

Colleagues:

We are off and running on a new school year. Like me, you probably look at the calendar and wonder where the time goes. During the last few months, OTF has continued to be actively promoting professional learning for our teachers, defending their interests and ensuring the voice of teachers is heard on the many issues of importance to our profession.

OTF is always at the forefront of effective and timely professional development that is recognized nationally and internationally. In November, OTF's financial literacy conference, attended by over 100 teachers, was a perfect example of professional learning created by teachers for teachers. The timing of the conference made it an ideal fit with the Ministry of Education's new push to bring financial literacy into the curriculum. As I write this, I am attending the Teacher Learning and Leadership (TLLP) summit where teachers create and share ideas that help to ignite the love of learning in our students. Truly inspiring!

We have also been active with issues concerning the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). As you may have heard, OCT is considering a fee increase of 11-19% that it says will help deal with "increasing costs" at the College.

The reason its costs are increasing is because OCT has expanded its mandate into areas that go far beyond that of a regulator. OTF has learned that this fee increase will primarily help pay down the OCT mortgage... a mortgage on a building located at Bay and Bloor in Toronto, the location of some of Canada's most expensive real estate. I believe that rank and file teachers should not be left on the hook for OCT's financial decisions.

This is unacceptable to Ontario's teachers.

Thankfully, there is a College election just around the corner. Teachers should take interest in their local candidates and pose tough questions on how they will represent us on the College Council.

The holiday season is one of the busiest times for teachers. I know that each of you work to make this a special time for your students. But be sure to take the time you need with your family and friends to recharge.

2018 will be a new year with new opportunities and challenges. OTF will be there... defending your interests and speaking on your behalf.

Happy holidays,

Chris Cowley