

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members

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

Date: June 4, 2021

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

Good afternoon, below is a summary of the discussions that took place today with the Deputy Minister and Affiliate GSs:

1. Vaccinations – Dr. Tepper reported that participation in the youth vaccination roll out has been positive. Up to 30% already vaccinated. There is also good uptake in the hot spot areas. They are now looking at ‘second dose opportunities’ before September. PHUs are also reaching out to educate on the vaccine. When asked about uptake in education, the Deputy Minister advised that their data reveals approximately 41% of educators are vaccinated. This information is collected on COVAX when individuals register to be vaccinated. There is an option to identify as an educator but there was an acknowledgement that many may not do this and therefore the stat is likely low. Concern was expressed by the Affiliates about using a stat that is unreliable and creating a false impression of lower than average education worker uptake.
2. Advice to Students on Vaccinations - The Deputy Minister was asked for an update on the Ministry poster that was created and posted that encourages students and families to speak to their teacher about being vaccinated. The Affiliates expressed grave concern about the poster and the reference in the Guidance Memo that went out to Boards last week. The Deputy Minister advised that the poster has been pulled. It will be revised and the reference to “teacher” will be deleted. The poster has also been removed from the website.
3. Graduations - A discussion ensued about the Premier’s comments yesterday on graduation ceremonies occurring outside. The Deputy Minister reported that many boards have already planned virtual ceremonies this year for secondary graduations and they are encouraged to proceed with these as planned. The Ministry is still exploring how to do something with other classes. They are not suggesting that a formal proceeding has to occur, they are looking for creative ways to commemorate high school students. When asked about elementary schools, the Deputy Minister indicated that the Premier went further than anticipated and when speaking about elementary they understood this to be those students in Grades 6 and 8 who have ceremonies if they are proceeding to a new school. She asked us to stay tuned on this piece. The Affiliates expressed concern about the suggestion, the lack of time to prepare, the safety

issues. A suggestion was made that the Ministry refer the issue to the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety for discussion.

4. Math Proficiency Test – Ministry staff provided an update on the status of the test. After our last meeting, follow-up occurred with the 72 individuals who were on the waiting list. There were 3,000 spots still available but not booked at this time and individuals were advised of this. On June 1, in-person testing sites opened and spots were made available to those requiring accommodation first. Spots will be made available to others after those requiring accommodation are scheduled. They have addressed the technical glitches in the test that occurred in the first week. The Ministry also did some modelling on the space requirements for those who may need to “retake” the test. Based on a 20% retake requirement, the Ministry is satisfied that they can accommodate this. If more than 20% need to rewrite, they are prepared to add more spots.
5. N95s – The Affiliates asked for an update on the issue of masking and whether N-95s will be available to educators in September. The Deputy Minister responded to say that they have no new information on this but will be meeting with the new Chief Medical Officer of Health to discuss reopening requirements. The discussion will include: masking requirements, case counts, vaccination rates.
6. Advisory Table - A renewed call for an advisory table was issued by the Affiliates. The Deputy Minister was asked to consider convening a table of stakeholder to prepare for September reopening.
7. Working Group Update – Ministry staff provided a brief update on the working groups.

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.

c. ETFO TVTL Released Officers
Terry Card, President, ETFO Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local