

Update



No deal on contract extensions

The road to a possible extension of the current collective agreements for teachers/occasional teachers and support staff employed by school boards, which had been proposed by the provincial government in September, came to an abrupt dead-end on November 24. Discussions were halted when it became clear that the government was unwilling to honour its commitment that the school boards' associations would not be allowed to play a significant role in the discussions.

The prospect of a contract extension was floated by government representatives when they met twice with OSSTF/FEESO in September to begin discussions of a possible remedy for the successful Charter challenge to Bill 115, which had been launched by OSSTF/FEESO and a number of other unions.

The Provincial Executive made it clear to the government representatives that any consideration of a proposal to extend the collective agreements would require approval and input from OSSTF/FEESO local leaders. Accordingly, a special meeting of local OSSTF/FEESO Presidents, Provincial Councilors and Chief Negotiators, as

well as the Provincial Collective Bargaining Committee, was held in Toronto on September 29. At the Provincial Council meeting the following day, motions were passed setting out a clear process for the negotiation of a possible contract extension and Bill 115 remedy, as well as a ratification process. A brief was approved at a subsequent meeting of Presidents and Chief Negotiators on October 13, and discussions commenced with government representatives on October 19.


OSSTF/FEESO had sought and received assurances from the government that the school boards' associations would not have substantive input into these talks, but as discussions unfolded over a total of six dates during the following weeks, it became apparent that the school boards were playing an increasingly central role. And ultimately—though not surprisingly, given our experience in the last round of central table negotiations—it was the intransigence of the school boards' associations that precipitated the termination of discussions.

Rather than embrace a collaborative approach to problem-solving, the boards refused to consider a mutual-consent process for mid-term amendments to collective agreements. And given



the offer of funding for hundreds of additional support staff to assist and support the province's most vulnerable students, the boards refused to guarantee that the funding would be used to provide that additional staff.

With the government's failure to limit the role of the school boards in these discussions, and the determination of the boards' representatives to undermine progress by clinging to needlessly antagonistic positions, it was not possible to come to an agreement.

OSSTF/FEESO is now preparing to commence local and central bargaining next year under the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act*, and to pursue a ruling for the Bill 115 Charter challenge remedy through the courts. 

Aucun accord de prolongation des conventions collectives

L'avenue d'une possible prolongation des conventions collectives actuelles pour le personnel enseignant/enseignant suppléant et pour le personnel de soutien qui travaille au sein des conseils scolaires, qui avait été proposée par le gouvernement provincial en septembre, s'est retrouvée abruptement sans issue le 24 novembre. Les pourparlers ont été interrompus lorsqu'il est devenu évident que le gouvernement n'était pas disposé à respecter son engagement selon lequel le Conseil d'associations

d'employeurs ne serait pas autorisé à remplir un rôle déterminant au sein des discussions.

En septembre, la perspective d'une prolongation des conventions avait été effleurée par des représentants du gouvernement lors de deux rencontres avec OSSTF/FEESO visant à entamer des pourparlers sur de possibles mesures correctives à la suite de la victoire de la contestation de la *Loi 115* en vertu de la Charte, qui avait été entreprise par OSSTF/FEESO et plusieurs autres syndicats.

L'Exécutif provincial avait indiqué clairement

aux représentants du gouvernement que toute considération d'une prolongation possible des conventions collectives nécessiterait l'approbation et l'avis des dirigeants locaux d'OSSTF/FEESO. En conséquence, une réunion extraordinaire des présidences locales, des conseillères et conseillers provinciaux et des négociatrices et négociateurs en chef d'OSSTF/FEESO, ainsi que des membres du Comité provincial de négociation collective, s'est tenue à Toronto, le

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Suite de la → première page Prolongation


29 septembre. La journée suivante, à la réunion du Conseil provincial, des résolutions ont été adoptées énonçant un processus bien défini en vue de la négociation d'une possible prolongation des conventions et de mesures correctives concernant la *Loi 115*, auquel s'ajoutait un processus de ratification. Le 13 octobre lors d'une réunion ultérieure des présidences et des négociateurs en chef, une requête fut approuvée et le 19 octobre, des discussions débutèrent avec des représentants du gouvernement.

OSSTF/FEESO avait sollicité et obtenu l'assurance du gouvernement que le Conseil d'associations d'employeurs ne devrait pas contribuer de manière importante à ces pourparlers, mais tandis que les discussions réparties sur six dates au total se poursuivaient au cours des semaines suivantes, il est devenu évident que les conseils scolaires tenaient un rôle de plus en plus prépondérant. En définitive, comme on pouvait s'y attendre, vu notre expérience lors de la dernière ronde de négociations à la table centrale, c'est en fait l'intransigeance du Conseil d'associations d'employeurs qui a précipité la conclusion des pourparlers.

Plutôt que de suivre une approche collaborative dans la résolution de problèmes, les conseils scolaires ont refusé d'envisager un processus de consentement mutuel dans le cas

d'amendements de mi-durée aux conventions collectives. De plus, étant donné l'offre de financement de centaines de postes additionnels pour du personnel de soutien, afin de soutenir les élèves parmi les plus vulnérables de la province, les conseils scolaires ont refusé de garantir que ces fonds serviraient à cela.


Le gouvernement n'ayant pas abouti à limiter le rôle des conseils scolaires dans ces pourparlers et les représentants des conseils étant résolu à faire obstacle en maintenant des positions inutilement hostiles, il n'a pas été possible de parvenir à un accord.

OSSTF/FEESO se prépare à présent à entamer la ronde de négociation centrale et locale de l'an prochain, en vertu de la Loi sur la négociation collective dans les conseils scolaires et à obtenir une ordonnance des tribunaux en ce qui concerne les mesures correctives émanant de la contestation de la *Loi 115*. 

Federal government to ban asbestos

The Canadian government announced on December 15 that it will create a regulation in 2018 that will ban the manufacture, use, import and export of asbestos containing materials.

While this is certainly welcome news, it is a rather bittersweet victory for the labour movement, as in the past ten years over 10,000 workers have lost their lives due to asbestos exposure. The current use of asbestos replacement brake pads and asbestos-containing building material will cease in 2018, and the federal government promises to drastically limit the risk of "on-the-job" asbestos exposure for federal employees. Many schools and public buildings are riddled with asbestos.

The federal government initiatives for workers will apply only for federal employees, but it is hoped that the provinces will enact similar measures for provincially-regulated workers. 

Women in politics speak out about abuse & hatred


Public abuse and expressions of hatred towards women in politics was almost a daily occurrence in the recent US election campaign, with Donald Trump supporters routinely chanting "lock her up," and Trump himself insinuating, to the apparent delight of his supporters, that Clinton's assassination by the "second amendment people" would be a perfectly acceptable response if Trump didn't win the election.

We'd like to think that this kind of misogyny doesn't happen here in Canada, but the truth is that Canadian women in politics are frequently subjected—publicly, privately and on social media—to abuse, threats and multiple other forms of harassment. Politicians have always been subject to criticism and even mocking, but for many women seeking office, this has now morphed into near-constant verbal abuse, threats against their families, threats of rape and even death threats.

Recently, Alberta politician Sandra Jansen withdrew her candidacy for leader of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party and crossed the floor to join the NDP government of Rachel Notley. In a letter to supporters, Jansen cited personal insults scrawled on nomination forms, jeers from delegates as she passed them on the floor, and the "filth" directed at her through social media as her reasons for dropping out.

When the leader of Alberta's Wildrose Party is comfortable asking if it's "against the law to beat Rachel Notley," and when the Oilmen's Golf Tournament encourages participants to aim at placards featuring Notley's face, it's little wonder that women think twice about choosing politics as their career.

This is not just an Alberta problem. Women in provincial and federal politics from across Canada have begun to speak out about the constant abuse and threats, and the pervasive misogyny they are subjected to on a daily basis. Most recently Cathy Bennett, Newfoundland and Labrador's Minister of Finance, invited a number of female journalists to hear about the incessant abuse she has had to endure, including death threats, body-shaming and suggestions that she should kill herself.

Being targeted by hatred and misogyny cannot be excused as some kind of joke or simply part of the job. It's an important step that women who have been targeted are speaking out, but now is the time for their male colleagues and for all of us to be equally vocal in proclaiming that this type of harassment is simply not acceptable in politics or anywhere else in our society. 

Update

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Looking for climate change solutions?

O SSTF/FEESO submitted the following suggestions to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in April 2015 as part of the climate change discussion consultation process. A link to the full submission can be found on our Environmental Resources page at www.osstf.on.ca/resource-centre/environmental-resources.aspx.

1 Make all schools carbon neutral

- All new schools should be carbon neutral and funding should be provided to retrofit existing schools with technology that would allow them to become carbon neutral.
- New buildings should be constructed with LEED standards and powered with green technologies that are reliable and efficient.
- The roofs of school buildings should be covered with solar panels (where structurally feasible) that can power the school; excess electricity should be directed to the provincial grid, so that the associated revenue can benefit the school.

2 Reduce school bussing and enhance walking opportunities

- Schools should be linked by paths and corridors that connect the building to the core areas for the student population of the educational institution.
- Students should be able to safely walk or bike to school.
- End the public funding of the parallel religious school system, thereby reducing the duplication of school services and extra bussing.

3 Introduce a carbon fee and dividend system

- A public carbon fee and dividend system can be implemented to encourage polluters to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Since the implementation of a modest price on carbon pollution, BC has reduced fossil fuel consumption by 16 per cent, while its economy has performed better than the Canadian average.

4 Reduce waste

- The increase in waste generation, and in waste that is not treated in an environmentally sound manner, contributes to worsening environmental pollution, including air, soil and water pollution, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.
- Governments need to shift away from encouraging the extraction of raw resources and toward support for the use of recycled materials and fostering local manufacturing.
- Strengthen product stewardship laws and make it mandatory for all industry not only to produce products that could be recycled at the end of their lifespan, but also to be responsible for the collection and disposals of goods that they produce.

5 Continue to invest in alternative energy

- The Government of Ontario should facilitate a transition to cleaner energy production through regulations and policies supporting green energy.
- Removal of government subsidies on fossil fuels would level the playing field and allow for a true cost comparison between fossil fuels and alternative energy.


6 Education

- The Province of Ontario should ensure that students develop an understanding of the problems associated with climate change and the urgency to find solutions to the challenges that global warming presents.
- Education about climate change should be mandated using a cross-curricular approach at all levels and grades of schooling.
- Educators, especially those without a scientific background, need to be provided with up-to-date and accurate curriculum materials to assist with presenting the challenges of climate change to students in a clear and accessible way.

7 Encourage less meat consumption

- Cattle and livestock are the second leading contributor to climate change after buildings, generating 18 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.
- Public education programs could be targeted at schools that encourage less meat consumption and outline both the health and environmental benefits of reducing meat consumption.

8 Transportation

- The transportation sector makes up 25 per cent of Canada's emissions and, in Ontario, passenger transportation currently contributes the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions in the province. Urban sprawl, traffic congestion, long commutes and inadequate transit infrastructure are the main culprits for these emissions.
- Implement tax increases on gasoline and diesel fuels to generate revenue to support public transit and car-pooling, as well as to improve urban infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Encourage the use of more fuel-efficient vehicles by offering substantial rebates for hybrids, electric vehicles and industry leaders in fuel efficiency.
- Invest in building public transportation projects and provide subsidies to the daily operations of public transportation.
- Encourage car-pooling through high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.
- Improve urban infrastructure to promote walking and biking.
- Establish more charging stations for electric vehicles. 



Federal Liberals poised to break promise on electoral reform

The 2015 federal election was supposed to be the last to use our flawed and outdated first-past-the-post voting system. That was the commitment repeated frequently and emphatically by Justin Trudeau during the campaign—if the Liberals formed the government, which they did, we would have a new voting system before the next election. And so for organizations like Fair Vote Canada, and for the wide range of politicians, academics, prominent commentators and ordinary citizens who have been pointing out for years that our current system is really not very democratic, there was a heightened sense of optimism in the weeks following the election that we would finally see meaningful electoral reform in Canada.

A year later, however, that optimism is rapidly waning. Over the past couple of months both Trudeau and Maryam Monsef, his Minister of Democratic Institutions, have been grasping for any excuse to dodge their campaign commitment and back away from electoral reform.

Even before an all-party Special Committee on Electoral Reform had completed its report, Justin Trudeau was telling journalists that “the motivation to want to change the electoral system is less urgent” now that he, rather than Stephen Harper, is prime minister. Apparently it’s not okay for other parties to benefit from a skewed system, but it’s perfectly fine for Trudeau’s Liberals.

The Election Reform Committee delivered its report on December 1. Predicated on months of evidence-based consultations in which 88 per cent of experts argued for a system of proportional representation (PR), the Committee’s report was very clear in its majority recommendation in favour of a PR system. Monsef, however, flippantly dismissed the report as not specific enough, and suggested that the Committee members had failed to do their jobs.

Monsef has been similarly dismissive of the town hall meetings hosted by more than 170 Members of Parliament, saying that no clear consensus has emerged, even though virtually all independent reports—and even most of the official reports submitted by MPs—indicate a strong preference for proportional representation and wide-




spread dissatisfaction with our current system.

So if months of Committee consultations, town hall meetings, voter surveys and workshops have not provided the government with enough evidence that Canadians want reform, what do they think will tell them what they want to know? Well, they’ve mailed every household in Canada a postcard inviting us to complete an online survey—something Justin Trudeau has called “a fun little questionnaire”—to determine our “democratic values.”

The survey, which resides at mydemocracy.ca, has been the subject of both serious criticism for its leading questions and satirical ridicule for its similarity to any number of vacuous online quizzes one might fill out solely for entertainment. The latter perception is amplified by the survey’s insistence on slotting participants, based on their responses, into “archetypes” such as “guardian,” “innovator,” “pragmatist,” “challenger” and “co-

operator.” Each category comes with a quaint description, but none of them indicates what kind of voting system a particular “archetype” would prefer. The survey, in fact, never even asks that question.

In spite of its many flaws, however, Fair Vote Canada is encouraging Canadians to complete the MyDemocracy survey. They’ve launched a website at mycanadiandemocracy.ca as a guide to help us avoid the traps set by leading questions and complete the survey in a way that will indicate support for a proportional electoral system.

The federal Liberals made an important commitment to Canadians. They pledged to get rid of an electoral system that distorts the intentions of voters, creates false majority governments and breeds widespread frustration and voter disengagement. Now it’s up to all of us to hold them to that commitment. 

Lessons learned?

Recent events across Canada suggest that governments, particularly Liberal governments, should take heed before they attack the rights of education workers and disregard the freely-negotiated terms of collective agreements.

The recent Supreme Court of Canada decision that ended the 14-year legal battle between the Liberal government in British Columbia and the BC Teachers’ Federation should send a clear message to governments across the country. The decision, which required several months of deliberation by the highest court, immediately restored clauses deleted by the Campbell Liberals in 2002 related to class size and supports, and staff for special needs students. They passed


legislation that stripped provisions and passed a law denying teachers the right to bargain those issues.

In Ontario, we witnessed first-hand the same tactic with the 2012 passage of Bill 115, also known as the *Putting Students First Act*. This law allowed the McGuinty Liberals to set the rules for bargaining, while imposing collective agreements and limiting the ability of education unions to strike. Terms of the Bill prohibited the OLRB, or any arbitrator or arbitration board, from getting involved in the constitutionality of the Bill or ruling on any alleged conflict with the Human Rights Code. The Bill also prohibited the courts from reviewing the terms and conditions of the collective agreement, imposed a wage freeze, established unpaid professional development days, restructured sick leave, and limited the ability of unions to strike.

Public sector unions, including OSSTF/FEESO, joined a Charter challenge alleging that the government’s unilateral decision to strip rights

and impose contracts was unconstitutional. In April of 2016, a decision ruled in favour of the unions, and a remedy is yet to be determined.

On the east coast, another Liberal government seems to be making decisions with a similarly flawed approach. The Nova Scotia government, under Stephen McNeil, is continuing its attack on labour through an escalation of the fight it has instigated with its teachers. Earlier in December, Education Minister Karen Casey announced that all schools in the province would be closed starting on December 5. The teachers had announced a work to rule campaign and the excuse given by the government for its action was that students would not be safe. The government also announced that it was working on legislation that would limit the union's legal ability to take strike action. On December 5 the government announced that it was in talks with the teacher union and based on those talks it was changing course. Later that day the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) said that no such talks had occurred.

As the NSTU's struggle continues, we cannot help but be concerned over the seemingly incessant attempts by governments to undermine the rights of workers in the education sector. We must be vigilant and work together to ensure that future governments remember their losses in the courts and don't attempt to repeat the actions that took them there. 



On December 4, six climbers from the OSSTF/FEESO provincial office climbed the Casa Loma steps 18 times (there are 105 steps ascending from Davenport to the top of the hill that Casa Loma sits on and 18 times up is equivalent to climbing the CN Tower!).

The money raised will count toward the provincial office OSSTF/FEESO United Way workplace campaign.



New elections law bans union donations

With the new calendar year of 2017, Ontario's new *Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act* will come into force. The bill enacting the new law was passed with all-party support, despite opposition party objections that the bill did not properly involve all-party input.

One of the most significant changes affecting OSSTF/FEESO is that union financial contributions to political candidates and parties will be prohibited. The bill will also prohibit corporate donations.


During public hearings on the proposed legislation, OSSTF/FEESO's brief called for a ban on corporate and union donations, and argued for greater public financing of the electoral process.

The final amended bill incorporated some of these ideas including the introduction of public subsidies. The legislation will introduce voter subsidies annually on a per-vote allowance of \$2.71 for every vote received in the previous general election. As well, each constituency will divide \$25,000 annually amongst the contending parties based on the previous election's results.

The legislation also makes an effort to help ameliorate the influence of wealthy contributors by limiting individual political donations to \$3,600 per year, down significantly from the current \$33,250.

The legislation also addresses complaints from some that third-party groups were exercising undue influence on the election process. Third-party political advertising will be limited to \$100,000 for the six months prior to an election. Previously, no restrictions existed on third-party advertising. Also, a \$1 million cap on each political party six months before the election will be imposed.

Among other changes in election financing, MPPs, Cabinet Ministers, candidates, party leaders, nomination contestants, leadership contestants and chiefs-of-staff will be banned from attending political fundraising events. However, MPPs are free to make phone calls to solicit contributions to events.

Many hope that these profound changes to Ontario's election financing rules will be a positive step towards removing the influence of private money in the electoral process. 

Pro-charter school advocate picked as Trump's Education Secretary


In a not-so-stunning move, United States President-Elect Donald Trump has named another billionaire conservative activist to his cabinet. Betsy DeVos will become Trump's Education Secretary upon her confirmation by the Senate.

DeVos has been a strong advocate for the creation of more charter schools in her home state of Michigan, as well as expansion of school choice and the voucher system in education. She has also been a strong advocate for right-to-work legislation and has contributed millions of dollars to the Republican Party in Michigan.

The expansion of charter schools in Michigan has led to about half of all students in the city of Detroit attending one of these schools. While most charter schools in the United States are "not-for-profit," Michigan's charter school law allows for-profit charters to be established.

What has resulted in Detroit is intense competition for students between public and charter schools. Thanks to DeVos's efforts to promote choice and charter schools, a multitude of new schools were established in Detroit, even though overall enrollment was in decline. As a result, schools have engaged in "bidding wars" to draw kids, and the money that they bring with them, into their buildings. These campaigns have included the offer of incentives to students, such as iPads, gift cards and bicycles.

Public education advocate and historian Diane Ravitch said of DeVos's nomination in *Mother Jones* magazine, "never has anyone been appointed to lead in the past 150 years who was hostile to public education."

While Canada has been able to mostly resist the charter school movement and voucher systems, the attacks on public education may find a resurgence through the Trump regime. Our fellow educators in the United States are going to be facing renewed attacks and a further dismantling of public education, which could garner attention from conservative elements in our own country. 

First Nations children still facing funding discrimination

In January 2016, the Human Rights Tribunal of Canada (HRTC) ruled that the Government of Canada discriminates against First Nations children living on reserves by failing to provide child welfare services at the same level that exist elsewhere in the country. As a result, the government was required to bring about change to end the disparity in child welfare funding.

After approximately one year, very little has changed, according to Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations and Family Caring Society, who was one of the HRTC complainants, along with the Assembly of First Nations. This prompted a request to have the issue heard at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), on December 9 in Washington, DC. The hearing considered Canada's treatment of First Nations children, including its non-compliance with HRTC orders.

Just prior to the hearing, Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada, said, "It is unacceptable for the federal government to discriminate against First Nation children on reserves by failing to provide the same level of child welfare services that exist for Canadian children." May went on further to state, "This underfunding affects the most vulnerable children who live in Canada and results in putting these children at risk."

The funding shortfall in federally supported schools run by First Nations Bands also continues across Canada. In a report released on December 6, 2016, by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, it was highlighted that Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs funding continues to be inadequate in comparison to provincial funding for public education. Part of the difference is due to the fact that federal funding for Band-operated schools often does not account for the higher costs associated with having so many schools located in remote communities.

In the meantime, the First Nations and Family Caring Society, the Assembly of First Nations, and other advocates continue to put pressure on the Trudeau government to comply with the HRTC orders and to follow through on its promises to remove the funding inequities between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canada. 🌊

Colombia peace deal ratified

Now schools can become "zones of peace"

Canadians interested in global affairs have followed the recent events in Colombia, hoping that armed conflict would soon come to an end. According to the South American news outlet Telesur, there is reason for hope:

"The Colombian House of Representatives unanimously ratified the historic peace deal between the government and the FARC rebel group early in December after the Senate did the same, triggering the implementation of the agreement that brings an end to over half a century of civil war in the South American country. Both the Senate and lower house votes easily passed the vote thresholds needed to approve the deal, and the margin bestows greater legitimacy on the deal, analysts have argued. The ratification allows the peace deal to enter in force and triggers a 180-period—monitored by the United Nations—for FARC rebels to move to transition camps and begin the process of laying down their arms and preparing to reintegrate into Colombian society."

The approval comes less than a week after Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño, also known as Timochenko, signed the new deal in Bogota. A previous peace agreement was narrowly defeated by less than half a percentage point in a national plebiscite on October 2. Within weeks of the plebiscite, the government of Colombia and

FARC leaders revised the original plan, making 50 changes while keeping foundational cornerstones of the deal intact. The peace agreement, negotiated over the past four years in Havana, Cuba, brings to an end the longest and bloodiest civil war in Latin America, which has left some seven million people displaced, more than 260,000 dead, at least 79,000 disappeared and 30,000 kidnapped since 1958.

OSSTF/FEESO has provided solidarity to the educators of Colombia for many years. We have sent human rights observer missions, have funded education-related projects in schools and, recently, have approved a three year pedagogical circle project aimed at rebuilding the education system following the conclusion of a bitter armed conflict that has claimed many educators' lives.

According to one of our teacher union contacts, schools have suffered long enough. He states:

"Public School has also been the victim because it is besieged by the neoliberal educational policy and because it has suffered the horrors of war. From January 1 1985 up to today, (July 2016), there have been 1076 teachers murdered, 1,800 displaced, 50 missing, 70 in exile and 6,000 threatened (Committee of Human Rights, Colombian Federation of Education workers—FECODE).

"Many minefields in school environments; control of education by the armed actors; prioritization of the war budget over the budget of education; schools in the cross fire surrounded by trenches, places of meeting convened by the military, the paramilitaries and the guerrillas. Desertion of students by the displacement of communities. The school receives in its classrooms a student population displaced and victimized by war, and also the children of one or the other armed side.

"Now, we hope for peace and a better school system." 🌊





Santa knows who's been naughty and who's been nice. We've been able to obtain Santa's classified list that tracks who will be getting some candy in their stockings and who will be getting a lump of coal.

Patrick Brown—Coal

Confusion over his support...or was it opposition...to the new physical and health education (aka sex ed) curriculum, and his inability to be clear on any of his policies puts him on the naughty list.

Cindy Blackstock—Candy

Her relentless advocacy for First Nations children, including a Human Rights Tribunal victory against the federal government for their inequitable funding of child welfare services for children living on reserves, has earned her great respect among all Canadians.

OPSBA and the CTA—Coal

For their persistence in placing petty administrative concerns and a spiteful management-rights agenda above the needs of students, the

Ontario Public School Boards' Association and the Council of Trustees' Associations receive a truckload of coal.

Local OSSTF/FEESO Leaders—Lots of Candy

For their countless hours of work supporting their local members, and for working through many of the challenges we have all faced this year.

EQAO—Coal

The online test disaster in the fall led to a fury of criticism by parents, students and education workers.

It's time to dedicate its annual budget of \$33 million to actually helping kids.

Sandra Jansen (Alberta MLA)—Candy

Crossing the floor from the PC Party to join Rachel Notley's NDP Government, Jansen faced brutally misogynistic comments, many from members of her former party. Jansen has been public about the harassment she has faced, and has pushed back against those who would belittle her and other women in politics.

Justin Trudeau—Coal

Despite great optimism by many Canadians, Trudeau and the Liberals appear to be on the verge of breaking a significant campaign promise—real electoral reform. A great disappointment indeed.

Canadian Labour Congress—Candy

Using its strong voice to represent Canadian workers, the CLC was a key player in getting the Canadian Government to implement a ban on asbestos by 2018. This will go a long way to protecting the health of many workers in the future.

All Members of OSSTF/FEESO—Candy, Candy, Candy!

For all of the work that you do for our students, whether they are in the early years, elementary school, secondary school, university or learning a second language, Santa will stuff some extra candy in your stockings this year! 🍬

Healthy diet boosts children's reading skills

A healthy diet is linked to better reading skills in the first three school years, shows a recent study from Finland. Published in the *European Journal of Nutrition*, the study constitutes part of the Physical Activity and Nutrition in Children Study conducted at the University of Eastern Finland and the First Steps Study conducted at the University of Jyväskylä.

The study involved 161 children aged 6–8 years old, and followed up on them from the first grade to the third grade in school. The quality of their diet was analyzed using food diaries, and their academic skills with the help of standardized tests. The closer the diet followed the Baltic Sea Diet and Finnish nutrition recommendations—i.e. high in vegetables, fruit and berries, fish, whole grain, and unsaturated fats and low in red meat, sugary products, and saturated fat—the healthier it was considered.

The study showed that children whose diet was rich in vegetables, fruit, berries, whole grain, fish and unsaturated fats, and low in sugary products, did better in tests measuring reading skills than their peers with a poorer diet quality.

The study also found that the positive associations of diet quality with reading skills in Grades 2 and 3 were independent of reading skills in Grade 1. These results indicate that children with healthier diets improved more in their reading skills from Grade 1 to Grades 2–3 than children with poorer diet quality.

"Another significant observation is that the associations of diet quality with reading skills were also independent of many confounding factors, such as socio-economic status, physical activity, body adiposity, and physical fitness," says Researcher Eero Haapala, PhD, from the University of Eastern Finland and the University of Jyväskylä.

A healthy diet seems to be an important factor in supporting learning and academic performance in children. By making healthy choices at every meal, it is possible to promote a healthy diet and enhance diet quality. Parents and schools have an important role in making healthy foods available to children. Furthermore, governments and companies play a key role in promoting the availability and production of healthy foods.

The study was funded by the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation and the Päivikki and Sakari Sohlberg Foundation. 🍬

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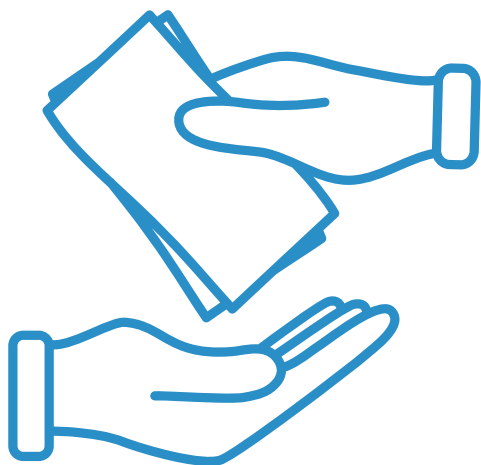


Get the salary you deserve

All teacher members of OSSTF/FEESO should have a Certification Rating Statement (CRS) in their possession. This is the document that ensures you receive grid pay for teaching assignments—both Permanent and Long Term Occasional positions.

Every school board in the province will place a new salaried teacher at lowest level (Group 1) as a default position upon hire. But the vast majority of teachers can be placed in and receive the salary of a higher Group rating—either Group 2, 3, or 4. In fact approximately 90 per cent of initial applications result in a placement in Group 3. And every school board in the province will then place you at that higher Group level based on the CRS produced by OSSTF/FEESO.


Evaluations are done by the in-house Certification Department of OSSTF/FEESO as a service for all dues-paying members, including day-to-day supply teachers. If you are a daily occasional teacher on the OT Roster and you do not have a CRS you should go to the provincial website at www.osstf.on.ca and follow the



Certification “Quick Links” to the Applications page. An online application is available for your convenience. Having a CRS in hand means that you will receive grid pay from the first day of any LTO position that you may obtain with no delay or effort required to chase retroactive pay for the assignment.

Far too many teacher members never engage with the Certification Department of OSSTF/FEESO to have their academic or trade backgrounds evaluated for pay purposes. Some needlessly remain in Group 1 for their entire careers and miss out on literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost salary. Others fail to get re-evaluated when they achieve new credentials that would lead to a higher Group rating. The attainable goal of all teacher members should be to get to a Group 4 placement as quickly, efficiently, and as inexpensively as possible. The Certification Department can assist in that planning.

In fact, the Certification system has seen extensive revisions in the last several years (outlined at the “Recent Changes” pages of the website) and many members will find that these beneficial rule changes will allow for Group increases without any further course work. If you are not at the highest Group 4 level and have not had a re-evaluation of your existing file then you could well be missing out on the opportunity for increased salary that will come with a rating change. Send in Certification Application Form #2 and request a review of existing credentials if you believe any of the changes apply to you. Send in the form regardless if you haven’t been re-evaluated in a few years.

The Certification Department of OSSTF/FEESO (1-800-267-7867) is available to advise you on any issues related to Group placement. Don’t lose out on hard-earned salary through a delay in applying for a CRS. It’s free to dues paying members. And don’t delay in taking the necessary courses for advancement. It is well worth the effort and expense. 



Time is money! Get the salary you deserve!

The OSSTF/FEESO Certification Department evaluates teacher academic/technical credentials and issues Certification Rating Statements for salary placement purposes.

Only it can give authoritative advice on the certification process.

Upgrading courses for use in salary placement must be approved by the department.

Don’t wait! Re-evaluate!

Go to the Certification Quick Link at osstf.on.ca



Classified ads

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AMAZING PERU & GALAPAGOS: Machu Picchu, Lima, Cuzco and Lake Titicaca. 1.800.867.2890. Email: info@offthemap.ca.

CLIMB KILIMANJARO: You can do it. 1.800.867.2890. info@offthemap.ca.

CONDO/CHALET FOR RENT 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom condo/chalet on Peninsula Lake, down the hill from Hidden Valley Resort, Huntsville. Fully equipped, side looks onto HV ski hills. Beautiful views! Contact information is email mamos@cogeco.ca.

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Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to OSSTF/FEESO, 60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, ON M4A 2P3

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