

Mark Fisher  
Director of Education  
Thames Valley District School Board  
1250 Dundas Street  
London ON  
N5W 5P2

February 8, 2024

Director Fisher,

On January 31 the Thames Valley District School Board posted the following message:

In alignment with other school boards across the province, the **Professional Activity Day scheduled for Friday, April 19th, 2024, will be changed to Monday, April 8th, 2024.**

The reason for this decision is safety concerns associated with a total solar eclipse scheduled to affect the region between 2-4:30pm on Monday, April 8th, 2024.

Looking directly at a total solar eclipse can be dangerous because of the intense sunlight that is still present even when the moon is blocking part of or all of the sun. The sun's rays can cause damage to the eyes. Regular sunglasses are not sufficient for looking at a solar eclipse because they do not block the harmful solar radiation.

Southwestern Public Health and the Middlesex-London Health Unit recommend following the advice of the [Canadian Association of Optometrists to safely enjoy a solar eclipse](#). For more information about on how to safely experience the total solar eclipse, please visit the [NASA website](#) for additional resources.

The health and safety of students and staff is our number one priority.

Given the profound safety concerns expressed and recognizing that there is a basic plan for student safety, the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local is asking that the Thames Valley District School Board adopt a simple, system-wide, worker safety plan for April 8.

Specifically:

1. That morning PA Day sessions be conducted at home schools/worksites.
2. That morning PA Day sessions commence at the usual start time of home schools/worksites.
3. That afternoon PA Day sessions be conducted remotely and conclude at the usual end time of home schools/worksites.
4. That adequate time for lunch and travel be built into the structure of the day.

The usual end of the instructional day for students is also the end of the workday for staff, most of whom will be driving at the height of the total solar eclipse, which is a very serious safety concern.

The adoption of a simple, system-wide worker safety plan would:

1. Maintain the usual start and end times at schools/worksites.
2. Allow the business of the day to proceed safely and consistently.
3. Demonstrate respect for individual workers and their collective health and safety.

Given that several Boards have made the decision to make April 8 a PA Day, we are looking for the Thames Valley District School Board to demonstrate positive and determined leadership in this matter.

The ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local is committed to working with the Thames Valley District School Board to ensure safety for all on April 8.

Sincerely,



Craig Smith, President  
ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

C.  
Beth Mai, Chair, Thames Valley District School Board of Trustees  
ETFO Local Released Officer  
Terry Card, President, ETFO Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local  
John Bernans, President, OSSTF District 11  
Rebecca Avey, President, CUPE Local 7575  
Mary Henry, President, CUPE Local 4222