member preparation: pre-election training for activists, three years of training sessions for the chairs of local



ETFO leaders and MPPs meet and discuss issues at a federation sponsored breakfast meeting.

political action committees, and the federation's first Women in Politics conference designed to expand women's participation in elections. Each training event and election makes ETFO a stronger organization whose growing membership directly influences the outcome of elections by communicating the federation's position to MPPs and the community both during and between campaigns.

Today's challenges

Looking back over the past decade, it's gratifying to conclude that our political action is no longer about fending off the attacks of a hostile government but rather about working to build better public schools. ETFO's current priorities are to close the gap in elementary funding, promote a teacher-based model for full-day kindergarten, and see the end of large-scale standardized testing. To achieve these goals, ETFO is continuing the strategies that have been successful in the past. After 10 years we're relying more on technology – YouTube as well as placards – to communicate our message, and we are well positioned to continue to make gains for public elementary education and for our members. ■

Bringing Elementary Education to the Forefront

BY MARY MORISON

Political action and public relations go hand in hand. While our leaders and activists respond to government initiatives, solicit opposition party support, and lobby MPPs on both sides of the legislature, ETFO promotes its work and the work of its members not only with politicians, but also with other education stakeholders, the media, community activists, and the public at large.

From its inception ETFO knew that it would have to build a public profile for the federation and for elementary education and that its messages would have to resonate with its members and with parents. ETFO was aware that it had a powerful and important role to play, giving voice to elementary educators and the students they teach.

ETFO also knew that the first challenge it faced with the public and with politicians was to build credibility. We could not start our new life as a federation asking for support without demonstrating our commitment to elementary education. With this in mind, ETFO undertook two early public relations initiatives.

The *Teachers Bring Learning to Life* campaign had two important features. First, ETFO

used its own members as “models” on the billboards, and we have continued to do so. Second, the campaign provided members (and their students) with bean seeds for students to plant and with supporting curriculum materials that demonstrated our message.

The second initiative – later titled *From the Ground Up* – started as a consultation with our members about what they believed needed to be improved in elementary education. From the results of the consultation we produced a report, brochures, and posters that summarized our beliefs about public elementary education. These beliefs, grounded in our membership, have informed much of our work since.

ETFO’s public relations campaigns are based on core messages that resonate with our members and reflect what we stand for:

- It’s all about our students.
- We care passionately about public education.
- We are proud of the work we do.
- We are working with parents to help our students succeed.
- We are working to be the best teachers we can be.



Mary Morison is an ETFO executive assistant.



Our campaigns were carefully planned to ensure that we built upon the credibility of public elementary school teachers, stayed true to the voices of our members, and crafted clear messages that would be easily understood.

Our public relations campaigns have taken many forms and have had different audiences. The primary audience is always our own members. Public relations campaigns support our members in their work and provide them with opportunities to share their work with the public. In some instances, our campaigns are specifically designed to support the collective bargaining ETFO does on members' behalf. The first large-scale PR campaign ETFO undertook to support bargaining was *Campaign 200* in 2004. This was followed by the *No Substitute* campaign supporting bargaining by occasional teachers. And for the past year and a half, ETFO has been engaged in the *Close the Gap* campaign. No one can have missed this campaign.




Other public relations work ETFO does is directed toward parents. ETFO has produced summer activity brochures for parents, welcome-to-school brochures, and billboards about fair funding and specialist teachers. We have

distributed brochures questioning the value of standardized testing. We have circulated material advocating for teacher librarians and school libraries. While these support the work of our members, they are primarily designed to encourage parents and the public to join us in strengthening public elementary education.

CLOSE the GAP

ETFO's public relations activities take a number of forms. We don't just do brochures and billboards: we have prepared videotapes (now DVDs) and podcasts and bought advertising on radio, on television, and in newspapers.

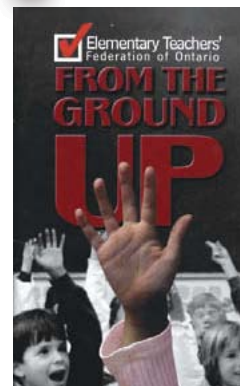
But paid advertising is only a small part of our public relations work. And this is where political action and public relations intersect. Most of the work that ETFO does to bring elementary education issues to the attention of politicians and the public is done, day by day, by our leaders and our members. Our leaders speak to the media, to politicians, and to the community. Our members talk with parents and the public. And in all of these conversations, the message is the same: public elementary education is critically important and needs to be treated that way. Our students deserve nothing less. 

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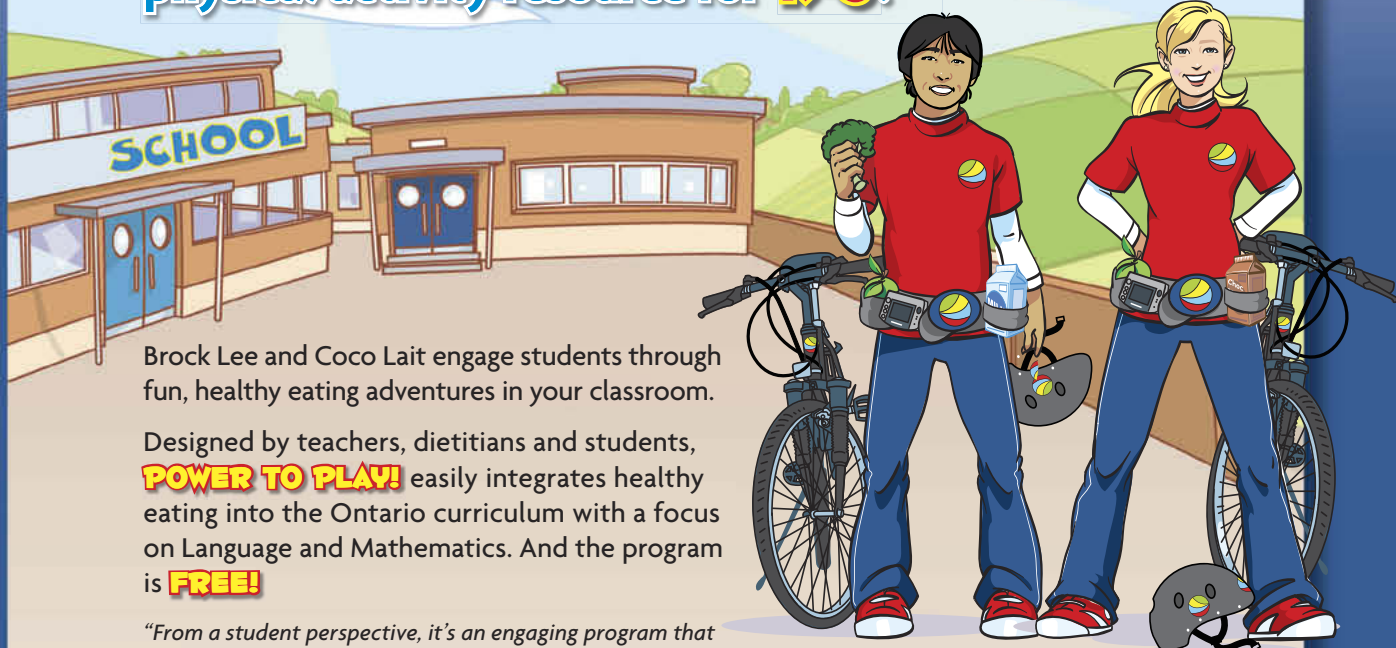
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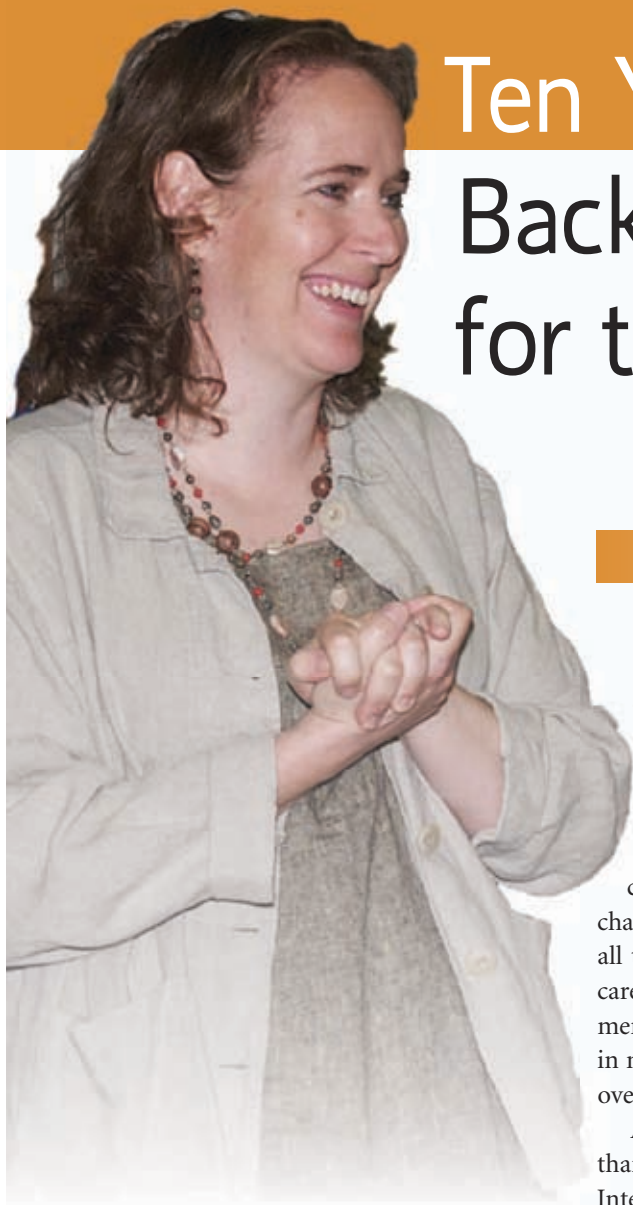


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Ten Years and It's Back to the Classroom for this Teacher!

BY VERA C. TESCHOW

This September, after several years as a program resource consultant and a term as an acting vice-principal, I'm returning to the classroom. By the time you read this, dear colleagues, I'll have been teaching my 3/4 split in southwest Mississauga for nearly two months. I'll be in the throes of report cards, mucking about with ELL stages of proficiency, mandatory Spec. Ed. comments, parent calls, pizza money, and chasing kids down to stack their chairs at the end of each day. These are all things I haven't done for the past five years, nearly half my teaching career! And as I pack boxes in my little VP's office, and make arrangements for a friend with a van to help me dust off and clear out the bins in my garage in August, I can't help but reflect how things have changed over the last decade.

Apart from the fact that I now have about 37 bins of "stuff" more than I did when I graduated from OISE 10 years ago and took the first Intermediate job I was offered at a little country school in my board's north end, I also have more knowledge in my head and more tricks up my sleeve! My appetite for learning has not subsided over the past 10 years, and I read as many books and attend as many workshops as I did when I first became a teacher (though many of the latter I attend as a facilitator rather than as a participant). The past decade has seen me move from *unconscious incompetence* (as a first-year teacher, I didn't know how much I didn't know!) to *conscious incompetence* (I soon discovered how much more there was to learn!). I'm now moving steadily further into the *consciously competent* phase of my career: I know I'm a good educator, but I often still have to think about the moves I make when I interact with

Vera C. Teschow is a "new again" classroom teacher with the Peel District School Board. She is also a mother of twins, and teaches pre-service students in Toronto. Visit Vera online at www.verateschow.com



Vera Teschow with her first class in 1998.



As a new teacher.

students, colleagues, a new concept in Math, a complex instructional strategy I want to try out on my class, and so on. How I admire my senior mentors, who appear so effortless in their *unconscious competence*, as only time and experience can provide! Ironically, I spent part of this summer training teacher candidates as *they* prepare to enter the profession, so I had plenty of opportunity to become conscious about my teaching practice!

A changed job market

I remember deciding after my first few years of teaching to test the waters and see what else was out there. Teaching positions were plentiful, and for someone lucky enough to have started her career with a strong mentor administrator as I had, the job offers came fast and furious. I had my pick of schools, teaching positions, principals to work for. This time on the interview circuit, the pickings were slim, and those positions that interested me were primarily in some of the many schools in our board that had acting principals at the helm: retired folk come back to help out the board, or inexperienced people plucked from other positions to help fill the gap.

It seems the market has shifted from a large availability of teaching posts to an enormous need for school leaders. And people can smell

the blood in the water. Like ravenous sharks, they take the plunge – perhaps before they are really “ready” – and swim furiously through the promotion process to vie for one of the bountiful spots in administration. Indeed, many of us now find ourselves in the interesting position of working for someone who may have only a few years of teaching experience under his or her belt, and whose knowledge of school leadership is largely theoretical rather than experience-based. How will those of us who are more seasoned veterans of the profession step up to the plate to support our many young leaders as they learn to lead our schools in an increasingly complex world?

The kids have changed too!

Instead of Yu-Gi-Oh! cards and Walkmans, now it’s Game Boys and iPods. Cheat notes during tests have been replaced in some communities with text messages being sent via cellphones. Whereas we used to call home and get some help with difficult students, now we call home to defend ourselves in front of increasingly edu-savvy families who struggle to support the work of the schools while their children spend evenings posting malicious notes to one another’s Facebook accounts. There are more autistic children in our schools, and an apparent increase in behavioural challenges as teachers strive to juggle the many ways to meet the diverse needs of their classes. Brain-based Teaching, Differentiated Instruction, Critical Literacy, and many other ideas and theories have joined the “old standards” of Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning that were considered hot and new when I was starting out. And how do we know if we are meeting students’ needs?

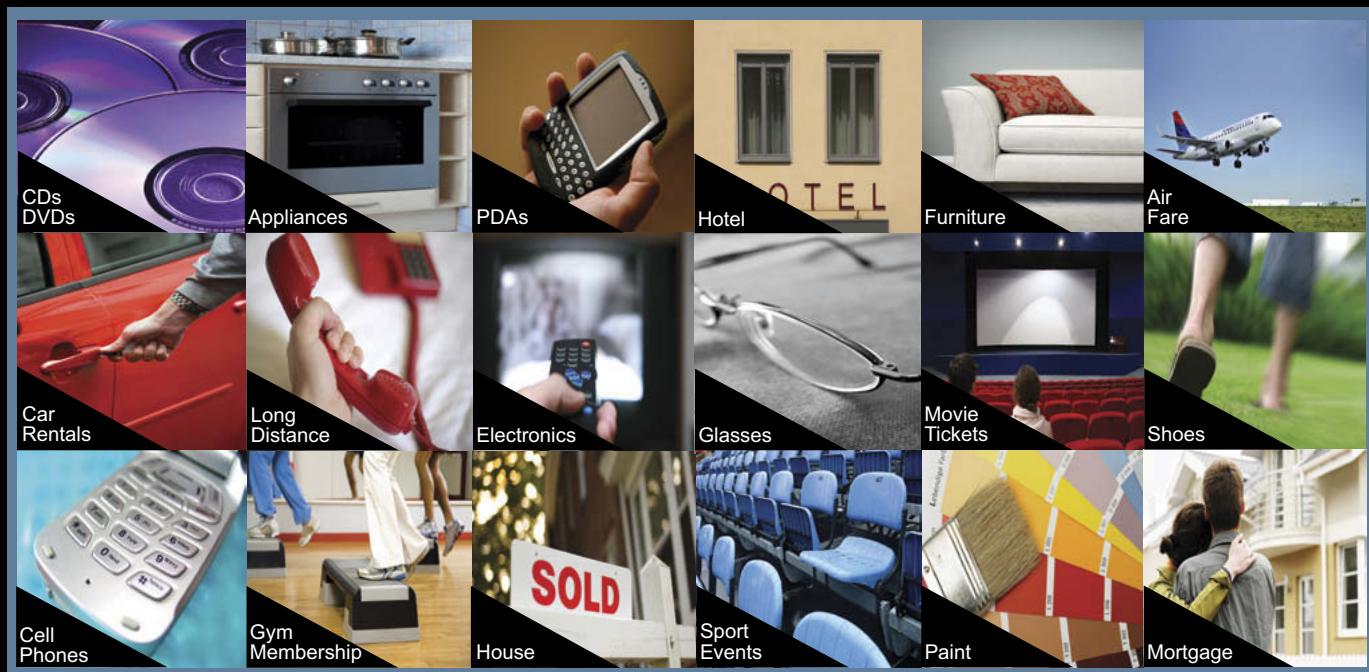
Assessment has changed, too. In my first year of teaching, we did assessment at the end of each term in order to come up with a mark for the “new” report card. Now we use assessment to inform our instruction

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Ten Years and It's Back to the Classroom for this Teacher!

at the beginning of and throughout the teaching cycle. We used to sign up for one-off workshops; now we meet with colleagues to “moderate” student work several times a year. Formerly, the staffroom was abuzz with that awful thing Johnny did before recess today. Now we talk about data walls, student continuums and ... that awful thing Johnny did before recess!

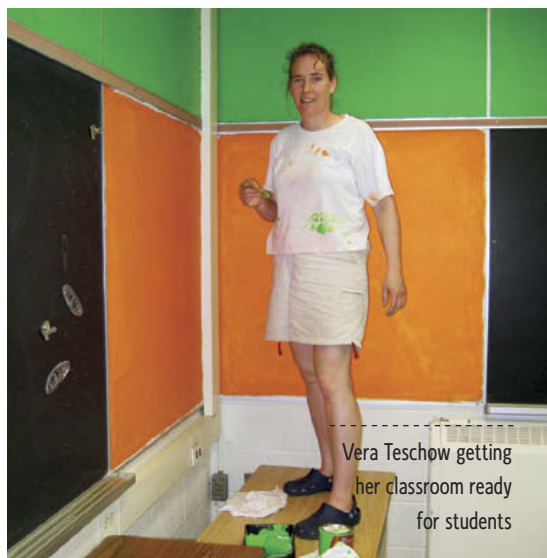
A new political climate

When I left teachers college a decade ago, it was with the strong memory of practice-teaching blocks spent on the picket line, as my future colleagues took job action against the hostile government of the time in order to protect the rights of our students and the future of our profession. As I entered my own first classroom, resources were scarce, and every year I spent a lot of my own money to set up my program. Curriculum documents arrived on my desk September 1 for implementation September 5, without any kind of practical support.

Today, a steady stream of new documents and resources from the ministry appears in our schools to support teachers in a variety of educational contexts. The GEIR (Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading), the GEIM (Guide to Effective Instruction in Mathematics) for each math strand at both the Junior and Primary lev-

els, and DVDs from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat are just a few of the plentiful quality resources we have received lately. And when we’ve devoured those, we can head online to an e-workshop to see the theories in action and test our knowledge. We have money for math manipulatives, release time for in-school PD, and literacy resources at various divisional levels. On any given summer day, I can sign up for free, government-sponsored PD. Even the ETFO Summer Institutes have multiplied, thanks to an influx of funding from our current government.

Kids, teachers, political climate ... Is it really that things have changed so much, or is it merely that I have grown more insightful and reflective with age and experience? I know at least one thing hasn’t changed, and that is my enthusiasm for the profession. Whether as a classroom teacher, a program resource consultant, or an acting vice-principal, nothing excites me more than a strong lesson plan carried out with appropriate flexibility to meet the needs of a group of diverse students working together on this thing called “learning.” But before I launch into that realm at the classroom level once again, I need to find a Canada border for my bulletin board and get some pillows for my reading corner! 🇨🇦



Vera Teschow getting
her classroom ready
for students





Supporting Members' Professional Growth in Times of Change

BY JERRY DEQUETTEVILLE

Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, believes that the programs and services unions provide in addition to collective bargaining are the heart and soul of the union movement. ETFO recognized this early in its first decade and has consistently supported members in their professional lives as well as negotiating and enforcing collective agreements. Members have responded positively; without fail they have found ETFO's professional learning resources and programs to be the best available. Today ETFO is known nationally and internationally for its efforts.

The ultimate test was undertaking this work at a time of incredible tumult in the profession. In the past 10 years the expectations placed on Ontario's elementary educators have been revised year after year with head-spinning frequency. Supporting members in these times has been challenging, but ETFO has done it with vigour.

Responding to change in the classroom

Since 1998 a whole new curriculum has been implemented in all grades, with great speed and with few supports. Elementary educators did not experience the multiyear phase-in afforded our secondary colleagues. ETFO stepped up to the plate, producing professional resources and providing training for members as they struggled to do a seemingly impossible task. That they succeeded was due to their own hard work, professionalism, and tenacity – and to ETFO's assistance.

Many of the new curricula had more expectations than there were days in the school year. Recognizing this, Professional Services staff produced resources to help teachers identify areas of overlap so that they could integrate multiple expectations. Our document, *Building a Teacher's Planner*, and our planning workshops are among our most popular and most successful.

The new curriculum was particularly problematic for teachers of combined grades because combining expectations and teaching

Jerry DeQuetteville is ETFO's coordinator of Professional Services.



a common lesson became much more difficult and in some areas impossible. After holding focus groups with these teachers, ETFO produced a position paper, *Split Decisions*, and used it to lobby successfully for change. Because these issues remain significant, the federation is developing an additional qualifications (AQ) course for teachers of combined grades.

During this same period, a new report card was introduced, soon followed by another, and in some district school boards, yet another. It was a part of a significant change in student assessment. Once again Professional Services staff assisted members by developing resources and providing training in the collection, interpretation, and use of data. Our work in responding to assessment issues spanned the organization. Collective Bargaining staff ensured that teachers' working conditions were respected and that they would have access to the tools and the training they needed to complete report cards. Professional Relations Services staff provided advice about the legalities of the reporting process and about responding to pressure to change a mark or comment.

Programming for special needs students also underwent significant change, much of it dictated by the response of school boards to the new funding model. More special needs students were integrated into regular classrooms with fewer accompanying resources. In many boards, classroom teachers assumed greater responsibility for the completion of individual

education plans (IEPs). Recognizing the increased demands on these teachers, ETFO hired staff and developed its own Special Education AQ course and special education resources.

Supporting teacher professionalism

The Conservative government's plan for mandatory teacher recertification was perhaps the greatest challenge to teachers' professionalism during this period. The professional learning program (PLP) required teachers to attend 14 professional development sessions over a five-year period in order to keep their certificates. ETFO members refused to participate but found it difficult to pursue their own self-directed professional learning because many traditional providers were offering only PLP courses. ETFO offered its own programs and showed members how to track their own self-directed and PLP-free professional learning. The campaign against mandatory recertification involved all areas of the organization and every member, and was ultimately successful.

Surprisingly, there was a significant bright spot amid all of this misery. In our first year, the Ministry of Education provided the federations with



Reflections of Me, ETFO's body image program, was developed in consultation with staff at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.



funds to offer summer curriculum courses for teachers. These courses, offered by teachers for teachers, were immensely popular. When 5,000 teachers applied for 1,500 spots, the ministry provided additional funding.

ETFO worked with OECTA, AEFO, and OTF to offer these programs annually until in 2002 the government insisted that they be tied to the PLP. Our response was “Thanks, but no thanks!” Instead we found resources, hired staff, and offered our own Summer Academy program. These courses continue to be popular: this year some 2,500 teachers attended ETFO courses in all corners of the province.

The election of a more education-friendly government in 2003 may have slowed change in some areas, but it increased the pace elsewhere.

The Liberal government’s oft-stated goal of having 75 percent of grade 6 students achieve level 3 or 4 on provincewide tests has resulted in an unprecedented focus on literacy and numeracy. However, unlike its predecessor, the current

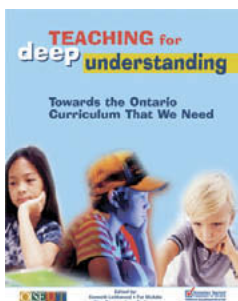
government has focused on consultation and providing resources. When the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) was created, it initiated focused literacy and numeracy plans, and it put significant resources into the system – in fact, more than at any other time in Ontario’s history. Teachers received extensive support and training, so much so that at times they wanted it to stop. How quickly things change!

Unfortunately our occasional teacher and ESP/PSP members didn’t receive this same level of professional support. ETFO urged the government to provide them with professional learning opportunities and, while we have had some success, this work is ongoing.

In another significant initiative, the government eliminated the widely disliked test that new graduates had to pass to be certified and replaced it with a comprehensive system of supports. The ministry and many boards based their plans on the ideas espoused in a popular ETFO resource, *Professional Beginnings: An Induction Resource Guide*, published in 2003.

ETFO recognized that members who were mentors to new teachers also needed support. The Ministry of Education identified our hugely successful workshop for mentors as an exemplary program. We hope to capitalize on this success by developing a Mentorship AQ course.

The government’s intention to create full-day, every day kindergarten programs will require that members receive significant support. ETFO’s professional resources, *Kindergarten Matters: Learning through Play and Observation*, will be invaluable. ETFO has also developed a Kindergarten AQ course that focuses on play-based learning. Last year, we received significant funding from the Ministry of Education to develop programs to support JK/SK educators.



2,500 members attended ETFO’s Summer Academy in 2008.



After extensive dialogue with stakeholders the ministry recently released *The Partnership Table Report on Teacher Professional Learning*. Its recommendations about effective professional learning will have a significant impact on our work in the years ahead. Already many of our programs involve multiple sessions over the course of a year so that participants can examine their professional practice in a deep and meaningful way. Programs such as *Teachers Learning Together* and *Reflections on Practice* are more expensive and complex than single-session workshops, but our research shows that they have a significant impact on teachers, classroom programs, and students.

Perhaps the best example of the difference in this government's view of teacher unions occurred in 2006 when ETFO received \$8 million from the ministry for professional learning. This funding allowed us to provide new programs and to enhance some existing popular offerings. Among the new initiatives was ETFO's *Poverty and Education* program, which focuses on supporting students from impoverished backgrounds. Additional grants from the Council of Directors of Education has allowed the continuation of this program.

That ETFO received these funds recognizes our status as a provider of high-quality professional learning. Our programs meet the diverse professional learning needs of our members. Many projects include an extensive evaluation and impact analysis because we want to gain additional insight into what influences members' professional practice to help us with future planning.

Involving members and the broader community

The professional zeal of our members has supported our work. Over the past 10 years members have completed multiple surveys that have helped us identify areas of need and focus. Members eagerly participated in focus groups to ensure that new documents and programs were useful and reflected classroom reality. Our Summer Academy and the wide range of courses it offers is one example.

Another example is the recently published resource, *ETFO Arts*. Teachers told us that the focus on literacy and numeracy and the cuts to specialist teacher positions meant there were few professional supports at a time when more classroom teachers were teaching their own arts programs. Our new resource has been repeatedly praised by educators and specialists in arts education.

Member input, research, and best practices have allowed us to develop programs and resources that are more sophisticated than ever. Our services are widely recognized for their practicality and their success in sup-

porting members and their students.

Today, unlike 10 years ago, ETFO Professional Services staff are often called upon to ensure that the voice of elementary educators is heard in all areas of the education sector. We meet with officials at EQAO, the Ontario College of Teachers, the LNS, and other branches of the Ministry of Education.

Recognizing that education is far more complex than in the past, we have forged links with experts in medical fields and universities, and with international groups. We developed *Reflections of Me*, our curriculum on body image, with the Hospital for Sick Children. We undertook research on teacher working conditions with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Staff from Ontario faculties of education are working with participants in Teachers Learning Together. And we are working with Right to Play to bring a more play-based program to students in developing nations.

We have also worked with subject associations to ensure they develop a greater elementary focus. This has allowed us to better tap into their expertise to meet our members' professional needs. The influence that ETFO has throughout the education sector is significant, and the change that we have been able to bring about has been positive – a far cry from the exclusion we experienced 10 years ago.

In her first report to the ETFO annual meeting then-president Phyllis Benedict identified our first year as a time of change not seen in Ontario since the time of Egerton Ryerson. Looking back, it seems that every year of our first 10 years has been full of change. Each and every time the federation has met the challenge head on, never shying from a difficult task, and in the process far exceeding the goals it set for itself when it was formed. ■



etfo.ca

Growing to Meet Our Members' Needs

BY STEPHEN MAU

From its inception, ETFO embraced the use of the Web to improve service delivery to members. ETFO and its predecessors were pioneers among service organizations in using the Internet to communicate with members.

The World Wide Web was created in 1992, and by the mid-1990s it had gained widespread use. Both of the organizations that predated ETFO – the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF) – had websites by the mid-1990s. When ETFO was formed in 1998, its Web presence built on these pre-existing sites.

ETFO's use of Web technologies has evolved in two ways that mirror the development of the World Wide Web itself. First, there has been a marked growth in both the amount and sophistication of content available to members. And secondly, ETFO's presence on the Web has evolved from a one-way mode of communication into an interactive platform that allows members to communicate not only with the federation but with each other as they collaborate and share knowledge online.

ETFO's public website, *etfo.ca*, has under-

gone two redesigns in the past decade. It began as a basic site with text and graphics produced by provincial office staff, and updated by a website design company. A few years later, the site was redesigned so that staff at provincial office could update it themselves. This greatly improved the timeliness of website communications. Added to the site's text and graphics were the first interactive elements:

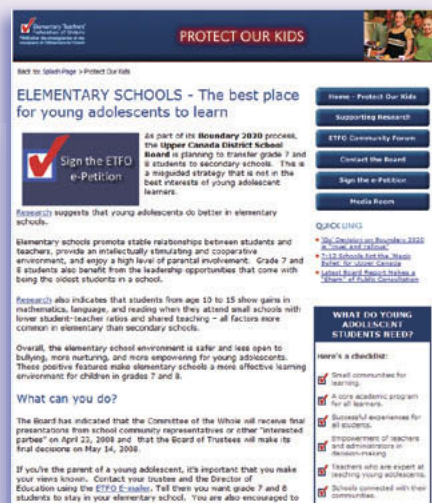
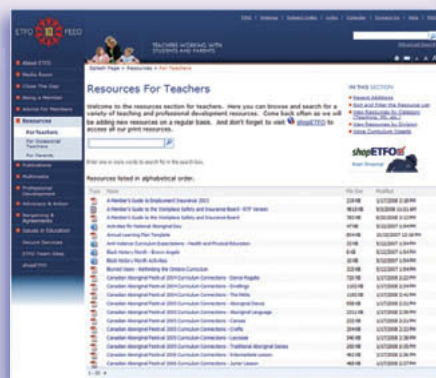
- shopETFO began as an online order system for ETFO products and teacher resources, and evolved into a full-service store with online credit card processing.
- Members were able to complete their annual learning plans (ALPs) using an interactive form.
- The "Fax Your MPP" tool allowed members to send a protest fax to their provincial member of parliament directly from the website.

In the early years, member demand for document sharing and online collaboration also led to the development of a number of secure (password-protected) websites.

The development of Secure Services provided the ETFO executive and local presidents with a site that gave them secure access to provincial office documents; but they had no means of contributing their own content.

Two early examples of secure websites supported online collaboration. The Equity Network site allowed a community of ETFO members to collaborate, communicate, and share content online. The Reflections on Practice site helped deliver a comprehensive, blended model of

Stephen Mau is an executive assistant responsible for ETFO's website.



professional development for women teachers, providing coaching and mentoring through both face-to-face sessions and an online community of practice.


The latest iteration of ETFO's public website was released in June 2007 on a platform that improves our ability to manage content and provides up-to-date communications tools such as RSS feeds, podcasts, webcasts, online forms, surveys, a campaign tool, and databases that allow users to search, sort, and filter content in many different ways.

This new platform has enabled provincial office staff to deliver more sophisticated content to members, and allowed members to contribute content of their own.

- The eNewsletter – @ETFO/FEEO – replaced two paper newsletters, *Link* and *Women's Issues*. Members can subscribe at etfo.ca/Publications/@ETFO/FEEO eNewsletter.
- protectourkids.ca allows members to take part in the *Protect Our Kids* campaign by sending protest e-mails and signing an online petition opposing the Upper Canada District School Board's plan to transfer students in grades 7 and 8 to secondary schools.
- At etfo.ca/Multimedia members can access streaming webcasts, a podcast feed, annotated photo albums, and regular video addresses from ETFO's president.
- etfo.ca/Resources/For Teachers lets members search, sort and filter content in many different ways.
- The online questionnaire that members can fill out on the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) page (etfo.ca/Advice For Members/The School Effectiveness Framework) sends their feedback on the SEF process automatically to ETFO and to the Ministry of Education.

The platform that forms the basis for ETFO's current website is an enterprise portal that allows staff to quickly create secure websites for their own use and for external communities of members or partners. These sites provide users with a variety of sophisticated tools such as document libraries, customizable lists, online forms, discussion forums, chat rooms, blogs, calendars, and surveys.

If you visit the directory at etfo.ca/Team Sites you'll notice a proliferation of online communities for a variety of groups. Members from across the province involved in ETFO PD programs, communities, or writing projects can now expect to be supported by a website that will enable them to collaborate, communicate, and create in a secure online environment.

Clearly, ETFO's website technology has come a long way in a decade. ETFO has invested not only in infrastructure, but also in staff committed to using the new technologies to provide ever-increasing levels of service to members: more electronic content, and more opportunities for members to interact with their union and their colleagues across the province. 



Book a Green Street program at green-street.ca

Greenstreet, a CTF partner, provides affordable programs that are relevant to students' concerns and curriculum-linked. Visit green-street.ca and follow the cues in the Teacher Zone. The site also has an environmental education blog for educators.



Working Together for Social Justice and Equity

BY EWS STAFF

ETFO is unique among Canadian teacher federations in having a service area devoted to Equity and Women's Services, demonstrating our commitment to women's equality and social justice.

When ETFO was founded in 1998, its constitution included this objective: "to foster a climate of social justice in Ontario and continue a leadership role in such areas as antipoverty, nonviolence, and equity." There is also a specific constitutional commitment to provide and fund programs for women.

Developing equity policies

Intense policy development work during ETFO's first few years sought to clarify the beliefs informing these constitutional provisions and to understand how they could be put into effect. In 1999 the ETFO executive adopted this definition of equity:

ETFO recognizes that we live in a society characterized by individual and systemic discrimination against particular groups. Within this context, ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures that result in equality for all.

Strategic planning and consultation with members and locals led to the development of ETFO's Statement on Social Justice and Equity, which the executive approved in 2002. It identified eight organizational goals as part of an ongoing, long-range equity implementation plan (etfo.ca/AdvocacyandAction/SocialJusticeandEquity). Delegates to the 2003 annual meeting passed ETFO's Policy on Equity and Social Justice (etfo.ca/AboutETFO/Governance/PolicyStatements). These

foundation documents guide the work of staff in Equity and Women's Services.

Policy development continues as our understanding grows. ETFO has adopted policies on Discrimination (1998); Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity, Employment Equity, Harassment, and Religious Rights (2000); Aboriginal Education and Native Languages (2001); Equity and Social Justice (2003); ETFO Representation (2004); and Disability Issues (2006).

Programs to meet our members' needs

EWS staff, working with staff in ETFO's other service areas, are responsible for a broad range of programs that include initiatives for members who face subtle and overt discrimination: women; racialized and Aboriginal members; members with a disability; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members. Programs also address social class and poverty issues.

Our role is to educate, stimulate, and support the transformation of ETFO and its locals into organizations that are more responsive to the needs of a diverse membership and that exert a positive influence for change in society. Ontario educators now work with a more diverse student population than ever before and in an increasingly complex world. They need the support of their union to counter discrimination and to advocate for social justice.

Our programs and services include conferences and workshops, curriculum resources, support for locals' equity and women's programs, and advocacy and partnerships with other organizations.

Conferences and workshops

...and Still We Rise was first held in 2000 and over the years has drawn many members into active participation in their union. The combination of provocative keynote speakers (including Rosemary Brown, Naomi Klein, Sally Armstrong, Roberta Jamieson, Monia Mazigh, Judy Rebick, Trey Anthony, Shari Graydon, and Catherine Frazee), leadership workshops, personal growth opportunities, and arts and cultural activities (featuring Faith Nolan in celebration of Black History Month) has proved popular over the years.

In 2009, this conference is going national. With the theme “Connecting Caring Citizens in Schools and Communities,” the conference will feature dynamic plenary speakers such as Rona Maynard and Margaret Trudeau and celebrate black history month with performances by Kellylee Evans and the Collective of Black Artists (COBA). Workshops will offer a variety of leadership topics such as social justice advocacy, health and well-being, curriculum, and strategies for success.

Leaders for Tomorrow began in 2004–2005, and built on the success of two earlier programs: Aboriginal and Racialized Women’s Leadership Course and Building Coalitions. It provides women members from all designated groups with an intensive, year-long leadership development program that includes workshops and experiences that relate directly

to leadership roles within ETFO, locally and provincially. Participants must put their learning into practice throughout the year. Graduates have demonstrated their growth and development by participating in union leadership both provincially and locally.

Diversity in Leadership, which began in 2006, provides members from designated groups, both male and female, an opportunity to discuss such leadership issues as barriers, bias, and privilege. They build new knowledge and network with others with similar interests. Guest speakers, including Didi Khayatt, Patrick Solomon, and Shakil Choudhury, have used current research to engage members in broad discussions of educational and leadership issues.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were introduced last year as a way to build members’ capacity for social justice and equity work. Women members took part in PLCs on white privilege and the experiences of immigrant educators. This year, an additional PLC for women members will focus on “Learning How to Change Your Self-Talk.” Two new PLCs for both men and women will also be held.

Visions has been a popular leadership event for members in their first five years particularly interested in union leadership.





Curriculum resources

EWS has developed a wide range of curriculum-based resources, with topics and issues that were determined by members' needs. Because effective implementation of curriculum requires support, hands-on workshops presented by trained members accompany our resources.

We're Erasing Prejudice for Good is a good example. Based on the understanding that children's literature provides an ideal entry point for teachers who want to develop inclusive classrooms, the kit includes lesson plans for SK to grade 8 classrooms, with the message that we love and respect one another in all of our wonderful diversity. Members researched and wrote the resource and subsequently presented the material in workshops across the province.

First introduced in 1999, *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good* has been continually updated: in 2002 we produced a supplement, *Respecting Cultures and Honouring Differences*, and in 2006 a French-language supplement, *Effaçons les préjugés pour de bon*. This year we are undertaking a comprehensive revision to produce the next-generation kit, *Social Justice Begins with Me*.

Since the inception of EWS, the breadth, depth, and volume of the resources have expanded enormously, paralleling the evolution of ETFO's investment in equity and social justice. The longevity of our resources attests to their quality and ongoing relevance. The former is a result of our members' commitment to a vision of equity and social justice; the latter is a

reminder of our need to continuously challenge our own prejudices and privileges.

Support for locals

EWS staff work directly with local equity and status of women committees to plan events, build knowledge and, in some locals, to establish new committees. Each fall the chairs of local committees come together for professional development at ETFO's leadership training.

ETFO also provides funding and incentives to locals for equity work that includes support for women's programs, for work countering homophobia and heterosexism, and for community partnerships around disability and other equity issues.

Partnerships and advocacy

EWS has supported the work of many social justice organizations by undertaking joint initiatives, providing financial support, and sharing resources and expertise.

ETFO's 10-year history of advocating for women's rights, supporting activism to end violence against women, and encouraging women to pursue leadership opportunities has included involvement with:

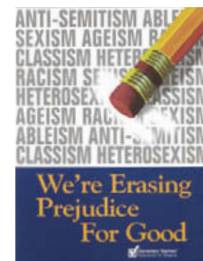
- **The Women's Future Fund** (WFF), celebrating Equality Day
- **The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund** (LEAF), providing financial support for Charter litigation to defend and further women's equality rights
- **The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action** (FAFIA), supporting research and activism around gender-sensitive budgeting by the federal government.

ETFO works to eliminate the violence against women that pervades our society so that women can live without fear and feel safe in their homes, workplaces, and communities. ETFO has provided training for members, as well as human, financial and material resources to a number of programs:

- **Springtide Resources** has partnered with us for many years in making available to members the antiviolence workshops **Break-**



Roberta Jamieson, (second from left), spoke at "...and still we rise" in 2005. With her are Ethel Birkett-Lavalley of the OFL, Cynthia Lemon of ETFO, and Marie Clarke Walker of the CLC.



ing the Silence and Woman Abuse Affects Our Children. ETFO makes an annual donation to support their newsletter.

- **Step It Up! End Violence Against Women** is a campaign launched by a provincial coalition in 2006.
- **Take Back the Night** raises awareness of safety issues for women and children.
- ETFO makes annual donations to women's crisis centres and shelters all over the province.

ETFO has worked tirelessly to fight homophobia and heterosexism by educating members about the histories, cultures and experiences of LGBT people and members. The federation has shown leadership in providing anti-homophobia training, workshops, funding, and print materials for locals and members. In 1999 ETFO distributed its first anti-homophobia pamphlet to schools. We participated in the campaign for legal recognition of same-sex marriages and, more recently, supported an Ontario private member's bill that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity. ETFO's **Rainbow Visions Award**, created in 2003, recognizes materials created by members that include LGBT realities. Since 2001, ETFO has participated in Pride Day in Toronto and provided funding and materials for locals that participate in Pride activities in their own communities.

ETFO helps fund and is on the steering committee of the **Ontario Coalition for Social Justice**, which promotes social and economic justice in Ontario. ETFO has also endorsed the **Make Poverty History Campaign**, and supports it by purchasing its white wristbands, promoting the campaign to locals and members, and linking to its website.

Awards

ETFO EWS resources and programs have received national recognition. We were honoured that *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good* (2001) and *The Power of Story* (2003) were finalists in the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's Award of Excellence. In 2005, *Leaders for Tomorrow* received honourable mention in the category of leadership training. 🏆

EWS Resources

- *Take a Closer Look* (2000) addresses media literacy.
- *The Power of Story* (vol. 1, 2002; vol. 2, 2004) links the experiences of Canadian girls and women to curriculum.
- *Imagine a World that Is Free from Fear* (2004) addresses issues relating to homophobia and heterosexism.
- *Circle of Learning* (2006) incorporates Aboriginal perspectives in elementary classrooms.

Newer additions include:

- *Roots of Equality* (2008) promotes healthy, equal relationships and raises awareness of violence towards women.
- *Connections* (2008) raises gender-related and social justice topics.
- *Beyond the Breakfast Program* (2008) is a workshop on class and poverty supported by the Ministry of Education.



This report was prepared by ETFO's Equity and Women's Services staff: Belinda Longe, Jacqueline Karsemeyer, Sherry Ramrattan Smith, and Carol Zavitz.

Membership Well-Being at the Forefront

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

Educators work in a highly regulated and litigious environment. Moreover, political, economic, social, and environmental change in the province inevitably affects families, children, and, of course, schools.

Some issues in educators' lives are constants: stress, health and safety concerns, potential allegations of misconduct, interaction with outside bodies such as the Children's Aid Society, College of Teachers matters, illness and injury, accommodation for disabilities, conflicts with school administrators, conflict with parents – the list is long. But, as might be expected, the larger picture has affected how all of these issues have played themselves out over the past 10 years.

Policy-induced stress

In ETFO's earliest years, work-related stress and its fallout (such as long-term disability claims) were on the rise. As the professional relations services report to the 2000 annual meeting noted: "With the government's unrelenting attacks on teachers and the realities of today's classrooms, educating members on ways to address stress in their lives remains critical."

There were particular stressors, of course, such as the new provincial report card introduced in ETFO's first year, as well as the introduction of standardized testing and recertification.

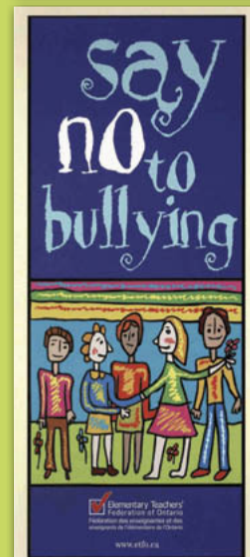
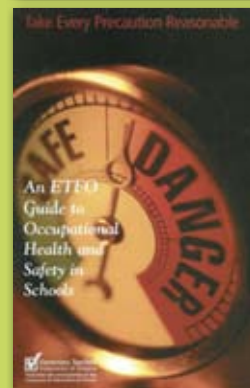
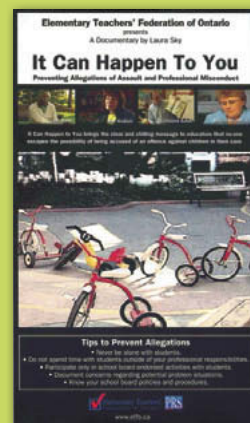
In September 2002 Bill 110, the *Quality in the Classroom Act* was implemented. This law mandated a new system of teacher performance appraisals, four in two years for new teachers and twice every three years thereafter. Understandably, the anxiety level in schools was palpable.

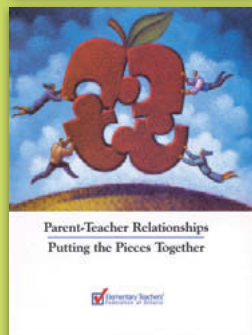
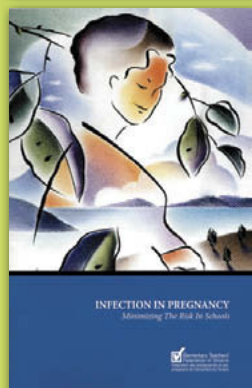
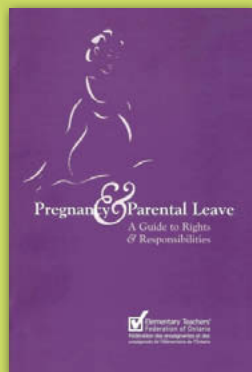
During this period the government also put in place a new system for criminal background checks. ETFO worked with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association to ensure a process that was as consistent and fair as possible.

Positive change

When the Liberals were elected in 2003 they made changes to some of these initiatives. For example, they scaled back standardized tests, repealed recertification, and enacted a less draconian performance

Christine Brown is ETFO's coordinator of Protective Services.





appraisal system. The union was instrumental in lobbying for amendments to performance appraisals to make them less punitive and more focused on professional growth, dialogue, and collaboration. Nevertheless, despite the changes ETFO locals and the provincial office have spent considerable time working with boards to ensure that the system is implemented appropriately, with a focus on respectful professional relationships.

Changes made to procedures for student suspension and expulsion in February 2008 were also positive. As part of the previous government's "get tough" agenda the *Education Act* had been amended in 2001 giving teachers the right to suspend students. This power is one that should clearly rest with school administration, and ETFO took the unusual step of issuing a formal advisory to members not to suspend students.

ETFO members were among those who benefitted in December 2000 when the federal government extended the period during which Employment Insurance (EI) benefits are available for pregnancy and parental leaves. Provincial governments, including Ontario, amended their own laws so that new parents could take advantage of these extended benefits. Today's challenge – one that is a goal in this round of negotiations – is to bargain increased supplemental payments to top up EI benefits when members go on leave.

Fluctuations in the labour market in the past decade have also driven public policy. When ETFO was founded, the province was facing a teacher shortage. Changes to the pension plan made early retirement more feasible for many teachers. In addition, applications to faculties of education had plummeted – hardly surprising given the climate of the preceding years. One lasting effect of this was a new focus on retaining new teachers, a group disproportionately at risk of leaving the profession. Many aspects of the New Teacher Induction Program, which came into effect in 2007, are a legacy of these times.

Awareness of health and safety

Over the past 10 years, educators have developed a greater awareness of the health and safety implications of their work. While educating children has always been considered a relatively safe occupation, we know from a decade's worth of experience with Workers' Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims that complacency on anyone's part would be a mistake.

In 1998, the year ETFO was founded, the province made extensive changes to how WSIB deals with those who have experienced work-related injury or illness. The system, which had been focused on compensating ill or injured workers, is now focused on returning them to work as quickly as possible. As well, the "loss of earning" benefit was reduced from 90 per cent of take home pay to 85 per cent.

As schools age, and as boards struggle under the dysfunctional funding formula to find sufficient funds for maintenance and repairs, the health and well-being of ETFO members is affected. Slips and falls, particularly in parking lots, are major occupational hazards. Recently, there has also been an increase in air quality-related incidents, such as exposure to toxic chemicals and mould (especially in leaky portables).

As for long-term disability (LTD), stress and related conditions such as depression and anxiety remain the most common cause for claims today. In recent years, there has also been an increase in cancer-related and circulatory system LTD claims.

These are just a few of the ways in which the working lives of ETFO's members have been shaped by the occasionally turbulent past 10 years. To educators, the legal, regulatory, and political environment is not a remote process that happens far away in Queen's Park. Rather, it is the reality that shapes the day-to-day work that they do, and their relations with their employers, students, and communities. Its consequences are tangible, something governments of all stripes need to keep in mind. ■

2007-2008 Prime Minister's Teaching Awards

Three ETFO members received a Certificate of Achievement. They are:

Kim Redmond, Codrington PS, Simcoe County DSB

Sheryl Johnston, Roberta Bondar PS, Peel DSB

Priyadarshini Sivarajah, Hollywood Public School, Toronto DSB

For more information go to tinyurl.com/6g77km



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2008 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History

Three ETFO members were among 25 finalists for the award. They are:

Andrew Rychel, W. H. Morden Public School, Oakville

Bryce M. Honsinger, Applewood Public School, Caistor Centre

Nicole Aucoin, Horizon Alternative Senior School, Toronto

For more information go to historysociety.ca/gga.asp

ETFO Member Wins OTIP Contest

Dayle Mannion, a teacher at Maple Ridge Elementary School in Ottawa, is one of two Ontario teachers to win a \$5,000 travel voucher in OTIP's (Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan) "Gimme A Break" travel contest. Check otip.com for details about the next contest.

"I think all of us as volunteers came in acknowledging that, yes, we may have skills, but we're also going to learn a lot."

— Michele Hillier, Sri Lanka



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For the first time this year ETFO is providing online resources for locals to help them run Book Clubs for their members.

For more details visit etfo.ca ► Professional development ► Book Clubs or look for the flyer in the next steward mailing.



BY HILDA WATKINS

The Ontario College of Teachers: Still a source of concern

IT IS FITTING, in ETFO's 10th anniversary year, that we celebrate its successes. However, we must also look, acknowledge and reflect on the challenges that bind the 155,000 members of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF). One of these is the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). Since its inception in 1996, many aspects of the college have been a source of grave concern for federation.

First, it is important to differentiate between the mandates of the two organizations. OTF is responsible for advocating on behalf of the profession, while the college regulates the profession in the public interest. Often in the years since its formation, the college has been perceived as straying beyond its mandate and undertaking initiatives that are both costly and unnecessary. This has led to numerous discussions about the OCT fee between OTF and the college.

Teachers want their college to use their fees prudently. Most members believe that the OCT annual membership fee of \$104 is too high. They will be disappointed to learn that the college's governing council recently endorsed an annual fee of \$120 for three years beginning in 2009. The chair of council, an elected member, justified this increase in a recent article of *Professionally Speaking* by indicating additional need in the areas of accreditation, investigations, and hearings as well as the need to purchase a building or secure office space.

Let's be clear: councillors should fulfill their mandate and their fiduciary responsibilities. Indeed, it is a legislative requirement. However, the funding of activities that stray beyond the OCT mandate should not be tolerated. The excessive manner in which the college undertakes some of its initiatives (for example, OCT's attendance at job fairs in Quebec, New Brunswick, and New York) must be curtailed. College

staff presenting professional learning activities for teachers around the province is an undertaking not contemplated in its mandate and therefore should cease.

The college offices are currently located in the Bloor-Church area of Toronto, prime real estate that the college is continuing to consider for its permanent facility. Its proximity to Queen's Park should not be a factor. Real estate in other areas serviced by Toronto's transit system could be significantly cheaper and still accessible for members and staff. The selection of a facility must be guided by fiscal responsibility.

Over the course of a decade, there have been improvements in the OCT's governance structure. When the Harris Tories passed the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* in 1996 it established a governing council of 31 members, 17 of them elected. Of these, only 13 were OTF members.

The federation had numerous concerns. The College was seen as the vehicle by which the government carried out its policies and regulations (Ontario teacher qualifying test, recertification, teacher performance appraisal). As a result, the college had very little credibility among the members. The entire notion of a self-regulating body was fundamentally flawed because the governing structure did not have a majority of teachers.

In 2006, following an intensive lobbying campaign by OTF members, the Liberal government amended the *Act*. OTF members now have a slight plurality on the governing council.

Overall a more constructive relationship now exists between OTF and the college. Nevertheless, there are numerous outstanding issues. Hopefully, when ETFO celebrates its 20th anniversary, a more positive reflection will be outlined.

Hilda Watkins is an ETFO vice-president and is ETFO's OTF table officer.



BY EMILY NOBLE

Congratulations from CTF

ON BEHALF of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), please accept my sincerest congratulations to you – members and leaders of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario – on the occasion of your tenth anniversary. It seems as if it were only yesterday that the federation came into existence.

When I think of this anniversary, I am reminded of the great strides ETFO has made during the past 10 years and of its accomplishments on issues related to social justice, gender equity, professional development, and collective bargaining. ETFO's important contributions to the teaching profession have gone beyond provincial borders, through its involvement with CTF national committees, and engagement and participation in CTF's international initiatives.

Of course, I also have very fond personal memories, having been a member of ETFO's executive since its inception and its president during the last round of collective bargaining, which achieved such important gains for members. Thank you for giving me the privilege and opportunity of serving you during the federation's first decade.

I am also extremely proud to be the first ETFO member to have become CTF president. With my congratulations go my best wishes for your success and prosperity in the future as part of the CTF family.

Emily Noble is president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Canada's third annual National Media Education Week, Nov. 3–7, aims to promote the importance of media literacy as a key component in the education of children and youth. This year the focus is on encouraging young people to practice ethical behaviour when using new technologies.

In keeping with this year's theme "Think Critically, Act Ethically", the Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the CTF have developed free resources for teachers and students that address the issue of cyber bullying and online harassment. These are available at mediaeducationweek.ca.

MNet and the CTF are working with education organizations and libraries, as well as with community, parent and youth groups to organize and promote a variety of media education events leading up to and during the week, including: youth forums, media production workshops, classroom activities, panel discussions, parent information sessions, professional development workshops, and conference presentations.

There are many excellent activities that can be implemented in your school or community.

Throughout the week, CTF and MNet will be looking for innovative media education initiatives by educators and youth to feature in newsletters and on the NMEW website. Those interested in having their activity profiled should contact MNet at info@media-awareness.ca.

For more information on how National Media Education Week 2008, visit mediaeducationweek.ca or contact MNet at info@media-awareness.ca.

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trivia

BY PETER HARRISON

Crossed Lines

On a large sheet of paper, Julie drew a big red circle. Then she marked some black dots round the edge of it.

Taking her blue pen, she joined the dots with the greatest possible number of straight lines so that no three complete straight lines formed a triangle.

Counting up all the lines, she found that she had drawn three times as many blue lines as she had marked black dots.

How many black dots were there?

Send your answer to ETFOVoice@etfo.org with the word "Trivia" in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to Editor, ETFO Voice, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all the correct entries received by November 21, 2008.

Solution to our last puzzle

Don't Panic

**The second and third numbers are:
12684 and 35937**

Winners are chosen by lottery from all the correct answers received. They are:

**Barbara Herman, Toronto;
Wendy Louwerse, Bluewater**

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November 2-4, TORONTO

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Engaging Our Community of Learners

Ontario School Counsellors' Association
Doubletree International Plaza Hotel
osca.ca

November 5-8, DALLAS

2008 NAEYC Annual Conference and Expo

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Dallas, Texas
naeyc.org

November 6-8, TORONTO

Texture 2008

The Ontario Music Educators' Association
Doubletree International Plaza Hotel
omea.on.ca

November 6-8, LONDON

CEC Ontario's 52nd Annual Conference!

Ontario Council for Exceptional Children
Hilton Hotel - cecontario.ca

November 8, VAUGHAN, ON

OFSHEEA Annual Conference 2008

Authentic Family Studies for the 21st Century

Ontario Family Studies Home Economic Educators' Association
Maple High School - ofsheea.ca

November 12-14, RICHMOND HILL

Inspire, Connect, Teach

29th Annual Conference of the Educational Computing Organization of Ontario - ecoo.org

November 13-15, TORONTO

STAO 2008

Learning through STSE

The Science Teachers' Association of Ontario/Association des Professeurs de Sciences de l'Ontario annual conference.
Doubletree International Plaza Hotel
stao.org

Canada-wide, November 15

Deadline for submissions

2008-2009 Museums and Schools Partnership Award

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For more information:

museums.ca/en/about_cma/awards/museums_and_schools_partnership_award

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INTERNATIONAL TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SEARCH ASSOCIATES 13th Annual International Recruiting Fair, Friday, Jan. 30-Sunday, Feb. 1st at the Delta Chelsea Hotel, Toronto. First international recruitment fair in Canada. Hundreds of job openings in all teaching areas will be available for the upcoming school year. Fifty (50) recruiters representing over 80 schools in over 30 countries will be in attendance. This fair is by invitation only so apply early. Go to www.searchassociates.com, 2009 Fair Schedule or contact Ray Sparks at ray-sparks@eastlink.ca for additional information.

THE WORLD IS YOUR CLASSROOM Experience the personal and professional growth that comes from a year of living and working in another country. The Canadian Education Exchange Foundation facilitates reciprocal teacher exchanges to destinations that include the United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia and some U.S. states. We are now accepting applications for the 2009/2010 school year. For more information visit www.ceef.ca; email cwilk@ceef.ca or telephone 705-739-7596.

SPEND A YEAR as a counsellor in Australia. Would you consider a year (2009) in Australia on school counsellor employment exchange? We will swap homes, jobs, climates, etc. We live in a beachside home in sunny Port Macquarie, New South Wales. I work in both a secondary and a primary school but you would work at either one, or both. Contact Dawn Dockrill; Dawn. Dockrill@education.nsw.gov.au



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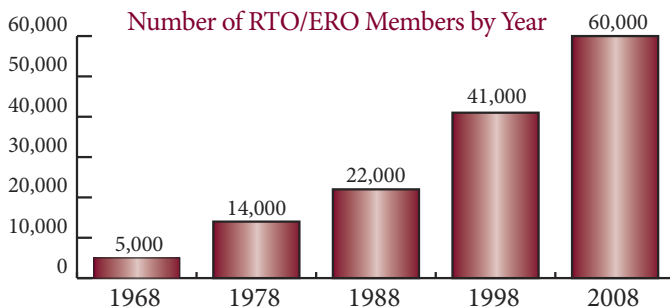


For the past 40 years, The Retired Teachers of Ontario/les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario (RTO/ERO) has provided quality programs and services for retired members of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and other retired educators including principals and vice-principals and educational support staff. These include:

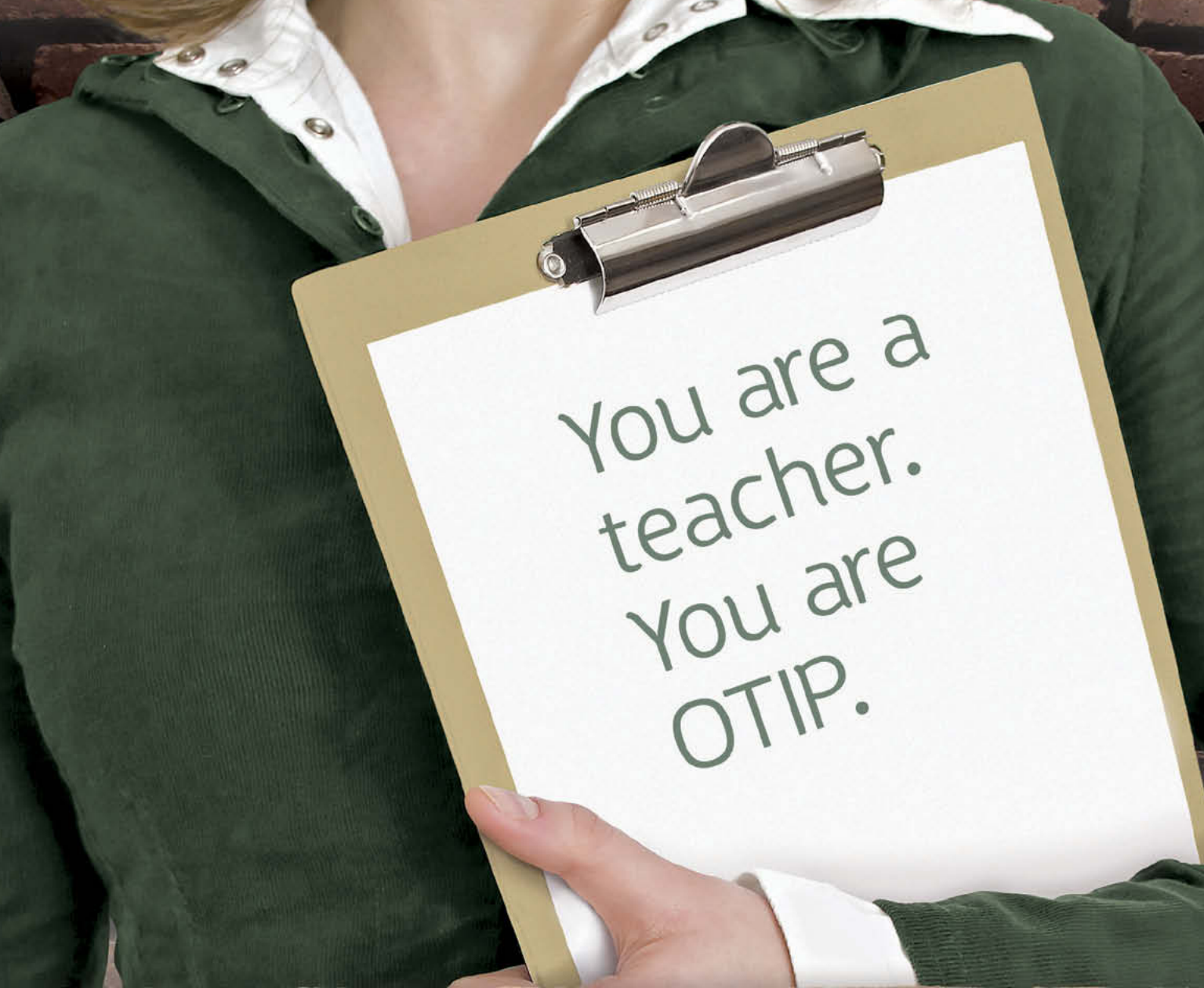
- ✓ Comprehensive, Competitive and Affordable Health & Insurance Plans, Owned and Managed by its Members
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Since 1968, RTO/ERO has become the official voice and lead organization for retired teachers in the province of Ontario. It has amassed the largest retiree educator health and insurance plan in Canada and the favoured choice of retired Ontario teachers with 40,000 participants.

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