



A message from the President

"Ontario's education system works when teachers, parents and government come together to invest in the schools our communities rely on every day."

Chris Cowley, OTF President

Colleagues,

As I begin my term as President, the 2017-18 school year has the potential to bring great change and great opportunities to our province and our profession. In June, Ontario goes to the polls to elect a new government and as in years past, teachers will protect the interests of our students and our profession. It remains vital that we work to elect candidates who will support and enhance our publicly funded school system.

While on the topic of elections, it is also an election year for the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). Teachers have continued concerns about the mandate and the over-reach of the College. This election provides members the opportunity to question the candidates and ask them to commit to ensuring the College stays within its legislated mandate.

In September, I attended the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC) in Dublin, Ireland at which education stakeholders from North Atlantic nations met to discuss current issues

that we share. This was the second annual summit that brought together internationally-renowned education researchers as well as representatives of the teaching profession and government. The Ontario Minister of Education's Chief of Staff, the Deputy Minister of Education and I represented Ontario.

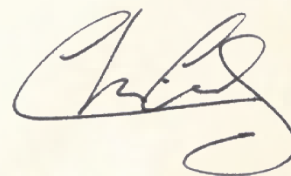
The focus of ARC this year was the new "wellbeing" initiatives being promoted by various governments, including ours. All teachers monitor and care about their students' wellbeing each day but our focus at OTF will be to ensure the teacher's voice is heard on the implementation of any new initiatives coming from the Ministry. You can read more about these new initiatives in the Secretary-Treasurer's message on page three.

On a personal note, it will be an honour to serve the teachers of Ontario over the next year. Throughout my career, it

has always been reassuring that organizations such as OTF have been standing behind me to ensure teachers have a voice on issues important to our profession.

Teachers are at the heart of every school and OTF stands behind you 100 percent. I look forward to representing your interests and wish you a very rewarding school year.

Yours in education,



Chris Cowley
President

Jane Urquhart

A Number of Things



Jane Urquhart is well-known around the world for her critically-acclaimed novels as well as a collection of short fiction and four books of poetry. Her work has been translated into numerous foreign languages and she is the recipient of numerous awards.

Jane spoke to the Board of Governors at its annual meeting in August about her latest book, *A Number of Things*, which celebrates Canada's 150th birthday. In the book, Jane chose 50 objects which are reminiscent of her Canada but which also speak to all of us as Canadians.

Many of the objects are familiar to us, some bring a smile, others a reminder of past events not so happy; for example, the Irish Commemorative Stone or Black Rock in Montreal which commemorates the deaths of 6,000 Irish immigrants to Canada during the famine immigration.

The theme of the many stories which Jane shared was that, unless we are indigenous in this country, we are all immigrants or refugees or descendants of immigrants or refugees.

Pay close attention and be involved

June 2018 provincial election



Robert Fisher

This was the advice of Robert Fisher, nationally recognized, award winning broadcast journalist, when speaking to the Board of Governors in August.

Robert reminded Governors of past political events which impacted teachers and the people of Ontario. There were some Governors in the room who still remembered Bob Rae's NDP Government and the "Social Contract." Many remembered the "create a crisis" speech by Snobelen during the Harris PC's "Common Sense Revolution" which pitted teachers against the government. They were reminded of Liberal Premier McGuinty's desire to be known as "the Education Premier" and the fact that he introduced legislation overriding collective agreements before stepping down. The take-away message is that teachers' relationship with the provincial government has always had its ebbs and flows. So,

education is a central issue in most campaigns.

In the June 2018 provincial election, Robert mentioned some of the issues concerning Ontarians: education, economy, environment, trust, hydro, healthcare, minimum wage.

There will be 124 ridings at stake, 17 of which are new. All three major political parties have their share of obstacles to jump over to win a majority.

The bottom line, according to Robert, is that this may well be a crossroads election in Ontario and to expect the unexpected.

Robert concluded with the request that teachers should pay very close attention to the leaders and candidates in this election and even more importantly, get involved.

Congratulations to the 2017 OTF Fellows!



Front Row - L to R: Karen Campbell, ETFO; Nancy Lawler, ETFO; Cheryl Fullerton, OECTA; Shannon Evans, OSSTF; Claire Bélanger, AEFO; Marie-France Grégoire-Cayer, AEFO; and Rhonda Kimberley-Young, OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Back Row - L to R: Ross Peebles, Co-Chair, OTPP Partners' Committee; Michael Foulds, OSSTF; and Dan Maxwell, OSSTF



Another year begins

Teachers had barely crossed the thresholds of Ontario's schools this September before hearing that significant policy shifts may be coming to education in Ontario. The Minister of Education's "Welcome Back" letter was replete with new and ongoing policy directions. These included continued attention to student and staff wellbeing, a new Equity Action Plan and a lot of "refreshing" – curriculum, math, assessment and reporting (including a review of EQAO), and Grade 9. Questions remain about what some of this language will mean for students and teachers across Ontario. Does "refreshing" mean review and update, review and overhaul, review and scrap? Does it mean, let's take 1 to 2 years before implementation or will change be expected sooner?

As the professional association for teachers, OTF has important insight to offer on these matters. Each of the four teacher federations or Affiliates has deep and broad knowledge on these aspects of education. It will be very important for teachers' voices to be heard as the government begins to translate these concepts into more refined policies and actions.

This same government made a commitment to professional collaboration within the education sector. In fact, the Ministry of Education issued PPM (Policy Program Memorandum) 159, directing a collaborative approach. It did so because of discussions with teacher federations. It will be truly important this year, with so many directions under review and consideration, that the collaboration is genuine and that teacher voices are heard.

At this point, the directions are relatively broad and vague—we have only a general look at the forest, with no clear view of the trees. Refining these big picture ideas to produce positive results will require the insight and knowledge of those who work most directly with students. We hope the Ministry understands that. Real collaboration does not start with "how will we do this?" It starts before that with "what" and "why." Teacher representatives look forward to being involved in the full conversation.



Rhonda Kimberley-Young
Secretary-Treasurer



Frontier College

Low literacy skills are directly linked to poverty, poor health, and high unemployment. Frontier College is committed to providing programming to improve literacy in communities across Canada.

Last summer, 6,648 children participated in 1,725 days at Aboriginal Summer Literacy Camps in 99 communities across Canada. Campers spent an average of 51 minutes reading each day—almost four times the amount studies show is needed to reduce summer learning loss. OTF has proudly contributed to these camps for several years.

Frontier College has partnered with 474 community partners across Canada to deliver creative and quality literacy support to children, youth, and adults.

2,520 volunteers donated 60,174 hours to help children, youth and adults improve their literacy skills.



Frontier College distributed 91,720 free books to children and families to share in the love of reading and provided employment for 320 youth.

They served in 126 communities for a total of 31,632 participants across Canada.

Frontier College is a registered charitable organization.

To learn more or to donate, go to www.frontiercollege.ca.

Two new TVO educational supports



TVO's mPower K-6 is ready to go! mPower is an engaging, curriculum-based, assessment-driven and learner-centred online game-based resource for K-6 students that focuses on math, STEM-based challenges and global competencies. mPower K-6 is free for all classrooms.

Just go to <https://mpower.tvo.org/>

TVO's Homework Help is an online math resource for Grades 7 to 10 students and teachers. It features a wide range of math tools that teachers can use during the instructional day, as well as free online tutoring for Grades 7 to 10 students after school and in the evenings, from Sunday to Friday, with Ontario-certified teachers.

<https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org/>

Support for educators

Indspire's K-12 Institute is a virtual resource centre that serves educators, communities, and other stakeholders in improving Kindergarten to Grade 12 success for Indigenous youth. With more than 1,000 resources, the institute provides lesson plans, professional development webinars, and research reports.

Indspire is an Indigenous-led registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous people.

<http://indspire.ca/>



Teacher Learning Co-op (TLC) Call for proposals

Areas of focus for 2017-18

- wellness
- technology
- math
- Kindergarten



Deadline for submissions: October 16, 2017

www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/teacher-learning-co-op-tlc/

All projects are developed through an inquiry approach and culminate in a source/product/presentation that can be shared with other teachers in Ontario and online as an OTF resource document. TLC will consist of teams of two to four team members who will collaboratively develop a project based on a self-assessment of their professional learning goals to enhance teaching practice.



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Robin Taub, Author
*A Parent's Guide
to Raising
Money-Smart Kids*

Registration opens October 4, 2017



Visit otffeo.on.ca/en/learning



OTF Connects, developed for teachers by teachers, is the Ontario Teachers' Federation's (OTF) free professional learning webinar program.

2017-2018 topics

- technology
- mathematics
- curriculum
- Kindergarten
- wellness
- financial literacy

Registration is now open. Webinars start on October 17.

Register or learn more at www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/otf-connects.