

Back to School!

September can be a stressful time for many teachers. The scope of planning for the next ten months of learning is a daunting task for many people. Don't be afraid to ask a colleague for advice... teachers are great resources that we can all learn from! New grade this year? Good chance there's someone in your school who's taught it and can offer you some guidance. Is there a new teacher at your school? Offer them some help with finding resources around their new school!

Supervision

Check over your supervision schedules closely. You should have no more than 80 minutes of supervision per week for a full time teacher, and no more than 40 minutes per week for a half time teacher. Supervision minutes cannot be averaged out over any other period of time.

President's Message

Welcome to the 2017-2018 School Year! By now we have worked through the possible reshuffling of students/classrooms, an Open House and a Professional Activity Day. As exciting as the start-up of the year can be, it can also be a very stressful time some due to the changes and the concerns they have moving forward. One of the main concerns teachers have once their class lists have been finalized, is potential violence in their classroom.

Violence in the Classroom

We have seen an increase, since I have been in the Unit Office, of calls and emails detailing violent students and violent situations. This issue is not a Simcoe Muskoka issue alone, all the Ontario school districts have similar situations. Therefore, this issue is a much bigger problem than something local.

Why?

This is a very difficult question to answer. Is it related to better reporting of violent incidents? Is it due to lack of EA support? More violent children allowed in our classrooms? Etc.

What is being done?

OECTA Provincial conducted a survey, and you should have received the results (Safer Schools for All). From there OECTA is meeting with the Government to encourage a collaborative approach to find a solution. ETFO, OSSTF, CUPE and OPSEU are all on the same page on this matter.

Annual Learning Plans-ALPs

In the first few weeks of school, your principal will be asking you for a copy of your updated Annual Learning Plan (ALP). This is a document that teachers are required to hand in annually to your administrator that outlines your self-directed professional learning goals and growth strategies. OECTA subscribes to a website called [Teacher's ALP Creator](#). The website will guide you through the ALP document. It provides a plethora of examples in drop down menus for the various sections. It is a good idea to start a file of your ALP's as they are something that your administrator will require for your TPA.

Preparation Time

Full time teachers should each have 40 minutes of prep per day, with an extra 40 minutes once per week. A half time teacher is entitled to the prorated amount of 20 min/day and an extra 20 once a week. Prep time is self-directed planning time.

Each is taking a different approach to this issue.

The easiest solution is to place more money in Special Education. However, the Provincial Education budget is over \$15 billion, and getting the government to put more money in the budget is unlikely. It is more likely that they would take some of the overall budget and place that money into Special Education. That means taking from one budget line to fund another.

Locally, our Board overspends on Special Education – I know it is hard to believe – in fact all schools are given an over-compliment to their special education allotment. Where we have had a static approach is with the hiring of Educational Assistants – this year not included. Despite the increase in students with needs, the funding from the government has not kept up with that growth. Hence the need to address the issue with the government, to address the funding formula to help address this issue.

What can we do?

Teachers need to complete either a Health and Safety Form if they were injured – no matter how minor – due to a violent incident, and seek medical treatment immediately if the injury is severe. Furthermore, if the incident was a “near miss” then a Health and Safety Form should be completed as well. For example, if a student throws a chair and it doesn't hit you, but comes close, that is a near miss. Health and Safety Forms are reviewed – with names removed – at monthly Joint Health and Safety Committee Meetings. At these meetings, we have a Teacher representative on the committee that can advocate for certain events to be looked at more clearly, or perhaps a Ministry of Labour inspection.

As well, Teachers need to complete Safe School Forms whenever they see an incident that “could” result in a suspension or expulsion. Please note that these forms are not exclusively for incidents that happen at school. They apply to school-related activities, and while on a bus etc. Safe School Forms should be readily available and all staff

Important Dates:

Oct 9-Thanksgiving

Oct 11-OECTA Reps Lunch
-Executive Meeting to follow

Oct-Variou PA days-Community of Schools-see board website for exact date for your school

Oct 17-New Members Dinner

Oct 27-Nov 2-Blackout Week-progress reports

Nov 3-Reports Due to Office

Nov 16-17-Parent Conferences

Local Website and @oectasm.ca

Please take some time to visit our [local website](#) regularly. The website holds a wealth of information:

- Current Collective Agreement
- Forms: Conference funding, Medical Certificate, ELP application, Transfer request, Salary Grids, Pregnancy and Parental Leave Guides, etc
- Upcoming events
- Archived memos

The website is also your link to your @oectasm email account. This is where we will be sending you memos and relevant information. It is recommended that you forward your email from here to a personal email account (not your @smcdsb account). This will eliminate having to go to multiple websites to retrieve your emails.

should know where to access Safe School Forms. These forms should be submitted as soon as possible to your administration. Upon receipt of the form, the principal or vice-principal will investigate and they will **have** to communicate the results of the investigation to you in a reasonable amount of time. OECTA expects the results to be communicated within 24-48 hours. If your administration is not accepting the forms, or is not fulfilling their duties outlined above, contact us at the office as soon as possible.

It is advised that you keep a copy of both the Health and Safety Form and Safe School Form for your reference and records.

Mitigating Circumstances – this maybe a result of the investigation. But this does not mean a Safe Schools Form does not have to be submitted.

Nothing happens, so what is the use of submitting the form?

This is an issue that is being dealt with at the provincial level, as the requirements of the Safe Schools Form state that only under rare circumstances does the Safe School Form end up in the OSR. As well, the Joint Health and Safety Committee does not receive notification of violent incidents.

Finally, OECTA is advocating that after each violent incident a risk reassessment be conducted at the school-level and the results of the risk reassessment be communicated with all staff.

If your administrator does not return the Safe Schools Form within 48 hours (excluding weekends), or communicate with you the results of the investigation, you are advised to contact the Unit Office. We are starting to keep track of violent incidents and how administrators are responding.



Payday Changes

Every few years, there is a year that has an extra Thursday. The last time this happened, our pay stayed the same-26 equal pays, but that left three weeks between pays at the end of the summer. Last year had an extra Thursday, and as a result, there were 27 Thursdays that were payday. The board and the union agreed that after receiving a number of complaints about this “pay gap”, that in years like last year, teachers would get paid in 27 equal payments instead of the usual 26.

People who use automatic payments and money transfers may need to change the dates if it is imperative that these transactions occur on a payday. Other payments, such as mortgage payments, unfortunately cannot be moved as easily, depending on your bank.

Join a Committee

OECTA has a number of committees that we run. Each committee is made up of a chair, and a number of members. The commitment is attending a few meetings per year. We encourage members to join if you are interested in helping out!

Human Rights Committee

The Human Rights committee dedicates itself to guarding and improving human rights around the world. The committee is active in many ways locally such as the Walk for Social Justice, and helping out in the various charities both locally and globally.

Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee reviews our Local and Provincial By-Laws to ensure that the best practice is being followed for our members. We strive to review the By-Laws annually for required updates.

Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee is dedicated to on-going monitoring of the political landscape and lobbying of the various levels of government. The Committee attends various social events put on by candidates and elected officials.

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee is responsible for providing suggestions and feedback to the PDT PD committee regarding the planning, organizational and implementation aspects of professional activity days sponsored by the unit or jointly with the board.

Contact the Unit Office if you are interested in joining any committees!

Births

Congratulations goes out to:

Tracey Chippett, Hearing Resource Teacher, and husband Allan, on the birth of their daughter Cassidy, born on July 14th, 2017.

Kate Campbell, Teacher at St. Antoine Daniel Catholic School, and her husband Dave, on the birth of their daughter Lachlyn, born in August 2017.

Bereavements

Please keep in your prayers:

Renate Spratt, Teacher at St Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School, on the passing of her mother, Catharina Knesewitsch.

Allison Boggs, Teacher at St Bernadette Catholic School, on the passing of her grandfather, Bernard Bellemore.

Tina Marie Lockyer, Teacher at St Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School, on the passing of her father, Clifford Lockyer.

Giselle Vandervoort, Teacher at Father F.X. O'Reilly Catholic School, on the passing of her father, Ken Gauthier.

Alyssa Hendy, Teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School, on the passing of her grandmother, Vincenza Magnoli.