



From the President

September -October 2011

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers Federation

GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website

www.gefed.on.ca



The Office: Maggie, Donna, and Dave

Our Office

You will find us at our office at 49 Dalkeith Drive, Units 1 & 2, Brantford. Our phone number for local calls is 519 753-9291 and toll free at 888 753-9291. The office is open each day from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Many evenings the office is open much later due to meetings and workshops. We also endeavour to leave Fridays at 3:30 pm.

Welcome to Nearly 60 New Contract Teachers

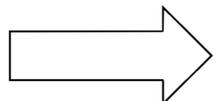
We are happy to welcome nearly 60 new contract teachers to Grand Erie! We did have 36 retirements, but there is still a net gain of Grand Erie Elementary Teachers. Many new contract teachers are familiar faces in our schools as many have worked long term occasional assignments in Grand Erie prior to accepting a contract. Congratulations and welcome to the Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation.

New contract teachers are required to complete the NTIP process. Some new contract teachers will have completed the Grand Start portion of NTIP when working in an LTO position. For new contract teachers who have already done the Grand Start portion of NTIP, the TPA portion still needs to be completed before NTIP can be officially completed.

Interesting - Fun - I really feel part of something important.

These are just some of the comments I received from this year's GEETF teachers who attended the ETFO Annual Meeting. Grand Erie delegates had the opportunity to listen to the debate and vote on many resolutions which shape the direction that ETFO takes. Guest speakers included Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, NDP Leader Andrea Horvath and Harvard professor, Dr. Elaine Bernard. This was an election year for ETFO provincial executive. Congratulations go to Susan Swackhammer, former Grand Erie ETF president, who has accepted another two year term as ETFO's First Vice-President. I am confident that the ETFO Executive team will serve us well for the next two years.

Thanks to the following Grand Erie teachers who were delegates at the 2011 ETFO Annual Meeting: Catherine Gorecki, Brent Hachborn, Jeff Kersten, Natalie Kitchen, Anne LaRoche, Shawn Martin, Eleanor Pardoe, Jan Scheidt, Mark Smith, Steve Thorkildsen, Catherine Wiebe, and Amy Woodley. GEETF released officers are also delegates, so Dave Peters and myself were there as well. Caroll Ann Macsai worked at the ETFO Annual Meeting as a poll clerk. If you might be interested in attending the 2012 ETFO Annual Meeting, contact Geraldine Turkoski or myself. **First five years teachers are encouraged to attend.**





Thursday October 6, 2011

VOTE

Because education matters!

Booking Holy Days

Teachers who need to be away from school/work to observe a holy day should book the leave on E-Centre, well in advance of the day if possible. Reference Article XI—Leaves of Absence, 11.01 ...leaves without loss of sick leave credit, loss of salary, or loss of seniority...b) Holy Day - Up to a maximum of three(3) school days shall be granted for observance of recognized Holy Days. HR uses the Ontario Public Service calendar. If the holy day is unfamiliar to HR, they will need some additional information.

Teacher spends 10 days at home using sick days when she didn't need to.

Here is a scenario that plays out every year. There is an outbreak of Fifth's Disease in the school. By Board Administrative Procedure HR120, the principal is required to inform all staff, inform the community through a memo on school letterhead and direct teachers who are known to be pregnant to see their physician immediately to have the blood test done to determine if they are susceptible to Fifth's disease.

Pregnant teachers who either do not have immunity or who do not know if they have immunity are often advised by their physician to be off work until the results of the test are known and/or until the outbreak is over at the school. These results take up to two weeks.

Many people are immune to Fifth's and would not need to be off work.

A simple blood test can avoid the uncertainty and worry. If you are considering a pregnancy, have yourself tested for Fifth's immunity.

Why Do Teachers Belong to a Union Anyway?

In 1944, Conservative Premier George Drew's government supported and successfully passed the Teaching Profession Act which created the Ontario Teachers' Federation. The Teaching Profession Act made membership for teachers mandatory. Through the solidarity this created, many improvements to teacher working conditions have happened. Did you know:

- Despite the fact that the majority of teachers have been female since the 1880s, male teachers were paid significantly more than women teachers until 1951. In 1947, women teachers only earned 67% of male teacher earnings. It took until the 1970s for pay inequities between men and women to be eliminated. Barriers to promotion still remained.
- Pay used to be determined by the grade level taught, with teachers of higher grades being paid more.
- Women teachers used to be forced to resign when they married and even until the 1970s were forced to resign when pregnant.
- Until 2004, there was no cap on supervision minutes. Many teachers in Grand Erie had more than 300 minutes of supervision per 5 day cycle.
- In 1992, when I started with the Brant Board in a primary assignment, I received 1 forty minute prep period per 6 day cycle.

Your federation continues to advocate for teacher working conditions and improvements to public education. We know teachers are hard working professionals who care for the well-being and achievement of their students.

Please know that you are always welcome to bring forward your concerns and opinions. I encourage you to participate in our meetings and committees. I am always available to each of you by phone or email. Your input will always be valued.