

interaction



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A MESSAGE FROM OTF PRESIDENT FRANCINE LEBLANC-LEBEL



It's that time of year again—the temperature is cooling, the daylight is getting shorter, and the leaves are changing colour. For me, the most fascinating moment in September is that first day back to school.

By the time you read this message, you and your students have already started another great school year. As your President, I sincerely wish you all a good year and wish a warm welcome to the newcomers in the profession.

On October 5, **World Teachers' Day**, we celebrate the contributions of teachers to education and society. Teaching is a very giving profession. We guide students to reach their full potential. We encourage students to continue to succeed. Moreover, we actively take part in the larger community. We "give back" daily on behalf of our profession. Teachers are giving and caring professionals.

In my opening remarks at the August OTF Annual Meeting, I announced the launch of a special campaign. I challenged teachers and members of the education and labour communities across Ontario to support

the **Ontario Trillium Gift of Life Network** and register as organ and tissue donors.

These few facts might enlighten your decision to becoming an organ donor. Currently in Ontario, there are over 1,500 people on the waiting list for an organ transplant. One donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation as well as enhance the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation. You can register your consent to donate online at <http://beadonor.ca> or in person at a Service Ontario centre. Being a donor is another way for teachers to "give back."

This fall promises to be most interesting with the upcoming provincial election on October 6. The results could well impact our working conditions and other aspects of education. It is essential to be connected and informed on the platforms of all political parties. It is also your

responsibility to go out and vote. Education in Ontario has moved forward over the past several years. Let's keep the momentum going and make it even better for students and teachers.

Yours in education,

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President interviewed by Marivel Taruc, CBC Reporter, on EQAO testing results



OTPP signs UN Principles for Responsible Investment



The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) announced on September 15, 2011 that it has become a signatory to the **United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI)**. In 2005, at then Secretary-General Kofi Annan's initiation, a group of the world's largest institutional investors developed the six fundamental principles for responsible investment.

The media release, further information and a video are available at www.otpp.com under the "Newsroom" link.

As well, more information on the Principles for Responsible Investment can be found at www.unpri.com.



Now you can get instant information on funding of teacher pensions on the new website, **Funding Your Pension**, a co-operative effort of the pension partners—OTPP, OTF, the Affiliates and the Provincial Government.

Some features of the site are: the latest news on the Pension Plan, the most recent being the three-part plan to address

the projected funding shortfall; Funding 101 – a five-minute challenge quiz and fast facts; and Funding 201, a series of video presentations followed by a quiz.

Click the hot link, **Funding Your Pension**, on OTF's home page www.otffeo.on.ca and check out your knowledge on pension funding.



OTF Fellows 2011



Fellowships Awarded at OTF Annual Meeting

OTF Fellowships are awarded to those who have given outstanding service to OTF and/or education.

At its meeting in August, the OTF Board of Governors honoured ten new Fellows at the OTF President's Banquet.

LEFT TO RIGHT: *Back Row:* Elaine Chartier, Murray Gold, OTF President Rian McLaughlin, Michael Haugh *Front Row:* James Ryan, Christine Brown, Jacques Tremblay, Sandra Sahli, Paul Elliott and Joan Littleford



Coming soon is a website, hosted by the OTF website, where teachers can download, edit and share secondary assessment resources that are subject-specific such as subject-specific rubrics, checklists, question banks, published material and exemplars.

This resource has been developed from the research phase of the **Teacher Voice on Assessment** project. This completes both phases of the project. The web site will function similar to a wiki. Teachers can create a login using their board email address and can select resources from either Classroom Resources or Teacher Learning. The hope is that secondary teachers will use the site to share resources, collaborate with other teachers across the province

and develop new resources to be uploaded to the site.

The English site has been completed; the French site will be finished in the near future. If you want a sneak preview of the site, visit: <http://connect2assess.ca/> to see some of the resources posted or <http://connect2assess.ca/pages/about> to read about the project and the site itself. Stay tuned for the official launch!



YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE

The results of the **provincial election on October 6** will set the future of our province for the next few years. As citizens, there are several major issues to consider but, as teachers, a major part of our focus must be on the education platform of each party and its projected effects on students, teachers and public education.

Your vote for students

Not only encouraging students who are eligible to vote but also educating students on the democratic process is important. Student Vote has excellent resources for use in the classroom: studentvote.ca.

Your vote for democracy

Several changes to the *Election Act* make it easier to cast your ballot. You can apply for a special ballot to vote by mail. If you want to vote in person before October 6, again you can apply for a special ballot and vote on any day before October 6. It takes only a visit to your local returning office. For more information on the ballot and returning offices in Ontario, go to wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/home.aspx

Ontario offers learners one of the best educations in the world. Let's elect those who will work to maintain and improve that system. Make sure to vote and encourage others to vote.

Your vote for education

The OTF Affiliates have excellent election information. The links are listed below if you wish to learn more.

Give your school a hug October 24-28

In October, *Heartspeak* is launching **Give Your School a Hug Day**, to provide an opportunity for students to identify ways to make their school better and invite members of their school community to engage in meaningful discussion on topics such as bullying/cyber-bullying, mental health, learning and communication challenges, and addictions.

Since 2005, *Heartspeak* has engaged youth, ages 14 to 23, in the video production process within schools and community settings. Youth have participated in discussion

forums, talk shows, one-on-one interviews, community events, and creative performances. Through these methods, *Heartspeak's* goal is to spark dialogue and de-stigmatize the multitude of issues confronting youth, families and educators today.

Visit heartspeak.ca to download the **Give Your School a Hug Day** poster to promote awareness and a planner with suggestions of activities.



AEFO
www.aefo.on.ca



ETFO
www.etfo.on.ca



OECTA
www.oecta.on.ca



OSSTF
www.osstf.on.ca

Teachers: Inspiring students, awakening potential

What an appropriate theme for the celebration of **World Teachers' Day** on October 5, 2011! OTF congratulates the 160,000 teachers in Ontario's publicly funded schools for their role in providing quality education at all levels.

The aim of **World Teachers' Day**, which has been celebrated since 1994, is to mobilize support for teachers and to ensure quality education for future generations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, better known as UNESCO, along with Education International, have as their theme, *Teachers for gender equality*. Inequality is still an issue in many states throughout the world, despite supportive policies and constitutions.



In Canada, the Canadian Teachers' Federation has *Teachers: Inspiring students, awakening potential* as its theme for **World Teachers' Day**. The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan, in partnership with OTF, will recognize and celebrate teaching excellence in the annual presentation on the OTIP Teaching Awards on September 29, 2011. The *Toronto Star* and TFO will also present awards for teaching excellence.

A boon for teachers Subject and Division Associations

Subject and Division Associations have much to offer classroom teachers, consultants and coordinators through regular networking, resources and annual conferences. For elementary teachers who teach a variety of subjects, these Associations are especially helpful.

The **OTF Curriculum Forum** brings together representatives from the various Subject and Division Associations in Ontario. Over the last few years, membership has grown steadily to 49 different associations. OTF and the four Affiliates are also represented on the forum.

In addition to the regular subject-specific organizations, there are two divisional organizations: Consultants'/Coordinators' Association of Primary Educators (CAPE) and the Ontario Association of Junior Educators (OAJE).

Check out the complete list of the associations, with links to their websites, on the OTF website at: http://www.otffeo.on.ca/english/init_forum_members.php.

Be an organ donor ...more than just signing the card

beadonor.ca

OTF has launched a campaign in support of organ and tissue



donation. Ontario is facing a serious challenge in that the waiting lists for organs is extremely long; in fact, one person on the list dies every three days.

Making the decision to be an organ donor is a personal one. Many people believe that signing the card takes care of their wish to donate organs. However, you still need to register. A signed donor card is not recorded in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's database and may not be available when needed. Organ and tissue donor registration is the only secure and guaranteed way to make your decision to save lives known. It only takes a couple of clicks to register your consent for organ and/or tissue donation at **Beadonor.ca**. This site is run by the Trillium Gift of Life Network, a non-profit agency of the Ontario Government and the organ and tissue donation agency for Ontario.

Support for Spec Ed teachers



The **Special Education Gateway** is a collection of resources and strategies for elementary and secondary teachers of special education students.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation, with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education, developed this site. Since the internet is overflowing with information for teachers, they have undertaken some of the groundwork by providing searchable web-based resources.

Go to the OTF home page (www.otffeo.on.ca) to find the hot link to the **Special Education Gateway**.

There is a "Strategies and Resources" link which teachers and school teams can use as they feel are appropriate to meet their students' educational needs.

You are welcome to use the "Share a Strategy"

link to submit your favourite strategies and resources for teaching students with special needs.

Feedback is welcome. You can also submit your general comments about the site by contacting OTF under our "Contact Us" page.