



# Provincial Council Report

## February 27 – 28, 2009

Submitted by: Joe Nadalin

### 1. Collective Bargaining Update

Fifty-six of fifty-seven teacher and occasional teacher bargaining units have reached agreements, and all support staff bargaining units have ratified collective agreements.

Negotiations between the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and OSSTF/FEESO District 12 have reached an impasse as determined by the Ministry of Labour Mediator. OSSTF has filed charges with the Ontario Labour Relations Board that the TDSB has bargained in bad faith by trying to contract strip all clauses that pertain to on calls and supervision. The Ministry of Education has declared that throughout the process OSSTF was in compliance with the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) framework agreement and the Board was not compliant.

A “**Rally For Respect**” in support of District 12 teachers will be held at 4:30 Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> in Mel Lastman Square, 5050 Yonge St. A strike vote, if necessary, will be taken on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### 2. Teacher/Occasional Teacher Provincial Framework Agreement

- Local Teacher/Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit Presidents attended a meeting in Toronto on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 to review the details of the recently negotiated provincial framework agreement. The local leadership strongly endorsed the provincial framework agreement.
- Highlights of the framework agreement include the following: deadline for ratified local agreements is January 30, 2009; four-year term of agreement (September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2012); 3% per year increase for salary, wage rates and allowances; funding for benefit improvements.
- Appointment by the Minister of a Tripartite Teacher Advisory Committee (Ministry, Teacher Federations, and School Board Associations) to investigate and make recommendations to the Minister regarding educational issues including: credit integrity, school safety and violence in the workplace; management of Occasional Teacher call-out systems; review of the delivery and best practices for Adult Education and Continuing Education Day School Teachers.

### 3. Annual Action Plan (2009 -2010)

- This years action plan is outward looking and attempts to engage and encourage participation in OSSTF by new members
- Leadership 2009 theme will be “**Leaders of Tomorrow**” with newly developed workshops, conference materials, and “new member kits” to be available and used by DBU’s.

- 5 Regional Conferences focusing on OSSTF governance/participation for members of 5 years or less experience
- One day French conference/symposium for new Francophone members
- PE will visit 200 worksites in 2009 – 2010.
- Establishment of a New Member Engagement and Training Workgroup to promote the involvement of younger members, i.e., under 35 years of age.
- Establishment of a small workgroup to dialogue with First Nations on educational issues.
- OTPP workshop for new members to focus on the impact of changes to pension plan, such as *de-indexing*.
- Creation of an independent research team to study the revised Ministry Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting (AE&R) Policies with a view to creating a workshop that will offer practical AE&R resources and implementation strategies for OSSTF/FEESO teachers.

#### 4. In-House Legal Counsel

In August of 2008 the Provincial Executive hired Heather Alden to fill the position of in-house counsel for an initial two-year period with the possibility of permanency.

In the four-month period ending December 31, 2008, Heather has handled grievance/arbitration files, College of Teachers cases, a College of Social Workers case, Ontario Labour Relations Board matters, and Human Rights Tribunal cases. Furthermore, Heather has provided legal advice and opinions on 75 different matters to 18 Districts.

In the four-month billing period OSSTF/FEESO would have been billed approximately \$134,000 for commensurate service by an outside firm. Salary and benefits for the same period cost approximately \$52,000.

#### 5. Member Protection Account (MPA)

The Member Protection Account (MPA) on January 31, 2009 was down approximately \$53,000,000 (14.8%). The MPA balance is \$52,767,255.

The Resumption of Bargaining and the Market downturn put “strains” on the MPA.

#### 6. Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS)

At the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of OMERS, OSSTF/FEESO was granted a seat on the OMERS Administration Corporation Board.

This is a significant achievement because OSSTF/FEESO now has a seat on both OMERS Boards—Sponsors Corporation Board and Administration Board.

## 7. Committee To Review Committees and Councils

- This subcommittee of Provincial Executive reviewed the Finance Committee (FC) and the Status of Women Committee (SWC)
- Recommends that the terms of reference for the Status of Women Committee be expanded to include: ***to develop and provide regional and/or local outreach workshops for members***
- Provide \$20,000 funding for biennial outreach regional workshops
- Recommends that the Finance Committee subsume the Funding and Investment Advisory Work Group (FIAWG) and its duties because members are identical and there is significant mandate overlap between the two groups
- The Finance Committee expands its Terms of Reference to include timely meetings with the auditors to provide input and final review of the annual audit. (Supported by OSSTF Chief Financial Officer.)
- Recommends appointment of a non-voting Vice-President liaison, on a rotational basis to FC. To provide potential Presidents greater insight into a significant area of Federation business.

## 8. International Involvement

- OSSTF/FEESO was not able to attend, due to provincial negotiations, the Third Americas Social Forum, October 5-6, in Guatemala City or the contemporaneous three-day Education Conference coordinated by the Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas (IDEA) Network. OSSTF is affiliated with many of IDEA's constituent organizations such as the Secondary Teachers' Union of Guatemala and the Federation of Central American Teachers. OSSTF/FEESO made a donation of \$2,000 to assist members of the Mexican Teachers' union, CNTE, with participation at the conference.
- OSSTF/FEESO was invited by the General Secretary of the National Association of Salvadoran Educators to be part of an international election observers group. As the dates conflicted with AMPA, OSSTF was not able to send members of PE or Secretariat. Provincial Executive did approve an expenditure of \$3,500 to assist Federation members from District 26 Upper Canada and District 27 Limestone traveling to observe the elections.
- The Canadian Labour Congress in conjunction with nine affiliates has launched the second phase of its campaign to stop the Canada-Columbia Free Trade Agreement from becoming law. This free trade agreement would be passed while the Columbian government continues to suppress workers' rights.

#### 9. OSSTF Communications Audit Update (2008 Annual Action Plan)

- McDonnell Haynes Advertising Agency outlined the research and results to this point of the OSSTF Communications audit—approved as part of the Annual Action Plan at AMPA 2008.
- Data collected through a variety of interviews, focus groups, and e-surveys.
- Preliminary findings indicate that members: are pleased with OSSTF but are often disengaged; want OSSTF to build its image; prefer the positioning concept of ***“to protect and enhance public education”***; require a state-of-the-art provincial website; want a more coherent, consistent visual publication brand; see a need for relevant and increased e-communications, especially by younger members.

#### 10. Equity Survey Work Group (2008 Annual Action Plan)

- Vector Research has tabulated results from the Summer Leadership Conference, Provincial Council, and Diversity Conference and forwarded the results to the Equity Work Group. Results from committees and councils are forthcoming.
- The Equity Survey Work Group will present findings at AMPA 2009 and set out the plan of action for next year (three-year process as set out by 2008 Annual Action Plan).