



ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

Volume 11, Number 1, December 21, 2023

Colleagues and Friends,

Season's Greetings to all Members of the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local.

So far, the 2023/2024 school year has been as challenging and as it has been rewarding.

Thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, on behalf of all students in your care and in support of public education in Ontario. Your professionalism and hard work make a real difference, are acknowledged, and are very much appreciated.

For yourselves and your families, I hope that you find time over the holidays to rest, to reflect, and to recharge.

The ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local continues to fight the good fight on your behalf.

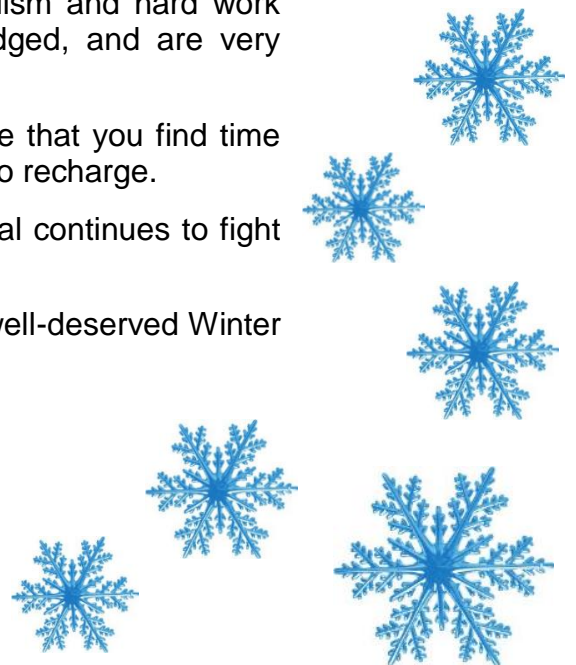
Best wishes to you and yours. Enjoy a well-deserved Winter Break and a Happy New Year.

In Solidarity,

Craig Smith, President



Craig Smith, President



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Collective Bargaining

Your Collective Agreement outlines the terms of your employment with the Thames Valley District School Board. The final version of the 2019 – 2022 Collective Agreement is posted to the Board's website and the ETFO TVTL Website. The ETFO TVTL bargaining team continue to advocate on your behalf to improve the working conditions of ETFO TVTL members. To date, the Local bargaining team and the Board have met 11 times so far. The Local has proposed multiple dates in 2024 and can confirm that we have secured January 29th, February 13th & 14th, and March 5th & 6th to continue Local Bargaining.

On Wednesday, November 22, ETFO Teacher and Occasional Teacher (T/OT) local presidents and chief negotiators participated in a confidential meeting to review the terms of the ETFO 2022-2026 T/OT Tentative Central Agreement. On Monday, December 11, ETFO held two town hall information meetings to review the terms of the Teacher/Occasional Teacher Tentative Central Agreement and answer members' questions. Online voting occurred between December 11 and December 15.

It is important for all Members to recognize that your current Executive believe strongly in the collective voice of the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local and that Local Bargaining Matters. For more information, please contact the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local.

Mark MacLeod, Chief Negotiator / Grievance Officer

Grievance and Arbitration

The Collective Agreement outlines the terms of your employment with the Thames Valley District School Board. It is a rule-book, not a guide book. The employer has a legal obligation to follow the Collective Agreement. Members are reminded to honour the Collective Agreement by adhering to the duly negotiated and ratified provisions contained within it.

Since the beginning of the school year, ETFO Thames Valley filed a number of grievances. Areas of concern include but are not limited to Digital Platforms, Failure to Recognize Post-Certification Experience, Staffing and Abuse of Management Rights.

All ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members are reminded to contact the Local if they believe their rights and entitlements found within the Collective Agreement have been violated.

Mark MacLeod, Chief Negotiator / Grievance Officer

Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) Workshops

TPA Workshops for New Teachers and Experienced Teachers were presented at the Local office this fall. The workshops explained the process and the rights and responsibility of the Teacher and the Assessor under our Collective Agreement and the Ministry Technical Requirements Manual.

The power points from the workshops are posted on the Local Website under Resources – ETFO Local Workshop Resources.

Notification of TPA must occur on or before October 10. If you were advised after that date, please call Jennifer Hillner at the Local office. There are still many schools with backlogs of TPA's. We continue to encourage the employer to ensure NTIP TPA's are a priority and catch up on past due TPA's.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Hillner at the Local.

Jennifer Hillner, Vice President

Pregnancy/Parental Leave

A Pregnancy/Parental Leave Workshop was presented at the Local office on October 3. This workshop is designed to help Members understand the process to access Pregnancy / Parental / Adoption leave.

The workshop took place in person this year and it was great to meet new Members and answer questions relating to these types of leaves. If you were unable to participate in this workshop the materials are posted on the Local Website under Resources – Pregnancy/Parental Leave. Please take a look or call Jennifer Hillner at the Local office if you have questions.

Another workshop is scheduled in the spring. Refer to the "Upcoming Events" section of the newsletter or look on the Local website for dates and details.

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local would like to congratulate our Members on their baby's arrival. After baby's arrival please email the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local with your mailing address and the date of your baby's birth to receive your baby's welcome package. (etfothamesvalley.com).

Jennifer Hillner, Vice President

ETFO Professional Opportunities Fund

Registration for the ETFO Professional We offered ETFO Professional Opportunities Funds for members again this year and the response was incredible. The registration for access to these funds was full after less than 24 hours! Members have been able to access funding for expenses related to Professional Opportunities (course, conference, workshop, resources).

Self-Directed Days were also made available to members this year and registration for this was also full in less than 24 hours!

We appreciate the interest in these funds and look forward to offering them again in the future. There have been many suggestions about how to make them more accessible and more broadly available. We will review the feedback as we budget for the Professional Opportunities Fund for the upcoming school year. Please contact Jennifer Hillner at the Local office with suggestions or questions.

Jennifer Hillner, Vice President

ETFO Personal Wellness Fund

The Personal Wellness Fund proved to be more popular than last year and registration for access to this fund was also full after less than 24 hours! This fund is available to reimburse personal well ness expenses for our Members (courses, conferences, workshops, resources, equipment and memberships).

We welcome feedback and suggestions related to this fund as well as we budget for the upcoming school year. Contact Jennifer Hillner with suggestions or questions.

We are currently planning a Wellness night for Members in the spring. Stay tuned for details about that evening.

Jennifer Hillner, Vice President

Direct Compensation Property Coverage



Soon, Ontario drivers will have a new option to restrict coverage in the event of a collision – the option not to claim damages.

Read more at www.otip.com/article173

In-School Staffing Committee

The In-School Staffing Committee oversees the staffing process within schools. It is a representative committee that must include the school Steward, the Principal and at least 2 other ETFO Members. The committee must be formed by September 15th and have its first meeting by October 1st (L23.18). The September meeting is to review:

- Classroom sizes are in compliance and student distribution within grades are balanced
- Supervision schedules are equitable (all 1.0 FTE have the same minutes) and a maximum of 80 minutes per 5 days is not exceeded.
- Review all timetables to ensure 240 minutes of prep time, pro-rated, for Days 1-5 and 6-10. For part-time Teachers, ensure prep time is within the Teacher's instruction day. Review prep assignments are Board-recognized positions. Finally ensure all allocation given to the school has been accounted for. Prep times must be 30 minutes in length, except in rare circumstances (e.g. small FTE assignment – L17.04).

When the school receives staffing allocations, usually in late March, the In-School Staffing Committee must meet, review allocations and present possible school organizations to the Principal. The committee must meet prior to any staffing changes throughout the year.

At any time during the staffing process something seems questionable, Members are encouraged to contact the Local office.

Scott Hardie, Vice President

Setting Boundaries

In the digital age, all Members are encouraged to set boundaries regarding communication for their mental well-being and professional safety. Failure to do so can result in misconduct allegations and burnout. Clearly communicating what your boundaries are is the best way to establish and enforce them. Consider the following boundary tips:

School Administration

- Communication should always be in person or by email. Email provides documentation of conversations and keeps communication professional and on a Board provided platform.
- Avoid texting. Texting slides too easily into personal relationships and is harder to ignore when away from work.
- Like Teachers, school Administration is bound by the Communication Protocol in the Collective Agreement and TVDSB's Right to Disconnect Procedure that states employees should not be communicating with other employees between 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. or on weekends.

Parents

- Personal emails or phone numbers should not be shared with parents. Communication should be from school phones and Board supported platforms.
- Set times that you are available. These times should be during or adjacent to the instructional day. Evening conversations infringe on a Teacher's/families' personal time and blurs the line between professional and personal relationships.

Students

- Communication with students should be limited to the school day. Electronic communication of any kind may be misconstrued and could lead to allegations of misconduct.

Setting boundaries to when a Teacher is available is professional. Doctors, mechanics, bankers all keep business hours. Teachers are no different. Setting boundaries will help support a healthy life-work balance, maintain professional communications and protect you from allegations of misconduct.

Enjoy your Winter Break and 2 disconnected weeks!

Scott Hardie, Vice President



Advice to ETFO Members

Members must always be vigilant to maintain their professionalism at all times, whether dealing with students or parents. Unfortunately, we can find ourselves in situations requiring Legal Assistance due to allegations made against us to either the Police or Children's Aid Society (CAS). If you have been notified that the Police or CAS is investigating an allegation against you, contact your Federation. In addition:

- Do not participate in or consent to an interview;
- Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation/charges;
- Say "I am willing to cooperate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel;"
- Call ETFO Professional Relations and ask to speak with the PRS Duty Officer (1-888-838-3836); state that your call is urgent.

The Local Released Office supports the parameters associated with the school board, however, it is important that you have legal representation at these meetings with outside agencies to ensure that your rights are upheld.

It is also important to note that if you are asked by your Administration to attend a meeting at school with Union Representation, that your representation at these meetings must be from the Local office and not your Workplace Steward. If you are asked to attend such a meeting, please contact the Local office to set up a mutually convenient time to meet (519-474-3150 – ask to speak with the Duty Officer).

Michael Thomas, First Vice President

Retirement

A retirement workshop was recently held in the fall; another will be held in the spring. These workshops are designed to help Members understand what processes are undertaken if they plan to retire. Thank-you to everyone who participated in the workshop this year. If, however, you did not get the opportunity to participate, the materials presented at these events are available on the ETFO Thames Valley Local website under "Resources". Please feel free to have a look, or call the Local office and ask for Dale Napier, if you have any questions.

The Collective Agreement language with respect to timelines for retirement is as follows:

L5.09 A Teacher may resign or retire:

- (a) on the thirty-first (31st) day of December in any year of the Teacher's employment by giving written notice to the Board on or before the last preceding fifteenth (15th) day of November, or
- (b) on any date between and including June thirtieth (30th) through to August thirty-first (31st) in any year of the Teacher's employment by giving written notice to the Board on or before the last preceding fifteenth (15th) day of April, or
- (c) on the Friday preceding March break in any year of the Teacher's employment by giving written notice to the Board on or before January 31st, or
- (d) at any other time by the mutual consent in writing of the Teacher and the Board.

For those that are retiring, ETFO Thames Valley Teachers' Local would like to congratulate you on your career, and wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Dale Napier, Vice President

LTD Termination

If you retire (as some of you may be doing this Winter Break – Congratulations) you will no longer be paying into your LTD benefit package. However, sometimes members are eligible to stop this payment prior to their retirement date. This can occur if one of the following scenarios applies to you:

- 1) you have 30 credit years of teaching experience or
- 2) you have reached the age of 65.

If either of these scenarios applies to you, please call Dale Napier at the Local office (519-474-3150 or email dnapier@etfothamesvalley.com).

Dale Napier, Vice President

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

EFAP provides various forms of support for ETFO Members and their families including but not limited to the areas of Family, Health, Life, Money, and Work. This could take the form of Clinical Counselling, Work-Life Services or On-Line Resources. The company that provides our EFAP is called LifeWorks and is owned and operated through Telus. They can be reached by phone at 1-844-958-5105 or online at tvdsb.lifeworks.com.

Confidentiality is guaranteed within the limits of the law.

Here's hoping everyone gets a well-deserved break over the Holiday season. Please remember to look after yourself, your health and your family.

Dale Napier, Vice President

Winter Tire 101



It's no secret that getting from Point A to Point B in the middle of a Canadian blizzard can be tough. Thankfully, there's one simple step you can take towards a safer winter drive: installing a set of quality winter tires.

Read more at www.otip.com/article171.

ETFO Membership Profile

- All Members are requested to log on to the Local's website (www.etfothamesvalley.com), to update their profiles (name, mailing address, contact information and professional information).
- To access your profile, log in under ETFO Secure Login using your ETFO membership number and password.
- In your account, be sure to indicate your personal e-mail address and to calculate your preparation time and supervision time accurately when completing the Professional Information section.
- The Local has to ensure that the articles of the Collective Agreement are being adhered to and ensure that any discrepancies are addressed as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Local office.

Are you retiring in December?

If you are retiring in December please contact Erin at the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local office or email:

etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com to submit your name, email and home address in order to receive an invitation to the Retiree's celebration.

25 Year Celebration

The ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local is currently planning a celebration for all ETFO Members who have completed twenty-five years of teaching as of June 30, 2023 (e.g. currently in 26th year).

If you are eligible please forward your information to the Local office on the form that was provided to Workplace Stewards.

Holiday Hours

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local office will close at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 22, 2023. The office will re-open on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 8:15 a.m.

Emergency assistance will be available through the ETFO Provincial office (1-888-838-3836). They will only be responding to critical legal matters.

Christmas Season Support to the Local Communities

On behalf of our Members, the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local donated \$1000.00 to each of the following organizations:

- London Food Bank
- The Salvation Army - Woodstock
- The Salvation Army - Strathroy
- The Caring Cupboard - Food Bank, St. Thomas

On behalf of our Members, the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local donated \$500.00 to each of the following organizations:

- London Abused Women's Centre
- Atlohsa Family Healing Services
- Ingamo Family Homes
- St. Thomas-Elgin Second Stage Housing



The following events are scheduled.
Advance registration will be required.
(these dates may be subject to change)

January 2024

- Stewards' Council Meeting - January 23
- Documenting and Communicating in Kindergarten Workshop – January 30

February 2024

- ETFO Family Skate Night - February 9
- General Meeting - February 15
- Experienced Teacher TPA Workshop - February 29

March 2024

- Retirement Planning Workshop - March 4
- 25 Year Celebration - March 20
- Workplace Stewards' Meeting - March 27

April 2024

- Pregnancy / Parental Leave Workshop - April 9
- Wellness Workshop – April 11
- Local Annual Meeting - April 24

May 2024

- Workplace Stewards' Meeting - May 22
- Annual Banquet – May 30

June 2024

- Local Leaders' Appreciation - June 19

2023 – 2025 Executive



President

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Vice President

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Treasurer

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Recording Secretary

Marnie Meloche



Alia Awaysheh



Karyn Harris-Paschink



Brent Kelders



Kevin O'Neill



Jarod Parlee



Lara Shanley



Amanda Short



Maria Vieira



Kate White



Amber Yerema

- Regular Office Hours -

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

Monday - Thursday, 8:15 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.