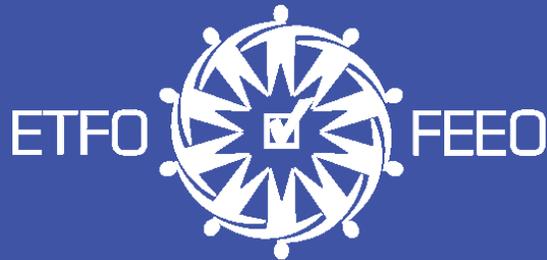


To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: March 30, 2020
Regarding: Supporting Students During this Challenging Time - March 30, 2020



**A Message from ETFO President
March 30, 2020**

Supporting Our Students

For all of us, so much has happened very quickly in the past few weeks. The closure of Ontario's public schools following March Break and questions about continued student learning in the coming weeks and months concern us all. We cannot predict how long schools may need to remain closed in these unprecedented times.

While the current pandemic is a temporary situation, the importance of our students and our public education system compels us to seek effective ways for learning to continue.

Learning is best face-to-face in a classroom setting. That being said, under the current circumstances we need to see our students continue to learn and succeed in the best way possible. We must come up with a solution for continuous learning. While not optimal, this is the best that we can do, given the immense public health challenges facing the province.

To ensure this happens, a formal working group made up of representatives from ETFO and other unions as well as the Ministry of Education has been established. We are working collaboratively to prepare and plan for these temporary measures until the pandemic abates and we can return to classrooms. I have spoken directly with the Minister of Education to indicate that we will work cooperatively with other affiliates, the Ministry and school boards to support a plan that works as best as possible for students and respects the needs of parents and guardians.

Given the unique circumstances of our current collective work environment, the Government is working as quickly as possible to arrive at a plan that ensures that you can deliver the resources and supports that students need.

We have reminded the Ministry that many students have unique and specialized needs, something that educators know better than anyone. Many will also have challenging circumstances affecting their ability to engage in learning outside the classroom. It is extremely important that while we are in this temporary situation, we strive to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for students to advance their learning.

Your leadership in continuous learning over the next weeks will make this temporary solution work in the best way possible. ETFO members have the expertise, passion, commitment and flexibility to respond to this emergency. You are the professionals with the knowledge and skills that students need to learn.

As we await the roll-out of the Ministry's plan, know that the ETFO provincial office staff and your locals remain ready to support your work with students and your relationship with your school board.

We will work together during this difficult period, finding the temporary solutions to ensure our public education system remains strong, effective and a model for other jurisdictions around the world.

Please stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

Sam

Sam Hammond,
President