

Memo # 15

To: OECTA Secondary Teachers

From: Michele MacDonald

Re: Provincial Renewed Mathematics Strategy Survey; The Canadian Forum on Theology and Education; OTF presentation to OCT re: fee increase; Auditor Generals' Report on Education

1. The Ministry of Education with input from OECTA and other stakeholders developed a Provincial Renewed Math Strategy Survey (RMS). The intent of the survey is to gather information about the implementation of the renewed focus on mathematics funded through the RMS since September 2016. Specifically the survey aims to gather information pertaining to impact, with respect to practice, beliefs and resources. The survey results will be used to inform the RMS on a go forward basis.

The survey will be shared widely by all development collaborators. This may result in you receiving more than one invitation to complete the survey. The survey instructions will indicate that the survey should only be completed once. Participation in the survey is voluntary, I encourage you to take the time to complete the survey as your perspective and experiences are necessary in advocating for ministry initiatives that meet the needs of teachers. The survey will take between 15-25 minutes to complete and individual respondents will remain anonymous. **The survey will be open until December 31, 2017.**

https://idb.qfimir.com/RMS_Survey

2. On April 27th and April 28th, 2018, **Dignity, Difference and Dialogue: Theology in Context** will address issues of diversity and inclusion specifically in the Canadian Catholic school context as a reflection of Catholicity within society as a whole. How we struggle with issues such as race, gender, LGBT concerns, religious difference and poverty in our publicly funded Catholic schools will interest both educators and non-teachers alike.

Tina Beattie and Catherine Cavanagh will draw on perspectives on Catholic Social Teaching, theologies of hospitality, teachings on conscience, biblical teaching, and maybe some postcolonial theology and some of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. There will be opportunities to reflect and discuss questions arising from these perspectives.

Registration: \$225 includes parking, brunch, dinner, wine and cheese on April 27th, and parking, breakfast, refreshment break, and lunch on April 28th. Accommodation \$127.60/person/night taxes included.

Register Now: <http://cfotae.ca/forum-registration>.

For further information contact John Quinn at johnquinn@cfotae.ca

3. Today, December 7, Chris Cowley (OTF President) made a presentation to the Governing Council of the Ontario College of Teachers regarding the proposed fee increase. Currently the OCT council is considering a Finance Committee proposal to increase our OCT fees by 20%, this is unacceptable. As we understand it the reason behind the fee increase is so that OCT can pay off the mortgage on the building they own on Bloore Street at an accelerated pace - the building is located on some of Canada's most expensive real estate. Chris indicated that this fee increase is asking today's teachers to shoulder the entire burden is not only unfair but it also violates the understanding that was made when the building was purchased. When the OCT looked for real estate to locate the OCT they chose to purchase and finance in this location when there were other locations in less expensive areas that would have been equally acceptable. The OCT has significant reserves (\$8 million) which they can use to cushion operating expenses. Paying off \$16 million in two years and asking this generation of teachers to shoulder the burden is unfair.

While nominations have closed for the upcoming OCT elections when we have the results of the vote on this issue we will provide that information to you. We can hold the current College Council accountable when it comes time to elect the next council.

4. Auditor General's report on Education made some giant leaps on the increase use of sick leave. Today, December 7, Liz Stuart (OECTA President) was on CBC Radio 1 Morning show to discuss the report. It is important to note that the Auditor General made some sweeping generalities about sick leave and why the increase in accessing those days. For example, because teachers can no longer bank sick days they are using them. To be clear only a handful of school boards actually had retirement gratuities, so her assumption is incorrect. The Auditor General reported, again without facts, that there is abuse in the sick leave. Teachers use their sick leave because they are legitimately sick, and she has no proof otherwise. It is important to recognize that the Auditor General simply reviews the data and has no concrete evidence to explain why there is an increase to the use of sick leave. Our president indicated that we have more incidents of violence in the classrooms, more teachers on LTD. In reviewing the data she has indicated that the Government needs to put in place controls for sick leave. Had she made any inquiries she would have recognized that there are a number of measures put in place when it comes to sick leave controls - medical notes are used for any absences longer than 5 days, and Attendance Management is used to look at trends and patterns for individual absences.

The Auditor General also made mention of wait times for assessments being too long in the school system, and while this may be true it is important to note that the classroom teacher continues to make modifications and accommodations for students who require extra services. Our school board has consistently over spent in the area of Special Education and those measures sometimes are not enough.

Teachers do an amazing job everyday and this time of year can be very stressful. Try to take time for yourself and your family. Enjoy the holidays and return relaxed and rejuvenated.

PLEASE POST AND DISTRIBUTE TO ALL OECTA MEMBERS