



From the President

April 2018

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GEETF Annual Meeting and Elections

Please mark your calendars for **Wednesday, May 16th** after school to attend our Annual Meeting. **This year is an election year.** I strongly encourage you to attend so you hear candidates' speeches and cast your ballot for the colleagues you feel are best suited to manage the local office and serve on the Executive Committee. Your released officers participate in many committees - local, ETFO provincial and school board committees. Your local released officers support individual members and groups of members every day. Please plan on attending your local's Annual Meeting on May 16th and make your wishes known for the future direction of your local. Meeting details, including registration for dinner, were sent out to Union Stewards for distribution.

Upcoming Events & Workshops

- APRIL 20-22** Women in Action – Part I
 - APRIL 23** Pension Workshop
 - APRIL 25** Pregnancy & Parental Leave
 - APRIL 26** Interview & Resume Writing
 - APRIL 30** Indigenous PD in Action
 - MAY 2** Dance Workshop
 - MAY 3** Robert's Rules of Order Workshop
 - MAY 7** OTIP Retirement Benefits Workshop
 - MAY 11** Annie the Musical Social Event
 - MAY 12** Blue Jays vs Red Sox Event
- Tickets Still Available for these Events!**
- MAY 16** GEETF Annual Meeting & Elections

Revised *Building Better Schools*

ETFO produced its first edition of *Building Better Schools* prior to the 2011 provincial election. The updated 2018 edition has been expanded by the addition of two more priorities that ETFO expects the incoming government to address. Those two additional priorities are:

**FAIR FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS and
ONE SECULAR SCHOOL SYSTEM.**

Fair funding means an honest review of the Education funding formula so it meets the actual, rather than statistically-determined needs of the system.

ETFO believes that it's time to end the wasteful duplication of Education services by merging the public and Catholic systems into one public system for English language students, and one for French language students. Declining enrolment leads to school closures, especially in rural areas. Boards waging expensive marketing campaigns to attract families is money that should be invested in frontline services for all Ontario students.



The other change in the current version is ETFO's position on EQAO testing. Our position is now complete elimination, rather than advocating for a random sampling test. The link to the BBS document is:

www.buildingbetterschools.ca/the_plan

Ontario Election Update

At this month's meeting, the GEETF Executive **passed a motion to endorse Alex Felsky as the candidate for MPP Brant** in the upcoming provincial election. Your Executive voted to support the NDP because their Education plan aligns with ETFO's eight building blocks in *Building Better Schools*. We await more information on candidates running for MPP (Haldimand Norfolk).

Due to changes in campaign financing rules, the Federation is bound by restrictions on what may and may not be done to support a political party. These new rules limit financial donations and our ability to release members as we've done in past elections to support a candidate. For this election we'll need to rely much more on volunteer work and getting out teachers' stories on classroom conditions to the public. Details on the GEETF plan will be shared with you shortly.

Update on Bill 115 Remedy

Members recently heard from Sam Hammond, ETFO President, that the Ontario government continues to refuse to offer a suitable Bill 115 Remedy to ETFO members.

To make things even worse, the government made payouts worth tens of millions of dollars to unions and employee bargaining agencies that did not challenge and, in fact, cooperated in the Liberals' agenda to strip education sector workers' collective agreements in the 2012 round of bargaining.

Sam Hammond accurately states that this government's payouts are "very expensive thank you cards from the Liberal government to unions that agreed to major financial concessions during 2012 and gave public legitimacy to a law, Bill 115, that the government used to impose those same concessions on others. At the same time, the government refuses to offer a fair settlement to the members of ETFO, a union that challenged Bill 115 at every turn and sought to protect its members' *Charter* rights in court."

In response, both **ETFO and OSSTF have filed unfair labour practice complaints with the Ontario Labour Relations Board** against the Government of Ontario.

GEETF - Trustee Annual Dinner

On April 9th we hosted the 10th annual Trustee Dinner. The event was very well attended by GEDSB trustees and GEETF Executive members. Topics of discussion included the need for more investments and better coordination of services for **special education** students, **violence and aggression** by students toward staff, increased funding for **Arts Education**, and a lengthy discussion on the incredible number of **unfilled assignments in Grand Erie schools**. A report on the serious negative impact of no-fills, actions taken to date, and ideas we have asked the Board to implement to reduce unfilled assignments, was given to trustees in hope that more action will be taken to address this problem.