

**To:** ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members

**From:** Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)

**Date:** December 4, 2020

**Regarding:** Summary of Meeting with Deputy Minister of Education/Affiliates (Shared with Local Presidents)

Good Afternoon Presidents, the following is the summary of today's meeting with the Deputy Minister:

1. The Deputy Minister was asked if the Ministry would be sharing the results of the survey. She advised that they have a request in to share the survey on a board by board basis and to others who request. They are awaiting approval on the request. She then proceeded to share some highlights of the information collected:
  - Boards have hired 2371 new teachers and expect to hire more teachers to a total of 5468;
  - Boards have hired 1132 additional custodians and still need to hire 363 more;
  - Boards are advising that the change to the 50 day rule has been helpful;
  - 116,000 devices have been purchased with boards still purchasing more to meet the demands;
  - 17,800 portable ventilation devices have been procured, 12,000 have been received and the additional outstanding devices are expected within the month;
  - Most board are reporting that they are under the class size averages.
2. The Deputy Minister was asked for an update on the issue of compensation for occasional workers. She advised that there is no decision yet. She stated that the issue is complex as it crosses into many different sick leave plans in the sector. They are engaged in conversation and she will report the decision as soon as possible.
3. A question was asked about school-based testing programs and whether the Ministry is considering expanding the testing that is currently being done in York, Peel, Toronto and Ottawa to other areas. The Deputy Minister advised that there has been a positive response to the testing that is occurring in these boards. They expect to learn something from this testing. The Ministry of Health is debating what test modalities are best for schools where there is both an adult and a child population. She indicated that the nasal swab test is the gold standard when it comes to testing.

4. The issue of enhanced safety protocols post- festive break was raised. The Deputy Minister was asked about whether the Ministry is discussing this issue with Boards. How will this be handled? There is anxiety about increased exposure if families are travelling over the festive break and not isolating appropriately. The Deputy Minister indicated that they have been preparing for the return in January. The Minister has requested that 'refresher' materials be developed for use upon return in January. These materials would reinforce the required health and safety protocols. Boards are also developing resources to send home to families with reminders about staying at home, following Health Guidelines etc. She also stressed that Dr. Williams has provided guidance as well on this issue. He is reminding Ontarians of the need to stay home over the holiday period, do not travel and do not socialize with anyone outside of the individuals who live in your household.
5. The Deputy Minister reminded us of the Memorandum that was released earlier this week on reporting and the issue of reporting on social emotional learning skills in Math and Physical Education. Boards were given the option to cancel this requirement during this time. This issue originated at the working group table.

Sharon O'Halloran  
General Secretary

For more information regarding this *summary* please contact the ETFO Local office by phone at 519-474-3150 or by email at [etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com](mailto:etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com).