



From the President

December 2018

Shawn Martin, GEETF President – smartin@geetf.ca

Happy Holidays!

December has been a very busy month so my newsletter is going out later than I wanted. I've included a summary of the main issues we are facing in Education, and as GEDSB teachers, so I invite you to take the time to be more informed on the issues. Please contact me if you'd like more information or to discuss issues further.

I want to wish you and your family a very happy holiday. This first term was stressful for many. On top of all of our regular responsibilities, the new report card platform and the unending unfilled assignments took their toll. These issues will no doubt continue to be discussed, and solutions expected, when we return in 2019. **I wish you a relaxing and joyful Christmas Break.**



Harassment and Violence in Education (Ontario) Survey

ETFO is partnering with University of Ottawa researchers doing a study on violence in our schools. The survey asks ETFO members about their experiences of workplace harassment and physical aggression from the 2017-18 school year. ETFO encourages members to participate. The website to participate in this survey is: https://uottawapsy.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1SsqdzdEgo2VAF

\$25 Million Cut from Education

School boards received word that \$25 M in cuts would be made to the *Education Program - Other* grant. This follows the \$100 M in cuts that were made to the school repair fund last summer. These latest funding cuts will affect specialized programming supporting student mental health, Indigenous education and anti-poverty initiatives. President Hammond described the move as "extremely rash and callous" in that "most of the programs being cut are vital extension programs for marginalized and vulnerable students."

Update on Workplace Violence

Now available is the PDF version of the document, *Workplace Violence in School Boards – A Guide to the Law*, which evolved out of the report of the 2014 ETFO Task Force on Health and Safety. This document provides extensive information on workplace violence, how we can address it and strategies to minimize violence. <https://files.ontario.ca/workplace-violence-in-school-boards-guide.pdf>

Federation Donates \$2000 to RISE

The local matched a \$1,000 donation from ETFO to support the efforts of RISE, a Norfolk-based anti-poverty organization. Pictured below are Nancy and Shawn presenting cheques on December 10th.



Wellness Resources

There are several resources available to you as a GEETF member and as an employee of the Board. I encourage you to investigate these resources as supports to both your mental and physical health. For more information on these options please contact the GEETF office and we can answer questions and send you more detailed information.

POSACTION: As a part of our LTD plan, GEETF members may access up to 12 hours of counselling at no cost. Simply call the toll-free number 1-800-668-0193 to make arrangements.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): As a permanent Board employee you have access to four one-hour counselling sessions. The Board covers 75% of the cost. The Program is accessed by contacting one of the service providers directly to book an appointment.

FEELING BETTER NOW: ETFO members have access to an online resource that helps to identify mental health issues early and take immediate action. This assessment tool connects the member with a personalized action plan.

LIFESPEAK: LifeSpeak is a well-being platform containing expert information and resources on a variety of topics related to mental health, wellness, and work-life balance. This platform is now available to all Grand Erie staff and their families, any time of the day or night. It also has built-in connections to the Board's Employee Assistance Plan. LifeSpeak is accessed through the Staff Portal.

ETFO 2019 Validation Sticker

The 2019 member validation sticker will be mailed to members' homes in the winter edition of VOICE magazine. As well, your school will receive 15 stickers through a Steward Mailing in case you don't receive your sticker in the mail.

Canadian Educator Exchange Foundation

THE WORLD IS YOUR CLASSROOM

Experience an amazing opportunity for personal and professional growth by living and teaching in another country or province for a year.

You remain employed and paid by your and retain seniority and benefits.

Teachers simply exchange accommodation and teaching duties.

Current destinations include the Denmark, France, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, some U.S. states and other Canadian provinces.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2019/2020 school year by the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, a registered non-profit foundation mandated by the Ministry of Education to facilitate this program.

For more information or an application please contact:

- Website: www.ceef.ca
- Email: teachers@ceef.ca
- Call: (705) 739 7596

TEACH

The CEEF provides teachers with the opportunity to live and teach in another country or province for a year. They are now accepting applications.

No Premium Rate Increase on LTD

Our Long Term Disability plan has been under financial pressure due to increases in successful claims. However, ETFO reports that we will not see an increase in our LTD premiums in 2019.

Upcoming Events

Please go to the calendar at geetf.ca for details and to register online for events.

JAN 2 – Free Skate for Members

JAN 19 – Women's March in Toronto

JAN 21 – PA Day – Reporting/Assessment

JAN 23 – FSL/Arts 'More Than a Play'

JAN 30 – Arts Committee – Ukulele Group