Message from the President

I would like to give a heartfelt thank you to each and every member for bravely navigating the government’s reopening of our schools.

This has been a completely different start to the “typical” school year for educational workers, families, and students. I commend you for your bravery, adaptability, resilience, and dedication over the last eight months. You have risen above and beyond to support Ontario's students both virtually and, in the classroom, to deliver the quality education that students deserve.

OPSEU/SEFPO, like other education unions, is aware of health and safety concerns and we’ll continue to monitor these issues with both Local Presidents and the government to work towards finding a solution that is safe for all education workers.

Your concerns are being addressed and quickly resolved at the local level when possible. If the issue can't be immediately addressed, it’s sent to the Education Triage Team to handle. I would also like to acknowledge your elected Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW) delegates, who have been working tirelessly to ensure that the voice of OPSEU/SEFPO front line educational workers is heard at central working tables and groups.

Front line educational support workers are often the forgotten heroes in Ontario’s education system, however many have realized that our schools would not be able to function without the commitment and vital work that you do on daily basis. I want to thank you, again, for all that you do, and for the care and commitment you show to the children and students of this province.

In solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas

Bringing learning to life and life to communities!

Message from your Sector Executive

Welcome!

On behalf of the Sector 3 Executive, we would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest locals 2100 and 478.

On June 30, 2020, Educational support workers in Peel said yes to join OPSEU with 86 per cent support.

Centre Jules-Léger from the Ministry of Education Provincial and Demonstration Schools Branch (PDSB) to a new consortium now known as Consortium Centre Jules-Léger Local 478.

Welcome all, we look forward to working with you!

Local Updates

Sector 3 strives to provide you accurate up to date information regarding sector meetings and local updates on a quarterly basis.

Upcoming Sector 3 divisional executive meetings are scheduled for December 10 & 11, 2020. We’re looking forward to having your brief local updates included on our agenda and featured in our newsletter!

We’re asking locals to submit brief local updates and/or photos by December 1, 2020. Some suggested topics could be: recent achievements/gains in your locals, an event that members from your local hosted or participated in, updates from a GMM, or upcoming local activities.

Please submit text and photos to Sandra Cadeau at opseusector3@gmail.com.

Local updates from AGO and ROM

The AGO local, with the help of their staff negotiator; members were able to negotiate a reduced wage agreement that expired in September. They were also able to negotiate temporary lay-offs instead of the proposed permanent lay-offs.

With the provincial roll back of Toronto to Stage 2, AGO members have been given the option to take reduced schedules, keeping them employed.

The ROM has been open since summer (in phases since July 9), albeit with dwindling numbers. Layoffs have ceased since the few dozen that took place earlier in the summer.

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**Education Sector Triage Team**

A triage team has been established to assist and address issues within our locals related to the Ministry's Reopening Plan for schools.

The triage team consists of Staff Representatives, Sector Negotiators, a Health and Safety Officer, Grievance Officer, Research Officer, Communications Officer, and other central resources as required that meet weekly with local presidents from across the province and the sector 3 chair.

Advice, strategy, and action plans are discussed and implemented during these valuable provincial zoom meetings.

The Triage team will continue to support to the staff representatives already working in the regions.

**If you have a situation that requires immediate attention or is urgent in nature your staff representative is your first point of contact.**

**Dues**

The 2019 elected BPS Conference delegates passed a motion to maintain the same dues amount for Sector 3 Boards of Education and Cultural Institutions members.

Dues will remain at 60 cents per member per calendar year. Your dues help to cover the costs of promoting the sector and the important work we do in our teaching and learning environments.

An invoice/reminder was sent to you in October from Sector 3 Treasurer, Donna Caissie.

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Health and Safety

**Employer/Supervisor Duties and Obligations:**

- To accommodate an employee’s disability-related needs and employee’s needs and obligations related to family status. Contact your local or OPSEU/SEFPO staff representative for advice.
- To take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect workers. Contact your local or your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) representative for advice.

**Worker Duties:**

- Follow the law and workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
- Wear and use the protective equipment required by their employer.
- Work and act in a way that won’t hurt themselves or anyone else.
- Report any injuries/illnesses or hazards/exposures.

**Worker Rights:**

1. **Right to know**

Members have a right to information and instruction about hazards that they are exposed to in the workplace and the protocols in place to control exposure. Exercise this right by asking for more information or clarification.

2. **Right to participate**

Workers participate through representation on the JHSC which is provided with additional information, the power to identify hazards and make formal recommendations. Exercise this right by making suggestions to your supervisor or through your JHSC.
3. Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Members have a right to refuse unsafe work if they have a “reason to believe” their work is “likely to endanger” their health and safety. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). Once at work, if the employer is not following the protocols outlined by school board and/or public health authorities, workers should first seek enforcement of the OHSA through the Internal Responsibility System by following these steps if possible:

1. Take the concern to the designated supervisor
2. If the designated supervisor does not address and resolve the concern in a timely manner contact your local, OPSEU/SEFPO staff representative, or JHSC representative for support.

If still unresolved, follow their advice to determine the most effective process to resolve the concern.

* Consult with your OPSEU/SEFPO local, OPSEU/SEFPO staff representative or health and safety representative.

* Workers have protection against reprisals while exercising their rights under OHSA.

* Remember documentation is key—including notes, emails, photos, reports, etc.

Distribution of Products and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Deputy Minister has committed to full transparency on what products they are providing. The Ministry will provide school boards and education unions with a full inventory list of products that can be purchased through Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) and spec sheets for each product. If there are any issues with the products that boards are using, the Ministry is asking that the union share the concerns so that they can continue to improve future cycles. The Ministry is working to improve scheduling delivery and only utilizing supplies secured from Ontario.
Useful information links:

- **B12 Memo: Optimizing Air Quality in Schools** contains best practices for school boards from the Ministry of Education

- **Additional Funds Enhance Ontario’s Robust Back-to-School Plan**

- **Ontario Releases COVID-19 Management Plan for Schools** for school boards

- **Ontario Launches COVID-19 School and Licensed Child Care-specific Web Page** tracking website: COVID-19 cases in schools and child care centres

- **Ontario Launches New COVID-19 Screening Tool to Help Protect Students and Staff**

- **Ontario Revises COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Schools and Child Care**


- **Memo to school boards from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education and the Ontario Fire Marshall: Fire Drills in Schools 2020-21**

- **Fire Marshall’s Communique: Use of Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer in Schools**

- **WHO Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19; Interim guidance**

- **CDC Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities** Public Health Ontario

- **FAQ COVID-19: Electrostatic Spray Disinfection Systems**

- **Health Canada: Authorized medical devices for uses related to COVID-19**