



From the President

June 2019

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'Lowlights' of the Ford Government

As very busy educators, trying to keep a healthy work-life balance, it's difficult to keep up with all the changes coming from Queen's Park. This month brings the first year anniversary of the Ford government. Below is a list of the major 'lowlights' so far to public Education:

- Deep funding cuts;
- Larger class sizes;
- Elimination of thousands of teaching positions over four years;
- Downloading responsibility for children with autism to school boards without needed funding for front-line supports. Thousands of children with autism will enter the elementary school system. The government is cutting off funding for therapies which will result in many parents having to send their children with ASD to school;
- Reducing front-line supports for children with special needs;
- Possible changes to Full-Day Kindergarten and its staffing model starting in 2020-2021;
- Over 300 teachers hired for Special Education, and to support Indigenous, at-risk and English language learner students, have had their jobs cancelled for next year;
- Passing legislation to limit salary increases before bargaining has even begun.

The government is providing a 0.5% increase in Education funding (\$24.66 billion next year compared to \$24.53 billion in 2018-19). That minor increase does not take into account that the number of students across Ontario will increase by 6%, inflation is estimated to be 2% and there is no additional funding for front-line supports for thousands of children with autism who will enter the school system when funding for therapies is cut off by the government.

In addition to underfunding Education, the government has already made deep funding cuts to health care, child care and to community and social services programs.

Cuts are being made while offering corporations further tax breaks of \$1.4 billion this year. Ontario doesn't have a spending problem. The province has the lowest per capita spending on public services and collects the lowest per capita revenues of any province. Ontario has a revenue problem – that Doug Ford is ignoring.

We must not become complacent or ignore the facts. Political protests against this government are having desired effects. The Ontario Conservatives have fallen sharply according to latest polls. We are likely facing another three years of this government. We will continue to experience the reality of inadequate funding in our schools. We must stand united in solidarity and hold this government accountable for its decisions.

Notice to Bargain Given June 3rd

ETFO let our partners at central bargaining tables know that we are ready to negotiate under the terms of education sector bargaining legislation. ETFO's practice is that any information about central bargaining will be released to members first, including what's being negotiated at the central tables. Regarding local bargaining, the central table needs to meet and determine what will be bargained centrally before local bargaining can begin. Once that happens, we'll have a better sense of when local negotiations can start. Your local Collective Bargaining Committee has met several times this year in preparation for local bargaining. You will be asked for your input into local bargaining after we find out what will be negotiated at the central table.

The GEETF Shows its Pride



Pictured above are Cory Judson, Kendra Kovach, Shawn Martin, Connie Hill and Nancy D'Aurora at Haldimand Norfolk Pride in Dunnville on May 25th. The GEETF will be at Brantford Pride on Saturday, June 15th in Mohawk Park. If you would like to volunteer please contact Cory at the GEETF office. Thank you to all who are volunteering their time to support local LGBTQ+ events.



Registration for ETFO's Summer Academy is now open. Courses will fill up very quickly!

This year's program includes over 45 practical courses across the province facilitated by dynamic presenters.

A wide range of courses is available including literacy, mathematics, engaging the learner, kindergarten, technology, well-being and a variety of other learning areas.

Information on Summer Academy is at: <http://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/ProfLearning/Pages/summeracademy.aspx>

GEETF Celebration Banquet - June 19

Our annual Celebration Dinner will take place this year at the Hellenic Community Centre in Brantford. If you would like to join in the celebration for our retiring colleagues and award recipients, please contact Jeannette at the GEETF office for tickets.

2019-20 Union Steward Nominations

The GEETF office needs to know by June 27th who on your staff will serve as Union Steward next school year. I can't thank our members enough who volunteer for this essential leadership position. With bargaining taking place next year, our Union Stewards will play a key role to ensure member communication, activation, and coordination.