



interaction

OTFFEO

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A Message from OTF President **Julie Pauletig**



Dear Colleagues,

The coming festive season brings the messages of sharing, hope, generosity and humility; all of which relate directly to us, as teachers in the classroom. In the past few months, I have attended several conferences and workshops and have heard many prominent speakers such as Pedro Noguera, Professor at New York University; Annie Kidder, Director of People for Education and Liz Sandals, Minister of Education. What resonated with me was that the message in every address was the same: there is no profession more important than teaching. Why? Because teachers have a profound impact in shaping the lives of students and future generations. Often unnoticed by the general public, teachers are selfless and give freely of their time and expertise to make a difference in their students' lives. This generosity and deep caring is rarely motivated by praise or recognition. It is motivated by the passion one has for teaching beyond the lessons in the textbooks and by those students who are motivated to learn as a result.

What truly captured my attention at these conferences was the number of teachers who volunteer their time to share their knowledge by leading professional development activities. At the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) *Sharing the Learning Summit*, sponsored by OTF and the Ministry of Education on November 8 and 9, 2013, I was overwhelmed by the more than 200 teachers from across Ontario who

displayed their high caliber projects and resources designed with student success in mind. At the same time, these teacher participants were eager to share their creative and innovative strategies with other teachers. It is professional learning through collaboration by teachers with teachers that makes this initiative so meaningful.

Our fascination with students' eagerness to learn inspires us to life-long learning and sustains our hope to make a difference in the lives of the students we encounter. In our profession, the time for sharing and giving and for having hope and humility, although beautifully tied to the Christmas and holiday season is, in fact, present year round among our colleagues and in our schools.

To my colleagues across this province, thank you for your dedication and hope for a better future for our students. Thank you especially for being the light that sparks learning among our students.

Wishing you a well-deserved peaceful and festive holiday with family and friends.



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Julie Pauletig, OTF President and Paul Anthony, Ministry of Education look on as Liz Sandals, Minister of Education visits a teacher's display at the TLLP Summit in November



Julie Pauletig, OTF President with Irina Ivanova, leader of the Russian delegation of elementary principals at OECTA



OTF hosts a delegation of Russian principals from Moscow at OSSTF Provincial Office in early November



Julie Pauletig, OTF President with Sonia DiPetta, OECTA at the OTF booth at the Toronto Marlies game on World Teachers' Day



Julie Pauletig, OTF President; Rhonda Kimberley-Young, OTF Secretary-Treasurer; Lindy Amato and Ian Pettigrew, OTF Senior Staff with the Bahamian delegation in October



Julie Pauletig, OTF President with David Onley, Ontario Lieutenant Governor at the "About Face: Celebrated Ontarians Then and Now" in September



Julie Pauletig, OTF President; Dianne Woloschuk, Canadian Teachers' Federation President with Taylor Gunn, Founder, Student Vote at Student Vote's ten-year anniversary



OTF's busy booth at the 2013 Word on the Street Festival in September

A message from the Secretary-Treasurer

Rhonda
Kimberley-Young



With news coverage of municipal, provincial and federal politics reaching perhaps an all-time high over the last months and weeks, determining a focus for these remarks has been difficult. My free hours have been glued to the television or stuck in newspapers. Just when I think I have seen it all, a new scandal is exposed. I used to turn to the *Daily Show* for my US political news—now I can find out what is happening here in Toronto from Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert or David Letterman. I don't see this as progress, despite its entertainment value.

Rather than add to the fray of opinions on senate expenses and drug videos—except to say that such actions by members of a regulated profession such as ours would be taken with a far more decidedly dim view—I'd rather comment on their value in terms of democratic engagement.

What effect does this have on the engagement of our members and young people, the next generation of voters and leaders? Many teachers have probably cringed after taking their students to watch the provincial or federal legislatures in action. Behaviour in question period is childish, but at least it is not criminal. Standards for politicians and public figures seem to be falling both far and fast.

Contrast this with the passion of Student Vote (which celebrated its 10th anniversary last month) and the OTF members across the province who champion democratic and civic engagement with students. Will recent events make this more difficult or will it generate more interest among students? I am sure I cannot answer this, but I am equally sure that the adults in politics and public life need to hold themselves to a higher standard than we have seen of late, lest such behaviour become "the new normal."

As for teachers, we cannot risk tuning out political action. It is often said that we get the government we deserve. Past white papers and the recently leaked Hudak PC campaign manual speak volumes about how teachers, our unions and our pension plan might be treated, should the PCs form a government in Ontario.

Whether or not politics have become nothing short of a shameful farce, we cannot risk apathy; in fact, it is more important than ever that we take full advantage of our democratic rights at all levels of government. By doing so, we can serve as the civic role models which students right now desperately need.

"Find great well-trained teachers in Ontario"

Minister of Education Liz Sandals recounted the time when she attended a conference in the US in the late 90s. One of the main topics was the need for good teachers. The overwhelming advice from US delegates was "go to Ontario—that is where the great well-trained teachers are."



Minister Sandals was speaking to teachers at the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program Summit in Toronto in the beginning of November. She went on to say that Ontario's teachers motivate and inspire their students with the end result that their students become engaged in learning.

The Minister outlined the consultations on public education, "From Great to Excellent: The Next Phase in Ontario's Public Education Strategy" which are happening presently. She stated that two early outcomes are the importance of good teaching practices and the need for students to understand how what they are learning relates to the real world. In early 2014, the Ministry will begin to present the results of this process.

OTIP Teaching Awards

For excellence in teaching

The OTIP Teaching Awards recognize teachers who stimulate students, inspire their colleagues and hearten parents.

Anyone can nominate a teacher in Ontario's publicly funded schools, including public, Catholic, and francophone school boards.

Nominations can be in one of three categories: elementary,

secondary, or a beginning teacher in the first five years of teaching.

Winning teachers are hosted at a fall awards ceremony in Toronto where they are presented with a personal award of \$1,000 and a Certificate of Recognition. Their schools are recognized as well with a \$1,000 prize and a Certificate of Recognition.

Nominations for the awards open on January 6, 2014. Just go to teachingawards.ca.



Student Vote

Recently, Student Vote, a program of CIVIX, celebrated its 10th anniversary. Their objective is to encourage and assist young people to practice and use their rights as citizens in a democratic society.

The organization works with teachers and educational stakeholders to offer free programs within the schools which focus on elections, budgets and connecting students to the people and institutions that represent our democracy.

The Student Vote program coincides with official election periods and

includes four basic steps: Register with Student Vote, Receive resource materials; engage with the campaign and participate in Student Vote Day. The program basically mimics the whole election process which is unfolding in real time.

Since 2003, 21 Student Vote parallel elections have been conducted in numerous classrooms across the country.

Registration is now open for the next election—the Ontario provincial election. Just go to studentvote.ca to start the process.

PRESSPROGRESS▶

This new website is all about advancing progressive solutions for Canada with hard-hitting news and analysis. The site, launched in October, is a project of the Broadbent Institute.

PressProgress hopes to cut through the news spin with facts and an informed point of view. It has blog posts, a daily roundup of news and pages dedicated to issues such as democracy, environment and the economy.

Users can visit the web page, follow on Twitter, @pressprogressca, or on Facebook.



The Ontario AMBER Alert is a warning system that quickly alerts the public of abducted children who are in imminent danger.

Tips sheets for use with young people are available on the OPP website.

As well, check out the great informational [brochure](#).



Planboard



Lesson planning simplified

OTF is pleased to announce a new initiative in partnership with Planboard, a web and iPad app that simplifies lesson planning and scheduling for teachers and supports collaboration among teachers.

With free access to all OTF members, OTF Planboard enables teachers to get organized with their lesson plans online. Teachers can create, edit and share in one seamless experience.

Over 250 sample lessons—created by Ontario teachers—are already available and can easily be added into your daily lesson plans. These plans can be personalized for particular classes or courses using the integrated planner. Best of

all, Ontario curriculum expectations are all built into OTF Planboard. You can embed curriculum expectations, images or videos, and attach documents to your lessons.

Live, in-service sessions will be available through OTF Connects to support teachers in their use of OTF Planboard.

To set up your free OTF Planboard account, click [here](#).



OTF Connects Webinars for teachers

Coming in the Winter/Spring 2014 schedule

- They're Doing the Same Work... It just looks a little different!
- The Role of Questioning in Inquiry: Let's question questioning!
- Multimedia: Are students really constructing knowledge?
- Connecting and Assessing Global Learning Projects in the Classroom
- Twitter 101
- Making Student Thinking Visible: How can technology help?
- Introducing OTF Planboard
- Elementary Financial Literacy with Investor Education Fund
- Teaching Financial Literacy to Adults with Financial Consumer Agency of Canada
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Recognize, respond and refer
- Digital Harassment, Social Networking, and Online Safety
- Coming of Age in the Digital
- Safe@School
- Professional Learning: Parents and Guardians - Partners in Prevention

Check out the [calendar](#).

Creating
circles of
hope in
teacher
education



2014 OTF/OADE Conference - February 21-22, 2014 - York University

2014 OTF/OADE Conference

February 21-22, 2014

York University

4700 Keele Street

Toronto

Click [here](#) for information.

The Home Safe Educators Resource



Check out the Home Safe Educators Resource which explores how families experience homelessness and poverty in Canada. SkyWorks, a non-profit organization, has created this professional development and classroom resource which includes film chapters on DVD and an educators' guide and lesson plans on CD. The package can be used in a wide range of subject areas from Grades 5 and up.

The DVD & CD package is available for sale from the non-profit Toronto distributor, V-tape. Lesson plans are available by free download from the [SkyWorks website](#).

**Don't
forget**



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Did you know that...

The OTF website hosts a PD Calendar that tracks all AQ and ABQ courses, subject association conferences, Affiliate workshops and events on a wide-variety of topics and across all grade levels.

As well, if you know of a great professional learning opportunity, encourage the organizer to submit it. Postings require OTF approval.

Visit the [PD Calendar](#) and away you go!



New and improved Safe@School website

OTF and le Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA) have expanded the Safe@School website which focuses on bullying prevention and includes a new professional learning module for teachers on parents, equity and inclusion. Added to this is a new website for young people, Change Our World, which deals with the issues of equity and inclusion.

Check out both on the [OTF website](#).