

Memo #9

Date: November 12, 2020

To: Members

Re: Teacher Performance Appraisals; Retired Teachers Re-Employment Changes; Pivot to Online Learning; OTIP News

Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPAs)

On October 30th the Ministry of Education provided school boards direction that 2020-21 Teacher Performance Appraisals have been temporarily paused for this year in order to focus on any New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) Appraisals.

Therefore, any teacher who did not have their TPA completed last school year (2019-20) due to Covid-19 and school closures, and teachers scheduled to have their TPA completed this school year (2020-21) will have their TPAs rescheduled for next school year (2021-22).

If this involves yourself, please discuss with your administrator responsible for your TPA, as the Board should have notified Ps/VPs of this change.

Retired Teachers Re-Employment Changes

Some teachers were enquiring with the Unit Office about changes to the number of days a retired teacher could work, while also receiving a pension, without penalty, and if OECTA had any influence over this requirement.

The short answer is no OECTA cannot make this change, however the Ontario Pension Plan, Government of Ontario and the Ontario Teachers' Federation have had discussions about temporarily changing the 50-day requirement.

Yesterday, it was announced that retired teachers will now be able to work 95 days while retired without affecting their pension. This change will end June 30th, 2021.

We are experiencing a shortage of retired teachers – both locally and provincially - who would normally work a set number of days, but due to Covid-19 many are choosing health and safety over income. This recent change may result in a decrease in the number of unfilled teacher absences. However, better health and safety, appropriate social distancing, and lower class sizes would encourage more retired teachers to make themselves available.

Pivoting to Online Learning

On August 12th, 2020 the Ministry of Education released Policy/Program Memorandum 164 (PPM 164): Requirements for Remote Learning.

Lately we have heard in the media about schools, teachers, students and parents being prepared to pivot to online learning. This does not necessarily mean moving to a hybrid model or all schools to move to online learning – like we did from March to June – but when a classroom is required to quarantine/self-isolate, or during a partial or full school closure and how education will continue.

PPM 164 provides direction to school boards on the last matter. Therefore, school boards are preparing (or have prepared) plans for teachers if certain situations arise. During periods of remote learning, school boards must adhere to:

- Minimum requirements for engaging students during remote learning
 - 300 minutes of learning opportunities
- Minimum requirements for synchronous learning
 - Kindergarten 180 minutes (120 asynchronous)
 - Grades 1 to 8 225 minutes (75 asynchronous)
- Process for student exemption from synchronous learning
- Protocols for delivering remote learning
- Standard suite of synchronous learning platforms (Brightspace for example)
- Online safety

Synchronous Learning does not necessarily mean live teaching. According to PPM 164, it is learning that happens in real time. Synchronous involves using text, video or voice communication in a way that enables educators to connect with students in real time. Synchronous learning may include students working independently and in small groups. **Teachers remain available to students.**

Asynchronous Learning is learning not delivered in real time, which can involve pre-recorded lessons, completing assigned tasks or contributing to online discussions.

Teachers need to be prepared if their classroom is forced to quarantine/self-isolate. Using the data collected from the number of cases experienced in our schools, very few teachers are deemed high risk and are also required to quarantine/self-isolate. Therefore, while students are at home, teachers will be at work, and will be required to provide remote learning.

As Covid-19 numbers continue to rise in Ontario, we may be seeing more of our schools affected, and as a result we may have more classrooms moving to remote learning for a period of time.

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