

## Provincial Executive Liaison Report

To: District 14 TBU Council  
From: Dave Warda, Executive Officer

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### 1. **Bargaining Update**

The BargainingForEducation.ca website will be updated as appropriate. If members have not signed up for myOSSTF please direct them to the following link as all updates will be provided on the site [Video Tutorial MYOSSTF](#).

### 2. **On-Line Provincial Council**

With the current restrictions on meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and no assurance that these restrictions on in-person gatherings will be lifted in the near future, the April Provincial Council will proceed as an online, remote meeting. **The meeting will be delayed by one (1) week. It will be held on Friday, May 1, 2020 with a start time of 10:00 a.m.**

Provincial Councillors will require a computer, laptop or tablet to visually follow the meeting and will require a phone to verbally participate. Provincial Councillors will also require a reliable internet connection. If this is not possible, an alternate should be appointed who can participate in their stead. To participate in the meeting, councillors will need to be able to access the protected section of the OSSTF website. Voting procedures will continue as usual but will be conducted online.

Because this will be OSSTF/FEESO's first attempt at a remote meeting of this size, we will be holding a rehearsal of Provincial Council on Wednesday, April 29 at a time to be determined. This will allow staff and Provincial Councillors to try out the new system in preparation for the actual meeting.

More specific information about the technical steps to participate in this remote meeting will be forthcoming.

Please note we will be adjusting our usual agenda for this Provincial Council to deal with only the most necessary elements. In addition, because motions from the floor will be particularly cumbersome to deal with in a remote meeting, we strongly encourage councillors to submit motions ahead of time if possible.

A video feed of the meeting will be available to the general membership. Please note the following dates:

- **Wednesday, April 29** – online rehearsal of April Provincial Council
- **Friday, April 24** – deadline for on-time motions and request for alternates (by email to Jade Maltar [jade.maltar@osstf.ca](mailto:jade.maltar@osstf.ca))
- **Friday, May 1** – Provincial Council

### 3. **Union/Government Education Worker Work Groups**

In addition to the Ministry/Affiliate 2020 Continuous Learning Workgroup, which was established in late March and comprises representatives from the government and the teachers' federations including OSSTF/FEESO, three additional work groups have been established for specific groups of education workers. These are the Information Technology/Library/Clerical Work Group, the Custodian Work Group, and the In-Class Workers Work Group. Again OSSTF/FEESO will participate in these workgroups and advocate on behalf of our members.

### 4. **COVID-19 Emergency Donations**

The Provincial Executive considered ways to play a constructive, province-wide role in assisting those who have been most severely impacted by the social and economic disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the Provincial Executive approved the following donations:

- \$25,000 to Kids Help Phone, for elementary and high school students in Ontario
- \$25,000 to Good2Talk, for post-secondary students in Ontario
- \$25,000 to Feed Ontario, the provincial arm of Ontario's food banks
- \$25,000 to Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH)

These donations will provide much needed support for organizations that serve communities in all Districts.

### 5. **Web Based Professional Growth and Opportunity Workshop**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, OSSTF/FEESO is continuing to provide members with support in a variety of ways. The staff in the Educational Services Department is organizing a number of web based professional development sessions for members. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association is also offering web-based learning to their members during the COVID19 shut down of schools.

The pilot web-based learning session will be the Cultivating Resilience workshop, with two sessions scheduled, one on April 22 (10:00 am – 11:30 am) and one on April 29 (1:00 pm - 2:30 pm). Staff will facilitate the 90-minute sessions, in English, through the GoToMeeting platform. Members can register on a first come first served basis at [ES.Workshops@osstf.ca](mailto:ES.Workshops@osstf.ca). Should the demand exceed capacity, staff will create a waiting list and consider providing additional sessions. OSSTF/FEESO GoToMeeting accounts provide twenty-five spots in each session: twenty-two spots available for members and three for staff. If these pilot sessions in English prove to be successful, Staff are planning to offer a similar web-based PD session in French. Advertising for the pilot web-based learning for members can be posted on the OSSTF/FEESO social media platforms.

### 6. **Ontario Virtual School (OVS) and Similar Organizations**

Although credit mills are not new, the issue was raised recently because some members were receiving communication to their board emails.

#### **OSSTF/FEESO Policies**

It is the policy of OSSTF/FEESO that:

#### **7.2. Charter Schools, Privatization and Commercialization**

7.2.1. there should be no tax credits for private education and no introduction of charter schools or voucher education in Ontario; (R.12) 7.2.13. only accredited schools with fully qualified staff should be licensed to grant secondary school credits based on Ministry of Education curricula. (A.16)

## **7.5. Curriculum Implementation and Delivery**

7.5.8.4. programs should offer a universal entitlement to children and their families; (R.19)

7.5.8.5. programs should be fully-public and non-profit; and (R.19)

## **7.21. Electronic and Distance Education**

7.21.1. any electronic and distance education in Ontario should be delivered by certified, fully salaried teachers, using curriculum developed in Ontario, and with controlled class sizes no larger than comparable courses in a regular secondary school; (R.10)

7.21.6. any distance education courses which offer Ontario secondary school credits be delivered by District school boards or provincial school authorities and be fully funded by the Ontario government; (R.11)

In addition to the current OSSTF/FEESO policies, the following interim policy was passed at May 2019 Provincial Council:

*BIRT it is the policy of OSSTF/FEESO that public school board students enrolling in an e-learning class should be placed in a course delivered by a public school board.*

As well, the following motion was submitted for consideration at AMPA 2020:

*BIRT is the policy of OSSTF/FEESO that publicly funded school boards in Ontario should not outsource e-learning to private and/or business organizations. (Rationale: any deliver of online learning courses for credits must stay in the public sphere and not be turned over to private, for-profit companies).*

The delivery of credits by credit mills does not respect OSSTF/FEESO's current policies and as such, we recommend that members should not work for any of these organizations.

### **The Risk to Employment Relationship with Publicly Funded School Board**

We wondered whether school boards might view this type of work as a serious conflict of interest in those employees of a publicly funded school board who would be working for a direct competitor: a for-profit private credit mill. However, after a brief discussion with the in-house legal counsel, we determined this was not an avenue worth pursuing. There are several OSSTF/FEESO members, primarily occasional members, who currently work for both the public and the catholic school boards in their area. There is a long history of competition for students between these education systems and yet, employment within one system does not preclude one from employment within the other at the same time. We do not believe, therefore, that members are at any greater risk with their school board employer should they work for a credit mill. We recommend that members should be directed to review their school board's conflict of interest policy if they are choosing to ignore OSSTF/FEESO's direction not to work at a credit mill.

We recommend that members who may choose to work for a credit mill, be cautioned that any resources and/or materials used or developed in their employment with a publicly funded school board belong to that board. The use of these resources or materials in another employment situation may be problematic and could lead to discipline with the school board.

### **Advice to Local Leaders**

If local leaders become aware that OVS and/or other similar credit mills are recruiting members via school board email, they should contact the Board and discuss possible strategies to address the issue, including the blocking of emails from the credit mill email

address. It is quite likely that OSSTF/FEESO and school boards share similar positions on this issue.

### **Corporate Intrusion in Public Education Task Force**

Along with e-learning, credit mills is an issue that the Corporate Intrusion in Public Education Task Force will be looking at. The Task Force was asked to provide a report to the Provincial Executive once it has completed its analysis. I will be sure to get that to you as soon as it comes to the PE for approval.

## **7. Economic Update – An Act to Amend Various Statutes**

The government is planning a deficit for 2020-2021 of \$20.5 billion, up from an estimated \$9.1 billion in 2019-2020. Revenue is predicted to drop by \$0.4 billion (-0.25%) in 2020-2021, largely due to the virus.

The bulk of the economic update focuses on the response plan to COVID-19 made up of \$17 billion in stimulus spending.

Direct OSSTF/FEESO-Relevant Announcements:

### 1.0 Education Sector:

- Increasing education envelope from \$29.8 billion in 2019-2020 to \$30.3 billion in 2020-2021 (excludes OTPP). This is a 1.6% increase. Even with lower inflation, this is not in step with the 2.7% increase in cost drivers that the Financial Accountability Office predicted for next year.
- Increase in the 2020-2021 Education envelope of \$0.5 billion over the plan outlined in the 2019 budget. Most of this is due to increased student enrolment and investments in child care programs. It includes a 1% increase for wages and benefits.
- Total infrastructure expenditures will be reduced by \$381 million in 2020-2021 as compared to 2019-2020.

### Stimulus announcements for Education:

- Parents with students under the age of 12 will receive a one-time payment of \$200, and \$250 for those with special needs to support child care costs and additional costs of having children at home.
- Deferring the upcoming quarterly (June 30) remittance of education property tax to school boards by 90 days. The government reports that this will give municipalities the ability to provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses.

### 2.0 Postsecondary Education:

- A planned increase in the postsecondary education envelope from \$10.4 billion in 2019-2020 to \$10.7 billion in 2020-2021. However, this is still down from \$11.2 billion in 2018-2019.
- An increase in the 2020-2021 postsecondary education envelope of \$0.1 billion over the plan outlined in the 2019 budget.
- Total infrastructure expenditures increased by \$48 million for universities between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.
- Student financial assistance for colleges and universities will decrease by \$47.6 million between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

### Stimulus Announcements for Postsecondary Education:

- OSAP – There will be no interest or payments due for the next six months in partnership with the Federal Government.

### 3.0 Children's and Social Services:

- There is a \$0.8 billion increase for the 2019-2020 year from the planned 2019 budget and a \$1.2 billion increase in the 2020-2021 year.
- Most of this is in social services for people facing economic hardship due to the virus.
- This includes investments in the Ontario Autism Program and supports for children with physical and/or developmental disabilities, however no breakdown is supplied as to the amount in each category other than funding the Ontario Autism Program at \$600 million annually.

### 4.0 Labour, Training and Skills Development:

- There will be an overall expense increase of \$46.4 million in 2020-2021.
- This includes increases in both the base amount and the Demand-Driven Employment and Training Programs amount. However, there will be a reduction of \$43.5 million in the Ontario Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit.

## 8. Recent D/BU Memoranda

- 112 - Continuity of Learning for Students with Special Education Needs and Mental Health Supports
- 111 - 2019/20 - Ratification Meetings
- 110 - AMPA 2020 Rescheduled Date
- 109 - The School Year in Pandemic Times
- 108 - Local AGM Advice/Processes
- 107 - Open Media Petition on Data Caps and Data Throttling
- 106 - Postponement of Human Rights Conference
- 105 - Implications of the Use of Video Streaming Platforms with Students
- 104 - Cancelled - Status of Women Regional Outreach Workshop May 8-9
- 103 - Additional Benevolent Council Meeting
- 102 - April 28 Day of Mourning
- 101 - TLA and LOP 2018-2019
- 100 - QECO Services Continue During Shut-Down
- 099 - Remote April 2020 PC Meeting
- 098 - Women's Advocate Program - Postponement
- 097 - Provincial Office Closure
- 096 - Distance-Learning Work Group Applications

