

ETF0

OCTOBER 2010
VOL. 13 - NO. 1

Voice



Overcoming the legacy
of residential schools

ETF0s' First ECE Conference

Annual Meeting 2010

New Columns for Occasional and New Teachers

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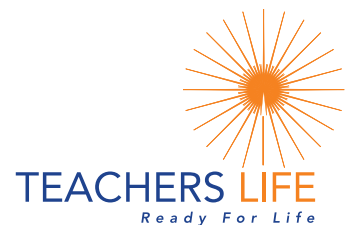
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ON OUR COVER: BERNICE GREENE, Keewatin Patricia Teacher Local / Photo: Sheena Valley



ETFO's Annual Meeting: Tackling the issues members face

The issues discussed at ETFO's annual meeting often resonate widely. This year was no exception.

EQAO testing limits education, ETFO members told us. Teachers' assessment in the classroom is much more effective. Now a former proponent of standardized testing, Diane Ravitch, has written a book denouncing it. Read Vivian McCaffrey's review on page 37.

The testing regime results in a heavy emphasis on test scores. That in turn can drive all learning in the school, starting in kindergarten. And that does not bode well for Ontario's new early learning program, where the focus is to be on play-based learning.

Teachers and ECEs attending ETFO's early learning conference heard that play is crucial to learning. They also heard about the importance of joining a union. (See the Professional Services column, page 21.) As President Sam Hammond points out (page 4) ECEs are now in the position teachers were in years ago: undervalued and underpaid. Joining ETFO will address those issues. Union membership also gives educators the professional confidence to resist pressure – and to teach using play when they believe it is appropriate.

When Stan Beardy, grand chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, addressed ETFO's annual meeting (page 11) he said communities often have to send their children away to school, largely because federal education funding is inadequate. It's not a new issue for First Nations people: for many years their children were sent away to attend residential schools, also underfunded and inadequate. The legacy of that experience is described by ETFO member Bernice Greene (page 16).

As well, with this issue we are launching two new columns: the Occasional Teachers' and the New Teacher's pages will provide practical advice and information for use in the classroom.

As always we welcome your feedback. Send an email with your comments, or fill out the form at etfovoice.ca


JOHANNA BRAND

Correction:

In the May 2010 issue we neglected to provide the names of the writers of the curriculum insert << Les racines d'égalité >> (*Roots of Equality*). They are: Elizabeth Kay, Limestone; Joanne Kelly, Bluewater; Linda-Beth Marr, Keewatin Patricia Occasional Teacher Local; Sirkku Meldrum, Durham; Susan Ritchie, Algoma; Alison Robinson, Peel; Deborah Soloman, Peel; assisted by Jacqui Simm and June Sylbourne, York Region. Translation was provided by TK.

ETFOVoice

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James McCormack, Waterloo Region
Monica Rusnak, Ontario North East Teacher Local
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To: jbrand@etfo.org

Subject: Letters to the editor

Re: Letter to the editor (May 2010)

I agree with Pierre Martel regarding EQAO testing. Well said, Pierre! He's telling the truth about marking. I have heard the same comments from markers in my neck of the woods.

I agree with Pierre, teaching was much more fun 30 years ago. I really do not understand why pressure is put on our students, with these so-called standardized tests. (And let us not forget DRAs and CASI testing for the grades not covered by EQAO.) When I taught grade 3, I did not stress my students. I treated these "tests" as ordinary lessons. No big deal. Do your best. No special treats. I kept it low-key for the sake of my students.

We have many German-speaking Mexican Mennonite families in our area. Many of our students are exempt from EQAO testing, but when the results are published in the local newspapers these students are included in the percentages. Our school, as you can imagine, ranks pretty low in EQAO final results.

As a grade 3 teacher, I did not take the EQAO results personally. I think it is so sad that we put students and staff through this process because some teachers believe it reflects on them as teachers. I would far rather spend my time teaching my grade 4 students what they all need as *individuals*. I cannot expect them all to be on the same page at the same time, not when their ability levels range from low grade 1 to grade 5 plus.

When will this insanity end?

Anne-Marie Grange - Grand Erie Teacher Local

Re: "Lessons from Our Children's Coaches" (March 2010)

Prior to reading this article, I had never considered comparing EQAO assessment to a sports event. Consider adding these thoughts to this analogy.

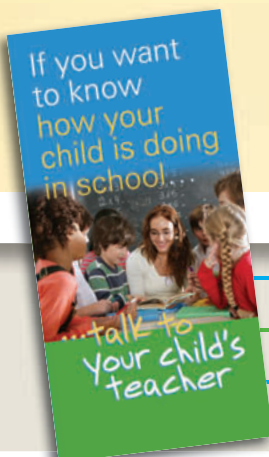
As with all forms of assessment, let's start with desired goals and work back. What is it we want for our students? If our goal for graduates of public education is comparable to the sport analogy of participation and fun, then merely see which students "go the distance" or simply ask, *Are we having fun?* If, however, we are looking for a team that consistently improves skills, develops teamwork, and ends up on top — not every game, but at the end of season — then we need to be able to identify those associations and coaches and learn from them.

This is the value of EQAO assessment. It identifies provincial mean scores then allows district school boards, and to a lesser degree individual schools, to analyze successful trends, and to gather data and techniques to improve student learning.

EQAO assessment is not "just another game." It is the culminating event in specific school years and developmental stages. Again, to refer to sport, does the whole team have an off-day; choke on the big day? Not if they have been properly prepared. If they do, do we change nothing? Standardized testing is an objective way to find out where you are, an efficient way to find methods that work, and a concrete way to document improvement. I believe the right decision regarding EQAO assessment will be made if all education stakeholders — students, parents, educators — consider carefully what we want for our students.

Laurel McIntosh - Avon Maitland Teacher Local

Voice gives members an opportunity to provide their opinions on articles published. Letters reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the official policy of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.



This ETFO brochure is a useful tool when talking to parents about testing and about your assessment practices. To obtain it please contact Dennis Peter at provincial office, dpeter@etfo.org.



SAM HAMMOND
ETFO President

ETFO and Early Childhood Educators: A Great Fit

Last spring the ETFO executive turned the first page in an exciting new chapter in the history of our federation: it decided that our federation would unionize early childhood educators (ECEs) employed by public and Catholic district school boards.

The executive made this decision because ECEs in the new Early Learning Program are working alongside ETFO members and, like all our members, they deserve the benefits of belonging to a professional union.

Historically, ECEs have had to fight hard for recognition and respect. They are mainly women, and their work has consistently been undervalued by their employers, and by society as a whole.

Teachers understand this, because we too fought that battle. When teachers organized themselves into a professional union they had the clout to begin demanding wages and working conditions that allowed them to practice as professionals. For decades those who educated younger students were thought to be less worthy – of respect, and of equal wages and working conditions. As elementary educators our fight is not yet over, but we have come a long way.

Now it is time for ETFO members to help raise the status of early childhood educators by offering them the opportunity to join our federation.

Membership in the same union will have many advantages both for teachers and for ECEs: it will facilitate team building, professional learning, quicker problem solving and conflict resolution. A strong, united early learning team is better placed to resist pressure.

ETFO understands elementary education and elementary educators. This federation is a natural choice for ECEs. Our ECE members will be equal partners in our federation.

ECE locals in ETFO will have equal stature within the federation as teacher and occasional teacher locals. They will have an equal voice shaping ETFO policy and programs by attendance at Representative Council and the annual meeting. They will have equal access to ETFO services and our award-winning professional learning and leadership development programs.

For the past several months ETFO organizers have been working hard to sign up these new members. To date ETFO has organized ECE locals in seven school boards: Durham, Durham Catholic, Grand Erie, Hamilton-Wentworth, Rainbow, Toronto Catholic, and Trillium Lakelands. Other applications for representation are pending. In some boards, because of existing collective agreement language, ECEs will not have an opportunity to decide whether they want to be ETFO members. However, we have seen that ECEs choose ETFO whenever ETFO is on the ballot.

The faith these new members have in our federation is a confirmation of the important work we do as educators and as union members. Working together we can and do make a difference in the lives of our members, our students, and in public education in Ontario. We welcome Early childhood educators into ETFO.



The Price of a Wage Freeze

GENE LEWIS

ETFO General Secretary

In July, the Minister of Finance invited ETFO and other public sector unions to a meeting to discuss compensation. The Minister indicated that the government would ask all public sector workers in Ontario to accept a 0% wage increase for the first two years of their next collective agreement. (For ETFO members the next collective agreement begins in September 2012.)

The government subsequently invited all the public sector unions to participate in consultations related to its wage freeze proposal. For the education sector, these consultations began with a meeting on September 20 and 21. The government set an October 8 deadline for the talks.

Your provincial executive decided that ETFO would participate in these talks only under certain conditions. These were based on our experience during the last round of bargaining when ETFO was asked to participate in forging a provincial framework agreement with the government and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPBSA).

- The 2% salary shortfall imposed on ETFO members must be restored.
- OPSBA must not be involved in the talks and must not be a signatory to any resulting agreement.
- ETFO must have sufficient time to consult local leaders and members.
- Any agreement reached must include enforcement provisions.
- Any agreement reached must include both time and a mechanism for the negotiation of local issues.

Your provincial executive also set parameters for how the process would unfold within ETFO. It wanted the negotiation process to be as open and as transparent as possible.

The executive determined the make-up of team that would represent ETFO at the table: the president, the first vice-president, the two vice-presidents, the general secretary, the deputy general secretary, the coordinator of Protective Services, and assigned staff. Executive members and assigned collective bargaining staff would provide support.

The executive also put in place a detailed communications strategy, which included a full meeting of local presidents and negotiators in September, and regular communications by email with your provincial executive and local presidents after each meeting with the government.

Finally, the executive developed an approval process that includes an all-member ratification process once the provincial executive and local leaders have approved a tentative agreement.

The federation and government teams have met several times. ETFO has put forward proposals that would improve the working life of members: some involve additional costs for the government, some are no-cost, and some would generate savings. We have taken the opportunity to point out once again the significant differences in resources and working conditions that exist between the elementary and secondary panels. To date the process has been slowed by the inability of the government team to provide the data we have requested or to respond in a timely way to the issues we have presented.

At this time it is unclear if an agreement is possible. Any agreement that includes a two-year wage freeze will also have to include significant workload relief, improved workplace democracy, and a heightened reliance in schools on the professional judgement of our members. The membership will make the final decision about accepting any agreement that is reached.

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


















































































Registration dates for face-to-face courses may be different.


For information about registration dates, specific face-to-face course dates and locations, check www.etfo-aq.ca.




* This schedule is subject to change. For more information refer to the ETFO AQ website: www.etfo-aq.ca. ETFO reserves the right to cancel programs due to low enrolment. There will be a full refund of registration fees should ETFO cancel the program.

** For details on PQP registration, course dates, locations, and fees, please check www.etfo-aq.ca

Education Law	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Part 1	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Part 2	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Specialist	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Part 1	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Part 2	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Geography, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
History, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Specialist	—	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Integrated Arts	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Specialist	—	 Online
Kindergarten	 Online	 Online
Librarianship – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Librarianship – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Librarianship – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Media – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Media – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Media – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mentoring	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Reading – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Reading – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Reading – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Part 2	—	 Online
Science and Technology, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 2	—	 Online
Special Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Special Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Special Education – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Teaching Aboriginal Children	 Online	 Online
Teaching Combined Grades	 Online	 Online
Teaching and Learning Through e-learning	 Online	 Online
Writing – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Writing – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Writing – Specialist	 Online	 Online

 Lambton Kent

 Limestone

Principal's Qualification Program – Part 1

Peel

Toronto

Principal's Qualification Program – Part 2

—

 Halton, York Region,
Upper Grand

Annual me



Sam Hammond

Member concerns about EQAO testing dominated ETFO's 2010 annual meeting. President Sam Hammond called on the government to temporarily halt provincewide testing and reduce the resulting number of Ministry initiatives. Teachers need the time to provide a balanced education for every student, Hammond said, adding that money spent on EQAO and the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat could be better spent.

More than 600 delegates and alternates attending the meeting viewed a new ETFO video in which teachers and parents speak out about the negative impact of the provincewide testing. As well, ETFO released the results of focus group testing conducted by Environics Research Group.

Hammond pointed out that the research, and a previous survey conducted by Environics late last fall, showed that ETFO members believe EQAO testing does little to improve learning. The emphasis on test scores narrows the focus of the education teachers are able to provide, leaving less time for other subject areas. EQAO testing particularly disadvantages children with special needs.

Delegates mandated ETFO to launch a further campaign to inform parents and the public about the negative impacts these initiatives have on our students and our classrooms.

Leaders elected

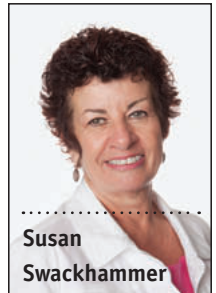
The elections at the 2009 annual meeting resulted in a vacancy in the position of first vice-president. Last fall, the ETFO executive appointed Susan Swackhammer to fill the position. In turn, Maureen Weinberger was appointed to fill the position of vice-president female. In accordance with ETFO's constitution, elections were held this year and both Swackhammer and Weinberger were elected to the positions they held during the past year.

Prior to the annual meeting, the executive appointed Monica Rusnak (Ontario North East Teacher Local) to fill a vacancy created when Mark Hachmer joined the ETFO staff.

More member involvement

In his closing address, President Sam Hammond reiterated his commitment to represent all members across Ontario and "to build a transparent, accountable, and collaborative culture" in the federation. "Together with your local leaders and members of the provincial executive we have done that over the past year," he stated.

Delegates to the annual meeting built on that approach by approving resolutions that will increase member involvement. They voted to add two more members to the ETFO Budget Committee and to create an opportunity for chairs of ETFO committees to meet with the executive. They also asked the executive to make it possible for members to be more actively involved in determining bargaining priorities.



Susan Swackhammer



Maureen Weinberger



Monica Rusnak

eting 2010



LEONA DOMBROWSKY

A moratorium on EQAO testing is not part of the government's plan, Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky told delegates to the annual meeting.

EQAO testing provides an accurate and objective assessment of student achievement and of the school system, which "parents want," and which "allows us to drive resources into classrooms," the minister added.

Nevertheless, she acknowledged that provincewide testing was just one measure of student achievement and underlined the importance of parents talking to teachers when they want to find out how their children are doing in school.

Ontario's education system is known throughout Canada and the world for its excellence, Dombrowsky said. She added that the new Early Learning Program is a unique initiative that underscores the government's commitment to publicly funded education and student success.



ANDREA HORWATH

Andrea Horwath, leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario, supported ETFO's criticism of EQAO, which she said "throws a monkey wrench" into real teaching and real learning.

Horwath noted that Ontario celebrates diversity as one of its core values. "So why is it we apply cookie cutter methods to our public education?" she asked. She called for random sampling and a broader definition of student success to include aptitudes in areas other than literacy and numeracy.

Horwath also criticized the Ontario government for its decision to cut corporate taxes instead of investing in health care, education, and public transit. She said the government had cut corporate taxes but is now asking front-line public sector workers to accept a wage freeze.

EQAO resources

All schools received a copy of the EQAO video in September. The brochure "Talk to your child's teacher" is available for members to distribute to parents and the community. The March 2010 issue of *Voice* outlined in detail teachers' concerns with EQAO testing.

All resources are available on our website, etfo.ca.

Annual me



Continuing support for Aboriginal literacy programs

Five years ago then-Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman asked delegates to ETFO's annual meeting to support his newly created Aboriginal literacy initiatives for northern communities: summer literacy camps, annual book drives, and the book club, Club Amik.

This year, David Onley, the current Ontario lieutenant governor, asked delegates to continue their support. Delegates did so overwhelmingly, approving a \$45,000 contribution for each of the next five years.

In his address to the annual meeting, Lieutenant Governor Onley explained that one reason he is continuing the support for these initiatives is that he is an advocate for accessibility.

"Accessibility is that which enables people to achieve their full potential," he said. "I believe that young Aboriginal people with low literacy levels and no computer skills are challenged as surely as people with disabilities here in southern Ontario when it comes to making their way in the world."

Lieutenant Governor Onley is expanding the "enormously successful" programs with the establishment of a computer literacy program that will begin this fall: "The success of these programs will give young people skills that will allow them to decide whether to go into the world or stay in their communities while still connected to greater community outside their boundaries."

In addition to providing young people with opportunities and their schools and communities with resources, the programs demonstrate to northern Aboriginal residents that "Ontarians do care about their communities."



Lieutenant Governor
David Onley

In 2009

- There were 37 Summer Reading Camps in 29 communities.
- 2300 young people took part.
- They read almost 11,000 books, about five books per child.
- The "Literacy through Digital Photography" module was expanded and a "Literacy through Art" module was offered for the first time.
- Club Amik, a book club for children, involved 6,000 children from kindergarten to grade 6.
- The Lieutenant Governor's book drive delivered 50,000 new books.

Meeting 2010

GRAND CHIEF STAN BEARDY

Stan Beardy, the Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, thanked ETFO for its support of the lieutenant governor's literacy initiatives.

"Supporting these initiatives helps to address the gross discrepancy in education," he said. They "open doors" and "offer hope" to First Nations students.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is made up of 49 fly-in communities in Ontario's far north. These communities have "a strong vision for education" but face many challenges, Beardy told annual meeting delegates.

First Nations leaders have to make "choices no other government is forced to consider," he said, the choice between a quality education and culturally appropriate one. "We are often asked why we don't send our children to provincial schools," but doing so would mean sending them away from home and not providing an education "rooted in their own culture, traditions, and language."

Fewer than 10 of the communities he represents are able to offer their students both elementary and secondary education. That means children as young as 13 have to leave home to go to high school.

The lack of funding by the federal government is a major cause of the problem, he said. Schools lack many of the facilities southerners consider essential to providing an adequate education.

Beardy described some successful alternatives that communities have developed including an Internet-based high school, adult education provided by radio, and a curriculum, approved by the Ministry of Education, for teaching First Nations languages, traditions, and culture.



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.



Inadequate funding for Aboriginal education is a long-standing issue. So is the fact that children have to leave home to be educated. In the last century First Nations children were forced to go to residential schools. As Bernice Greene's story, on page 16, makes clear, these schools were also severely underfunded.



Annual me

ETFO members recognized for their contributions

Honorary Life Members



ETFO's highest form of recognition, honorary life memberships, are awarded to retired members who have given outstanding service to the federation. Among the recipients this year are three former provincial presidents of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAAO), the organization that represented women teachers before the formation of ETFO – Sheryl Hoshizaki, Maret Sädem Thompson, and Margaret Dempsey.

The 2010 award winners (from left) are: Bill Martin, long time ETFO staff member and former president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (a predecessor organization to ETFO) and OTF; Sheryl Hoshizaki; Barb Burkett, Ontario North East Teacher Local, former ETFO vice-president; Cathy (Smith) Hare, former Peel Teacher Local president; Wendy Van Straten, former York Region Teacher Local president; Margaret Dempsey; Lynda McDougall, Upper Grand Teacher Local, former ETFO executive member; Maret Sädem Thompson.



Martin Long (right) with President Sam Hammond

President's Award

Martin Long, president of the **Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT) Local**, received the **2010 President's Award**.

Long has been involved in the federation since he became a steward in 1977. He was elected ETT president in 2002 and served six years on the provincial executive. "Martin reminded us of our responsibility to the many diverse members of our federation and the students they teach," said President Sam Hammond in presenting the award. "He promoted our active involvement in the broader labour movement." Hammond noted that Long has championed many causes in his local, the federation, and the community. "He will always be remembered as the one who pushed for an inquiry into the death of Dudley George, a First Nations activist who died at Ipperwash."

Betty Knight, Peel

Humanitarian Award, ETFO Member



To mark her fiftieth birthday, Betty Knight decided to work with CAUSE Canada. She raised funds to renovate and expand a primary school in Sierra Leone. At her own expense she has twice taken learning and resource materials to the school, now known as the Knight School. She has trained staff and also students who assist them.

Sue Diotte

Humanitarian Award, Non-ETFO Member



Sue Diotte was nominated by ETFO members who are part of the Renfrew County ESP Local to recognize her work with high school students at Arnprior Secondary School. In 2001, after her 16-year-old daughter, Sarah, died in a car accident, Diotte set up the "Yellow Butterfly Fund" in her memory. It provides scholarships and computer equipment for students. Diotte also works with a variety of community and school organizations.

eting 2010

Amy McLaren, Grand Erie **Innovative Projects on Behalf of Children Living in Poverty**



Amy McLaren helped found World Teacher Aid, which supports students and teachers in developing countries. In 2008, seeing an opportunity to connect this cause to curriculum, McLaren created "Write to Give"

for students in grades 1 to 4. They work collaboratively to write and illustrate short stories that are then compiled into books. The books are sold to raise funds for World Teacher Aid and are used as reading materials for students abroad.

Women's Municipal Campaign School Committee **Women Working in Social Activism on Behalf of Women and Children – WP**

The Municipal Campaign School Committee of Waterloo has twice organized a campaign school for women wanting to break into municipal politics. In 2006, the first school attracted over 150 women, eight of whom ran successfully in the subsequent municipal election. This year 145 women attended the second school.

Carole Edgar, Peel Occasional Teacher Local **Occasional Teacher of the Year**



Carole Edgar's work as an occasional teacher focuses on students with special needs. When Intermediate-level developmentally delayed students were moved to a secondary school, she fought for the right to continue to work with them, as she is qualified

to teach up to grade 10. An OT for 30 years, Edgar worked for a year at INDEC, Peel's program for independent education for students with challenges.

Krystyna Kazilis, York Region **New Teacher of the Year**

As a first-year special education resource teacher, Krystyna Kazilis forged links with local professionals and agencies, including the Children's Treatment Network (CTN). As a result she has been able to give teachers and parents the information they need to give students the appropriate help and direction.



Colin Wackett, York Region **Health and Safety Activist**



Colin Wackett has served on numerous federation, board, and provincial health and safety committees. He has worked to ensure that teachers' concerns are reflected in the board's new health and safety procedures and policies. He has developed online health and safety information tools for members and has helped set up training.

OTF Fellows

ETFO staff members **Jim White** and **Vivian McCaffrey** were named Fellows of the Ontario Teachers' Federation for 2010.



Annual me

ETFO Awards

Linda Baker, Rian McLaughlin, Nancy Purich, Barb Wallace,
Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teacher Local
Curriculum Development

Angie Bolt, Superior Greenstone
Multi-Media

Christopher Dinsdale, York Region
Writer (published)

**Kim Haynes, Laurel Merriam, Carol Peterson, Betty-Anne Smith,
Kim Strong,** Kawartha Pine Ridge
Women Who Develop Special Projects in Science and
Technology

Sue Irwin, Hamilton-Wentworth
Writer WP (unpublished)

Jacqueline Kelly, Niagara
Writer (unpublished)

Cecile Leach, Halton Occasional Teacher Local
Anthony Bruce Stodart, Elementary Teachers of Toronto
Newsletter Editor (multi-sheet)

Philip May, Rainbow
Arts and Culture

Anshu Paliwal, Peel Occasional Teacher Local
Local Website of the Year

Todd Rimmington, Niagara
Newsletter Editor (single-sheet)

WP indicates awards funded by ETFO's Women's Program. Unless otherwise indicated, recipients are members of teacher locals. A list of ETFO scholarship and bursary recipients is available at etfo.ca ►Being a Member ►Member Services ►Awards and Scholarships.

ETFO's Awards Program

Information about deadlines, application forms, and awards criteria is available from

- Mark Fallis at provincial office; mfallis@etfo.org
- our website – etfo.ca ►Being a Member ►Member Services ►Awards and Scholarships.

Watch for the awards flyer on the ETFO bulletin board at your school.

ETFO 2010-11 Budget General Fund

Revenue

Members fees + investments	\$66,734,237
Defense Fund	(12,854,390)
Political Action/Public Relations Fund	(1,658,631)
OTF/CTF/EI Fees	(3,238,300)
QECO Fees	(1,125,410)
OFL/CLC Fees	(846,463)

NET REVENUE **\$47,011,044**

Expenditure

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	\$ 159,500
GOVERNANCE	2,752,059
Annual, executive, & representative council meetings; released executive costs	
ETFO LOCALS	20,002,575
Fee rebates, local release time, training & materials for locals & stewards	
COMMITTEE, TASK FORCE & WORK GROUP MEETINGS	244,400
ASSISTANCE	620,542
Awards, donations, scholarships, Project Overseas	
EQUITY & WOMEN'S SERVICES	1,519,833
Race relations, employment equity, anti-violence & women's programs*	
PROTECTIVE SERVICES	2,028,302
Collective bargaining, professional relations, health & safety, pensions, legal costs	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	951,955
Professional learning programs, government relations, communications	
PROVINCIAL OFFICE	2,606,850
Office expenses, members' records	
STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS	16,215,243
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES & SUNDRIES	936,100
Website, VOICE, consultants, insurance, auditors	
TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED FUNDS	(796,312)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$47,241,047
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$(230,003)

*Each year, ETFO allocates 6% of the annual budget (\$2,802,663) to programs for women. Some are in the Equity & Women's Services section but most are spread throughout the budget.

eting

ETFO Members recognized by Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence

Bryce Honsinger, Niagara Teacher Local, was honoured as Teacher of the Year A grade 5/6 teacher at Applewood Public School, he was a contributor to the ETFO resource *Racism Hurts*.

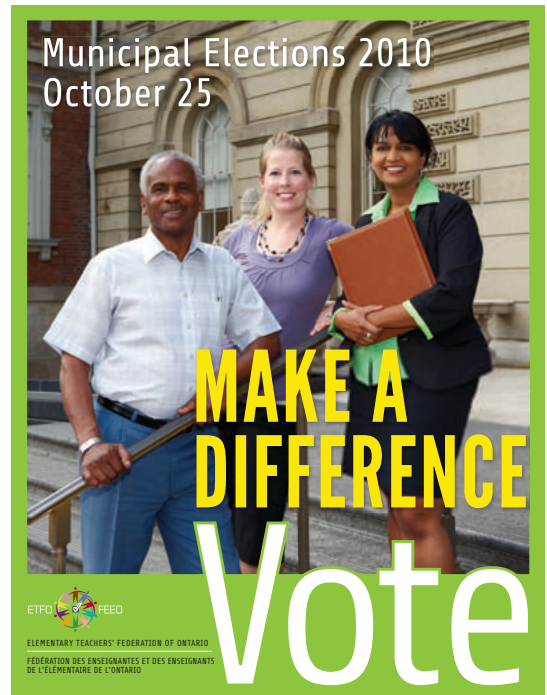
Michelle Jerzyk, Halton Teacher Local, was named New Teacher of the Year. She is a teacher at Sam Sherratt Public School, where her classes routinely have the highest participation rate in the Right To Play initiative.

Joyce Public School Team, Toronto Teachers and support staff at Joyce Public School were named the School Team of the Year. The ETFO members on the team are Sonia Callea, Brian Chandrapal, Rhea Perreira-Foyle, My-Linh Hang, Christopher Lee, Leon Lenchner, Farah Rahemtula, Shiva Sotoudeh, Michelle Holland-Spencer, Michele John Zentena. Joyce PS serves a highly diverse student population. The team has developed a series of literacy projects that emphasize digital technology and use the personal experiences and first languages of students and their parents.

Members Recognized

Susan Read, Trillium Lakelands Teacher Local, has been named Volunteer of the Year for her seven-year involvement with the Ontario Search and Rescue Volunteer Association.

Carla Pietersen, a longtime ETFO/ FWTAO member, received the CTF Volunteer Recognition Award for her many years of involvement in international co-operation programs and her role as a trustee of the CTF Trust Fund.



ETFO's municipal election poster featured our members: Lennox Abraham, Peel Occasional Teachers; Allison Tate, Rainbow Occasional Teachers; and Rameena Ragoonath, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local.

Now everyone in the class can see the blackboard.

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TLC Waterloo 519.888.4502	TLC London 519.438.2020

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“As soon as my LASIK procedure was complete, I knew that my life had instantly changed – for the better of course! LASIK has enabled me to give my full attention to my students and their needs without being interrupted by the burden of my uncomfortable contacts or blurry vision. It is honestly the best decision I've ever made.”
- Katie Cook, Teacher

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Effective leaders know how to build strong relationships. ETFO's PQP gives you the tools you need to meet the leadership challenge.

2010-2011 PQP courses are available in these locations:

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PART II – Burlington, Newmarket, and Orangeville

All PART I courses include the EQ-iTM instrument on Emotional Intelligence

Find more details and application forms at etfo-aq.ca
Or contact Joanne Languay at provincial office; jlanguay@etfo.org

Understanding the Legacy of



The education of First Nations children in Canada has a dark history. Today, as Grand Chief Stan Beardy told ETFO's annual meeting, inadequate funding means many students have to leave their families and communities to get an education. In the last century, they were forced to leave to attend residential schools. This had disastrous consequences.

An estimated 80,000 former students of residential schools are still living today. The impact of the residential school experience has not faded away.

BY DARLINE POMEROY

Bernice Greene is an Ojibwe woman living in Iskatewizaagegan #39 who currently works for the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board. She is a classroom teacher and has been a Native Language/Native Studies special assignment teacher, responsible for facilitating the development of curriculum resources, supporting teacher practice, acquiring resources, and co-ordinating and providing professional learning to both Ojibwe and Oji-Cree teachers.

Bernice attended the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School in Kenora, operated by the Presbyterian Church from 1900 until 1964, after which it was operated by the federal government. She shared her story with Darline Pomeroy.

Residential Schools

Bernice Greene in conversation with Darline Pomeroy.

I was born and raised in Iskatewizaagegan or Shoal Lake #39 Independent First Nation and I attended the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora from 1967 to 1973. The old residential school built on our reserve in 1902 was closed in 1929. The school was moved to Kenora to accommodate students from surrounding communities. It closed in 1974.

My mom and dad and their parents attended the same residential school. My grandparents did not talk about it. They accepted that they had no choice. Parents always feared being jailed if they tried to keep their children from attending. Gradually, resistance grew toward the schools and there were some who tried to hide their children.

My mom spoke about her experiences at the residential school and they weren't very good experiences at all. Students were encouraged

to get involved in hockey, the school band, or dancing for local competitions. If they did not achieve well they were severely disciplined. My mom was a dancer and she was often hit across the shins if she or her partner missed a step. To this day, she remembers all of those dances; but what a way to learn, through harsh discipline! She said that the students attended classes for part of the day and then worked on the farm, or in the kitchen and laundry.

My mom must have thought it was the thing to do as we were sent to residential school as well. I would never have sent my kids.

Starting school

I can clearly recall my first day at Cecilia Jeffrey and the long steps leading to the main doorway, people speaking only English, and then my mom leaving and my sister and I being dragged down a long hallway. Our hair was cut,



Exterior of "old" Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, 1931.

Photo: Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (G-3807-FC-2)

Residential Schools in Canada

Residential education was at the centre of the federal government's policy of assimilation of First Nations peoples. Residential schools were first established by religious communities, before Confederation. However, in the 1880s, the federal government decided that these schools would become the model for Aboriginal children's education and began funding them. In 1897 attendance became compulsory. The government began closing schools in the 1960s, but continued to operate some as residences or hostels. The last school closed in late 1996.

Compulsory attendance at residential schools meant First Nations children were removed from their homes and communities. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* characterized the process this way: "Aboriginal languages, customs and habits of mind were suppressed. The bonds between many hundreds of Aboriginal children and their families and nations were bent and broken, with disastrous results."¹ As Trent University professor John Malloy states in *A National Crime*, the concept was violent and abusive in its intent.

The schools were desperately underfunded, which led to a level of care and education far below an acceptable standard. Many students were physically and sexually abused by school administrators and staff. A lack of medical care and sanitation led to disease and death.

In the 1980s students began disclosing the abuse they had experienced at residential schools. By the late 1990s they had begun to launch lawsuits against the churches and the federal government. A settlement agreement included compensation for residential school survivors and provided for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As well, on June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal apology on behalf of the federal government.² He apologized to former students, their families, and communities for both the excesses of residential schools and the creation of the system itself.

Notes

1. trc.ca/website/trcinstitution/index..php?p=12
2. The full text of the Prime Minister's apology can be found at ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/rqpi/apo/index-eng.asp.

Understanding

we were checked for lice, and a solution was put on our heads for delousing, and then we were showered. All of this in spite of the fact that my mom kept us clean and our home was always immaculate. We were then taken to the sewing room to be given our new clothes, and then to the dormitory and shown our cubbies and our beds.

From then on, everything happened according to the ringing of a bell. If you didn't follow the routine, you would be punished. I can remember standing, looking out the window, and through my tears hoping to see something or someone familiar and wishing I was back at home with my mom. We were sent to bed early and siblings were not allowed to communicate, nor were other students. My older sister was determined to go home to look after our baby sister because she knew that our mom was struggling with an illness. My sister was a "runner" and she would run every chance that she got, and she was finally told to stay at home.

I stayed, and I suppose that I was one of the lucky ones who was never punished as severely as the others because my father was the chief at the time, and my grandparents were prominent in the community. They were commercial fishermen and so had the money to come and take us home almost every weekend.

A soul-destroying experience

By the time that I was in grade 4, Cecilia Jeffrey became a public school and accepted other students from the surrounding communities. Later all the CJ students were allowed to attend the public school system in Kenora.

As a child and then when getting into my teens, I encountered a lot of racism at school. Being Indian was not seen as a good thing; another bad seed that was planted into our heads. These years destroyed my pride and self-esteem. I became fearful. The school buildings were frightening, even in how they were con-

the Legacy of Residential Schools

structed. I was introverted and shy. The whispered comments of others stayed in my mind. I had no trust and I looked for the negative. I watched everyone and questioned everything. I still do today. I think if I had known about my own history and that of my people, I could have spoken up for myself when people would say we got everything for free.

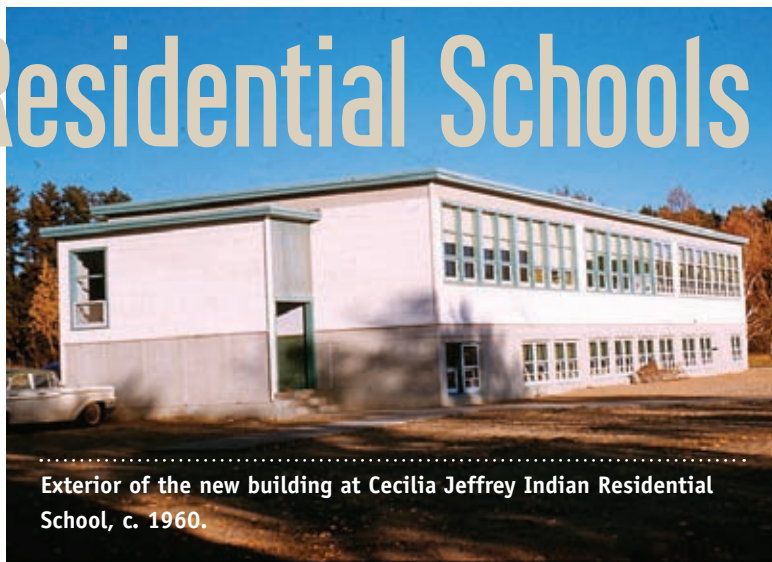
Education was something to avoid. It was destructive and harmful and I look back to a bleak, dark past. I didn't want anything to do with education! Just when I think that I am past residential schools and their impact, I break up (*quietly sobbing*).

Overcoming the past

As a young girl, I got involved in some church groups in my community over the summers, and I came to admire some supervisors and some of my teachers. There were some people who were accepting and didn't judge. I believe that this played a part in my career choice as I remember a few times wondering what it would be like to be standing in front of a classroom.

I've been fortunate to have many relatives, aunts and uncles, who played important roles in my upbringing. They have maintained and retained the traditional teachings, and so I've learned to change my attitude and how I perceived things. I feel very honoured to have had the opportunity to listen to their teachings and the words from our Elders. They share so much knowledge of our ways of knowing and how we fit in this circle of life. This has helped me to overcome the negative effects of the residential school system and has influenced me to become the teacher that I am today.

When I got my teaching qualifications, I taught for several years on my own reserve and then decided to teach off-reserve. I remember my first day of teaching at a high school. As I was walking up those stairs and down the



hallway, I reverted back to my high school days and began thinking, "What are they going to say about me?" and I felt so insecure and fearful at that moment. I had to really pull myself together and remind myself that it was another time and another place and that now I was where I needed to be, "teaching"! It was such an awakening for me and to realize that the non-Native students were just as unsure of me because they had never had a Native teacher before. Over several days there was a shift and we accepted and respected each other.

Lasting scars

What is so important for today's educator's to know is that residential schools affected the whole community. It is Canadian history, everyone's burden. Many people have long-lasting scars from being in those schools, and you see it when you're around your own community or towns. There are those who are not well, who are consumed by alcohol and drugs. There is that whole ripple effect that happened. People did not know how to parent because they never got that in residential school; the basic needs of being nurtured and of nurturing weren't there. There are many things that occurred in those schools that people are not aware of. Both students and families became suspicious and distrustful, and even today it takes a while for me to gain trust in people. Would you trust a



government or school that subjected you to all of that abuse? Probably not!

The government apology didn't do too much for me. It seemed insincere, too little, too late. The Truth and Reconciliation process might bring some closure for some people. For some families it is too late.

What teachers can do

How should we teach First Nations students? Be real. Be respectful. Children quickly interpret body language and facial expression. Teachers need to be receptive and to bring out the "shine" of each student. As an educator and most importantly an Anishinaabe, I believe that it is very important for students to know about their own history, their own teachings, their own language and culture. It is important to empower them with that knowledge so they

can become the best they can be. We are told by our Elders to share our knowledge, share our own stories, in the hope that it will have a positive impact on others. I believe that there is good in everybody and that everyone has a special gift, and that as teachers we have that responsibility to continue to work at getting the students to share their gift with everyone.

Teachers should make an effort to educate themselves about the First Nations peoples and to make information readily available about residential schools. We need to continue to integrate the history and customs of First Nations people into what we do. There should be a link between language and culture for First Nations students, as they are inseparable. Look and listen. That is what Anishinaabe people are told and it is still good advice. That is how I survived tough situations.

DARLINE POMEROY is the first vice-president of the Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local and a member of ETFO's Aboriginal Education Committee.

Resources

trc.ca ► residential school locations
afn.ca/residential_schools/history
thecanadianencyclopedia.com



2010-2011 Women's PROGRAMS SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Equity Conference

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.

Financial Tools for Women

ETFO's Financial Management Conference for women is designed to provide participants with an opportunity to increase their financial literacy and learn about strategies to address their financial fitness. Workshops and presentations focus on building confidence for members through basic financial literacy. Some of the topics presented include budgeting, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security, estate planning, investing, insurance, and real estate.

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; Managing the Multiple Demands of Professional, Parent, and Family Caregiver; Women in Transition.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

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 receive provincial training and support, including regular electronic communications.

Women in Action

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

Professional Relations Leadership Training

This workshop, held in two sessions, will provide opportunities for participants to learn about legal issues, rights and responsibilities, and professional boundaries. Opportunities to develop leadership skills, build support, and do some follow-up in the local are built into the sessions.

Women's Collective Bargaining Issues

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.

Women's PROGRAMS 2010-2011

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

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:

Think on Your Feet®

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.

Women in Politics

Designed to encourage women members to get involved in federal, provincial, and municipal election campaigns, this program provides members with practical information and skills.

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.

Parliamentarian Training

Women members receive training to act as parliamentarians at ETFO local and provincial events.

Next Steps: Supporting Women's Involvement in ETFO

Initiatives to enhance and encourage women's leadership in ETFO.

Project Overseas

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

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 2010 poster features Aboriginal women artists.



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

Life stories are a way of passing on history. These kindergarten to grade 8 curriculum resources emphasize social justice and present real stories and lesson activities linked to Ontario's curriculum expectations.

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 materials that focus on 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 and 8 girls' conferences, and tipsheets for educators and parents. A French-language resource is available in 2010: Les racines de l'égalité.



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 of Women WP provides funds to community organizations, individuals, or projects working to improve the status of women and girls in Ontario or 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 funding to assist ETFO locals with costs related to providing local programs. Programs include:

- 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

...and still we rise

2011 marks the 11th year for ETFO's provincial conference for women. This year's conference explores the theme Local and Global Citizenship for Change.



Women's PROGRAMS 2010-2011

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.

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.

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.





“The evidence is overwhelming — to fully prepare children to learn, academically and socially, they must engage in playful learning.”



Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek.

Play Makes Program Unique

Photos: Brian Summers

BY MARY MORISON

Ontario’s Early Learning Program and its play-based curriculum will set a new standard for early childhood education, according to renowned psychologist Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek.

“What you are doing here is historic for the world,” Dr. Hirsh-Pasek told 200 early learning educators attending ETFO’s *Partners in Early Learning* conference in August. The integration of play into the curriculum is not happening anywhere else in the world.

The conference took place as 600 Ontario schools were preparing for the beginning of the new Early Learning Program. The program offers four- and five-year-olds full-day kindergarten staffed by a teacher and an early childhood educator working in partnership.

“It is up to all of you to ensure that play is incorporated into every aspect of learning,” Dr. Hirsh-Pasek said. “To groom intelligent, socially skilled, creative thinkers for the global workplace of tomorrow, we must return play to its rightful position in children’s lives today. Playful learning

Partners in Early Learning



engages and motivates children in ways that support better developmental outcomes and strategies for lifelong learning.”

Dr. Hirsh-Pasek is the Stanley and Debra Lefkowitz Professor in the Department of Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia, where she is the director of the Infant Language Laboratory. She is the author of more than 100 articles and 11 books, including *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool, Play = Learning, Einstein Never Used Flash Cards*.

“What are the skills we need to nurture in young children?” she asked conference participants. “Information is doubling every two and a half years. If all we teach is information, our students will never be able to keep up.”

Instead, she posited, there are six competencies we should be developing in children – collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence. Play is the best way to develop these, she said.

Dr. Hirsh-Pasek noted that children need two types of play: free play in which they let their imagination define the rules, and play-based learning. Both types have been cut back in recent years.

“Children are not getting enough time to play,” she told her audience. “In 1981, 40 percent of a preschool child’s time was spent in play. By 1997, the figure had dropped to 25 percent. In the United States, 30,000 schools have dropped morning recess. A study of teachers in Los Angeles and New York found that 25 percent of teachers in LA had no time for free play; 61 percent of teachers in New York and 81 percent of those in LA had less than 30 minutes a day. “But,” she noted, “79 percent of teachers in New York and 82 percent of those in LA spend 20 minutes a day on test preparation.”

Dr. Hirsh-Pasek reviewed the extensive body of research that supports play-based learning. Guided play advances cognitive skills like language and reading, and social skills like emotional regulation and peer cooperation. “The evidence is overwhelming: to fully prepare children to learn, academically and socially, they must engage in playful learning,” she stated.

Implementing a curriculum based on play will not be easy. There is increasing pressure on children to “do well” at school, to do more “work,” to have higher test scores. Dr. Hirsh-Pasek urged educators not to give in to this pressure for the sake of their young students and for the sake of the society to which they will eventually be contributing. “It is time to change the lens on how children learn. You are doing that in Ontario.”

To view the whole presentation, visit youreceunion.ca/conference and click on Kathy Hirsh-Pasek.

Early learning is a sound investment

Jill Worthy, an education officer with the Early Learning Division at the Ministry of Education, underlined the unique nature of the new program. “You are pioneers,” she told her audience. Worthy outlined the rationale for the new Early Learning Program and its implementation.

She emphasized the research that shows that investing in the early years of a child’s life is one of the best investments a government can make: “Every dollar we spend before a child is six years old saves up to \$17 in the [future] reduced use of social services. It pays off economically for society and in the advantages it may give children who are enrolled in programs.”

The ultimate goal is a seamless day that integrates child care and kindergarten programs, and a school site that becomes a central hub for families to access a variety of programs and services. Parental frustration should be reduced as a result. “This initiative will support family life; and improved family life can only improve life for young learners,” she said.

.....
MARY MORISON is an ETFO executive assistant.

Conference

ETFO Is the Union of Choice for ECEs

BY JOHANNA BRAND

ECEs should choose ETFO as their union, according to Diane Kashin, president of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO). “For those of you still considering your options, I ask you to recognize the value in joining a professional union where the majority of members are educators, that is provincially based, and that understands and supports early learning,” Dr. Kashin urges.

Dr. Kashin is also the coordinator of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education program at Seneca College. She began her professional career as an ECE and she told the audience that “it is as an ECE that I am speaking to you today.”

Despite the critical importance of early learning to a child’s development, ECEs are amongst the lowest-paid educators. For years the system has been based on compensation tied to the ages of the students being taught, she said. Those who teach the youngest students receive the lowest wages and the least recognition, even though they “teach when the greatest window of learning exists.”

“Our field needs to emerge from undervalued obscurity and evolve to professionalization and we need to do it now,” Dr. Kashin said. She noted that the first ECE diplomas were granted in Ontario 40 years ago. ECEs now approaching retirement have little economic security. Few have pensions and low wages have made saving for retirement difficult. ECEs’ low wages have subsidized the child care system, Dr. Kashin said. One reason is because most ECEs are not union members.



Diane Kashin speaks to teachers and ECEs at ETFO's early learning conference.

She told her audience that professional unions such as ETFO allow members to practise their profession, give them a voice, and improve the recognition they receive for their work. She urged ECEs to become activists in fighting for themselves. “Uniting with one voice and assuming a more assertive stand” means there is “no limit to the transformation possible in the profession,” she said. But if the workforce is scattered among multiple unions, the potential of a strong collective voice is lost.

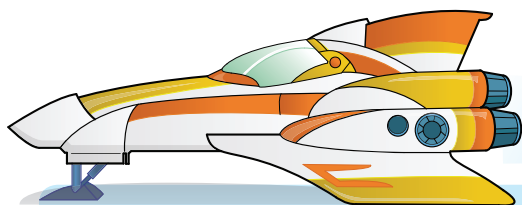
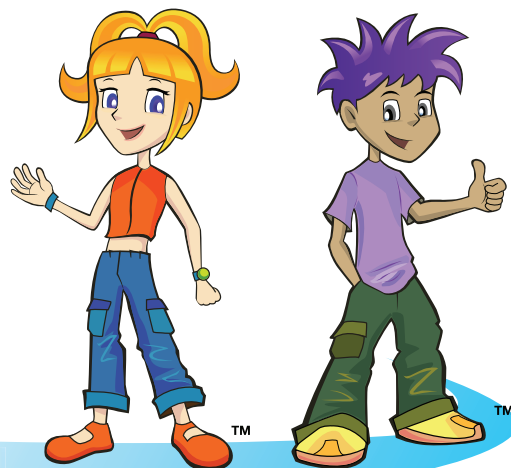




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Ensuring that Every Vote Counts

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

“I sat down on the edge of the stairs and I went down on the seat of my pants down to the bottom of the stairs while somebody carried my walker.”

On March 17, 2008, Peter Hughes went to vote in a federal by-election. The polling station was located down a long flight of stairs.

The solution? “I sat down on the edge of the stairs and I went down on the seat of my pants down to the bottom of the stairs while somebody carried my walker,” Mr. Hughes said.

With municipal elections in the news, many ETFO members will have taken advantage of those teachable moments that arise when a student comments on a lawn sign, a television story, or a canvasser at the front door. You may have found yourself explaining how important elections are in providing individuals a voice and an opportunity to help shape the world they live in. With older students, you may have had a more in-depth discussion about what it means to live in a democratic society with free and open elections. You may have pointed out that across the globe, millions do not enjoy these benefits.

Seven months later when Peter Hughes arrived at the same polling station he once again experienced the same barriers. And, because he lives in a democratic society, he filed a complaint against Elections Canada with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Last February, the commission ordered Elections Canada to revise its standard lease for polling stations to require that they “provide level access and are barrier free.” The commission

also ordered Elections Canada to put in place a procedure to deal with complaints about accessibility at polling stations.

Closer to home, not long ago, Elections Ontario issued a draft Site Accessibility Standard. Returning officers will use this document when they are selecting voting locations. The standard will eventually form part of a broader Elections Ontario Accessibility Plan.

Physical access to polling stations is only one aspect of creating barrier-free voting. For example, voters with visual impairments have long pointed out the importance of being able to cast a vote in secret, without assistance from others, and in a way that they can verify their choices. Without these three elements, their right to vote is compromised.

In Ontario, there are considerable differences in the way municipalities run their elections, and hence the barriers confronting voters are different depending on where they live.

What drives various levels of government to turn their attention to these issues? In part it is individuals like Peter Hughes who refuse to settle for second-class treatment, but instead use the power of the law to assert their rights. In part, it is growing awareness that far too many barriers to full participation exist even in 2010 – an awareness educators have a long history of raising among the children they teach.

CHRISTINE BROWN is ETFO’s coordinator of Protective Services

In the

WEAR A PINK SHIRT ON APRIL 14. You may have received a message similar to this via email, Facebook, Twitter, or even the newspaper. When a bullying incident took place in Nova Scotia, students took action, as students historically have to address all kinds of social justice issues.

The organization Jer's Vision: Canada's Youth Diversity Initiative was formed as a national response to bullying. Among its initiatives is the International Day of Pink (celebrated the second Wednesday in April), an international day against bullying, discrimination, and homophobia, by encouraging everyone to wear pink. It is a simple act with a powerful message. ETFO members like Sheri Birch (Simcoe County) and Ron Vine (Hamilton-Wentworth) heard the call and organized. Ron's and Sheri's whole schools responded by wearing pink shirts.

ETFO has also heard the call and will support the International Day of Pink and Jer's Vision. Watch for materials and resources that will be sent to your school early in the new year.

There are many "days" to be commemorated in a year; for example, International Women's Day, World AIDS Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. While it is important to recognize these days, it is vital to work at social justice all of the other days of the year. So let's wear pink on April 13, 2011. But the next day if we hear the derogatory phrase, "That's so gay," let's do something about it, even though the pink shirt is tucked away in a drawer.

KELLY HAYES

KELLY HAYES is an executive assistant in Equity and Women's Services at ETFO.

Pink: Creating Awareness about Homophobic Bullying

BY SHERI BIRCH

In September 2007, two grade 12 students from Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge, Nova Scotia, heard about a male grade 9 student who was bullied for wearing a pink shirt on the first day of school. David Shepherd and Travis Price decided to take action. They bought 50 pink t-shirts, and handed them out at school a few days later. Other students at the school wore their own pink clothing creating a "sea of pink" that caught the attention of the local media, eventually gaining attention across North America.

When I read the newspaper article about this event to my class in the fall of 2007, my students quickly identified with the victim as many of them had experienced incidents of bullying. Surprisingly, some were honest enough to also admit they had bullied other classmates, and many acknowledged that they had also participated as bystanders.

During our conversation, one student suggested that they all wear pink t-shirts to show support for what happened in Nova Scotia and to bring awareness about bullying into our school. It was a student-driven initiative and, as educators all know, one of the most effective strategies is to use those teachable moments whenever they blossom in a classroom. Soon everyone was chattering about what clothing they might wear, the boys wondering if they could borrow something from their older sisters, the girls offering to bring in extra t-shirts just in case someone forgot.

A week later, I stood proudly in front of my class as they all sat in their desks, giggling and grinning from ear to ear, all 28 of them wearing something pink: shirts, sometimes with matching skirt or pants, pink hair ribbons, and even some boys with spray-painted hair. I took a photo and we

hung it on the door of our classroom, to serve as a reminder throughout the year of their generosity in embracing a new idea about anti-bullying.

BULLYING IS TOO COMMON

An incident of bullying happens every seven minutes in an Ontario schoolyard and every 30 minutes in a classroom.¹ The most common form of bullying is to attack someone's sexuality or perceived sexuality by calling them "gay" in a derogatory and hurtful manner. One very common occurrence is students using the word "gay" when they really mean "stupid." Elementary educators know that LGBT issues affect students in our school communities.

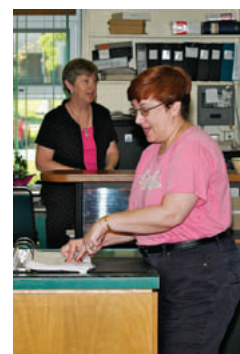
Statistics show that one in 10 people is gay, which means that on average 10 percent of the students we teach are gay. Children who do not conform to gender stereotypes are often taunted for being different and sometimes bullied. Name-calling and put-downs are the most common form of homophobia: 97 percent of students have suffered from homophobic name-calling by grade 7 and students are exposed to negative name-calling as early as kindergarten.²

These incidents have long-term consequences: American studies suggest that 28 percent of gay and lesbian students drop out of school before they graduate, most often because of harassment and discrimination in the schoolyard, halls and classrooms.³ After race and ethnicity, sexual orientation is the most frequent motivation for hate crimes in Canada.⁴ Homophobic bullying can lead to suicide. In 2009, an 11-year-old Massachusetts boy, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, hanged himself after enduring bullying at school, including daily taunts of being gay.

In 2009, EGALE reported on its Canada-wide survey of schools which found that three-quarters of LGBTQ students feel unsafe in at least one place at school, such as change rooms, washrooms, and hallways.⁵ Half of straight students agreed that at least one part of their school was unsafe for LGBTQ students. Three-quarters of all participating students reported hearing expressions such as "that's so gay" every day in school. Six out of 10 LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed



Ron Vine (centre) with colleagues at Green Acres PS. He was the moving force behind Pink Day at the school and then went on to have the day observed throughout the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.



Administrators and school support staff also take part in Pink Day at Steele Street PS.



Sheri Birch, (back row, second from right) with her class at Steele Street PS.



about their sexual orientation. More than half of LGBTQ students compared to a third of non-LGBTQ students reported hearing remarks like “faggot,” “queer,” “lezbo,” and “dyke” daily. LGBTQ students were more likely than non-LGBTQ individuals to report that staff never intervened when homophobic comments were made. Over half of LGBTQ students did not feel accepted at school, and almost half felt they could not be themselves, compared with one-fifth of straight students.

STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

This year, after I once again read the newspaper article about the Nova Scotia students, my grade 7 class decided to wear pink every Wednesday because, they said, bullying happens more than

just one day a year. They also decided to encourage everyone in our school to participate in “Pink Day.” Students designed and produced colourful posters and hung them around the school and they made weekly announcements reminding everyone to participate. It is a wonderfully rewarding sight to see many of the 425 students, both male and female, wearing pink every Wednesday at our school; in the staff room teachers compliment each other on their pink apparel and the male teachers have purchased new pink ties to wear every week.

Pink Day is beginning to spread in my board. Hillcrest PS, also in Barrie, has begun Pink Days on Wednesdays using resources and posters that I’ve provided.

Legislation recently passed in Ontario has placed more responsibility on educators to ensure that schools are a safe learning environment for all students. Bringing awareness to homophobia and the bullying of LGBTQ students helps create a safe learning environment for everyone.

There are many resources now available for educators. ETFO has a wide variety of materials available, including the *Positive Space* pamphlet, and Equity and Women’s Services offers “Free From Fear” workshops that can be booked through provincial office. EGALE Canada launched a Safe Schools Campaign several years ago and has many resources including the new “My Gay-Straight Alliance” program.⁶ I highly recommend the CAW brochure “To Our Allies: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Issues.”⁷ The Canadian Labour Congress has also published a number of resources.⁸

On April 14 this year, the first International Day of Pink was celebrated in many Canadian schools and promoted in many workplaces. As a result of the activism of David Shepherd and Travis Price, Nova Scotia now officially recognizes the second Thursday of every September as Stand Up Against Bullying Day. Many schools across Canada also commemorate Pink Triangle Day by having staff and students wear pink t-shirts on February 14. As I always tell my own students, one of the best things about Canada is that we celebrate diversity and make all people feel welcome and included in our communities.

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SHERI BIRCH, is a member of the Simcoe County Teacher Local and serves as the local’s third vice-president.

Notes

- 1 Craig, W. & and D Pepler, D. (1998) “Observations of Bullying and Victimization in the School Yard” *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13 (2), 41-59.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. *Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization New York 1984*; Ramefedi, G. ‘Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent perspective’ *Pediatrics* 1987.
- 4 Statistics Canada. *The Daily*. June , 2004. Available at statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/040601/dq040601a-eng.htm.
- 5 Available at egale.ca ►newsroom.
- 6 Available at mygsa.ca.
- 7 Available at caw.ca/en/3678.htm.
- 8 Available at canadianlabour.ca/human-rights-equality ►pride.

BY MICHAELA MURPHY

Thinning the Alphabet Soup



Your collective agreement provides protection against excessive demands; the key is for you to request and expect to be provided with the supports you require.

Data walls, teacher-moderated marking, critical learning pathways, running records, benchmark assessments, numeracy assessments, early literacy observation tools, district review team visits, electronic data entry, pre- and post-assessment tasks, class profiles, mock EQAO tests, SMART goals, Alpha-Jeune, PLCs, LNS, PRIME, CASI, DRA, GB+, OLA, APA, OFIP, IEPs, CIL, PLAB, ONAP, OWA... Educators across Ontario are swimming through an ever-growing alphabet soup of new initiatives introduced by the government, school boards, and principals. Many of these initiatives are driven by an accountability agenda with little regard for the increased workload they entail.

Collective agreements provide protection against excessive workload demands. Recent negotiations have resulted in improvements to teacher preparation time scheduled within the instructional day so that you can attend to your professional responsibilities. You have the right to determine how to use that time. Occasional teacher contracts stipulate that you are to follow the timetable of the teacher you are replacing, including scheduled preparation time. Hours of work and uninterrupted lunch times are clearly

designated in educational and professional support personnel contracts. Early childhood educators in Early Learning Program classrooms are guaranteed rights under labour legislation. ETFO will work to expand on those basic rights during contract negotiations. Your employer cannot expect or require you to give up your rights.

THE BALANCING ACT

All ETFO members feel pressure to use preparation and/or personal time to complete tasks associated with what administrators often call “the attainment of achievement objectives.” Members report that the multitude of expectations means there is little time left for effective teaching and learning.

Balancing workload demands is part of the job. But when unreasonable expectations and arbitrary deadlines interfere with the work you do with students, it’s time to step back and reflect upon your professional goals and responsibilities.

Certainly there is an obligation to teach, evaluate, and report on student progress. And undoubtedly, some initiatives provide valuable information as you develop plans and programs to meet student needs. The key is to recognize that

you are responsible for making decisions about which strategies are most appropriate to use with your students.

A MULTITUDE OF INITIATIVES

Some school boards enthusiastically embrace every opportunity to measure student achievement, while others demonstrate a more restrained approach. In one way or another, educators are dealing with all of the following initiatives, which represent only a sample of the many projects being implemented in Ontario schools.

IEPS

Individual education plans (IEPs) require that precise academic and behavioural goals be recorded, measured, and evaluated. There are ever-increasing demands on educators to document every aspect of student achievement and behaviour. When do those who participate in the development of IEPs find time for meaningful consultation so that they can establish effective plans? In some locations, creative administrators have found ways to schedule blocks of time during the instructional day to allow staff teams to collaborate in the preparation of IEPs. ETFO members in every school should be requesting and expecting this kind of support.

ASSESSMENT

Some boards inundate teachers and students with tests and data. In such instances, teachers administer, mark, analyze, and submit data from as many as twelve tests per student, per year. In many cases, these assessment tasks are above and beyond those mandated by the government. Marking tests can take many hours. The workload associated with them becomes more cumbersome when administrators request that data be entered or displayed in a specific format.

You should record assessment data in a format useful to you. For example, you may choose to input data electronically or display results on data walls. Alternatively, you may choose to

record the information on paper and store it in a file folder or binder. The data must be available for the principal to view on request. When deadlines and other expectations are imposed by administrators, you can request release time to deal with the additional workload.

SCHOOL MEETINGS

Teachers are expected, not required, to attend regularly-scheduled staff meetings. However, teachers feel significant pressure to participate in meetings and in-service sessions because they believe they may otherwise be at a disadvantage. If the information or activity is considered essential, then release time should be provided.

PARENT EVENTS

Many schools plan literacy or numeracy events for parents, which often take place during the evening. ETFO members need to remember that attendance at these events is voluntary. If you are expected to prepare materials or activities to contribute to parent meetings, adequate time should be provided within the instructional day.

ADMINISTRATOR VISITS

As part of the School Effectiveness Framework, board administrators visit schools to make observations and determine what further supports might be required. In some schools, the principal mandates specific displays and staff members are expected to make them happen before the district review team visits.

Educators should remember that elementary education doesn't benefit from artificial or contrived demonstrations of teaching and learning during these visits. The board team needs to see a realistic 'snapshot' of what's happening in schools and classrooms and there should be no need to make special preparations. Time during the instructional day must be provided if members are required to complete tasks specific to these visits.

A BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

We've probably all heard the expression, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." In Ontario schools, the alphabet soup pot is already brimming with an overabundance of initiatives. The result is an unsavory concoction of demands which are becoming more and more difficult for educators to digest.

ETFO members understand that unreasonable expectations and arbitrary timelines only serve to create barriers to effective teaching and learning. Contact your local ETFO office when you have concerns about your workload.

Your collective agreement provides protection against excessive demands; the key is for you to request and expect to be provided with the supports you require. After all, when it comes to meeting student needs, elementary educators know best.

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MICHAELA MURPHY is an ETFO executive assistant in Protective Services.

To Share or Not to Share: LTD and the Internet

BY PRS STAFF

Surveillance is one of the tools an insurance carrier may sometimes use in assessing a claim for long-term disability (LTD) benefits. This is not a new practice nor is it illegal.

But did you know that the personal information you share over various Internet social networks may also be used in assessing a claim for LTD? Some Internet users share a wide range of personal information on Internet postings and for insurance companies an Internet search is much less expensive than hiring a company to conduct surveillance.

Information disseminated on blogs, chat rooms, websites, Facebook, Twitter, etc. is in the public domain and potentially available to anyone; it cannot be controlled. More and more employers are using these networks for a wide variety of purposes: for background checks on those applying for jobs or post-secondary education, in various kinds of litigation, and in assessing LTD claims. Remarks made in social network conversations that may seem benign to the casual reader could prove problematic to the success of an LTD claim. Carriers will look for

personal descriptions of events (e.g., vacations, trips) and activities (e.g., sporting events, recreational activities) that suggest that the author is not as disabled as claimed. The frequency, complexity, and coherence of postings will be compared against claims of cognitive restrictions. Criticisms of the insurance carrier or participation in chat groups defined by a specific diagnosis or condition will be scrutinized. The carrier may use postings to assess or impeach the credibility of the claimant.

Many believe Internet networking sites are not accessible to third parties, and that the information they share is private. But there are ways of garnering information without your explicit knowledge, information that could be used against you when you claim LTD benefits. As well, the insurer does not necessarily reveal what information it has, so you would have no way of knowing that this type of “surveillance” has been used in assessing your claim. In the course of a court action, you could be ordered by the court to provide the carrier with your Facebook account access and other Internet information.

Think carefully about the personal information you share on the Internet. Your insurance carrier may be watching!



To Pay or Not to Pay:

Continuing LTD premiums during a leave of absence

One of the questions members frequently ask is whether to continue paying LTD premiums during an approved leave of absence. In general, this is your decision to make as a member of your group plan. But there can be significant consequences when LTD premiums are cancelled, and you should know what you are giving up.

If you elect to discontinue LTD premium payments during a leave, your LTD coverage may still be reinstated when you return to work. However, you will be treated like a new hire by the insurance carrier. Any future claims following your return to work will be subject to pre-existing limitations for a period (often a year or more) after reinstatement of your LTD coverage. If a disability in that initial period relates to an entirely new condition, benefits may be paid. However, disability benefits may be denied if you had medical care related to the condition in the period before

you returned to work. Such medical care may include consulting a doctor, using medication, or receiving other medical services or supplies. In this case you could be denied disability benefits beyond the year or more that the limitations clauses stipulate. While you still have the option of using your sick leave credits, if your illness is prolonged these may expire long before you can return to work.

Unfortunately, we do hear some very sad stories about members who have chosen to cancel premium coverage, and have subsequently suffered a significant illness for which they were not covered.

ETFO has always recommended that members continue LTD premiums during any leave of absence. While saving money upfront might be very appealing, cancelling premiums can cost you far more than you expect.

Cancelling your LTD coverage while on a leave may be a false economy.

Professional relations services (PRS) staff at ETFO are trained to help you with a variety of issues:

- resolving conflict with colleagues, administrators, or parents
- legal issues related to your employment
- allegations related to employment responsibilities
- concerns about teacher performance appraisal
- College of Teachers matters
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) matters
- long-term disability claims.

All services are completely confidential.

If you have a question or concern, please call 1-888-838-3836 or 416-962-3836 and ask to speak to the PRS staff person "on call." After regular office hours, an answering service will direct your urgent concerns.

Connecting with Parents

BY VEL LIUT

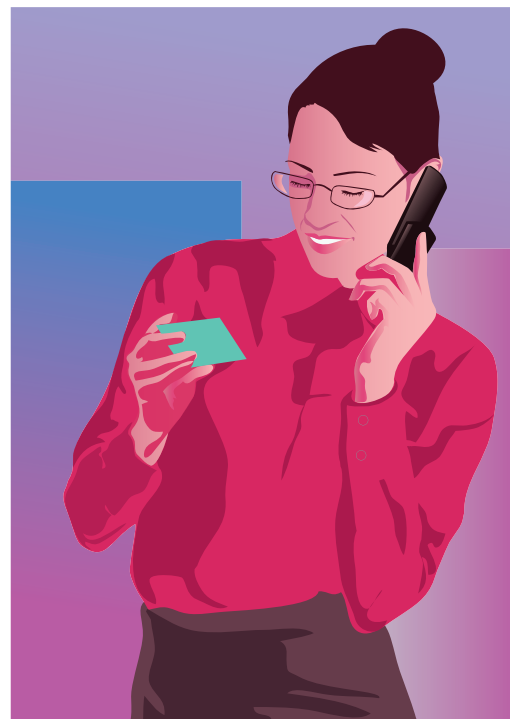
The sunshine call ... helped me to build a partnership with each parent and child.

In this data-driven and networked age, teachers must be prepared to use many strategies to support student learning. Technical supports have made it possible for educators to communicate more fully with parents. However, I learned one simple strategy in my early days of teaching that has never failed to bring positive results: the “sunshine call.”

I was a second-year teacher with a class of 32 grade 7 students. By mid-September, they had already provided me with plenty of material for anecdotal documentation, but not much of it was positive. At the first staff meeting of the year, our new principal had told us that he wanted each of us to have communicated with the parent(s) of each of our students at least once before the end of September. He wanted us to make a “sunshine call.” Only positive comments were to be made in this initial communication.

With 32 calls to make and only a couple of weeks left, I forced myself to make a list of only positive things about these kids before I began calling. I started with the easy ones! Ultimately, I reached every parent by the first week of October, and even though some were surprised by the call and what I was saying, it was a good first step for me to make. Who could be upset with getting a friendly call?

But I do recall one parent who was extremely suspicious. No one from the school had ever called to say anything nice about her son and she was clearly surprised. He was often absent and not engaged in classroom activities, and it seemed that he didn't want to be noticed. My



call did not change much initially, but it was a “foot in the door.” I went on to call that parent several times and each time it got a little easier to earn her trust. The student eventually became involved in a special project at an outdoor education centre as an alternative to regular classroom instruction and he flourished! I like to think that my efforts had an impact.

The sunshine call exercise had a very powerful influence on me and my future teaching. Finding the positives and the strengths of each child and communicating these to parents (who in turn will tell their child) gives students confidence and supports them. The sunshine call was a simple idea about interpersonal skills that helped me to build a partnership with each parent and child.

I continued to make sunshine calls throughout my career, not only for the benefit of parents and students, but also because it changed my outlook. When I was discouraged or struggling to make progress with a student, turning to the positive always made a difference, even when it was difficult to do. I highly recommend making sunshine calls. It's worth the time and effort.

VEL LIUT, a classroom teacher for more than 30 years, is the past president of the Algoma Teacher Local.

Connecting with Students

Success for all students is based on social, academic, and intellectual interactions. When students feel a social connection to the teacher, the intellectual and academic connections become much stronger. It is imperative that students feel connected to you in the first five minutes of the day. By showing students you care you can reduce discipline problems and devote more time to teaching. Here are two effective strategies for making a positive connection with students.

This new feature offers advice and tips specifically for occasional teachers. All teachers can use these strategies.

Greet students at the door

Make eye contact and smile while saying "Good morning," or "Welcome," to every student who enters your classroom. This simple gesture conveys that you are approachable and want to work with them. It also conveys confidence and implies that you and the class are going to have a successful day together. You may want to give specific instructions so that students can begin the task as soon as they are seated or as soon as announcements are over.

Something as simple as a pleasant "Good morning" can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy for the day's outlook. It is a good way to begin making connections with students.

Recognize positive student behaviour

A tried and true strategy is to draw a large box or circle on the board with an amusing title such as *Wonderful 2s* or *Fabulous 4s*. Students will be curious about this. Tell them that throughout the day, you will place a special chalk or marker on the desks of *wonderful* or *fabulous* students. Students may then write their name on the board and return the chalk or marker to you.



You can discuss criteria with students, but you will find that most already know what they have to do to get their names on the board. If some students are being *fabulous* more than once, the chalk appears on their desks again and they add a checkmark or star after their names.

At the end of the day leave the chart on the board with a note for the classroom teacher: "These students were awesome today. You can be proud of them."

As this is a positive behavioural tool, do not erase the names when poor behaviour occurs. Rather recognize the behaviours you want to encourage and keep stressing them.

Praise takes many forms. Younger students love to be praised in front of their peers. You can mention younger students' names as you walk about the room: "I like how Sam is working quietly on his number work." However, older students do not want this kind of attention in front of peers. Speak to them privately, use sticky notes, or write a brief comment directly on their work to let them know they have done something well. (Always ask if it is all right to write something on their work.)

Excerpted from I am the Teacher: Effective Classroom Management for Occasional Teachers, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Available from shopETFO.



By RIAN McLAUGHLIN

New School Year, New Resources

Is there any time in the school year that is more hectic than the fall? Arguably, all seasons are jam-packed, but the start of a school year seems to be especially busy.

At OTF, autumn brings a whirlwind of activities and events. No sooner had the entrance bell rung than, as OTF president, I was welcoming federation presidents from across the country and representatives from the United States arriving to attend Premier Dalton McGuinty's *Building Blocks for Education Summit* (www.bb4e.ca). Particularly fascinating were a keynote speaker who detailed the intricacies of Finnish education and one from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) who provided a global overview of public education. It was a privilege to participate in small group workshops where I was able to advance the status of the teaching profession and promote professionalism and teacher autonomy with administrators, bureaucrats, politicians, and parent groups from across Canada.

Promoting the profession and public education is a key part of OTF's mandate. By the time you read this, OTF will have hosted a hospitality suite at the Ontario Liberal Party's annual convention. OTF coordinates suites at all major party conventions on behalf of all of its affiliates, including ETFO, and has been doing so for decades. It allows affiliate leaders, members who are delegates, and party politicians to discuss issues one-on-one and in small, informal groups. If there is a convention coming to a city near you, OTF will be there!

In a previous column, I highlighted the *Safe@School* bullying prevention initiatives that OTF has been involved in over the last three years.

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RIAN McLAUGHLIN is ETFO's representative at OTF and is the 2010-2011 OTF president.



Included is the online professional learning community that allowed a cadre of teachers to develop resources on issues of homophobia, racism, and sexism. The work is now complete and the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Education. You can now download these free resources from the website safeatschool.ca. A special thanks to ETFO members who participated in this innovative work model!

Teacher-designed and developed materials created by *It's About Time* project participants will soon also be online at the OTF website, posted in the *Professional Learning* section. This project, funded by the Ministry of Education, provides release time for teachers to work together to develop curriculum resources or other projects.

And finally, it is with great pleasure that I share OTF's *Teachers' Gateway to Special Education*, teachspeced.ca, an amazing online resource and repository launched recently. It is comprehensive, well organized, user friendly, and free! With funding from the Ministry of Education, OTF has drawn together a wealth of information, strategies, and supports into a practical guide for teachers. There is also room for you to share your expertise – teachers know what teachers need!

There is much to share about OTF's professional learning opportunities this year, but the best way to stay in the know is to regularly visit our website, otffeo.on.ca, where you will find information – including the *PD Calendar* – about conferences and projects that you can access.

**BUILDING BLOCKS
for EDUCATION:**
Whole System Reform



By MARY LOU DONNELLY

Embracing Technology

In September Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty sparked a string of debates among Canadian teachers, students, parents, and the public at large with his comments about the use of cell phones in the classroom. Initially negative images were conjured up in people's minds: students texting and messaging during class time, cheating, causing interruptions and discipline issues — until the media started talking to teachers.

In our world of growing technologies, rapid sophistication of these technologies, and innovative practices, it only makes sense to incorporate these technologies into our classrooms. Whenever teachers can find a true educational purpose from any type of innovation that students can learn and benefit from, they will embrace it.

I was so impressed as I listened to and watched reports of teachers already using cell phones, iPods, and social media networking tools such as Facebook, but was even more impressed as I listened to *how* they were using them with their students: group discussions, organization skills, voice recordings, digital art projects, tools for special needs students. Students teaching teachers the logistics and teachers teaching students how to make connections with and apply the knowledge they've acquired — and this is just the beginning!

As with anything new, however, this does not come without challenges. We must be cognizant of issues such as equity, training opportunities,

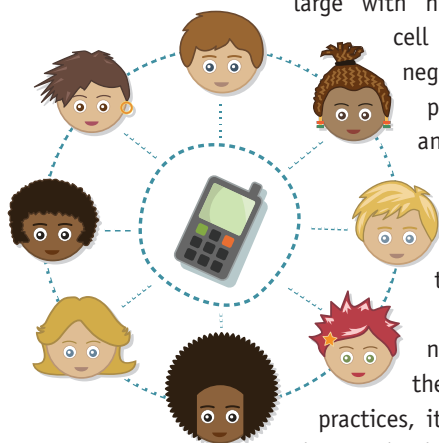
health and, of course, misuse. Parents are already worried about the cost of these items. Who will be responsible for providing them for students? Parents? School boards? Ministries of education? Will it require fundraising efforts on the part of the school? Will teachers end up contributing from their own pockets, only to increase the \$453 they already spend (on average) on classroom supplies?

As we advance our knowledge and capabilities, teachers will need professional learning opportunities to keep up with the rapid changes, and the newest teaching and learning strategies. They will need time to exchange and share ideas with each other. There have already been concerns about health issues that accompany the use of current technologies.

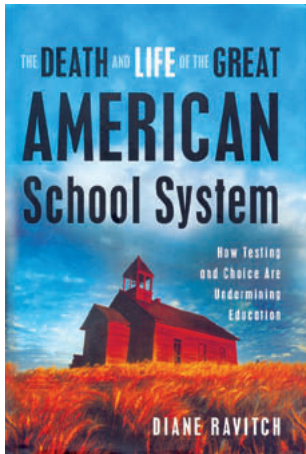
What effects will new and emerging technologies have on our teachers and students? One of the biggest issues now — the misuse of technology — is sure to cause stress and anxiety for the whole school community.

All of these concerns will require the school community to work together. Education and communication are needed to address these concerns, and an understanding of the *appropriate* uses of technology is crucial to the success of its use in education.

Just as graphic calculators and computers crept into our everyday language and use in classrooms, so, too, will these new technologies. It's called visioning for the future and teachers have a huge role to play in it. They are creative, innovative and are on the cutting edge, and they will be the leaders, as these great educational resources unfold.



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



The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How testing and choice are undermining education

Diane Ravitch

New York: Basic Books, 2010.

283 pages; \$33.95

Reviewed by **Vivian McCaffrey**

In this insightful analysis of American education policy, leading American education historian Diane Ravitch documents her personal rejection of the accountability agenda she once ardently defended. She raises serious questions about standardized testing and the direction taken by the current U.S. government.

Ravitch went through her personal transformation because she saw that reforms based on principles that drive the corporate sector – competition, workplace incentives, data-driven policies, and choice – don’t work in public education. She provides plenty of research to support her transformation.

Strong, relevant curriculum and experienced and well-educated teachers are the most important factors for successful schools, according to Ravitch. She identifies the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* as the source of all recent U.S. educational reforms and the rise of the standards movement. She laments that the report’s advocacy for stronger curriculum and national standards failed to survive a political controversy over establishing standards for the high school history curriculum. (Conservatives criticized the curriculum for the failure to focus on their historical heroes as opposed to American figures who championed more liberal values.)

When this first attempt to adopt national standards failed, “education leaders retreated into the relative safety of standardized testing of basic skills . . . In the trade-off, our education system ended up with no curricular goals, low standards, and dumbed-down tests,” Ravitch concludes.

Republican and Democratic presidents alike have embraced a narrow accountability agenda for public education. Ravitch argues that No Child Left Behind, the legislation adopted by former president George W. Bush, changed the nature of public schooling across the U.S. by making standardized test scores the primary measure for determining school quality and for evaluating students, teachers, and principals.

Ravitch is surprised that Barack Obama has hitched his educational policy to the bandwagon of the choice movement and charter schools, given his change mantra during his campaign. She also describes how Race to the Top, Obama’s equivalent of the Bush legislation, is institutionalizing regressive policies – like linking teacher merit pay to standardized test scores – across the U.S.

ANALYSING THE EVIDENCE

Ravitch applies a close lens to a number of so-called educational reform successes. She scrutinizes the available research, acknowledges the reports in favour and against, and invariably exposes the overriding evidence that the accountability and choice models have failed to deliver the promised improvements in student achievement.

One example is the balanced literacy policy adopted by New York City’s District 2 school board from the late 1980s to the beginning of the new century. As in Ontario, the district superintendent mandated large blocks of time for literacy instruction as the key strategy to bridge the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners. The policy involved intense professional development at the school level and ongoing monitoring of classrooms and teacher performance. Although some research pointed to improved student achievement in literacy, other studies challenged this conclusion. Ravitch concludes that all of the research available shows that improved literacy scores were “more attributable to changed demographics” resulting from the economic boom and the increased affluence of families moving into the district than to the intense focus on literacy.

THE PROBLEM WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS

Much of Ravitch’s book is devoted to chronicling the growth of the American charter school movement, which has expanded with the help of powerful local politicians (like New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg), ongoing federal government policy, and a number of wealthy and influential foundations – such as the Walton Foundation, established by the owners of the Wal-Mart empire, and the Gates Foundation, established by the founder of Microsoft.

While Ravitch acknowledges that some charter schools have achieved outstanding results, she argues that comparing charter schools with their public counterparts is problematic. Charter schools may attract the most motivated students and discharge students who don’t thrive. Many receive additional funding from corporate sponsors, enabling them to provide smaller classrooms and after-school enrichment activities. She concludes that there is little evidence that charter schools are meeting the needs of disadvantaged students or that the competition they provide leads to better performance by regular public schools. A strong defender of public education, Ravitch fears charter schools will irrevocably undermine this cornerstone of democracy.

CRITIQUING STANDARDIZED TESTING

Of more direct interest to Ontario educators is Ravitch’s critique of standardized testing. She doesn’t totally reject these tests as a measurement tool, but she makes a compelling case that they are being used inappropriately and excessively in U.S. schools. She maintains that standardized tests are not precise

instruments, a fact most elected officials and the general public don’t understand. Her scrutiny of the U.S. testing regime leads her to conclude that schools and states are increasingly “gaming” the system to achieve improved testing results. This can include teaching to the test, coaching test-takers, reducing time assigned to teaching non-tested subjects, exempting special needs students and English-language learners, or changing test standards.

For Ravitch, the implications of testing dominating school policy are significant: “When we define what matters in education only by what we can measure, we are in serious trouble . . . we tend to forget that schools are responsible for shaping character, developing sound minds in healthy bodies . . . and forming citizens in our democracy, not just for teaching basic skills.”

Although U.S. accountability measures are more “high stakes” than in Canada, our schools are subject to the same narrow focus on literacy and numeracy, a fixation with data-collection, and the disproportionate influence of standardized testing.

Ravitch’s analysis provides considerable insight for Canadians concerned with domestic education policies. Her critique offers a valuable rationale for replacing the testing agenda with a vision that emphasizes a broad curriculum that goes beyond the basics and an assessment regime that gives more credence to the professional judgment of teachers.

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Vivian McCaffrey is the ETF0 executive assistant responsible for government relations.

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trivia

BY PETER HARRISON

Ice Cube

	I			
			?	
C			E	

I have been playing with the letters V, O, I, C, E by placing each of them exactly five times into a 5 x 5 grid. When complete, no specific letter appeared more than once in any horizontal, vertical or diagonal line of any length. To my surprise, however hard I searched, I could find no instance of the full word, "VOICE", appearing in any row, column or diagonal reading forwards or backwards, up or down.

Can you recreate my grid? To get you started, I've already placed three of the letters in their correct places, so you're now off to a flying start!

Which letter appears in the square currently occupied by '?'

Send your answers to ETFOvoice@etfo.org with the word "Trivia" in the subject line.

You may also mail your entry to The Editor, *ETFO Voice*, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by November 22, 2010.

SOLUTION TO OUR LAST PUZZLE

On the Town: The minimum possible time is 24 minutes.

The winners are chosen by lottery. They are: **Rob Finch**, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local **Denise Sullivan**, Niagara Teacher Local **Tien Yeung**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local.

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