

ETFO

OCTOBER 2009
VOL. 12 - NO. 1

Voice

A photograph of a man with grey hair and a goatee, wearing a grey and white striped zip-up shirt and dark pants, kneeling on a blue carpeted floor. He is looking down at a young child with blonde hair, who is wearing a blue t-shirt and dark pants. The child is sitting on the floor, facing the man, and has their hands raised towards the man's hands. In the background, there is a computer monitor, a large white fan, and a map on the wall. A yellow toy alligator is on the floor near the child's feet.

ETFO's 2009 Annual Meeting
**TEACHERS ARE KEY TO
FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN**

Spotlight on EcoSchools

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ON OUR COVER:

Kindergarten teacher **NICK RADIA** is a member
of the Elementary teachers of Toronto Local.

Photo: Anne de Haas

Qualified Teachers Are Key to Full-day Kindergarten

The government's plans for full-day kindergarten have been the subject of debate around the province for the last few months. After promising full-day kindergarten during the 2007 election campaign Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed an early learning advisor, Charles Pascal, who released his report in June. From ETFO's perspective Dr. Pascal made one major unacceptable recommendation: that full-day kindergarten should be staffed for half the day by personnel who are not teachers.

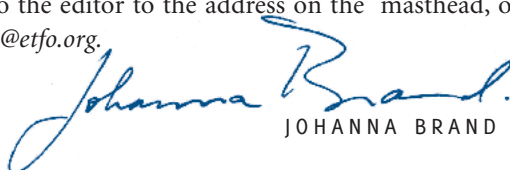
Throughout the summer and early fall groups closely aligned with Dr. Pascal have mounted a campaign to persuade the government to adopt his vision. ETFO in turn has advocated vigorously on behalf of our members who teach kindergarten, a group sometimes underestimated.

Our coverage begins with the report on the 2009 annual meeting, (p. 8). A full array of resources about full-day kindergarten is available on our website, etfo.ca. ETFO's expertise in kindergarten education is widely sought after as you will see in the report by staff members Dr. Anne Rodrigue and Joan Littleford (p. 16).

The first issue of the new school year typically highlights ETFO members who have won awards. This year Carrie Schoemer and her class are among them. They made an anti-racism video and won a national competition (p. 18).

And finally, this issue puts a spotlight on the Ecoschools program – one of the best ways members can address ETFO's priority, "care and protection of the environment."

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine. Your comments are always welcome. Send letters to the editor to the address on the masthead, or send an email to jbrand@etfo.org.


JOHANNA BRAND



To: jbrand@etfo.org

Subject: Letters to the editor

RE: SHARING LEADERSHIP WORLDWIDE (April 2009)

As past participants in Project Overseas Adrianna Knight and I would like to express, albeit a bit late, our delight in the *Voice* article about Project Overseas. Not only did the article give the Project a great deal of publicity, but it was a heart-warming to read, and contained wonderful stories about our roles as educators, and about the real-life connections we make when we participate in such initiatives.

Sincerely,

Wes Delve, York Region DSB

Adrianna Knight, Halton DSB

ETFOVoice

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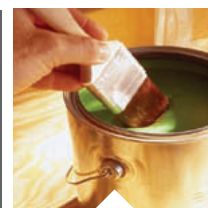
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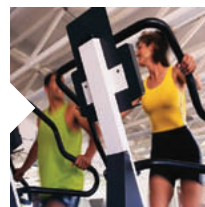
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SAM HAMMOND
President, ETFO

My Goal: A More Open and Accountable Federation

As you read this I trust you will be settled into the new school year. For educators September is a month of change and adjustment, of setting goals, and establishing a classroom routine. By now you and your students are moving forward, working to make your goals a reality.

There are many parallels between what happens to you in the classroom and what I have been experiencing in my new role as your president. Change and adjustment have been a constant since my election to the ETFO presidency at the annual meeting in August. But at the same time, I have hit the ground running and have experienced many firsts, including this one—the president's column in *Voice* magazine.

Over the past few years I have been clear about my goals for this federation: to make this a more accountable organization, with a more transparent and inclusive decision-making structure – an organization that works for you, the educators who are the heart of ETFO and the public education system. I offered you strong leadership, leadership that is collaborative, responsive, and respectful. Now, I too am working – on your behalf – to ensure my promises and my goals become a reality.

Since I first ran for office in this union in 1998, I have taken principled stands, I have questioned the status quo, and, at every turn I have done what I have felt was right. I was the chief negotiator for the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local when it endured a 17-day strike/lockout in 2000. During this time my leadership style worked to ensure that every member of my local was fully informed and included every step of the way – and it paid off, as every member jointed our picket line and stayed strong throughout the dispute. It was a time when we had to fight a government that wanted to undermine our profession and our

public education system. We understood that we were fighting not only for ourselves but also for our students.

Teacher federations have fought this fight many times over the years. We have won significant improvements that have not only benefited us but have also improved public education in this province. But we must never take any advance for granted and we must now vigorously defend the hard-won gains of the last round of negotiations. You deserve nothing less.

As educators we are professionals, but we are also union members. Unions have always taken the lead in social justice and equity work – we work hard to improve the lives of our members and we wish these improvements for all of society. As a union we have much more to do.

I have always believed that it is important to understand and work with the broader labour community and to make our voice heard in the Ontario Federation of Labour, in the Canadian Labour Congress, and in local labour councils across the province. That's why I have marched with union brothers and sisters in every Labour Day parade in Hamilton for more than a decade.

Presidents do not work alone. As I begin to undertake the work you elected me to do I feel fortunate to be able to work with a dedicated leadership team, your ETFO executive. We are supported in our work by the leaders of the ETFO locals across the province. We are also fortunate to have the support of our dedicated and hard working ETFO staff. I am looking forward to working with them and with each and every one of you over the next two years.

I wish you all the best in your assignment this school year.



GENE LEWIS

General Secretary, ETFO

New Collective Agreements Support Teacher Professionalism

Elementary teachers are professionals. They understand how best to organize their time and commitments to meet the educational needs of their students. ETFO collective agreements support teacher professionalism.

A case in point is the newly negotiated language relating to staff meetings. During the last round of negotiations language about staff meetings was placed in every collective agreement for our teacher members.

As you will note in Christine Brown's column on page 34, the new collective agreements do not make attendance at staff meetings mandatory. Teachers are expected to attend them, and in most cases doing so is probably wise. However, you are not required to attend.

Furthermore, the agreements stipulate that staff meetings, on average, must be no more than 75 minutes long and held no more than once a month. The dates for the year's staff meetings should be scheduled at the beginning of the year in consultation with the teachers in the school. The teachers should also be consulted on the agenda for staff meetings. Meetings should begin as soon as possible after classroom responsibilities have concluded and, in any case, no more than 15 minutes after students have been dismissed.

Why is it important to have these restrictions on staff meetings?

Traditionally staff meetings were an opportunity for boards and principals to deliver information to teachers and education workers and for the staff to discuss administrative and operational issues. Recently teachers have been overwhelmed with new demands from the Ministry of Education and school boards eager to implement new initiatives and raise test scores. The collective agreement provisions help to allow teachers to focus their energy on the tasks they know will truly support their students' learning.

There have been growing concerns about staff meetings being used to deliver compulsory professional development. This violates ETFO's belief (outlined in our policy statement) that professional learning should be self-directed and freely chosen by the teacher. As professionals, teachers do not want to be subjected to professional development someone else has decided on. While the collective agreement does not prohibit the imposition of compulsory PD, it does establish limits.

Staff meetings are addressed in your collective agreement. Divisional and similar meetings are not staff meetings. If divisional and similar meetings are not addressed in your collective agreement, it is the position of the federation that your attendance at such meetings is voluntary. Again, this is not to say you should not attend. Rather, you should use your professional judgement. The decision to attend is yours to make.

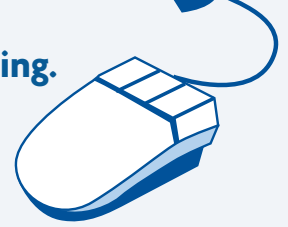
Similarly how you use your preparation time is strictly your decision to make. Your preparation time is not to be used for meetings unless you agree. Divisional and like meetings are not to be held during preparation time unless the teacher participants have agreed.

As professionals, teachers understand their duty to their students. The know in any real emergency they are expected to cooperate with each other and with the school administration and act in the best interests of students and other staff.

Administrators who treat all educators like mature professionals are acting to benefit the whole school community. They are working to create an atmosphere of dignity and respect that cannot help but be transmitted to everyone in the school. It's an approach that is encouraged by the collective agreement language ETFO has negotiated.

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ETFO's 2009 Annual Meeting

The election of a new provincial executive, the introduction of full-day kindergarten, and EQAO testing were the focus of delegates' attention and concern at ETFO's 2009 annual meeting.

Elections occur every two years. This year delegates elected a new president, Sam Hammond.

As well delegates debated and approved motions directing the federation to

- undertake a campaign that emphasizes the importance of qualified teachers in kindergarten classrooms
- increase public awareness of the negative effect of EQAO testing.

Newly elected president Sam Hammond said it was important to "aggressively advance" ETFO's position on full-day kindergarten, "so that junior and senior kindergarten students will have a program taught by teachers." Having qualified teachers in the classroom for the full day is "best for children and their learning," Hammond said.

Hammond also focused on the "burden EQAO testing places on students and teachers" and on the need to continue working to increase the funding provided for elementary students so that it equals that provided for secondary students.



TEACHERS ARE KEY TO FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

On Monday August 17, just prior to the start of its annual meeting, ETFO released the results of a survey on public perceptions of full-day kindergarten. Later in the week, annual meeting delegates directed the federation to launch a campaign focusing on the importance of having a certified teacher in the kindergarten classroom for the full day.

During the 2007 provincial election campaign Premier Dalton McGuinty promised full-day kindergarten programs, starting in 2010. Once re-elected, the premier named Dr. Charles Pascal as his early learning advisor and charged him with developing a plan to implement the promise. The report that Dr. Pascal released in June did not outline a plan for full-day kindergarten; it called for childcare programs provided in schools to be added to the current half-day kindergarten program.

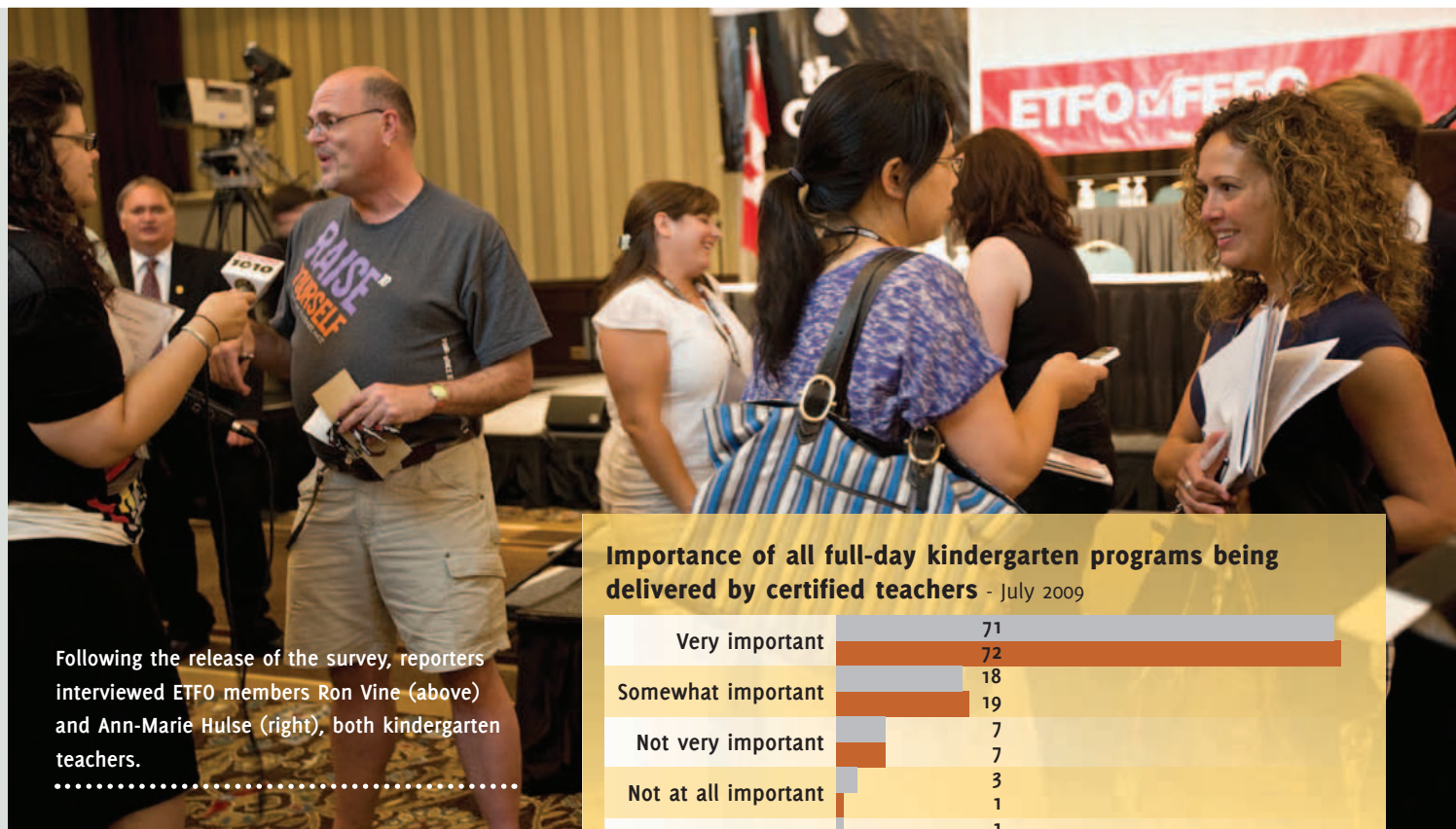
ETFO's position is that full-day kindergarten means a certified teacher in the classroom for the full day. Ideally there would also be an early childhood education worker in the classroom to work with the

teacher. But for ETFO the presence of a qualified teacher is key.

Parents support this position. Commissioned by ETFO, the respected polling firm Environics surveyed 900 adult Ontarians in June and July, including 323 parents of children under the age of eight. The results were statistically significant, with a margin of error of 3.3 and 5.6 percentage points 19 times out of 20 respectively.


The survey showed that the public supports full-day junior and senior kindergarten programs and, further, that these programs should be staffed by certified teachers.

The accompanying charts provide the survey results.

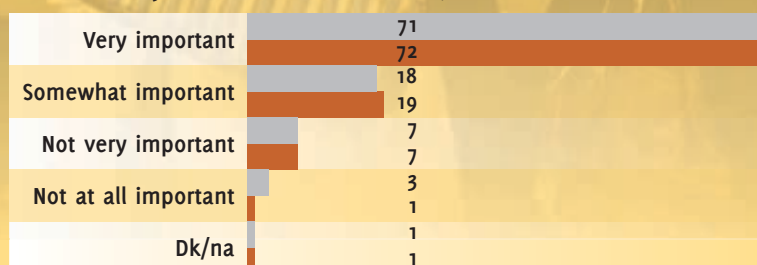


Following the release of the survey, reporters interviewed ETFO members Ron Vine (above) and Ann-Marie Hulse (right), both kindergarten teachers.

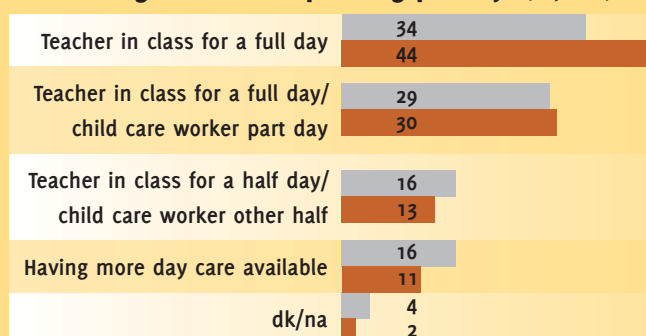
This survey was not the first to underscore the importance of staffing full-day kindergarten programs with qualified teachers. Nor was it the first to find that the public and parents support the concept. European countries, New Zealand, and the United States have all recognized the importance of the presence of a certified teacher for the full day. Prince Edward Island's commission on early learning has done likewise and is recommending that early childhood educators acquire teaching credentials over a number of years. In the speech from the throne in August, the British Columbia government announced plans for a full-day kindergarten program staffed by certified teachers.

ETFO's position paper "Moving Ontario Forward" provides the research that supports the importance of certified teachers in the kindergarten classroom. You can download it, and the full Environics report from our website, etfo.ca. 

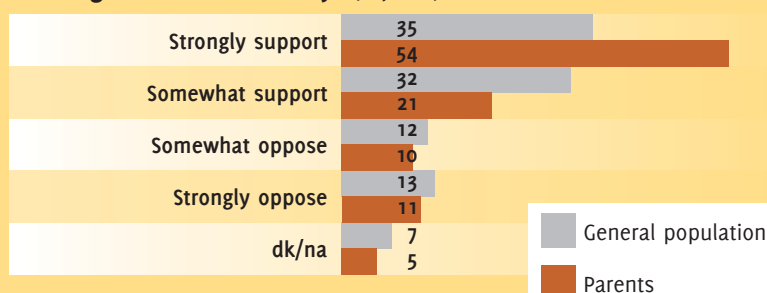
Importance of all full-day kindergarten programs being delivered by certified teachers - July 2009



Preferred government spending priority - July 2009



Support for provincial government's plan of expanding kindergarten to a full day - July 2009



Prepared for ETFO by Environics Research Group

ETFO Executive, 2009 -11



Sam Hammond, President

Sam Hammond takes on the position of federation president six years after first joining the ETFO executive. He has served one term as first vice-president and two terms as vice-president.

Hammond has a long history of federation involvement. From 1998–2003, he was the chief negotiator and grievance officer for the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local. He was chief negotiator when the local's 2,300 teacher members went through a 17-day strike/lockout in 2000.

Hammond has worked on numerous municipal, provincial, and federal political campaigns and has been a long-time member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Labour Council.

He has taught physical education and health, from junior kindergarten through grade 8 and has also taught additional qualification courses in physical education and health and in risk management at Brock University's faculty of education.



Susan Swackhammer, First Vice-President

Susan Swackhammer assumes the position of first vice-president after serving seven years as president of the Grand Erie Teacher Local. A long-serving ETFO activist, Swackhammer was one of the founding executive members of ETFO and held the position of first vice-president from 1998 to 2000.

Swackhammer served as a provincial executive member from 2007 to 2009. She served as president of the Brant Teacher Local of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO – one of ETFO's predecessor organizations) from 1991 to 1995 and began serving on the FWTAO provincial executive in 1995. As a teacher with the Grand Erie District School Board, Swackhammer taught all grades, from kindergarten to grade 8.



Hilda Watkins, Vice-President

A former president of the Greater Essex County Teacher Local, Hilda Watkins served as OTF president in 2006. Prior to that, she was a member of the governing council of the Ontario College of Teachers. She has been a member of the ETFO executive since 2005 and a teacher for more than 30 years.



Maureen Weinberger, Vice-President, Female

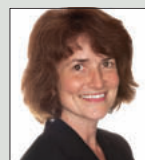
Maureen Weinberger assumes the position of vice-president after two years as an ETFO executive member and seven years as president of the Halton Teacher Local. Weinberger has been a teacher for more than 30 years. She is committed to her local community and serves on the board of directors of Community Development Halton.

Executive Members



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OTF Table Officer,
Hamilton-Wentworth
Occasional Teacher
Local



Adelina Cecchin

Greater Essex County
Teacher Local



Diane Dewing

Upper Canada
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Doug Cook

Upper Grand Teacher
Local



Rachel Gencey

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Mike Lumb

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Local



Deb St. Amant

Kawartha Pine Ridge
Teacher Local

Delegates Contribute to the Herbie Fund

Delegates at ETFO's annual meeting donated more than \$25,000 to the Herbie Fund after hearing from TV news anchor Gord Martineau. The charity has made it possible for more than 600 children from 88 countries worldwide to obtain medical and surgical treatments at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.



NDP Leader Andrea Horwath Addresses Delegates

Newly-elected NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, spoke about the critical role of education in creating a fair and just society. She called on the McGuinty government to increase funding for programs like special education and ESL, and to increase funding for school capital budgets to upgrade facilities. She criticized the government for continuing to focus on EQAO scores and supported ETFO's oft-repeated advice to parents: a teacher is the best person to evaluate how a student is doing in school. She also supported ETFO's opposition to the school information finder website, a government site that compares schools on the basis of EQAO test scores.



Honorary Life Members Named

Every year ETFO awards honorary life memberships to dedicated activists and staff who have worked for the federation and its predecessor organizations. The 2009 honorary life members are: **Regine Baker**, former president of the York Region Teacher Local, a director of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO); **Margaret Taylor**, former Peel Teacher Local activist and ETFO staff member; **Robert Blackwood**, former president of the Simcoe District of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF), the Simcoe County Teacher and the Simcoe County Occasional Teacher locals; **Val Duhaime**, former president of the Rainbow Teacher and the Rainbow Occasional Teacher locals; and **Anna Huston**, former first vice-president of the Durham Teacher Local.



Barbara Burkett Receives President's Award

Every year the ETFO president bestows a special award on a person who has made outstanding contributions to ETFO. The 2009 recipient was **Barbara Burkett**, who retired this year after serving four years as ETFO vice-president. Burkett, a teacher for 25 years, has a long history of involvement in ETFO and its predecessor organization, the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. She is past president of the Ontario North East Teacher Local and has served on numerous ETFO and local committees. Outgoing President David Clegg praised Burkett for her dedication and unwavering commitment to the principles of equity and social justice.



ETFO's Award-Winning Body Image Project



Jill Skinner representing the Canadian Medical Association presents the award to David Clegg, ETFO president, 2007-2009.

ETFO has received the Canadian Medical Association's Award for Excellence in Health Promotion. The award recognizes individuals and organizations from outside of the health sector who have made a significant contribution toward a healthy population and a healthy community.

"The CMA's vision of a healthy population can only be achieved through the actions of all Canadians," CMA President Dr. Robert Ouellet said in a news release. "We are delighted to present the 2009 Award for Excellence in Health Promotion to this dynamic provincial organization whose contribution to developing healthy self-esteem and body image in all children has made a difference in elementary schools across the province of Ontario."

Reflections of Me: The ETFO Body Image Project is a schoolwide preventative program. Teachers using the program help young children develop healthy and positive attitudes toward their bodies, and self-esteem.

Research indicates that attitudes about body image begin to develop when children are as young as four or five. Negative body image and low self-esteem are far-reaching and cause recurring problems: children withdraw from social networks and do poorly in academic subjects and physical education – the very activities that could provide support and strengthen their self-esteem and provide supportive environments.

The *Reflections of Me* lessons encourage self-awareness and acceptance of differences while building on other anti-bullying programs.

ETFO launched *Reflections of Me* in 2004. Since then, trained ETFO members have been teaching colleagues around the province how to use the program in their schools.

Reflections of Me can be purchased from shopETFO, shopetfo.etfo.ca. To download additional program resources go to etfo.ca → Resource → Body Image Project.

You can read more about the body image project in the *Summer 2004* and *February 2007* issues of *Voice*. Go to the *Voice* website: etf-ovoice.ca → Back issues.

ETFO Awards

- Shannon Bailey (Creedon), Keewatin-Patricia: Humanitarian Award for an ETFO Member
- Allison Belyea, Limestone Occasional Teachers: Occasional Teacher of the Year
- R. J. Carter, Peel: Writer (unpublished)
- Rebecca Codack, Peel: Multi-Media, WP
- Marina Cohen, York Region: Curriculum Development, WP
- Karen Fisk, Hastings-Prince Edward: Writer's Award, WP (unpublished)
- Daniel Grant, York Region: Multi-Media
- The Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home and School Associations (nominated by the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local): Innovative Projects on Behalf of Children Living in Poverty
- Charles Heller, Peel: Arts and Culture
- Shazilla (Shelly) Jan, Peel Occasional Teachers: Newsletter Editor(single-sheet)
- Shernett Martin, Elementary Teachers of Toronto: Writer, WP (published)
- James McCormack, Waterloo Region: Local Leadership
- John Payne, Waterloo Region: Newsletter Editor's Award (multi-sheet)
- Kimberly Peters, Durham: Writer (published)
- Dorothy Ramsay, Simcoe County Occasional Teachers: Outstanding Role Model for Women – WP
- Ricardo Rodriguez, Elementary Teachers of Toronto: New Teacher of the Year
- Sister Christine Leyser, nominated by the Upper Grand Teacher Local: Women Working In Social Activism on Behalf of Women and Children, WP
- Adam Wadon, Elementary Teachers of Toronto: Health and Safety Activist

* WP designates awards funded by Women's Program funds. Unless otherwise indicated recipients are members of teacher locals.

Right to Play + ETFO = Better Education for Young Children



ETFO members have been instrumental in creating positive change on many platforms; their dedication to improving the circumstances of those less fortunate on both a local and international level is unparalleled.

For several years ETFO has worked in partnership with Right To Play, the international organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world.

At the annual meeting, Johann Koss, Olympic gold medal speed skater and founder of Right To Play, thanked ETFO for its support and commitment. “ETFO members have been instrumental in creating positive change on many platforms; their dedication to improving the circumstances of those less fortunate on both a local and international level is unparalleled,” said Koss.

“You’ve carved a niche for yourselves as ‘Thought Leaders’ – paving the way for innovative thinking

and education, which can be used to assist children internationally who are unable to find help in their own communities.”

ETFO’s support helps provide programs and resources that especially encourage the participation of women and the development of their leadership skills.

In partnership with Right To Play and other organizations, ETFO staff officers have delivered teacher education programs in Cambodia, Dubai, and Benin. The Cambodia project, now spearheaded by the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation was featured in the June 2009 issue of *Voice* (read it online at etfovoice.ca).

Koss pointed out that in Benin, ETFO and Right To Play have stepped in to provide assistance with early childhood education – something the

country has not been able to provide to its children for 20 years. The ECE program helps reduce social inequality, Koss said: “Investing in human capital is one of the most important investments we can make, establishing a foundation for future learning. Through the implementation of ECE and ‘Play to Learn, Learn to Play’ programs, we can positively impact children’s lives by altering the trajectory of their development.”

In Benin Right To Play works in 15 preschools with over 2,000 children. 

ETFO supports early education in Benin. In “Through African Eyes” (pages 16-17) staff officers Dr. Anne Rodrigue and Joan Littleford describe the work they are doing with educators in that country.

ETFO's 2009 Annual Meeting

Bursaries and Scholarships

Aboriginal Women in Education Bursary, WP: Tanya Leary, York Region; Allison Lynn; Lisa Michano; Carla Vincent.

Bev Saskoley Anti-Racist Scholarship: Allina Lee, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Doctoral Scholarship: Antonino Giambrone, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Doctoral Scholarship Award, WP: Jana Duncan, Rainbow.

ETFO Bursaries – Designated Groups, WP: Mary Ampomah, Elementary Teachers of Toronto; Suzy DeJesus, Peel; Kara Cherland; Natalie Gavin.

ETFO Bursaries – Designated Groups: Brenda Alouache; Deena Douara; Nicole Luinenburg; Christopher Stewart.

ETFO Bursaries (Children of ETFO members): Daniel Feldberg, York Region; Valerie-Lyn Foster, Upper Grand; Caitlin Henderson, Peel Occasional Teachers; Robyn Hogan, Upper Canada; Yasmine Kherraji, Trillium Lakelands; Tamara Mervin, Elementary Teachers of Toronto; Shannon Smith, Keewatin-Patricia Occasional Teachers; Alan Stanley, Kawartha Pine Ridge; Jordyne Williams, York Region; Amy Wilson, Waterloo Region; Larissa Woods, Thames Valley; Elizabeth Young, Ottawa-Carleton.

Master's Scholarship: Kevin Auckland, Thames Valley; Amy Jensen, Hamilton-Wentworth; Angie Ortlieb, Elementary Teachers of Toronto; Ken Overeem, Thames Valley; Valence Young, Renfrew County.

Master's Scholarship, WP: Zaiba Beg, Peel; Melissa Jensen, Simcoe County; Tasleem Ladak-Haidari, York Region; Karen Naik, Elementary Teachers of Toronto; Tammy Pearce, Upper Grand.

WP designates awards funded by ETFO's Women's Program.

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 → Award and Scholarships

Or watch for the Awards flyer in the steward mailings.



ETFO PRIORITIES:

- ▶ To protect the collective bargaining rights of all members
- ▶ To defend publicly-funded public education
- ▶ To serve the needs of the membership
- ▶ To provide for the professional development of members
- ▶ To promote social justice in the areas of anti-poverty, non-violence, and equity
- ▶ To support international assistance and co-operation
- ▶ To promote the care and protection of the environment
- ▶ To actively engage members in the Federation
- ▶ To promote and protect the health and safety of members.



ETFO 2009-10 BUDGET General Fund

REVENUE

FEES

from teachers, occasional teachers,	
ESP/PSP & associate members + investments	\$64,571,051
Defense Fund	(12,444,960)
Political Action/Public Relations Fund	(1,605,801)
OTF/CTF/EI Fees	(3,236,951)
QECO Fees	(1,124,942)
OFL/CLC Fees	(846,024)

NET REVENUE **\$45,312,373**

EXPENDITURE

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS \$ 158,500

GOVERNANCE 2,671,503

annual, executive, & representative council
meetings & released executive costs

ETFO LOCALS 19,181,102

fee rebates to locals, local release time,
training & materials for locals & stewards

COMMITTEE, TASK FORCE & WORK GROUP MEETINGS 215,900

ASSISTANCE 590,042

awards, donations, scholarships & project overseas

EQUITY & WOMEN'S PROGRAMS 1,477,033

race relations, employment equity, anti-violence
& women's programs*

PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR MEMBERS 1,892,747

collective bargaining, professional relations
services, health & safety, pensions, legal costs

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 1,233,678

PD programs, teacher education & conferences,
publication & distribution of VOICE, & other
communications

PROVINCIAL OFFICE 2,478,700

rent, maintenance, taxes, phones, equipment,
printing, postage & members' records

STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS 14,935,570

provincial staff salaries & benefits

ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES & SUNDRIES 633,751

website, consultants, insurance, auditors

TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED FUNDS 16,311

transferred assets to be accumulated in separate
funds to meet long-term goals

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$45,484,837**

Surplus/(Deficit) of Expenditure Over Revenue **\$(172,464)**

*Each year, ETFO allocates 6% of the annual budget (\$2,701,854) to programs for women. Some of these programs are in the Equity & Women's Programs section but most are spread throughout the budget.



BY JOAN LITTLEFORD AND DR. ANNE RODRIGUE

Through African Eyes

The Benin Project – An international partnership to promote early years education



ETFO is a recognized leader in early years education. As part of ETFO's partnership with Right To Play, executive staff officers Joan Littleford and Dr. Anne Rodrigue are working with Benin educators and administrators to improve the country's education program for young children.

The West African country of Benin is one of the poorest in the world. Illiteracy rates are high, especially among women. Schooling for young children begins at age three, but only about a third of children attend. Girls as young as six leave school to care for their younger siblings, thus perpetuating educational challenges for women.

Classes are large, ranging from 50 to 75 children per teacher. Classroom resources are in short supply. Many teachers of young children have not received training in the pedagogy of early learning.

We are working in partnership with Right To Play; the Benin Ministry of Education through INFRE (Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Éducation); and the teacher union, SYNAEM-Benin (Syndicat national des enseignants de la maternel).

In the first phase of the project, six delegates from Benin and one from

Rwanda came to Canada to meet with Right To Play, develop plans for changes to their early childhood curriculum, and visit Canadian schools. We spent three days helping these representatives develop an understanding of the current research in early years education, the importance of play-based problem solving for young learners, appropriate teacher pedagogy and assessment practices, and the principles of adult learning and reflective practice. While here, participants developed a resource to support teacher training back home.

Last fall we spent 17 days in Benin supported by Right To Play, helping to train inspectors and consultants, ECE principals, and teachers. We met with government and education officials, as well as Right to Play, Benin, and we were involved in delivering a variety of professional learning activities as we designed a series of training models that could be used as the project expands.

This is a challenging project, par-

ticularly in relation to teacher training. Teachers do not have the curriculum or the resources to support play-based learning. Resources familiar to Canadian teachers such as read-aloud books, shared reading books, math manipulatives, and appropriate science materials are virtually nonexistent.

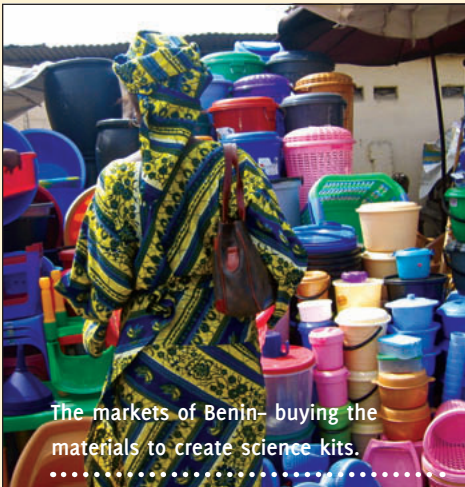
Education officials in Benin were eager to have ETFO involved. We have the expertise they need – in pre-service and in-service teacher education, curriculum development in ECE, parent outreach, and in finding resources.

The ETFO partnership model used in Benin could be adapted to other sub-Saharan countries; already the Rwandan government has expressed interest in a similar initiative.

During the past several months, we have worked to find additional partners and funding sources to support the work in Benin. We are collaborating with Dr. Stuart Shanker, a world-renowned researcher in early




Experiments with water lead to an understanding of play-based learning.



The markets of Benin- buying the materials to create science kits.

years education, in an effort to create a research centre on early childhood education in Benin.

In the future we hope to develop additional resources to use for training and in classrooms, implementation models, and a research framework. We hope to provide more professional learning to help teachers build on the success they have achieved to date and to help them reflect on the challenges of using a play-based program.

We learn from our Benin partners as much as they learn from us. Our participation helps place ETFO at the centre of research on early child development. In particular, we are learning how to expand teacher knowledge and skills in countries where resources are scarce. It helps us to understand and focus on the essential – the power and promise of early years education. 



Right to Play emphasizes the importance of teachers encouraging physical play for children.



Make the
Rights of the Child
part of your classroom

November 20 is the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To mark this important anniversary, ETFO has developed lesson plans linked to the Ontario curriculum.

Download these lesson plans: etfo.ca

Additional teacher resources from UNICEF Canada are available at unicef.ca



BY CARRIE SCHOEMER

The Message and the Medium

Teaching social justice with technology

“Our society should look past each other’s skin colours, languages, cultures and backgrounds. Kids can achieve a lot and we can spread this message. If we start now, then we will have a different future than the world we have now.”

These powerful words are from Farzana, a normally quiet grade 8 student. She admits that when she started to wear hijab three years ago, people bothered and taunted her. But she has gained confidence in herself and now speaks freely about discrimination. Farzana is just one of the students in my class who has found the vocabulary and the voice to discuss difficult issues like prejudice. Perhaps winning a national video competition had something to do with it.

Are You Sure?

When the secretary at my school told me one day in February that I had a

phone message from Citizenship and Immigration Canada I was shocked. My class had recently entered a contest sponsored by this federal department, called “Racism. Stop It!” The competition invited students ages 12 to 19 from across Canada to submit a 60-second public service announcement with an antiracism message.

Our video, *Are You Sure?*, was one of 10 national winners – the only winning video from Ontario – and the prizes for the contest were incredible. We won a digital camcorder for the school and our video will air on CBC/Radio-Canada television for one year. But the greatest honour was that I accompanied five student representatives from my class on an all-expenses-paid trip to Ottawa. During three days, we met the other winners and had many interesting conversations with teachers and filmmakers about combining social justice teaching with technology.



Expertise for the asking

My class came to enter the contest rather accidentally. In October, I received a flyer at a meeting of the Political Action Committee of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto. It offered free workshops by the National Film Board for students across Ontario. Facilitators would come to a classroom and assist the class in creating a video entry for the national “Racism. Stop It!” competition.

I thought that working on this topic using technology would certainly engage my students in a meaning-

ful way. Also, I had never produced video work with my class, and I felt I needed some professional learning. One month later, two facilitators from the NFB arrived in my classroom and stayed for two days. In that time, they showed us how to make a movie from beginning to end.

First we developed a message, which was perhaps the most interesting part of the process. Our video is about stereotyping, which, my student Juenelle explains, “is just as bad as racism. It is one of those forms of racism that just slides under the radar.” My students told me that stereotyping affected them more than direct racism. They live in Scarborough, where 84 percent of the population are visible minorities, according to their city ward profile. My students told me that there were negative and positive stereotypes, but that all assumptions limited their ability to just be themselves. They wanted to tackle this issue directly by challenging some of the main stereotypes they had themselves experienced.

Challenging assumptions

In our video, we ask the viewer “True or False?” as a frame for the statements that follow. Then we show several scenes where the assumptions of the text directly conflict with the video. “Black people are good at basketball” is the first message, followed by footage of Caribbean students missing the net. “Asians are good at math” precedes a scene in which several Chinese and Vietnamese students fail a math test. In the third clip, a white student breakdances after the message “White people can’t dance.” Finally, the film states “Racism doesn’t exist in Canada” and then shows Farzana alone at her locker, crouched on the floor with her face buried in her hands. Our final screen asks “Are you sure?”

After deciding on the content of the video in the morning of the first day, the students used the afternoon to create a storyboard, assign roles and tasks to all students, and rehearse scenes. The second day was devoted to filming scenes, editing footage in iMovie, and




writing original background music using the software GarageBand. The choice of these particular computer applications allowed students to get involved very quickly, since the programs are so user-friendly and visual.

The power of being heard

Winning the contest has had a lasting impact on my students. We received exciting media attention from several local newspapers, and I think that the students will always treasure their news clippings. Some students have indicated a newly discovered interest in pursuing a career in a media-related field. More importantly, all of the students experienced the power of having their ideas taken seriously. They feel empowered to make a difference and to combat racism in our society.

According to one student named Dan, “As a society – no matter any age, gender, or race – we can combat racism by understanding people from different backgrounds and appreciating that we have so many diverse cultures in Canada. Because, seriously, would you really want the world to have only your type of race? You can probably agree that it would be pretty boring.”

To view the video *Are You Sure?* and for details about how to enter the “Racism. Stop It!” video competition next year, visit cic.gc.ca/march-21-mars. 

CARRIE SCHOEMER is a grade 8 teacher with the Toronto District School Board.



Customer Service Standards in Schools

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

Does a parent who is blind have the right to bring a guide dog into school on “meet the teacher” night, even if the teacher is allergic to dogs? If an elevator will be closed for maintenance, must the board inform potential users? If an admission fee is charged for a board-sponsored event, can the board also charge someone who is there solely to provide attendant care to an individual who uses a wheelchair?

Four years ago, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* was passed. It is an unusual statute in that the implementation period is quite lengthy – until the year 2025, to be precise. But from now until then, various pieces of this complex law will be put into effect. Eventually, there will be five standards: transportation, customer service, employment, communications, and information, and the built environment.

In January 2010, school boards are required to implement the customer service standard, which is now a Regulation.


School boards must:

- Establish policies, practices, and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities.
- Use reasonable efforts to ensure these are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity.
- Set policy on allowing people to use their own assistive devices to access a board’s goods and services, and on any other measures available to access these goods and services.
- Communicate with individuals with disabilities in a way that takes their disabilities into account.
- Unless otherwise prohibited by law, permit guide dogs and service animals to enter

board premises open to the public; if animals *are* prohibited, develop alternative ways to accommodate the person with the disability.

- Permit support persons to accompany individuals with disabilities into premises open to the public, and where an admission charge applies to an event, provide advance notice of the charge, if any, for a support person.
- Provide notice when facilities or services normally used by individuals with disabilities will be temporarily unavailable.
- Conduct training for employees, volunteers, and contractors who deal with the public; among other things, this must include training on how to interact with persons with disabilities.
- Establish a feedback process and publicize its existence.
- Provide documentation on the policies, practices, and procedures established to meet the customer service standard; publicize the fact that documents related to the standard are available, and be prepared to provide these documents in an accessible format.

If the standard sounds very ambitious, it is. The boards are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the law. However, as board employees, ETFO members will be involved in a number of ways. Please note, for example, the requirement for training.

The customer service standard is not perfect, and cannot work the kind of miracle it would take to remove all of the many barriers in our schools. However, it will take us a bit closer to the ideal articulated in the Regulation, that “goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.” 

CHRISTINE BROWN is ETFO’s coordinator of Protective Services.

2009-2010 Women's PROGRAMS



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

Equity Training

This program helps members develop a deeper understanding of what "doing equity work" means. Participants share and discuss experiences and strategies that help eliminate the "isms" in our society including racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, and ageism.

ICT Conference for Women

This provincial conference increases women members' comfort level with information and communication technology (ICT). Curriculum connections are highlighted. Opportunities abound to reflect on and share best practices.

Legal and Health Issues Affecting Women in Education

These weekend workshops will heighten women's awareness of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. This year's topics are: Perils of Perfectionism; The Anger Within; The Realities of Divorce: Managing Life in Transition.

Assertiveness Training: Countering Bullying in the Workplace

These workshops provide women with the opportunity to learn techniques/skills to identify and deal with adult bullies in the workplace.



Race Relations Local Retreats

Locals are invited to plan equity programs, with outreach to Aboriginal and racialized women members and those with a demonstrated commitment to equity work. Retreats focus on proactive strategies for inclusive education and union activism.

Status of Women Chairperson Training

Women chairing local Status of Women committees are eligible for provincial training and support, including participation in an electronic communications network.

Women in Action

ETFO members facilitate these local workshops for women members who wish to become more involved in the federation.

Women's PROGRAMS

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

Women's Collective Bargaining

This introduction to collective bargaining deals with women's workplace issues, negotiating strategies, and effective bargaining.

Health and Safety Training

This program includes training in provincial and federal legislation, violence in the workplace, and activism that promotes healthy and safe workplaces.

Working with Community Groups

This program supports partnerships with community groups working on women's issues.



Leaders for Tomorrow

This intensive, year-long leadership development program for women members from designated groups includes workshops and experiences directly related to local and provincial leadership roles in ETFO. Participants are required to put their learning into practice throughout the year.

Reflections on Practice: A Women's Leadership Institute

The Institute brings 40 women members together for eight days to learn more about reflective inquiry, action research, professional activism, professional learning communities, and leadership.

Skills for Aspiring Chief Negotiators

This is a workshop for women members who want to develop leadership and communication skills. It teaches effective spontaneous public speaking through hands-on practice, coaching, and feedback.

Visions: New Teacher Leadership

This program for women in their first five years of teaching emphasizes leadership in the union.



Aboriginal Women's Initiatives

This program provides Aboriginal members with opportunities to attend workshops, present workshops, serve on planning committees, and participate in events related to Aboriginal issues.

Professional Learning Communities

Participants critically examine their equity understanding and practice through personal reflection and discussion of current research. Participants can enroll in one of three choices offered this year.

Breaking the Silence: Examining Violence Against Women...

This two-day provincial workshop educates women members about violence against women and explores what women in violent situations need from us, as educators and as sisters. It is intended for members willing to share what they learn with colleagues at the local level.

Project Overseas Six spaces in this Canadian Teachers' Federation program are reserved for women. Canadian teachers partner with colleagues overseas to deliver professional development to teachers in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.



PUBLICATIONS

Pregnancy and Parental Leave – a Guide to Rights and Responsibilities

This bilingual resource assists members with the many questions relating to the birth or adoption of a child.

Women's History Month Poster

All schools receive this poster highlighting women's achievements in Canada. The 2009 poster celebrates the 80th anniversary of the Persons Case.

2009-2010



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Reflections of Me... The ETFO Body Image Project a research-based, whole-school curriculum package for kindergarten to grade 8 classrooms.

The Power of Story, Volumes I and II Life stories are a way of passing on history. These two kindergarten-to-grade 8 curriculum resources emphasize social justice and present real stories and lesson activities linked to Ontario's curriculum expectations.

Take a Closer Look

This resource has comprehensive lessons to teach grade 7 and 8 students to become critical and informed consumers of mass media. It includes reproducible. A supplement with curriculum links for grades 4 to 6 is also available.

Beyond the Breakfast Program

This CD resource examines myths about living in poverty and the impact of poverty on school performance. It introduces strategies to support students in the classroom and beyond.

Connections

This kindergarten-to-grade 8 resource includes suggested activities and reproducible and is for everyone interested in building understanding about gender-related issues and working for social justice.

Roots of Equality

This resource helps foster students' healthy, equal relationships and raises awareness of violence against women. It includes lesson plans for grades 1 to 8, workshops for grade 7/8 girls' conferences, and tip sheets for educators and parents.

A French-language resource is forthcoming.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

International Donations WP provides funds to organizations working to improve conditions for women and girls in developing countries. Preference is given to partnerships with other organizations providing international programs or to projects organized by individuals in developing countries who are known to ETFO.

Status Donations WP provides funds to organizations working to improve the status of women and girls in Canada.

Women in Crisis WP provides annual donations to centres that provide emergency shelter, counselling, and referral services to women in crisis.

Local Incentive Funding WP provides financial assistance to locals to help with the cost of providing

- Career awareness for female students
- Female athletic incentives
- Professional growth for women members
- Science, technology, and math programs for girls
- Status of women programs.

Overseas Scholarships WP are offered to women and girls in developing countries studying at educational institutions in their own countries.

Annual Leadership and Professional Development Conference for Women

February 2010

2010 marks the 10th year for ETFO's provincial conference for women. This year's conference will feature dynamic keynote speakers and workshops that explore the conference theme, *Working Together to Create Healthy Schools and Communities*.

...and still we **rise**

EVENTS

International Women's Day (March 8)

ETFO develops materials for locals to use in International Women's Day events.

Take Back the Night (September)

This event includes activities that highlight the issue of violence against women, and the right of women to be safe and able to walk without fear, particularly at night.



BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Aboriginal Women in Education Bursaries for Aboriginal women entering a faculty of education or upgrading their qualifications.

Bursaries for members of designated groups entering a faculty of education or upgrading their qualifications.

Bev Saskoley Anti-Racist Scholarship for a member active in ETFO, pursuing graduate studies in anti-racist equity education at a publicly funded university/institution.

Doctoral Scholarship for a woman active in ETFO pursuing doctoral studies in education.

Master's Scholarships for women active in ETFO studying education or other subjects.

Women's Studies Scholarship for women active in ETFO in women's studies graduate programs at Canadian universities.



AWARDS

Women Working in Social Activism on Behalf of Women and Children for non-ETFO members who are outstanding social activists in Ontario.

Multi-Media Award for innovative educational materials.

Outstanding Role Model for Women Award for an ETFO member.

Special Projects in Science and Technology Award for educational materials related to science and technology.

Writer's Award for manuscripts written for children, teachers, or others.

Curriculum Development Award for the development of a curriculum unit or resource.

EcoSchools

Energizing environmental education in Ontario

The Ontario EcoSchools program is one of the most effective programs for addressing ETFO's priority of care and protection of the environment. Across Ontario, schools and school boards are turning to this program to address climate change and to help fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education's Environmental Education Policy Framework. The EcoSchools program provides resources and strategies to engage students in environmentally responsible practices and help them develop ecological literacy. Schools can participate in an annual certification process that recognizes their achievements in energy conservation, waste minimization, school ground greening, and the development of ecological literacy. These are the four pillars of the EcoSchools program. Here is a look at how three Ontario schools have used the program.

Ecological literacy

Robert Little PS, a K–5 school in Acton, was one of the first schools in the Halton District School Board to become a certified EcoSchool; it has maintained that status for the past three years. The school is part of the Ontario Focused Intervention Program and – true to



their “gold Eco-heart” – teachers chose the theme of Protecting the Environment as a schoolwide focus to address the literacy learning needs of their students.

Teachers and support staff engaged students in community walks, scavenger hunts in the schoolyard and nearby natural areas, and in planting trees, building birdhouses, and creating a school garden. The whole school watched *The Lorax* (an adaptation of the Dr. Seuss story depicting environ-

mental destruction and restoration) and took part in a followup compare-and-contrast activity. As part of the gradual release of responsibility, students participated in modelled reading, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading experiences, with care and protection of the environment as the context. As students applied their learning, they created their own illustrated posters and non-fiction books. Those in the youngest grades created Plasticine images.



To prepare for the initiative, staff determined students' learning needs and identified language curriculum expectations related to comprehension, inferencing, text forms, and text features as their focus. They chose non-continuous text as the main text form. This focus also fit with the School Effectiveness Plan goal related to reading and critical thinking that they had previously identified. Staff held several planning meetings, including meetings with board consultants; gathered a variety of resources; and determined this pre-assessment question to pose to all students: "What might you do to protect the environment and keep it safe? Use evidence from the text and your own ideas to give your answer."

The post-assessment showed that the results were outstanding. As international research indicates (see *seer.org*), using the environment as a context for learning leads to increased student engagement and improved achievement. Students' ecological literacy learning was directly connected to and supported accomplishments in teamwork and leadership, energy con-

The EcoSchools program provides resources and strategies to engage students in environmentally responsible practices and help them develop ecological literacy.

servation, waste minimization, school ground greening, and environmental stewardship throughout the community.

Minimizing waste

At Great Lakes PS in Peel DSB, students practise the *5Rs*: rethink, refuse, reduce, and reuse – with recycling as a last resort. To minimize waste, the school has bins containing reusable paper in each classroom and promotes waste-free lunches. Grade 1 students are given reusable lunch bags in the first week of school, and students are encouraged to pack waste-free lunches.

To understand how much waste

lunches were creating, each class performed a waste audit on lunch packaging and tracked the number of reusable, recyclable, and non-reusable containers students brought to school. The school passed suggestions for how to pack a waste-free lunch on to parents, and by the end of the year staff noticed positive changes. Waste-free lunch initiatives often take a while to catch on, but the potential reduction in school waste is significant.

Inspired by a presentation at an EcoConference put on by the board, students created and implemented a campaign to reduce the number of single-use water bottles brought to school over the course of the year. Students completed audits and saw significant results: by the end of the year the number of water bottles put into recycling bins had dropped from 250 to 60. Students sold Great Lakes reusable water bottles, and created before/after water bottle sculptures and graphs of their audits, which they posted in the hallway. Ongoing monitoring and school-wide feedback helped them succeed.



Energy conservation

Grade 7 and 8 students at Module de l'Acadie, Limestone DSB, started using EcoSchools in December 2008. Module de l'Acadie is a 7/8 immersion and extended French program, located within Frontenac Secondary School.

Students were doing very well so staff wanted to work on citizenship and community engagement to produce well-rounded students.

The school did not have an environment club – when they formed their EcoTeam these students were starting from scratch. They focused on energy conservation.

To raise awareness, EcoTeam members put Lights Off and Monitors Off stickers around the school and encouraged classes to use natural daylight whenever possible. One unexpected benefit was that many students reported improved concentration.

The team developed checklists for each classroom, itemizing possible conservation measures and strategies. Students in each classroom took turns at ensuring that lights and computer equipment were turned off and drapes were closed at the end of the day. Friendly EcoCops kept an eye on things and reported back on how classes were faring in conserving energy.



How EcoSchools began

EcoSchools began at the Toronto District School Board six years ago. Today there are more than 900 schools in over 30 boards that are using the EcoSchools program to engage students and reduce their environmental impact.

Support for teachers

The Ontario EcoSchools steering committee has representatives from seven schools boards who ensure that the program meets the needs of teachers and boards. Boards using the EcoSchools program are asked to designate an EcoSchools representative who keeps teachers up to date with environmental education resources and often provides board-specific professional learning to help teachers engage students in EcoSchools activities. Board representatives also may be able to recommend local environmental education opportunities. Ontario EcoSchools has a website with free resources, including a newsletter and Gallery of Best Practices.

Ontario EcoSchools Certification

The annual certification program (now available on line) assesses a school's achievement in the four pillars, and in teamwork, leadership, and environmental stewardship. Students and teachers, along with other members of the school community, form an EcoTeam as the first step. The EcoTeam reviews the energy and waste practices of the school, creates and implements an action plan for improvement, then reassesses the energy and waste practices near the end of the school year. Teachers help students develop ecological literacy through the curriculum. School ground greening projects that focus on active participation by students and sustainable greening practices may also be undertaken.

For more information and to access resources go to ontarioecoschools.org.

EcoSchools



Links were also made to curriculum. Students created 3D green dream homes showcasing what they had learned about green building and energy-conserving technologies and materials.

The campaign grew from its initial focus on areas where students could have direct control. The custodian supported energy conservation efforts by turning off the lights in the hallways as soon as they were cleaned. The students drafted an environmental policy for the school that included energy conservation and waste minimization practices, and the EcoTeam took it to the parent council, which gave its support and paid for reusable cups for the lunch program. Students met with the environment club from Frontenac High School to exchange ideas and strategies and elementary and secondary students worked together to plant trees.


Plans for this school year include

restarting the EcoTeam in September and making sure that everyone learns about, and participates in, energy conservation. With 50 percent of the school population having moved on, last year's grade 7s will be the leaders for this year's new students.

A growing phenomenon

More than 900 schools in 32 boards became certified EcoSchools in 2008-09. The program is appealing because it recognizes and values individual school culture and local environmental issues. It works for schools just beginning to implement environmental education initiatives and for those with highly developed programs. Teacher Mary Jane Jarvis from Module de l'Acadie reflects: "Last year we began by making small changes that were not difficult to implement. This year I would like to motivate students to undertake the most difficult change that they can to help the environment. The most

difficult change may be different for each student but will help us create the greatest change in our school's and our community's footprint."

EcoSchools goes beyond the classroom and the individual school. Many levels of the education system are working to address climate change. In the last two years, the Toronto DSB has developed and implemented a renewable energy program. Three projects are in the process of being installed: a geothermal system will provide heating and cooling for a new addition at Highfield PS; a large solar thermal system will provide 40 percent of the heating for Hillcrest Community School; and a 10 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) system will generate green electricity at W.L. Mackenzie CI. The board of trustees has also approved in principle solar PV projects at 11 more schools, which will generate a total of 132,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year – enough power to take a small elementary school off the power grid. 

RON BALLENTINE is the chair of ETFO's Environmental Standing Committee;

CATHERINE MAHLER is the Ontario EcoSchools program coordinator.

NEW THIS YEAR
Online BILLY HALLOWEEN GAME!

Teach your students the importance of using
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Dear Grade One Teacher:

In partnership with Honeywell Canada, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection's Kids in the Know program has unveiled a new **Billy Brings his Buddies Halloween game** to help teachers reinforce the Buddy System with their students to increase their personal safety. Through this online activity, your students can:

- Choose which Halloween costume they want Billy to wear; and,
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REMEMBER:

Don't forget to complete the online teacher evaluation of this year's **Billy Brings his Buddies Teacher Kit**. You could win great prizes for your class! If you haven't received your kit, please contact us toll-free at 1-800-532-9135 and we will have one mailed out to you.

Visit www.billybuddy.ca to access the new **Halloween game** and the original **Billy Brings His Buddies game**.



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Go to www.canadascapital.gc.ca/bannercontest for full details and an easy-to-use Activity Outline for introducing the contest in your classroom. The contest is open to grade 5-8 classes in schools across Canada. The deadline for entries is February 19, 2010.

This initiative is an extension of *The Gathering Place*, a teaching resource for grades 5-8 Social Science and History. Email us at info@classroomconnections.ca for your free copy.

The winning banners will be professionally produced and flown in Major's Hill Park in Ottawa from May to October of 2010.

THE GATHERING PLACE
AN EXPLORATION OF CANADA'S CAPITAL

ETFO's Union School: Creating an engaged membership

BY JERRY DEQUETTEVILLE

Unions work to create a better future for their members. Operating on the passionate belief that what we wish for ourselves we wish for others, the union movement has been at the forefront of every improvement in social justice and equity during the past 100 years.

ETFO does not ignore its own role in this drive to craft a brighter future. We recognize that a union is only as strong as its members, and requires strong, emotionally intelligent leaders. This understanding led to the creation of the ETFO Union School. Now four years old, Union School has been shaped by input from current local leaders, provincial staff, future local leaders, and participants. It seeks to help members become better local leaders – in whatever role they may take on. Those accepted into the program must be serving on a local committee or on the local executive.

Union School is an intensive year-long program that requires participants to actively engage in the task of refining their leadership skills.

Understanding the role of unions

Participants are introduced to the core concepts of the program during the first session in the fall. Dr. Elaine Bernard, director of the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School, emphasizes the importance of unions and their key responsibility to light fires not just put them out: unions are far more than “Grievances-R-Us”!

Participants are introduced to the concept of emotional intelligence, which is critical for leaders working in education and in unions, where people’s needs should set the agenda. Participants receive their own emotional intelligence inventory and learn strategies to develop new strengths; happily, unlike our IQ, we can all improve our emotional intelligence quotient (EQ).

Because union leaders need to understand the law, the program includes an in-depth study of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. This complex piece of legislation affects many areas of a union leader’s work and participants focus on it throughout the program.



Participating in an online community

When participants return home after the first session they are immediately immersed in the hectic realities of their daily lives. This is hardly the ideal environment for creating provincewide networks! Our solution is an online learning environment that engages participants in discussions moderated by Union School alumnae.

During this time, participants undertake two assignments meant to expand their understanding of ETFO and their local. The first requires an in-depth examination of education legislation. The second focuses on the composition of their locals, and how representative of the local membership their executive is. We ask participants to speak with local members to ascertain what motivates them in their work, and what concerns them.

Applying their knowledge

Between face-to-face sessions participants complete a practicum activity designed to allow them to practise their growing leadership skills in a role-embedded setting. We encourage participants to select an activity that works to increase members' engagement.

Last year's practicums included

- the development of a political action framework
- a "Women's Healthy Tea" designed to increase awareness regarding women's health issues
- a review of the local's financial processes aimed at making them more efficient and transparent, and to identify long-term goals
- planning an International Women's Day Dinner
- planning an FSL workshop – the first ever for that local



- a review of violence in elementary schools
- a survey of hiring practices that affect internationally educated teachers.

In many instances there was a significant impact on members' engagement and on the local and its practices. The practicum assignment is open-ended, respecting the varied roles participants have in their locals.

Sharing new learning

The second face-to-face meeting is held at the CAW Family Life Education Centre in Port Elgin, a site of union training for more than 40 years. Participants share what they learned during the year, information that assists all in becoming better leaders. ETFO staff and external presenters work with the participants on strategies that enhance member engagement, communications, and more effective local leadership..

Recognizing the importance of both working hard and playing hard, the staff facilitators introduced a social committee to plan group activities. Last year's committee did a brilliant job of planning activities that engaged the participants and enhanced provincewide networks.


Participants' feedback has been positive; here are two examples:

"I cannot thank you all enough for the words of encouragement, the sharing of expertise, the motivational leadership and the care and support you have given us *all* this past year with Union School. This has been an amazing experience, one I won't stop talking about for years to come in my local."

"Each experience was interesting and relevant. A wonderful gift from ETFO to cherish and pass along to other members – both literally and in fulfilling our new 'jobs' . . . whatever they may be."

In their online evaluations, participants agreed that the program achieved its goal of fostering the growth of new leaders in ETFO. It provided support, and fostered critical connections among the group.

Participants learned a great deal about ETFO, its members, other locals, and themselves. They appreciated and understood the importance of engaging members in the union. They felt they had received a clear focus for their work in ETFO.

As ETFO strives to create a better future for its members, the Union School will assist in forging a better future for the union. Many Union School alumnae have attained an enhanced role within their locals and the federation. Their efforts will pay off as they continue working to engage ETFO members in the crucial work of the union. 

JERRY DEQUETTEVILLE is the coordinator of Professional Services at ETFO.

Three Perspectives on the Meaning of Equity

What do *equity* and *inclusion* mean to you?

Consider three perspectives



Sherry Ramrattan Smith

I walk into a room and I sense acceptance for who I am. I feel welcomed. There is no need to explain my difference, whether seen or unseen. There is a space within that gathering for me, for my history, and my experiential knowledge. I feel an openness and willingness from the people to hear my voice and listen to my story. My contribution is valued.

I wish I could say that has always been the case for me, but it is a vision I hold for my children and now my granddaughter. ETFO members read our organization's definition of equity on a regular basis in pamphlets and reports. We listen to ETFO's Human Rights Statement and are proud of the proactive principles and policies we hold. We are also presented with definitions of *equity* and *inclusion* from the Ministry of Education:

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. *Equity* does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Inclusive Education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.¹

Using an equity resource, enrolling in a workshop, attending courses, and compiling a series of degrees can only move us so far toward equity and inclusion. It is not surprising that we may become "stuck" at a point in our equity endeavours unless we are ready and willing to take on a mindset that questions our often hidden beliefs and values. Some beliefs and values we hold can prevent us from achieving the noble goals of equity and inclusion. Self-understanding plays a key role in how we begin to accept and respect those whose experiences are outside of our own. One strategy that has worked for me is to question the thinking behind the choices I make: Why do I believe this? What experiences led me to this particular belief? How and why is this person's difference a threat to me? What do I have to lose or gain by shifting my perspective? Educational philosopher Nel Noddings states, "Probably no goal of education is more important – or more neglected – than self-understanding."² Perhaps by bringing a critical lens to our own thinking and actions, we may more readily advance toward a shared vision of equity and inclusion.



Alan Heatherington

The concept of equity serves to counteract the systemic, entrenched tendencies of a dominant group to impose and preserve a hierarchical power base. Equity acts to redefine the value of human activity by promoting the positive contributions of all who seek genuine improvement. Often these endeavours remain abstract, intangible, or difficult to measure. Equity does not ignore nor attempt to obliterate differences; the inclusive nature of equity invites divergent thinking and celebrates the uniqueness of every human spirit.

Leadership in an equity framework must develop gradually from a broad base. The road to equity provides individuals from under-represented, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised groups with opportunities to transcend the many barriers that persist. Equity facilitates growth and encourages the achievement of one's full potential. Equity means recognition of the worth of the individual within a collective.

The measure of equity's success is the level of commitment demonstrated by members of the dominant group to abandon traditional reactionary coping strategies and to work collaboratively with representatives of heretofore marginalized groups to adopt proactive, inclusive, and innovative approaches. Those who maintain a position of privilege will never willingly forfeit their status until they understand that a society based on inclusion will reap far more benefits than the present outcomes. Such a significant conceptual shift in defining human progress requires caring, courage, determination, and patience.

Notes

1. Ontario Ministry of Education (2009). *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, page 4.
2. Nel Noddings (2006). *Critical Lessons: What Schools Should Teach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, page 10.




Jill Aoki-Barrett

As a parent, student and educator, my concept of equity and inclusive education has evolved from personal experiences and learning from the 1960s to present day. It has changed through the years as I met and worked with a variety of people and learned through or with them. Upon reflection, I recognize, sadly, how my experience of being a student and those of my sons have not changed as much as I hoped they would over the past 40 years.

I consistently question my power and challenge myself to release more and more of that power in order to share it and model with the community of learners I have the privilege of working with. To me, the misuse of power demonstrates a lack of respect for others – something I choose not to model. The concept of power affects how I view inclusion and equity.

Inclusion is recognizing the identities of the students in school communities and our global community, whether the students recognize them or not. Be it learning styles, culture, race, sexual orientation, class, religion, ability, or gender – all identities must be recognized and reflected in our curriculum. It is my job to not settle for teaching the “status quo” but to recognize that all students deserve to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and to make that happen. Widening connections to those in our communities and globally is a way of being inclusive.

Of course, equity in the classroom does not mean everyone receives the same amount of something or is treated exactly the same. Quite the opposite – to me, equity means students get what they need in order to create a learning experience that meets their needs. Kids understand this concept when it is explained to them – it makes sense. We strive to respect individual needs by recognizing this. Equity and inclusion is ensuring that the dominant group does not continue to see themselves and their needs met at the expense of some whose needs and identities are often not recognized. I think the bottom line is that we need to respect all students and learn how to apply the principles of equity so that each one of us can feel included. 

Compiled by **SHERRY RAMRATTAN SMITH**, coordinator of Equity and Women's Services at ETFO. **ALAN HEATHERINGTON** is a member of the Thames Valley Teacher Local. **JILL AOKI-BARRETT** is a member of the Niagara Teacher Local.

Hazardous Humour: Professional boundaries

BY PRS STAFF

Most people like to think they have a great sense of humour, and pride themselves on making others laugh. As teachers, we're no exception. It's delightful when we can make students smile despite themselves. Good cheer is a good teaching tool.

As educators, we are performers who are on display all day long. We need to engage our students, motivate, inspire, and support them. Sometimes we think that humour is the way to go. We've read Robert Munsch's books or similar books to our own kids or to a group of young students, and we have seen the magic that shared laughter can create.

However, reactions to humour are highly individual. What one person finds funny, another may think is stupid, boring, or offensive. Ask yourself whether you like the Three Stooges. Captain Underpants? Austin Powers? Russell Peters? Jerry Seinfeld? You might like some of them, all of them, or none. Your own close friends or family may not share your views. Humour and jokes are the hardest concepts to translate and the most difficult to understand in a language not our own. Humour is rooted in age, sex, culture, language, and religion. For many people comedy is funniest when it deliberately violates social norms or taboos.

Many teachers have found themselves inadvertently wading into dangerous waters when they attempt to use humour in their classroom or with their colleagues. Humour can indeed be hazardous in the school setting.

STUDENTS

Recent cases brought before the Ontario College of Teachers illustrate the danger of classroom humour. In one case, a student was exaggerating the extent to which he had hurt his finger in gym class. In response, the teacher joked, "Would you like me to cut it off?" This remark, in combination with other comments, was investigated as unprofessional conduct. Although not meant as such, this type of comment could be perceived by the student or others as a threat. While intended to lighten the mood, the remark could be seen as menacing and as an attempt to silence or embarrass the student. Threats of physical violence will never be seen as funny by the Ontario College of Teachers.

Sarcasm and irony are not useful tools in the classroom. These types of comments are frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted. This year, for example, the College's Investigation Committee issued a written caution to a teacher who made derogatory comments to students and also sarcastically questioned whether one student "had a brain."

BOUNDARIES

Teachers are acutely aware that they must maintain a professional distance from their students. They are educators and role models, not friends or parents. Inappropriate humour with students is viewed as a boundary violation: a failure to maintain a professional comportment and distance, and a failure to appreciate the sensitivity that students may have to a teacher's comments,

however humorous in intention. It is very difficult to tell what type of humour will be appropriate in the classroom, given the differences in culture, religion, sensitivity, and maturity levels of students at all grades.

OFF-LIMITS HUMOUR

What is off limits in terms of humour? A joke or comment is hard to consider “funny” if it:

- is demeaning to a child’s self-esteem
- is racially or ethnically motivated
- refers to historical tragedies or world leaders who have been widely condemned
- is sexually suggestive
- invokes an episode of violence or hatred (e.g., a reference to the Columbine shootings or to the 9/11 terrorists attacks)
- demeans a specific religious belief
- ridicules
- can be construed as mean, sarcastic, or hostile
- is degrading to a member of a minority group.

If you have the slightest inkling that what you’re about to say may be controversial or sensitive, keep it to yourself.

OVERHEARING STUDENTS USE INAPPROPRIATE HUMOUR

If you hear your students teasing, ridiculing, or making offensive jokes, be clear and firm: explain that this behaviour is not humorous, why it is not, and that it will not be tolerated. Furthermore:

- Do not accept “it was just a joke” as a defence. If a remark is hurtful or offensive, it is not funny.
- Do not laugh along with inappropriate jokes that students make.
- Do not forward or share emails that you think are humorous but that could be construed as profoundly “unfunny.”


- Take appropriate action when inappropriate humour is used by students.

We need to use our best judgment and discretion in these situations. No one wants to teach in a humourless environment, but teachers have to be aware of the professional standards that guide their conduct. In this way, you maintain your position as role model and educator without compromising the respect you’ve earned along the way.

HUMOUR AMONG COLLEAGUES

Colleagues may also take exception to off-colour or inappropriate humour. Offensive humour outside the classroom that affects the school community can attract human rights complaints, harassment complaints, disciplinary measures, or College of Teachers complaints.

As teachers we owe each other respect in our workplaces. We are as diverse as our students and our appreciation of humour is as idiosyncratic. Do not share off-colour jokes touching on sex, sexual orientation, gender, religion, origin, or any of the other areas that can cause offence. Be especially careful with the Internet and email correspondence. Don’t forward offensive jokes or pictures to your colleagues. Some might delete them, others might send them directly to the College or school board.

Remember that poisonous humour can poison a workplace. 

For additional information, see
etfo.ca → *Advice For Members* → *PRS Matters Bulletins*

For advice about a work-related issue, contact your local ETFO president or Professional Relations (PRS) staff in Protective Services at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.

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Enforcement: Up and Running

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

Enforcement follows bargaining as summer follows spring. Bargaining years are filled with mass meetings, frequent updates on the status of negotiations, and dramatic developments – all very much a part of your reality last year.

The current school year is the first full year in the life of the 64 teacher and occasional teacher collective agreements concluded last spring. For only the second time in the history of public elementary collective bargaining, our agreements run for four years. What happens in 2009–10 will determine how members' rights will be implemented for the next three years. The patterns that are established early on with respect to enforcing these agreements are critically important.

While it may be your union office that files grievances, enforcement actually begins with you – the member in the classroom. Ensuring that your collective agreement is upheld starts with understanding its contents.

By the time you read this, most of you will have received copies of your new 2008–12 collective agreement. It contains the information you need about your salaries. Teachers' salaries will increase by 2 percent this school year, 3 percent in 2010–11, and a further 3 percent in 2011–12. For occasional teachers, there is more variation, but the majority will receive increases of around 5.5 percent this year, followed by 3 percent in each of the two following years. Increases for educational and professional support personnel members are 3 percent per year for each of the three years.

Many agreements also contain details about your benefits plan, such as how much you can expect to be reimbursed for a pair of eyeglasses. In the last round of negotiations, additional funding was rolled into benefit plans, though there are differences from local to local in how this funding will be applied.

As a rule, whenever new agreements come into force, there are few disputes around compensation issues, and most that do arise are settled fairly quickly. But, in addition to increases in compensation, there have been significant changes in the provisions of teacher collective agreements that deal with working conditions. Because teacher and occasional teacher collective agreements are somewhat interdependent, a number of these provisions will have an impact on occasional teachers, both those working in daily assignments and those in long-term positions.

Among other items, the new teacher agreements contain

- an increase in preparation time this year to 210 minutes, rising to 240 in three years
- scheduling of preparation time over five-day cycles
- a "hard cap" of 80 minutes' supervision time per week
- a limit on the number and duration of staff meetings
- a small decrease in the board's average grade 4 to 8 class size
- the designation of one professional activity day for assessment and the completion of report cards.

Enforcement


These are key elements of working conditions for teachers. Implementing them properly and in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the new agreements requires attention to detail by school administrators. The early indications are that while in some boards this process is working well, in others it is not.

- The new agreements say that teachers are *expected* to attend staff meetings. It is a good idea to attend them; doing so helps to keep you up to date with what is going on in your school. However, you are not *required* to attend, and are free to use your professional judgment in the matter.
- With regard to preparation time, please note that all teacher collective agreements state that this time is to be used for professional purposes, *as determined by the teacher*. Your principal does not control the types of professional activities you choose to use your preparation time for – you do. You cannot be compelled by your principal to use your preparation time to attend a professional learning community, for example.

Should your employer violate the collective agreement with respect to this or any other matter, assistance is close at hand. Sometimes it is in the next classroom, in the person of your workplace steward, who can advise you and direct you to the appropriate contact in the local office. You can also simply phone or email your local president or other appropriate local executive member directly. Each local has its own method for handling calls, which may result in either an informal or a formal process to remedy violations. A great many workplace disputes are

resolved through discussions between a union and a board representative. If this does not solve the problem, or if the issue does not lend itself to this method, a formal grievance may be initiated. The grievance process is an orderly, time-tested method for resolving disputes between the two parties to any collective agreement. In fact, having a method for the final, binding resolution of disputes is a legal requirement under the *Labour Relations Act*. The grievance process is the most high-profile enforcement mechanism of the many tools at the union's disposal.

Everything that takes place in any unionized environment, including schools, needs to be examined through the lens of the collective agreement to ensure that no negotiated rights are being breached. Each year, your local executive members attend dozens of meetings with the employer on issues such as harassment, health and safety, accommodating members with disabilities, staffing, school reorganization, professional development, information technology, and the implementation of (endless) new initiatives from the Ministry's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. Insofar as all of these issues touch on members' rights and working conditions, all must be viewed in the context of the provisions of the collective agreement. In many cases, potential problems can be ironed out during the discussion phase before, for example, they become part of board policy.

Rights that are not enforced are mere window-dressing. You can help your union to enforce your rights by reading your new collective agreement. 

CHRISTINE BROWN is the coordinator of Protective Services at ETFO.



By RIAN McLAUGHLIN

Introducing ETFO's New Voice at OTF

With a new school year come new roles for many of us, including me. As your new OTF table officer, I am very much looking forward to sharing timely and relevant information from OTF and building new connections for you with OTF.

Our umbrella organization has a 65-year history, but its key principles and objectives remain much the same today as they were when it was established in 1944. Providing a forum for Ontario's teacher federations to share common issues and seek consensus on moving forward together is the essence and strength of OTF. However, the way OTF works has evolved over time. Indeed, the new focus centres on how to define OTF and its role in the 21st century.

An extensive review of the *Teaching Profession Act*, its regulations, and OTF's bylaws and policies is currently being undertaken. This much-needed exercise involves teachers from all across the province – *your 40 OTF governors* – engaged in a debate that I am confident will bring about a vibrant and modern organization. As your legislated, professional advocate and your pension partner, OTF is actively engaged on many fronts: protecting and promoting our profession, advocating for public education, and building long-term financial security for members of the pension plan. What's new is that we must find meaningful ways of ensuring that you know what's new at OTF!

A recent example of OTF's advocacy has been in relation to the new professional designation that is being foisted upon teachers. Many of us have reviewed the September 2009 issue of the Ontario College of Teachers magazine, *Professionally Speaking*, and noticed the huge fanfare over the rollout of the Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) designation, which will be affixed



to our credentials in a user-pay fashion. Over the past year, OTF and the four affiliated teacher federations (ETF0, OSSTF, OECTA, AEFO) have been working in concert to dissuade the College from taking this initiative. We have significant concerns about the costs associated with administering the program with *your fees* and have found no compelling reason to support its introduction or encourage its adoption. The designation is unlikely to add any value to our professional status. The College has not provided full disclosure about how obtaining a professional designation works in other fields, and we are skeptical of the College's ultimate motivations when teachers have not sought such a system. Even the Minister of Education is lukewarm about this initiative. I encourage you to read OTF *Communiqué*, September 2, 2009, vol. 15, no. 1, for more information. OTF distributes the *Communiqué* regularly through schools and posts all issues on its new website, otffeo.on.ca.

The complete redesign of the OTF website, sporting OTF's new branding, has significantly added to the quality and accessibility of information teachers need. You will find an extensive array of professional learning opportunities, pension information, and highlights of the great work that OTF has facilitated for teachers and students here in Ontario and beyond. OTF has a new face – come have a look!

.....
RIAN McLAUGHLIN is the OTF Table Officer for ETF0.



By MARY LOU DONNELLY

Introducing CTF's New President

Greetings from the Canadian Teachers' Federation executive committee and board of directors. As I begin my two-year term as your new president, I am filled with a mixture of excitement and anticipation. It is an honour to serve my profession in this capacity, and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It is my goal to continue the work accomplished by your former president, Emily Noble, now the federation's past president.

I had the opportunity to meet many of you at the ETFO annual meeting in August and appreciated hearing your comments, feedback, and support. Over the next two years, I look forward to working with your leadership as well as those of all CTF member organizations.

This fall we are launching an online survey tool to allow CTF to check with teachers on new and arising issues that affect teaching and learning in Canadian classrooms. The first survey topic is the H1N1 virus. The survey will allow us to determine the degree to which teachers are

satisfied with the level of preparedness in their board or school. We will share the survey results with the ETFO leadership as well as with all our member organizations.

By the time you receive this issue of *Voice*, Canada's will be marking its fourth annual Media Literacy Week, November 2-6. The week is organized annually by the Media Awareness Network (MNet) in cooperation with CTF. This year's theme, "Media Literacy in the Digital Age," emphasizes the multiple literacy skills today's youth need when they create, access, evaluate, repurpose, and distribute media content. A variety of activities – from classroom-based projects to large-scale public events – take place throughout the week in support of media literacy. However, ideas for activities and other resources are available on the Media Literacy Week website, medialiteracy.ca, and can be used throughout the year.

On behalf of all of us at CTF, I would like to wish you a safe, healthy, and successful school year.

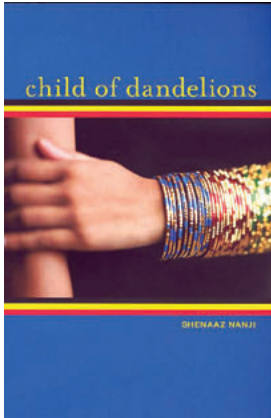


Marilies Rettig, ETFO deputy general secretary, was honoured with a Special Recognition Award at CTF's annual meeting in July. The awards recognize the contributions teacher leaders make in promoting the profession and public education.

"Great leaders combine vision with courageous action while setting the path for positive change in the world around them," CTF President Emily Noble said in presenting the award. As president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), Rettig led her federation

in fighting the Harris government's efforts to subvert publicly funded education in Ontario and provided the impetus for a 37,000-strong rally at Queen's Park. As CTF president from 1999 to 2001, she put the spotlight on the National Children's Agenda and supported teachers engaged in collective action across Canada. She served on the executive of Education International for seven years, and as OTF president in 2005-2006. Rettig became ETFO DGS in 2008.

MARY LOU DONNELLY, the past president of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, is CTF president for 2009-2011.



Child of Dandelions

By Shenaaz Nanji

Toronto: Second Story Press,
2008

215 pages

\$9.95

★★★★★

Reviewed by Debra Menary

This is a revealing story about the devastation that occurred during the dictatorship of Idi Amin and the resulting political upheaval. Told from the viewpoint of a young teenage girl, it holds appeal for the 12 to 15 year olds. There is so much to be learned from Nanji's description of life in 1970s Uganda.

This book screams the question: "Does history repeat itself?" There are so many parallels to the Holocaust, they are impossible to ignore. There are references to the Jewish plight in the book, which should prompt some emotional discussion among students who have been exposed to the dark events of the Holocaust. They won't be able to help but ask themselves how these events could have happened in Uganda only three decades later.

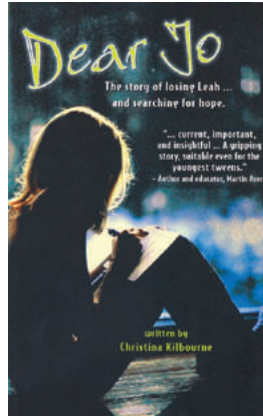
Child of Dandelions is a familiar tale of family conflict and perhaps an unfamiliar one of political tension. Female Intermediate students are especially likely to identify with the main character, Sabine, who is of South Asian descent. She is terrified of losing her best friend, Zena, who is a native Ugandan. As the political tension builds, Sabine and her family are at risk of losing not only their entire way of life, but each other.

This novel is not for everyone. Students would need to be carefully prepared for the graphic scenes and situations. They would need to be taught some historical background to the situation leading up to 1970s Uganda. I would advise extreme caution before using it in the classroom, because of the racial situations described in the novel.

Teachers would need to be sensitive to the backgrounds, origins and prior experiences of their students. Then they could judge appropriately whether and how to present the content.

Notwithstanding these reservations, I feel a rating of 4 stars is warranted.

Debra Menary is a grade 2 teacher in the Simcoe Bounty District School Board.



Dear Jo

By Christina Kilbourne

Montreal: Lobster Press, 2007

188 pages

\$10.95

★★★★★

Reviewed by Rosemary Renton

I did not intend to read *Dear Jo*, by Christina Kilbourne, in one sitting, but I could not put it down. Written in diary form, it is the story of 12-year-old Maxine LeMay, whose best friend has been abducted by an Internet predator. The plot follows Maxine as she recounts the events that led to the abduction; struggles with worry, fear and guilt about surviving her own close call; grieves when Leah's body is found in the woods; and eventually assists police in capturing the man who killed her friend.

With its shocking opening and short, intense diary entries, this book is easy to read and will be a popular choice with reluctant readers. But it also has a great plot and excellent writing to appeal to a more sophisticated audience.

The characters are believable and sympathetic. Leah and Maxine are good girls who meet a boy online, chat with him for months, and finally agree to meet him in a public place. How the killer manages to trick them will send shivers down your spine when you realize it could happen to anyone who lets down her guard for a moment.

The violence is responsibly handled. Although Leah is murdered, the details of the assault are never made explicit. The author uses Maxine's parents to warn about Internet safety without seeming artificial, and there are Internet safety tips at the back of the book.

Still, this book is upsetting – I cried at the end. But in this age of instant messaging, chat rooms, and Facebook, that's not a bad thing. In fact, if it were up to me, this book would be mandatory reading for every kid with Internet access. Highly recommended.

Rosemary Renton is a teacher-librarian with the Simcoe County District School Board.



Peggy's Violin: A Butterfly in Time

By Barbara York
Narrated by Angela Fusco

The Chamber Music Society of Mississauga, 2006
Distributor: The Children's Group (childrensgroup.com)

★★★★★

Reviewed by Catherine West

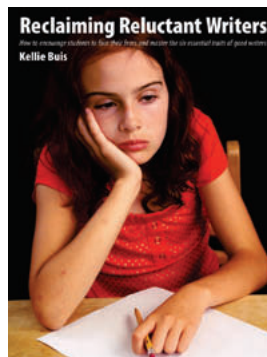
Peggy's Violin is an audio CD for children that recounts the true story of an 18th-century violin owned today by Toronto musician Peggy Hills. The story is told from the point of view of the little violin, a Grancino, and follows the instrument's fortunes as it passes from one hand to another, becomes worm-eaten, is restored, and travels from Milan, Venice, Paris, London, New York, and Montreal to Toronto.

The journey is also an experience of musical styles, as the violin plays Vivaldi, Bach, Haydn, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, traditional Jewish klezmer, and more. The story is beautifully narrated by Angela Fusco, and the musical selections fit deftly into the narration. Students will be intrigued to know that the real Grancino was used to record the CD; some of the selections are performed by Peggy's distinguished student, Adrian Anantawan, who plays the violin despite being born without a right hand.

Also available is a teacher's guide with useful information about the historical settings, and technical background on instrument manufacture, maintenance, repair, buying, selling, and performance. It divides the CD into 10 well-identified scenes for classroom presentation and indicates links to the Ontario Curriculum in a general way. It suggests many activities, some more practical (e.g., compare an 18th-century map to a 21st-century map) than others (e.g., perform scenes from Gilbert and Sullivan). Overall the activities and lesson plans are somewhat weak and experienced teachers will be able to provide a stronger sense of direction in adapting them for their own needs. One wishes that a teacher had been included as a writer. But, despite its uneven quality, the guide is worth purchasing.

This is a welcome new resource in an area where there are few quality products other than the Classical Kids series. The CD is highly recommended. *Peggy's Violin* would work best in grades 3 to 6, and would make an ideal preparation for attendance at a live concert, or an in-school artist visit.

Catherine West is an Instructional Leader in Music with the Toronto District School Board.



Reclaiming Reluctant Writers: How to encourage students to face their fears and master the essential traits of good writers

By Kellie Buis

Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers. 2007

128 pages

\$24.95

★★★★★

Reviewed by Marjan Glavac

Kellie Buis knows her audience and topic well. She does an admirable job of giving teachers strategies to deal with reluctant writers in the classroom.

Wasting little time, Buis quickly describes who the reluctant writers are. Her description resonates with any classroom teacher who has had to face this challenge: "In extreme cases, reluctant writers present themselves as uncooperative and oppositional. More often, they appear withdrawn, sleepy, bored, or indifferent."

She quickly follows with a summary of specific challenges and identifies critical success factors in six of her seven chapters. For example, the specific challenge for chapter 2 is "Nurturing the discovery and flow of ideas." The critical success factor she identifies is the "Need for interesting, fun, experiential writing."

I particularly liked how Buis organizes each chapter under the following bold headings: Myth, Reality, Challenge. She addresses each of these many times in each of her chapters.

I strongly recommend that you read her last chapter, "The Needs to Connect, Talk, and Celebrate" immediately after reading the introduction. I feel it should have been her first chapter.

In addition to giving teachers strategies to deal with the challenge of reclaiming reluctant writers, Buis includes over a dozen reproducible line masters, resource-rich appendices, a bibliography, and an index.

Marjan Glavac is a teacher with the Thames Valley District School Board.

trivia



Painting by Numbers

The school fence needs repainting.

Adam could complete it, himself, in a day under three weeks. Billie, working alone, would take 10 days longer.

The school needs to have it completed in exactly 2 days less than the time it would take for Adam and Billie to finish it working together.

So Chris who, on his own, could paint it all in 2 days less than Adam, has been asked to help the other two.

How many days work must Chris put in to ensure that the painting is completed precisely on target?

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 Nov. 23, 2009.

SOLUTION TO OUR LAST PUZZLE

"It's a Deal": The piglet was worth 2 Maples

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

Janet Adams, Renfrew County ESP Local

Julie Breeze, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local

Megan Steinmann, Waterloo Region Teacher Local

Congratulations!



OTIP Teaching Awards Presented

Eyal Levine, a kindergarten teacher and member of the York Region Teacher Local, and Cindee Karnick-Davison, a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local, received OTIP Teaching Awards for 2009. Levine was recognized as an exemplary new teacher and Davison as an outstanding elementary teacher. They are shown with ETFO President Sam Hammond (right). The awards are co-sponsored by the Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan.

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The following members have been disciplined in accordance with Article VI – Code of Professional Conduct and Article VII – Disciplinary Procedures of the ETFO Constitution.

All of the following penalties apply to the members listed below:

a. Publication of the name of the member and the finding of the executive in regard to the complaint in a federation document

b. Suspension of the right to hold local or provincial office in the federation

c. Denial of any or all services normally provided by the federation, except for such services as must be provided by law.

Disciplined Members:

Trillium Lakelands Teacher Local: Traci McIlroy – 1 year (a,b,c)

Upper Canada Teacher Local: Margot Mosher – 2 years (a,b,c)

calendar

NOVEMBER 5-8, TORONTO

Con Brio 2009: Harmonizing Past, Present and Future

The Ontario Music Educators' Association
Doubletree by Hilton – Toronto Airport
omea.on.ca

NOVEMBER 11-13, RICHMOND HILL

ECCO 2009: Inspire, Connect, Teach

Education Computing Organization of Ontario
Sheraton Parkway North, Richmond Hill
ecco.org

NOVEMBER 12-14, TORONTO

STAO2009: Spotlight on the New Curriculum – Inquiry to Innovation

The Science Teachers' Association of Ontario
Doubletree by Hilton – Toronto Airport
stao.org

APRIL 25-28, CHICAGO

IRA 55th Annual Convention: Reading in Many Languages

International Reading Association
Lakeside Centre at McCormick Place
reading.org

classifieds

14TH ANNUAL TORONTO SEARCH ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL TEACHER RECRUITMENT FAIR

Friday Jan.29-31st Delta Chelsea Hotel, 60 international schools recruiters representing over 80 schools throughout the world will be interviewing candidates for positions for the upcoming school year. This fair is limited to 200 candidates and by invitation only. Deadline to attend is Jan.15th, 2010. A special registration fee to attend the fair only. Information sessions will be held in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto in Oct. and Nov. Contact raysparkes@eastlink.ca or go to www.searchassociates.com for details under NEWS. As well, go to the 2010 FAIR SCHEDULE click on Toronto for additional information.

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