

## A message from the OTF President



Chris Cowley

Ask any former OTF President and they will tell you that a year goes by very quickly! As my term as 74th president comes to a close, I want to look back at what we have accomplished together and look to the future as our Federation enters its 75th year.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this role is the ability to interact with so many teachers, education faculty students and stakeholders that contribute to the mosaic of publicly funded education in Ontario. Speaking with student teachers across Ontario has been a great way to understand the needs and issues of young men and women who are entering a profession that is in a constant state of change. Their perspective and passion for education is inspiring.

Equally inspiring are those groups and individuals whose passion for education enhances our system in Ontario; e.g., Frontier College and, of course, the active teachers who participate in OTF's Curriculum Forum and the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) or the many other PD opportunities OTF provides. Each adds value to our Federation and Ontario's education system.

This year, we challenged the Ontario College of Teachers' (OCT) proposed fee increase and, together with our Affiliates, made the case to OCT councillors that an increase of 20% was unacceptable to teachers in this province. The College must learn to live within its means and within its fee structure. OCT councillors voted down the fee proposal after intense pressure from rank-and-file teachers from every corner of Ontario. This positive result is more evidence that, when teachers stand united on an issue, our collective voice will not be ignored.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to attend several teacher union annual meetings across Canada. It has been an incredible opportunity to meet with teacher leaders across the country to share and learn from their experiences. Regardless of where I have travelled in Canada or the world, the issues important to teachers remain the same; workload, violence, teacher retention and school funding always top the list. We are fortunate in Ontario to have a sophisticated network of support from our Federations that teachers can count on.

This has been a busy year at OTF. In addition to the myriad of services and programs we always provide, we also modernized our logo, moved office locations and created a President's Twitter account (@OTFpresFEO) to position our Federation for the next 75 years.

I am proud of the work we have done over the past year to build and enhance our publicly funded education system. Our schools in the public, French, and Catholic systems are world class and our teachers and education workers are the reason Ontario's education system is such a success.

Serving as OTF President this year and representing your interests around Canada and the world has been the honour of my life. Wherever I go I am proud to say I am an Ontario teacher.

Yours in education,

A stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chris Cowley'.

**Chris Cowley**  
OTF President



## NORCAN project wraps up

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) sparked the NORCAN project, which connected two Ontario TLLP school teams with five schools in Alberta and three in Norway. OTF has been engaged for the past three years in this initiative with The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and the Union of Education Norway.

Educators and students involved in NORCAN have been investigating diverse approaches to improving student learning in mathematics, and have simultaneously developed teacher, principal and student leadership in their respective schools. The project has also included an explicit focus on equity, since math is often used as a mechanism for sorting and ranking students the world over.

The final meeting in April entailed the partner schools from Ontario and Alberta visiting their counterparts in Norway. In total, 24 participants from Ontario participated in this visit. It is worth noting that the spread of ideas through the NORCAN project, both within and across jurisdictions, has been nothing short of remarkable. For example, the Math Council idea, developed by educators at Tecumseh Vista Academy, is today being used by schools across Norway and Alberta, as well as in several Ontario schools.

The final report on the NORCAN project will be published in the future but it is already clear that the learning from the project has been enormous and the educational gains to the schools in the three participating jurisdictions definitely worth sharing.



## Professional learning, teacher leadership, knowledge exchange and shared learning

### Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers

Each year in early May, OTF hosts the TLLP *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* training session. The most recent training session was held on May 9-11 at the Westin Prince Hotel in Toronto. The teams in attendance represented the twelfth cohort of TLLP teachers, an astounding milestone by any measurement for a Ministry-funded initiative.

This year, 249 teachers representing 127 new Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) projects attended the training session which provided the specific skills to effectively manage their projects and to share their learning with others. The content of the session included practical project management, TLLP networking expectations, data gathering and reporting, conflict management, workshop and presentation skills, to name just a few topics.

Dr. Carol Campbell, Associate Professor at OISE and long-standing supporter of the TLLP,

summarized the remarkable research findings on the TLLP to date. The remainder of the program was delivered by OTF and Affiliate staff, as well as staff from TVO's TeachOntario, and previous TLLP participants. These "TLLP grads" are proof positive of the truly remarkable impact the program is having on teacher professional learning, the development of teacher leadership and the opportunities for knowledge exchange and shared learning. They, like many of their peers, have experienced personal and professional growth as a TLLP project leader, as well as recognition by their peers, administrators and policy makers as being teacher leaders.

The TLLP continues to receive a great deal of attention from teachers and education policy makers, both locally and internationally; most recently, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the Junior Cycle for Teachers in Ireland.

Each fall, teachers may apply, through their school boards, for a TLLP. For more information, visit the TLLP page at <https://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/teacher-learning-and-leadership-program/>.

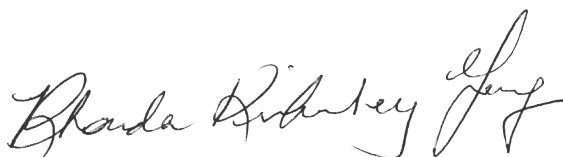
# A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

I write this message, not knowing the outcome of the June 7<sup>th</sup> election. That is making it very difficult, but one can only stare at a blank screen for so long. So, here goes. Regardless of the outcome, all elections have the potential to bring about significant change. The polls in this election show that a change is coming so the stakes feel higher. Undoubtedly, a part of this anxiety is a carry-over from the US election which defied not just odds, but logic.

One of the challenges education has always faced is that it is political. It's a big part of the government budget – and worth every penny. During campaigns, it becomes a target for pundits and all candidates seem to have answers to how they would “fix” it; never mind that many candidates have no idea what is happening in classrooms every day. Education is incredibly complex so the idea that the curriculum for one subject area (health and physical education but better known as “sex ed.”) can take up that much oxygen during a campaign is striking.

All parties and candidates have made promises about education and in campaigns often a hastily conceived idea becomes the newest priority, once the dust settles. Each day, I wonder what candidates will say next about Ontario's education system, fearful of a ridiculous promise. The four-year election cycle can whipsaw policies in education, driven more by reactions, headlines and emotion than proven strategies and thoughtful approaches in collaboration with those “on the ground.”

Not long before writing this, as part of the Awards Jury, I helped decide the winners of the 2018 OTIP Teaching Awards. Every year the decision is tough, but this year, it was almost impossible to choose winners since all nominees were so exceptional. We know these nominees are just the tip of the iceberg as we see fantastic work done by teachers and educational staff all the time. Sadly, during elections, candidates only look for faults in schools that they promise to “fix” rather than strengths they want to nurture. Let's hope that, after the election, our collective voices remain strong in making sure education heads down a path that teachers know is best for our students.



Rhonda Kimberley-Young

## Frontier College receives Greer Award

For its long-standing commitment to boosting literacy and engagement in Indigenous communities, and its significant support for public education, Frontier College is a most deserving recipient of the 2018 Greer Memorial Award.

OTF and the Affiliates were proud to present the award to Frontier College, their partner in the promotion of literacy for many years. Frontier College, founded in 1899, is Canada's oldest and most respected literacy organization. The organization recruits and trains volunteers to deliver literacy programs to children, youth, and adults in communities across the country.

For many years, OTF and the Affiliates have had the honour of supporting the Summer Literacy Camps, run by Frontier College. By the numbers, last year, the camps reached nearly 2,700 children in 24 communities in Ontario and over 7,500 young people in 127 communities across Canada. As stated in the nomination by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), “It is telling that the Indigenous communities themselves are consistently receptive to Frontier College's involvement, positive about the contributions made by counsellors and staff, and excited to have the camps return the following summer.”



L to R: Liz Stuart, OECTA President; Stephen Faul, President and CEO, Frontier College; Chris Cowley, OTF President; and Maureen Anglin, Southern Ontario Regional Manager, Frontier College





## They're back! OTF Summer Institutes 2018

Once again OTF, with the support of the Ministry of Education, is offering exceptional professional learning workshops that give you time to learn, reflect on your classroom practice, and collaborate with peers. All the institutes are conducted by Ontario teachers.

The focus of the institutes this summer is "Supporting Teachers' Curriculum Implementation."

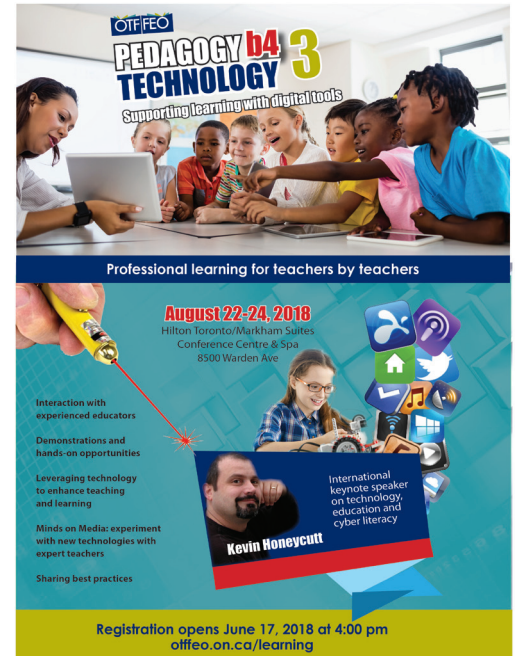
The workshops support the Ontario Ministry of Education's focuses on

- activating global competencies;
- deepening equity and inclusive education practices;
- increasing assessment literacy, especially FOR and AS learning;
- leveraging information and communication technologies to support learning;
- responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action;
- supporting English language learners;
- supporting experiential learning, including, but not limited to, pathways to non-traditional occupations and vocations;
- supporting inquiry-focused and play-based teaching and learning; and
- integrating financial literacy education and learning.

The three-day institutes are offered at several locations across Ontario during July and August.

A registration fee of \$50 covers workshop materials, on-site meals and two nights of accommodation at a university/college residence. Participants may also be eligible for a transportation subsidy. This \$50 fee will be reimbursed upon successful completion of a workshop.

For more information or to register, go to <https://event-wizard.com/OTFSummerInstitutes2018/0/welcome/>



### Third annual Canadian Educators Conference on Mental Health

The International Centre, Toronto  
November 8-9, 2018

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada is bringing together more than 300 educators and school board leaders to discuss mental health issues, learn about the latest research and best practices, and distribute tools, techniques and action plans to implement in their daily work with students.

The conference offers opportunities to network with educators and school staff from across Canada, to learn about the latest mental health tools and resources to promote student health, and to build relationships in a new and unique forum.

For more information or to register, go to <http://cecmh.ca/>.