



# From the President

April 2019

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## Rally at Queen's Park April 6



Educators, parents, community groups and a growing list of unions have come together to defend high-quality, publicly funded education in Ontario.

Together, we are sending a united message to the Conservative government to stop the cuts to education.

In March the government announced:

- Increasing class size in grades 4-8 and in high school.
- Downloading its obligation to support children with autism onto public schools without adequate funding.
- Reducing the number of teachers and support staff in schools across the province.

We also know that the government is considering changing the existing model for Full-Day Kindergarten, which currently includes a teacher and a DECE.

This plan needs to be stopped! Please consider attending this rally to show your opposition to this government. The GEETF is arranging bussing. **Please let Cory Judson know by April 3<sup>rd</sup> if you'd like to join one of our busses to and from Queen's Park.**

## GEETF Union Stewards Prepare for Member Engagement



Our local Union Stewards are taking part in Member Engagement training that they will be sharing with you. Members are asking what they can do to send a clear message to the government that we need investments and not cuts to public education. Your Union Steward will be presenting ETFO's campaign to your staff so that all members can engage.

Pictured above is ETFO President Sam Hammond with one group of our Union Stewards. Our local was very fortunate to have had Sam and ETFO First Vice President Karen Campbell presenting in Grand Erie. Thank you for all the work and dedication of our Union Stewards! Now is the time for unity and solidarity to defend all that we value.

## **Wear Red For Ed**

As a show of solidarity in the workplace, ETFO launched 'Wear **RED** for **ED**'. Every Friday, let's show our unity and opposition to policy changes and cuts that will hurt kids.

## **Update on Class Size**

Following a highly effective mobilization of members and the public outcry against an increase in primary class sizes, the government decided that the grade 4 to 8 class size will average 24.5 students across each school board. This is an increase from the 24.15 average that we currently have in Grand Erie. The secondary school average is to increase from 22 to 28 students.

To manage the transition to these higher class size averages, the government has announced a \$1.6 billion attrition fund available over the next four years. This fund would provide funding for positions that cannot be absorbed through staff attrition as class sizes increase. The government estimates an overall loss of 4,500 teaching positions per year over the next four years.

## **Grand Erie Policy on Inclement Weather out for Comment**

As part of the Board's cyclical review of its policies, currently out for comment is FT07 'Inclement Weather'. As local President, I provide feedback on many of the policies that go out for review to ensure that the needs and views of elementary teachers are considered. My feedback on this policy will be that the current system of closing schools when bussing is cancelled works very well and ensures staff and student safety.

## **ETFO Defends Public Education**

I think it's important to review many of the actions that ETFO has taken to counter the proposals and changes that the Ford government is directing at public education:

- Wear **RED** for **ED**ucation Campaign.
- Member Engagement Strategy that Union Stewards will present to members across Ontario.
- Digital and radio ads the first two weeks of April that criticize the government's funding cuts and increasing class size.
- FDK ads in the Toronto Star and regional newspapers.
- Responded to government 'consultations'.
- April 6 Rally for Education in Toronto.

## **Upcoming Local Events**

**Please go to the calendar at [geetf.ca](http://geetf.ca) for details and to register online for events.**

APRIL 4 – Computer Coding PD Workshop

APRIL 8 – OTIP Retirement Benefits

APRIL 8 – GEETF/GEDSB Trustee Dinner

APRIL 11 – FSL Workshop 'Les servo-jeux'

APRIL 15 – Pregnancy & Parental Leave

APRIL 17 – Film Night Social Event

APRIL 24 – Resume Writing Workshop

APRIL 25 – Meeting for Surplus/Redundant

APRIL 29 – Pension Workshop