



# Newsletter

## ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

*Volume 11, Number 2, June 28, 2024*

Colleagues and Friends,

As we come to the end of the 2023-2024 school year, we reflect on a year full of challenges, prepare for a well-deserved summer break, and carry on in the hope that the 2024-2025 school year will finally be a good one.

Once again, Teachers have been challenged and stretched to the limit and beyond.

Once again, Teachers have risen to the occasion, made it all work as best we can, and discharged our collective duties with individual determination, grace, and consummate professionalism.

Thank you.

Stay well and enjoy a safe and peaceful summer break.

In Solidarity,

Craig Smith, President



Craig Smith, President

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## Chief Negotiator/Grievance Officer Report

From a Collective Bargaining perspective, it has been a long couple of years with many challenges, but finally the 2023-2024 school year has ended. During these most challenging times, you have risen to each and every challenge that we as teachers have faced. I am incredibly proud of the professionalism demonstrated by each and every ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local member and it is an honour and privilege to work on your behalf as the Chief Negotiator/Grievance Officer.

On November 21, 2023, a 2022-2026 Tentative Central Agreement was reached for ETFO's 80,000 teacher and occasional teacher members. Teacher and occasional teacher members participated in a ratification vote on that agreement between Monday, December 11 and Friday, December 15 and at the completion of that voting period, ETFO members overwhelmingly ratified the 2022-2026 Central Agreement.

Locally, our focus within this round of Local Bargaining was to work jointly with the Thames Valley District School Board to create a Positive and Healthy Work Environment and to Improve our Working and Learning Conditions. Those were the priorities of the Local as outlined by the membership for this round of bargaining.

On Wednesday, May 8, after twenty-two (22) local bargaining sessions, a handshake tentative agreement was reached between the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local and the Thames Valley District School Board. The Memorandum of Settlement was signed on Tuesday, May 21, confirming the tentative agreement.

On June 11, the Local Tentative Agreement was presented at an All-Member Meeting and TVTL members participated in ratification vote between June 11 and June 13. On June 13, TVTL members overwhelmingly ratified the 2022-2026 Local Agreement. Our local bargaining goal was to negotiate a fair collective agreement that addressed the priorities set forth by the membership through fair collective bargaining. Together, we have achieved that goal.

Your Collective Agreement outlines the terms of your employment with the Thames Valley District School Board.

Please contact the Local if you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the Collective Agreement.

From my family to yours, enjoy a well-deserved summer break.

*Mark MacLeod, Chief Negotiator / Grievance Officer*

## LTD Termination

LTD premiums are automatically deducted from your pay cheque unless you qualify to have these premium deductions terminated. Please note, these deductions will stop upon your retirement as you will no longer have a pay cheque from the Board, from which they can be deducted. However, there are two scenarios under which you may qualify to have these premium deductions cease prior to your retirement.

The deductions can be terminated if;

1. you are eligible for a 60% unreduced pension (30 credit years of teaching experience) or
2. you have reached the end of the month in which you turn 65 years old.

If you believe you qualify for either scenario above, prior to your retirement, an application for LTD termination can be located on the ETFO Thames Valley website by clicking on "resources" and then "retirement". This application when completed, along with all required associated paperwork, can be emailed to [dnapier@etfothamesvalley.com](mailto:dnapier@etfothamesvalley.com).

If you are retiring and do not fall into one of these two scenarios, your LTD premiums will cease automatically and therefore you need not complete any paperwork in this regard. Simply enjoy your upcoming well-deserved retirement.

Congratulations!

*Dale Napier, Vice President*

## Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness

The Local is pleased to report that all the funds for Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness were able to be accessed by Teachers again this year. Teachers were able to access Self-Directed days for individual Professional Learning Opportunities. They also used these funds to assist with courses, workshops, resources, and other professional supports. The Personal Wellness funds were used by Teachers for memberships, personal training, fitness equipment and wellness sessions.

We have revised the Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness funds for the 2024-2025 school year. Thank you to all who provided feedback and suggestions for this program. Stay tuned in the fall for registration details.

*Jennifer Hillner, Vice President*

## We are ETFO!

Reflecting upon the thousands of conversations I have with Members yearly, one of the phrases that comes up regularly is, "The Union says". This phrase is worrisome, as it shows a belief that the Union is separate from the individual. We are all ETFO and how we choose to collectively engage will determine our path forward.

Our Local is 3810 Members strong. Provincially we have approximately 83,000 Members. We are part of the largest, professional labour group in the country. Being part of a Union gives us rights, benefits and a collective voice for change and to improve our working conditions.

As a locally elected officer, I can confidently state that the Local office's programming, planning, conversations with the Board and bargaining goals come 100% from our Members. Members who chose to not be involved in the process are letting others speak on their behalf. I would like to challenge the reader to consider the following ways to become more involved in your Union and attempt something new next school year.

- 1) Be Aware – All Members should update their profile at [www.etfothamesvalley.com](http://www.etfothamesvalley.com) yearly to receive updates from the Local. Reading the weekly updates is important to stay informed. Also check out the Local's Instagram page and YouTube channel.
- 2) Be Involved – We all have different comfort levels in Union activity. Union activity can be attending a social event or being a school Steward. This year we had many social activities from a golf tournament, a London Lightning night, planned skating (weather was not cooperative) and had wellness nights and workshops. The Local officers would love to hear your ideas for future social events.
- 3) Be a Voice – The Local officers depend on the membership to be the eyes and ears in the schools. Whether you choose to answer a survey, email an update on how things are at your school, call us with a concern or stand-up and share an idea at a meeting, there are many avenues to bring your voice to be part of the conversation.
- 4) Be Seen – Life is busy, but there are times when coming together is meaningful, powerful and a vital part of Union activity. It allows for networking and the realization that you are part of a larger group. If you haven't been to a workshop, social event or an All-Member's Meeting, come out, enjoy an evening, usually some food and learn a bit more about how your Union works with you.
- 5) Be a Leader – Leadership is vital to a Union's effectiveness. There are many opportunities for leadership within our Local. Become a Health and Safety Representative (an important role moving forward), a Steward, an Alternate or Chair a committee. There is no secret to why so many of our Stewards are coaches and natural leaders within their schools. If you care about our profession and would like to bring about positive change, consider a leadership position with our Local.

*Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much  
~ Helen Keller*

*Scott Hardie, Vice President*

## Wellness for the Summer and Beyond

The 2023-2024 school year saw Teachers face many challenges and work tirelessly to overcome them, all to the benefit of our education system. As a result, Teachers deserve time for rest and relaxation throughout the upcoming summer. This rest and relaxation can come with a need to focus on our physical and mental health.

The Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP) offered through "Lifeworks" provides some excellent programs and resources to help Teachers and their families access proactive support for their well-being.

Many different types of assistance are available including but, not limited to: achieving well-being, managing relationships with family, dealing with workplace challenges, tackling addictions, finding child and elder care resources, getting legal advice, and receiving financial guidance

To access these opportunities for wellness you can call Lifeworks at 1-844-958-5105 or reach that via [tvdsb.lifeworks.com](http://tvdsb.lifeworks.com).

Please enjoy your summer.

Take care of yourself, your health, and your family.

*Dale Napier, Vice President*

## TPA and NTIP

Teacher Performance Appraisals for experienced Teachers took place this year for those who were due or overdue in their five-year cycle. New Teacher Performance Appraisals as part of the NTIP program also happened and continue to support those newest to our profession.

The Local continues to support Members who experience an Unsatisfactory or Development Needed TPA. Support offered through this process can include access to professional learning, workshops, mentor days, TOSA support and more.

We were also able to offer workshops on Classroom Management, Planning and Programming, and Kindergarten.

If you are due to have a TPA in the 2024-2025 school year you will be notified by October 10. Workshops on the TPA process will be offered in the fall to help you understand it.

*Jennifer Hillner, 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:

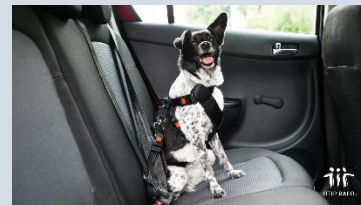
- Do not participate in or consent to an interview;
- Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation/charges;
- Say "I am willing to cooperate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel;"
- Call ETFO Professional Relations and ask to speak with the PRS Duty Officer (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*

## What you need to know about driving with pets and auto insurance



A driver caught with a dog in their lap may be in for an expensive surprise. According to the Ontario Provincial Police, there isn't a specific charge for having a dog in your lap, but it could be considered a crowding the driver's seat charge.

Read more at [www.otip.com/article183](http://www.otip.com/article183). #OTIPUpdate



# Congratulations!

## Health and Safety Activist Award

*Andrea Silverman, Chippewa P.S.*

## Workplace Stewards' Award

*Lyndsey Leitch, Emily Stowe P.S.*

*Bill Lewis, White Oaks P.S.*

*Lisa Mace, Stoneybrook P.S.*

*Shea Moore, Stoneybrook P.S.*

*Melissa Pearce, Forest Park P.S.*

## ETFO Membership Profile

- All Members are requested to log on to the Local's website ([www.etfothamesvalley.com](http://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.

## Money 101: how to make the most of a lump sum cash flow boost (including Bill 124 remedy payments)

Regardless of where you are on the pay grid, it's important to make every dollar count, especially in today's economy.

<https://bil.ly/3X0hwZ9>.

## Unlocking Financial Potential: Strategies for Bill 124 Settlement Webinar (by Educators Financial Group)

[https://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/webinars/?utm\\_source=article\\_lump\\_sum&utm\\_medium=affiliate&utm\\_campaign=endorsement&utm\\_content=english](https://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/webinars/?utm_source=article_lump_sum&utm_medium=affiliate&utm_campaign=endorsement&utm_content=english)

## Reminder

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local requires the names of the Workplace Stewards/Alternates and Health and Safety Representatives for the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Please submit the names and personal emails to [etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com](mailto:etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com)

## Upcoming Events

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

### July 21, 2024

- Pride Parade, London

### July and August 2024

- Summer Academy Courses

(Register through the Provincial website)

### August 12-15, 2024

- Federation Annual Meeting

## Summer Office Hours

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local office will close at **4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 28, 2024** and will reopen at **8:15 a.m. on Tuesday, September 3, 2024**.

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

## Regular Office Hours

**Monday through Thursday, 8:15 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**



# 2023 – 2025 Executive



## **President**

### **Craig Smith**

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## **First Vice President**

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## **Vice President**

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## **Vice President**

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## **Vice President**

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## **Chief Negotiator/Grievance Officer**

### **Mark MacLeod**

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## **Treasurer**

### **Amy Kilty Schwandt**



## **Recording Secretary**

### **Marnie Meloche**



**Alia Awaysheh**



**Karyn Harris-Paschink**



**Brent Kelders**

**Carla Musser**



**Kevin O'Neill**



**Jarod Parlee**



**Lara Shanley**



**Amanda Short**



**Maria Vieira**

**Erica Stefina**



**Kate White**



**Amber Yerema**