



Provincial Council Report

April 24 – 25, 2009

Submitted by: Joe Nadalin

1. Keynote Speaker: Malcolm Hamilton

Malcolm Hamilton, actuary with Mercer Limited, specializes in the design and funding of employee benefit plans. Mr. Hamilton outlined the origins and development of the global financial/economic crisis and the solutions governments and industry have implemented to combat it.

Mr. Hamilton stated that 2008 was the worst year in fifty for Pension Funds:

- OMERS -15% (\$8 billion loss)
- OTPP -18% (\$21 billion loss)
- Caisse de Depot -25% [Public Pension Plan of Quebec Provincial Employees]
- CalPERS (\$80 billion loss) [California Public Employees Retirement System]

He explained that if markets “fully recover” in three years there are virtually no consequences to Pension Funds. However, if the downturn is long lasting, contribution rates will increase probably at a rate of 1% per year for six years.

Mr. Hamilton was asked why OTPP selects the Real Return Bond Rate, plus 1.5% in 2008 and RRBR +1.4% thereafter, for our pension valuations. (OMERS, for example, consistently selects 4.5% each valuation.) Mr. Hamilton responded that we have to pick a Predictor, albeit an imperfect predictor. He cautioned that to ignore the Real Return Bond Rate would be at our peril.

2. Workplace Violence Legislation – Bill 168

On Monday, April 20th, Minister of Labour Peter Fonseca tabled Bill 168, *An Act to Amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to Violence and Harassment in the Workplace and Other Matters*.

The Bill, if passed, will:

- Recognize workplace violence and harassment as an occupational hazard in the Ontario Health and Safety Act
- Provide clear definitions of workplace violence
- Require employers to develop policies and programs to address workplace violence and harassment
- Require employers to take reasonable precautions against domestic violence that may intrude into the workplace
- Allow workers to remove themselves from the workplace if they reasonably believe they are in imminent danger

This Bill marks four years of intense lobbying and hard work by OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Executive to have this issue addressed and resolved. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

3. School Information Finder

In mid-April the Ministry of Education introduced the School Information Finder to their website enabling the searcher to learn details about public schools in Ontario.

Comparisons of schools included the following criteria: the percentages of low-income families in schools, students who are new to Canada from non-English speaking countries, and students who receive special education classes. OSSTF/FEESO feels that this is prejudicial information. On April 6th at an Education Partnership Table meeting, the President and General Secretary made our concerns known to the Minister of Education.

The Minister has agreed to temporarily remove the comparison “school bag” component of School Information Finder and establish a working table to review the issues raised.

In addition to OSSTF/FEESO, many education stakeholders have voiced their opposition to School Information Finder—OTF, OPSBA, OPC, AEFO, OECTA, ETFO to name a few.

4. Assessment Evaluation and Reporting (AE&R)

In mid-January the Ministry released its consultation paper *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting (AE&R): Improving Student Learning*. The work of the Credit Integrity Work Group ensured our issues were included in the paper.

In March phase two of the process proceeded with the Ministry consulting with additional education stakeholders including OSSTF/FEESO.

Five priorities of Assessment Evaluation & Reporting were identified:

- **Teacher Professionalism:** consistent application of AE&R across the province, principals changing marks, no failing marks assigned, credit integrity issues, no zeroes, deduction of marks for late assignments.
- **Purpose of Assessment:** concern that the emphasis of assessment has changed to one of quantitative testing.
- **Learning Skills:** more consistency in schools and school boards with respect to late, missed, or plagiarized work.
- **Achievement Chart:** clarification of the levels of the Achievement Chart, explanation of why the provincial standard moved from Level 2 to Level 3.
- **Grading and Reporting:** pros and cons of using levels of achievement, letter grades, and/or percentages; clarification of the meaning of “most recent and most consistent”; need for maximum number of reporting periods.

The release of the final AE&R policy document is anticipated in the fall of 2009 with mandatory implementation by all Boards in September 2010.

5. **OMERS Appointment**

Jack Jones (Vice-President) represents OSTF/FEESO on the OMERS Sponsors Corporation Board responsible for setting contribution rates, plan benefit changes, and appointments to the Administration Board.

In February OSSTF also gained a seat on the OMERS Administration Board responsible for investing plan assets, administering the plan, and determining the value of the plan's assets and liabilities. In April PE appointed Sheila Vandenberg as OSSTF/FEESO's representative on the Administration Board.