

From the President

September—October 2013

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation



GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website

www.gefed.on.ca

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grand-Erie-Elementary-Teachers-Federation-of-Ontario/218009294961984>

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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.

Exercising My Professional Judgement as an Elementary Teacher

Over the last several years, documents coming out of the Ministry of Education have acknowledged the role of teachers' professional judgement in regards to assessment, evaluation and planning for student learning. The Growing Success document (Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools) and PPM 155 (provides direction on the use of diagnostic assessments) are two examples of this. Both documents emphasize teacher professional judgement and also define professional judgement. Instead of defining exactly what a teacher must do in relation to assessment, evaluation and reporting, teachers are being given principles upon which to base their decisions. Teachers get some conflicting messages about they "must" do. I will address two questions that I have heard frequently over the last while.

Progress Reports—Do I have to provide comments for every subject I teach? The short answer is no, but...

Three documents that provide direction are: 1. GEDSB Reporting Directions (go to staff portal, select departments, elementary program, then assessment/evaluation/reporting), 2. Growing Success (on the ministry website, pg.64) and 3. ETFO Advice on Reporting (www.etfo.ca, select Advice for Members, select PRS Matters Bulletins, select Volume 66). By commenting on language, math, learning skills and "areas of pronounced strengths or weaknesses", teachers will easily be fulfilling the requirements of the progress report—arguably more than fulfilling.

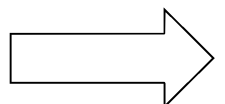
GEDSB System Standard Assessments—Do I have to have DRA/CASI/OCA completed with all of my students and the data entered into C+ by October 31st?

The answer is no, but...

PPM 155 provides direction. Teachers must use a board approved diagnostic. Teachers decide which students to use it with and when. The very title, "...System Standards,..." sounds imperative. The GEDSB communications related to system standards for assessment do not remind you of your ability to choose which diagnostic, when and with whom. However, respecting teacher professional judgement with the use of the board approved diagnostics also does not negate the need for teachers to have up to date assessment. Although teachers may choose not to use the diagnostic with every student at this time, or may not provide their data by inputting it into C+, teachers can be asked to provide student assessment data to their administrator. Teachers should be able to provide the rationale for their decision not to adhere to the GEDSB System Standard for all or a portion of students.

Be a GEETF Delegate to the 2014 ETFO Annual Meeting!

A special invitation goes out to first time delegates. Each year , 14 GEETF leaders and members spend four days at the ETFO Annual Meeting in Toronto. Most delegates enjoy the experience. Many enjoy the experience so much that they want to be a delegate again the following year. If you want to be a delegate, email Geri Turkoski soon. Further information is in the email sent September 16th. We finalize delegates at the October 23rd GEETF General Membership meeting.





GEETF Leaders and Brantford District Labour Council members have been showing support for Good Humour workers on strike in Simcoe since Labour Day weekend. Two hundred fifty predominantly female workers have been asked to take strips to their contracts by a foreign owned company that is making healthy profits. This doesn't seem fair.

Teachers have always stood together to achieve fairness in our workplace. Together we have achieved prep time, supervision time caps, a pay grid, primary class size caps, Last year, contractual strips were imposed upon us. As ETFO members we stood up for our rights and were able to mitigate some, but certainly not all of the worst aspects of this imposed agreement.

Together, we can continue to seek fairness in the workplace. Thanks to those of you who have expressed your concerns related to workload and fairness in the workplace. Please keep our office informed. What does "fair" need to look like for you as a teacher?

Activities For Which Suspension Must Be Considered

Teachers do not decide if a student will be suspended. However teachers, in fact all board employees, have a responsibility to report acts which must be considered for suspension. Report could mean two things. One, tell the administrator verbally about the incident as soon as possible. Secondly, even if an oral report has been made to the administrator, a safe schools incident report must be completed.

Additional to providing Part II of the incident report, the principal is required to communicate the results of the investigation with the person who submitted the report. This could look like a behaviour plan for the student and at times, additionally, a safety plan for the teacher and other students.

Upcoming GEETF Events—

- Wednesday October 16th—Personal Wellness workshop
- Saturday October 19th—Harvest Noon
- Wednesday October 23rd—GEETF General Membership Meeting
- Monday October 28th—steward training
- Wednesday October 30th—steward training
- Friday night, Saturday October 22, 23—ETFO Regional Assertiveness Training

Communicable Diseases Impact Pregnant Teachers in the Workplace

Board policies and procedures are not stimulating reading, but they do define the appropriate handling of many circumstances in our workplace. If you are a teacher considering a pregnancy, you will save yourself a lot of worry, and possibly unnecessary use of sick days by being aware of GEDSB Procedure HR120 Communicable Disease.

Chickenpox, Fifth Disease, and Rubella are a few common communicable diseases which can potentially cause harm in a pregnancy for women who do not have immunity. Please be proactive and have your doctor check your immunity to these diseases. Test results for Fifth Disease take ten days which can mean unnecessary use of your precious and limited sick days.

Call Donna if you need advice related to pregnancy and parental leave.