

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members

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

Date: September 25, 2020

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

Presidents, please find my summary of today's meeting outlined below:

1. Nancy Naylor began the meeting with a restart overview. She reported that the system is fully restarted now. A few boards had to make some shifts in the last two weeks to meet Distance Learning needs. The Ministry is continuing to work with Public Health and school boards to make sure that reporting is accurate. There are currently 210 COVID cases in schools. The Ministry will start reporting soon on resolved cases. Cases are considered resolved after 14 days. The site will soon distinguish between accumulated and active cases. She advised that 2 schools have been closed due to outbreak – one public high school in Renfrew and one catholic high school in Ottawa.
2. The Deputy Minister provided an update on PPE and cleaning supplies. She advised that they are working on the distribution of PPE and cleaning supplies for October. Boards should be monitoring usage so that there is no situation where supplies run out. Deliveries can occur at a faster rate now that all boards are up and running. An emergency or “top up” shipment can be made, if necessary. The Ministry is also working on the creation of a sharepoint site where the product list of Ministry Approved Items will be posted. A discussion regarding PPE ensued around a number of Affiliate concerns. These concerns included:
 - Boards asking staff to wash or clean isolation gowns that are supposed to be disposable (Ministry will investigate)
 - Boards purchasing their own equipment/products that don't meet safety standards (Ministry will investigate)
 - Boards asking staff to disinfect the Clear Mask and reuse (this was considered acceptable as it is not a disposable product)
 - Boards using Guard Hand Sanitizer that is not alcohol based (Ministry will investigate)
 - Boards using masks that have been sterilized with ethylene oxide (Ministry will investigate)
3. Both OSSTF and ETFO raised issues about school boards who are not offering Distance Learning Classes as directed by the Ministry earlier in the reopening process. Specifically, Upper Canada was discussed and a few boards that are not providing the DL option in all grades at the secondary level. Concern was expressed about what is being asked of educators in Upper Canada, concerns re workload, optimal learning opportunities, reasonable expectations etc. The

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Deputy Minister was asked if the Ministry is prepared to provide funding to assist the board to hire the staff needed to provide the DL program. The Ministry advised that they are aware of the UC issue. They were not advised by the board that it was a 'funding' issue. The DM acknowledged that the Ministry did direct school boards to establish classes for Distance Learning at the onset. With the volume of requests for DL, boards are using different models due to variations in parent choices. The Ministry was asked to investigate further and respond to the concerns raised.

4. ETFO raised a concern regarding the sharing of ventilation reports at the board level. In some locations, Boards are refusing to share the Ventilation Assessment Reports with the worker representatives of the Joint Health and Safety Committees. When this occurs, the MOL must be called and has been supportive to date. The DM was asked to discuss this issue with Directors in her weekly call so that the information can be shared openly in future. The Act supports our right to have this information.
5. Ministry Staff advised that the teacher working group is providing input on a working draft on assessment and evaluation. Once the document is finalized it will be released to the system as a guidance document for the first report card.
6. Affiliates raised the issue of paid leave for those who are required to self-isolate. There are inconsistent practices amongst boards with respect to who is paid while on a work-related self-isolation leave. Many permanent teachers are being paid under the quarantine provisions of the c.a. Daily occasional teachers and casual education workers are not being paid and do not have access to these paid leaves. The Ministry was asked to provide funding to school boards to address this issue. The Deputy Minister asked for time to review the issue.
7. The issue of parent interviews was also raised. Some boards are requiring in-person interviews and suggesting that these should be spread out over multiple evenings. This is an unreasonable request from a workload and a safety perspective. This is creating more stress, anxiety and fear in the system. The Deputy Minister was surprised to hear this and indicated that she would look into it.
8. The Deputy Minister advised that a letter has been sent to OTF asking for consideration to suspend the 50 day rule for retirees. According to the Ministry, occasional teacher lists are depleted in many boards. The DM was asked if the Ministry had any evidence on this issue. The OTF Executive is scheduled to meet on Monday and will be reviewing the request at that time.

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.