

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On Friday, November 17th every secondary teacher in the Board participated in a half day Professional Activity Day dealing with Health and Safety and this year's topic was Safe Schools. I know some of you were thinking how many times do we have to hear about this information. Well, it appears that we have moved away from following our obligations under Safe Schools, so it was necessary to refocus our attention to our responsibilities.

Health and Safety is the responsibility of everyone in the Board and with that comes our responsibility to complete Safe School Forms. These forms should be readily accessible to all staff members. Hard copies should be in workrooms and staffrooms, but should also be on a shared drive at each school.

In the coming weeks each of you will receive a pamphlet in your mailbox entitled - "What you Need to Know" - this is a good reference for you to remember your responsibilities. We are busy people and a lot goes on in a day in our schools and work locations, but if we do not document the behaviours that are inappropriate we can't hope to change them.

We have seen over the last couple of school years that we are seeing an increase in violent incidents with students. These incidents are usually a progression from small episodes to larger more dangerous episodes. If we all do our part and document then the

students that need our help may get it sooner.

The week of November 20 - 24 is Bullying Prevention Week. The theme is Our Story: Our Footprint and the focus is on developing kind practices in all areas of our lives.

At weareteachers.com you can find 5 FREE Kindness Posters to help spread the message of kindness.

By responding and reporting we can make our schools a safer place for everyone.

The 2017-2019 Collective Agreement has now been posted on our website: www.oectasimcoemuskoka.on.ca under Collective Bargaining Agreement, because the agreement is only an extension we had to append the seven pages and grids to the back of the 2014-2017 Collective Agreement. A copy of the seven pages will be sent to each OECTA Staff Representative to add to their binder. We will not be making copies of the extension agreement. A summary was sent out to all teachers last year. The agreement is in a searchable PDF format and you can download and save it for future reference.

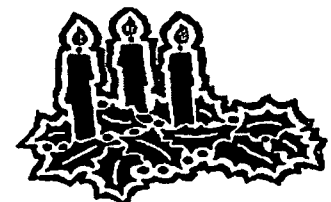
It is hard to believe that it is already time to start thinking about Advent and the Christmas season, which brings with it a busy time of concerts, tournaments, and parties. Please take care if traveling this holiday season.

The Executive once again is providing a hamper of essentials to Youth Haven. If your school or organization is looking for a worthy cause Youth Haven could use your help. These young boys and girls have very little and are always appreciative of the help that they receive. These young people are often in our schools and are trying to keep things together. The holidays are hard when you don't have the support of family, so please consider making a donation to Youth Haven.

The holidays can be a stressful time for everyone - even if you have a family to help and support you. As we move through the Advent season please remember those who have recently suffered a loss of a loved one - they will need a bit of extra care. For those who struggle with mental health issues the holidays can be a trying time - please be patient with those around you and spread the message of kindness whenever you can.

Take care of yourself and re-energize over the Christmas Break because when we return we only have a few short weeks and we will be on to a new semester and half way through the school year!!!!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



MOVEMBER

The Seventh Annual Simcoe Muskoka Movember Social is scheduled for Thursday, November 30, 2017, at the Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery from 4 - 7 p.m.

The month of November is dedicated to the growing or sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces, in Canada and around the world.

While men grow the moustaches women can support by donating to our local team or an individual. We will need judges for the event - so please come out and support the men's efforts to shed light on prostate cancer and men's mental health.

Donate at:

<http://mobro.co/oectasimcoemuskoka>



PENSION CORNER

What's the CPP Limit?

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) limit is the maximum earnings on which CPP contributions and benefits are based. The limit, set annually by the Canada Revenue Agency, is \$55,900 for 2018.

Contributions to the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan are therefore based on two amounts: they're lower on salary up to the CPP limit (10.4%), and higher on any salary above the CPP limit (12.0%).

The maximum employee CPP contribution for 2018 will increase to \$2,593.80.

SAVE THE DATE

OECTA Pension Workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, April 7, 2018. Applications will be sent out in February.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather is always an interesting topic. The Board has communicated their expectations through a memo on October 26, 2017, to all staff. If you haven't read it please ask your principal for a copy.

The collective agreement states:

No deduction of salary or sick leave will be made if weather conditions make it impossible, in the opinion of the Teacher, to reach their assigned school. The Teacher shall make an effort to reach the nearest school within the jurisdiction of this Board if they feel it is safe to do so.

Teachers are to use the ARCS call-in system in order to advise the Board of absence due to inclement weather, and indicate if they are working at home doing school related work, or if they will be working at the nearest Board location. If they are reporting to the nearest Board location, they are to sign in at that location in accordance with Board procedures.

In the event that road and/or weather conditions improve, the Teacher shall proceed to their assigned school if appropriate in relation to time and distance.

It is the Board's expectation that any Teacher who is unable to make it to their workplace, will be either at home doing school related work or working at their nearest Board location. Where there is clear evidence of non-compliance with any of the above the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the principal, shall determine if the day's absence shall be deducted from salary.

For the last couple of years the Board has been requesting that principals contact those individuals that ARC in working from home. The principal sends an email requesting that the teacher respond to questions about why they ARC'd in working from home and what school related work are they doing. I strongly urge those members who should receive an email that they contact the Unit office before responding. You are entitled to Union representation and anything you respond can be used against you for discipline.

In 2016-2017 school year a number of individuals were deducted a days pay because they ARC'd in working from home. The Union filed a grievance on behalf of each of the members. On this particular day the weather was predicted to be icy and the buses were cancelled. What is important to note, from the Board's memo, is that your decision to work from home when the buses are cancelled should be based on the road conditions at the time you would normally leave for work. It is also important to note that inclement weather doesn't only relate to bus cancellations. If you feel that road and weather conditions make it impossible for you to reach your assigned school you should be ARCing in Inclement Weather. Also, please note that if road conditions are going to become bad later you cannot ARC in Inclement Weather.

On November 10, 2017, we met with the Arbitrator to hear the grievances related to Inclement Weather. Clearly the Arbitrator indicated from the language in the Collective Agreement that it is not permissible to Teachers to ARC in "working from home" unless the weather conditions are such that it makes it impossible to get to your nearest school location. The Board will use this result as their barometer for future discipline under the Inclement Weather clause. Based on the grievances we filed we were able to get some teachers their loss of a days pay returned because the road conditions were such that it made it impossible to make it to their nearest school or their assigned school.

I know that bad weather stresses people out and some people have been caught in storms or had accidents when trying to get to work. No one is asking that you put yourself in danger to get to work. If you feel stressed with driving in bad weather or are stressed with the thought that the weather will turn bad before you get home then you have a legitimate reason to use your sick leave. Stress is illness and justifiable.

Take care in driving this winter and make decisions on what is best for you. Always consult with your Union before responding to requests for answers from your administration.

Teacher Resource Sharing

The following websites and blogs offer opportunities for teachers to share their resources, lesson plans and curriculum materials with other teachers. Post your own materials or download someone else's. Remember to use your own professional judgement when evaluating site content and materials.

Web Resources

TeachOntario

This is an online community for Ontario's teachers, by Ontario's teachers. Explore curated resources, share your knowledge, and create new projects to support teaching and learning. TeachOntario is sponsored by TVO.

Blogs

Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. These copyright licenses provide a simple, standardized way for teachers to share their creative work. The CC licenses enable teachers to modify copyright terms for their own material to best suit their needs.

ePals

This site provides opportunities to connect, communicate, and create with teachers and students around the world. Ideas in this blog include design your own flag, poster power, fighting poverty, and school swap.

Ontario Teachers

Blog from Tammy Gaudun where teachers are invited to share experiences and resources. Sample blogs include: TRICK You Kids: Trust, Respect, Independence, Cooperation & Kindness; Anti-bullying - The Validation Project; What Are Body-Focused Repetative Behaviours?; and Remind! Teacher-Parent-Student Communication Tool.

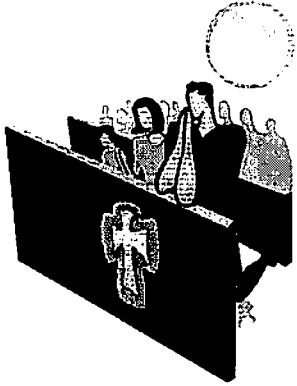
The Rookie Teacher

The Rookie Teacher is committed to facilitating new teacher collaboration, offering ideas, information, and resources, and providing an honest depiction of the challenges and rewards of being a new teacher.

IN SYMPATHY WITH

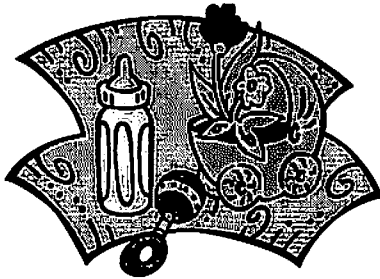
Lisa Emons, Teacher at Patrick Fogarty, on the passing of her father, Barry Humphrey.

Laura Hevia, Teacher at St. Peter's, on the passing of her husband's Uncle, Jose.



CONGRATULATIONS TO!

Ryan and Elissa Dalziel, Teachers at St. Theresa's, on the birth of their son, Everett.



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 30 - Movember Social
The Flying Monkeys, Barrie
4-7 p.m.

December 6 - Board Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
Board Office, Barrie

December 12 - Executive Meeting
Michael & Marion's, Barrie
12:30 p.m.

December 25 - January 5 - Christmas Vacation

January 16 - Executive Meeting
Unit Office, Barrie
12:30 p.m.



January 25 - 31 - Semester One Final Exams

February 1 - 2 - Professional Activity Days

February 2 - Semester Two Begins

February 13 - Executive Meeting
Unit Office, Barrie
12:30 p.m.

March 1 - OECTA Staff Representatives Meeting
Unit Office, Barrie
12:30 p.m.

March 5 - General Meeting
Unit Office, Barrie
4:30 p.m.

March 9 - 12 - OECTA Annual General Meeting
Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto

March 12 - 16 - March Break

March 20 - Executive Meeting
Unit Office, Barrie
4:30 p.m.

March 30 - Good Friday

April 2 - Easter Monday

