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THE INFORMER

The Official Newsletter of O.E.C.T.A. - Simcoe Muskoka Elementary Unit

ELEMENTARY UNIT

What's Going on at Your School?

As teachers we are constantly looking to supplement our classroom and school community with other fun events and activities. We would love to hear about them and share your great ideas with everyone. Send us a description of what your school community is doing and we'll do our best to include it in the Informer or on our local website. Pictures would be great too!

Supervision

Check over your supervision schedules closely. You should have no more than 80 minutes of supervision per week. Supervision minutes cannot be averaged out over any other period of time.

President's Message

Welcome to the 2016-17 school year. By this time many teachers have had their open house and their third PA Day of the year. This year – much like other years – will see some changes occurring, and I thought I would outline some of those changes and how OECTA will be there to assist you with those changes.

PPM 160 – Protected Time for Daily Mathematics

I personally feel this is a very political based initiative – seeing as the details were released one day after the provincial EQAO results.

I know that our teachers work very hard in all subject areas, and they know the importance of Math. To hear on the news or on Twitter that teachers are not qualified enough or don't have enough training in Math is absurd.

OECTA was part of the consultation process offered by the Ministry. OECTA stated that protected blocks of time, although important, can cause an imbalance in the rest of the teaching day. Otherwise – not enough time for all the other subjects.

As well, OECTA stated that this new regulation placed teacher's professionalism into question. Our teachers do their utmost to teach our students every day, and to say that more time spent on Math will make them better students doesn't add up.

OECTA Benefits

At some point this school year, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic Elementary Teachers will be transitioning from Board



Health and Wellness

We have a stressful job. As teachers, we often don't recognize the signs and effects that stress can have on us. Here are a few tips to keep your motor running in tip-top shape:

- Exercise- Take a walk, go for a bike ride, hit the gym
- Me-Time- Find some time for you. Take 30 minutes a day and do something you really like- read a book, gardening, sports
- Get Outside- Find an activity you can do outside for some fresh air and vitamin D!
- Nutrition- It's always a good idea to properly nourish your body and mind!

OTIP has a great website designed to give you a "mental wellness check-up." It is a program that gives you a synopsis of your current mental health. It is a few quick questions and it is anonymous. Visit: www.feelingbetternow.com

sponsored benefits to OECTA sponsored benefits. When a change of this nature happens, many people become nervous. The rationale around this change is important for us to understand: The School Boards made money off of our benefits. Each year if there was a surplus, the Boards could choose to reinvest the money or take the money and use it somewhere else. Most Boards chose door number two.

With our new provincially based benefits, we have the advantage of a larger pool of teachers to help decrease costs and increase purchasing power. Furthermore, any surpluses will be returned to the benefit plan in order to add more services to our members.

We are scheduled to transition in the third wave. This means we won't be making that change until February at the earliest. Until then, our current benefits will stay as they are – so there is no need to worry that you won't have benefits. OECTA will be providing assistance on how to register and we will be available if issues arise.

Collective Bargaining

If it seems like we just finished bargaining. That's because we did! In fact, our local Collective Agreement is now available in PDF form on our local website, as well at the Board's website.

You should have received an email reminder to participate in the Collective Bargaining Survey. The data collected will help the OECTA Provincial Bargaining Team form their plans for the next round of bargaining. That round will start in earnest sometime in the new year. The hope is that with the experience and knowledge learned from the last round, this round will not only run more smoothly, but more efficiently. (A reminder that provincially, they deal with all issues related to money. Now that benefits have been transferred to the unions, there are fewer issues to debate provincially.)

What does that mean locally? This means we could be

Important Dates:

Oct 28-Nov 3-Blackout Week

Nov 4-Progress Reports Due

Nov 10-Executive Meeting, Unit Office

OTIP Bursary Available Contest

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) is helping 12 lucky students with their post-secondary school costs this fall through its annual bursary program for members and their relatives.

Each year, OTIP awards twelve \$1,500 academic bursaries to six female and six male students across Ontario. Through an online application, members insured with OTIP can enter one of their relatives (e.g. child, step-child, grandchild, niece, sister, spouse, etc.) for a chance to win one of the bursaries.

Apply Now at: <https://www.otip.com/bursary>

negotiating sooner, with the hope of ratifying sooner. Locally we are able to negotiate items dealing with working conditions and rights. These are not the most glamorous of negotiating topics, but ones that affect teachers the most.

As well, our Premier has publicly stated that the rounds of collective bargaining with austerity measures have ended. So there seems to be hope on the horizon.



Kent MacDonald

Births

Becky MacKenzie, Teacher at St. Paul's Catholic School, and husband Paul, on the birth of their daughter Alora June, born on August 15th, 2016.

Lesley Truemner, Teacher at St. Antoine Daniel Catholic School, and her husband Cam, on the birth of their son Jack Campbell Ross, born on August 4th, 2016.

Katie Denis, Teacher at St Francis of Assisi Catholic School, and her husband James, on the birth of their son Cohen James, born on May 1st, 2016.

Bereavements

Joan Jebb, a former Teacher at Monsignor Lee Catholic School, St Bernard's Catholic School and Guardian Angels Catholic School schools passed away in late July.

Steve Zebruck, Teacher at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School, on the passing of his Father, William Zebruck, Father-in-Law of Cathy McNally, Teacher at Monsignor Clair Catholic School.

Tim McParland, Teacher at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School, on the passing of his Father, Robert McParland.

Jodie Lang, Teacher at St. Paul's Catholic School, on the passing of her father-in-law Karl Lang.

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. We encourage members to join if you are interested in helping out! Keep reading and you will find a brief description of each committee, as well as the person that you need to contact if you would like to join.

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 in Barrie and surrounding areas. Globally, we donate to different organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, Amnesty International, and Kiva. We meet 4-5 times a year to discuss and plan activities, donations and events concerning Human Rights. You can email the Chair, Shannon McGlynn at smcglynn@smcdsb.on.ca, if you would like to get involved.

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, seeking consistency, gender neutral language and inclusivity. We aim to ensure that the language is fair and equitable in all circumstances and move from year to year with an understanding of how we can improve our By-Laws for the greater good of all members of OECTA. If you are interested in getting a local or provincial By-Law changed or amended, or joining the Legislation Committee, please send a request to Tina-Marie Lockyer at tmlockyer@smcdsb.on.ca. We look forward to working for positive change for all.

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. Members of the committee have volunteered for different political parties, worked at the polling stations, sat on local labor councils, etc. If you would like to volunteer for the Political Action Committee contact Josh Goodeill at jgoodeill@smcdsb.on.ca.

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. The PD committee is in charge of collecting, sorting and judging the OECTA Young Authors competition. If you would like to volunteer for the PD committee, contact Catharine Douris at cdouris@gmail.com.