

A message from the OTF President



Anne Vinet-Roy

Colleagues,

As I write this, I am reflecting on the many events and meetings that I have attended this fall. Several come to mind: World Teachers' Day, OTF's Curriculum Forum, which brings together like-minded educators to discuss issues impacting teachers, students and the school community, and the Indspire National Gathering, which was moving, heartwarming and transformative.

Meeting with our Canadian Teachers' Federation colleagues from across Canada reminded me that Ontario is not alone in the fight against a government that undermines the value of the teaching profession and the incredible work that teachers do on a daily basis, all while being under attack on many fronts. Anybody who thinks that teachers are only fighting for their own good has obviously no idea about what really goes on in the classrooms and what deeply motivates education workers to do what they do.

While we know that there still continue to be many positive things happening

in Ontario classrooms, it is certainly unnerving to hear Minister Lecce and the government continuously make statements that he and his colleagues are being reasonable and that the government is "giving" the publicly funded education system certain items such as only two mandatory online courses for a high school diploma. Well, nobody needs a math test to know that there are still two mandatory courses too many.

Speaking of math tests, OTF and its Affiliates have recently forwarded their position, *A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test for Beginning Teachers* to the Minister of Education. On behalf of OTF and its Affiliates, I requested a meeting with him to discuss this issue and am awaiting his response. In the meantime, OTF is working with faculty teacher candidates, who are OTF associate members, and other stakeholders to oppose such a test.

Although OTF does not partake in collective bargaining, I am very grateful

for the incredibly challenging work of the OTF Affiliates, parent groups, student leadership, as well as community leaders over the past months to protect the very core of what makes our education system one of the best in the world.

Both in good and challenging situations, we must rely on the human capacity to work together and support each other. That is exactly what teachers do everyday and hopefully remembering to take care of themselves.

All the best in the festive season and in the New Year.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Vinet-Roy".

Anne Vinet-Roy
President

OTIP Teaching Awards 2019

The OTIP Teaching Awards recognize and celebrate teachers who make a difference... teachers who light a spark in students, inspire their colleagues and give parents confidence. And this year's winners were no exception.

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) and OTF recognized three outstanding teachers this fall with the OTIP Teaching Awards:

- **Emily Alexandra Seiling**, Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate & Vocational School, Kitchener - Beginning Teacher Category
- **LeRoi Newbold**, Africentric Alternative School, Toronto - Elementary Teacher Category
- **Natalie Morgan**, Brooklin HS, Brooklin - Secondary Teacher Category

Click on [OTIP Teaching Awards](#) for more information on these winners.

Nominations for the 2020 OTIP Awards open on January 6, 2020. Anyone can nominate a teacher in publicly funded education. Just go to the [OTIP Teaching Awards](#) website to submit a nomination.



OTIP TEACHING AWARDS

2020

Nominations open January 6, 2020 and close March 31, 2020

THREE CATEGORIES

- elementary
- secondary
- beginning teacher in the first five years of teaching

WINNERS RECEIVE

- personal award of \$1,000
- certificate of recognition
- \$1,000 prize and a certificate of recognition for their school

OTIP-RAEO visit teachingawards.ca OTF-FEO



L to R: Scott Perkin, OTF Secretary-Treasurer; LeRoi Newbold, Elementary Teacher Category; Vic Medland, OTIP CEO; Natalie Morgan, Secondary Teacher Category; Emily Seiling; Beginning Teacher Category; and Anne Vinet-Roy, OTF President



The Act of Remembrance

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them."

On November 11, Anne Vinet-Roy, OTF President, proudly laid a wreath on behalf of teachers in Ontario's publicly funded education at the Ceremony of Remembrance at Queen's Park.



A single red rose with green leaves, set against a dark background.

December 6

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



Scott Perkin

As I wrote a recent report for the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) on the state of Ontario's education system over the past six months, it struck me how misguided government policy and process can quickly erase years of collaborative success.

The current government seems to have adopted the view that anything the previous government did for education must be wiped out. We have witnessed not only legislative efforts to pre-empt the collective bargaining process, but also an absence of funding towards teacher professional development, revised curricula without input from educational stakeholders, and an ill-conceived effort to improve student success in mathematics by imposing a standardized math test on all new teacher candidates.

OTF does not participate in the collective bargaining process. However, we have

(until this government) collaborated with our Ministry of Education colleagues over many years to champion professional learning "by teachers for teachers", to provide thoughtful input and guidance towards revised curricula, and to work in partnership with the Ministry to support teacher professionalism through the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) – an internationally-recognized success story. Ever since the provincial election (18 months ago), however, this collaborative professionalism has been absent.

Most recently, OTF and its Affiliates have spoken out publicly (through the release of a [position paper](#)) against the proposed Math Proficiency Test for beginning teachers, a government policy clearly based on politics rather than evidence. Even the EQAO, charged with developing the test, released a literature review

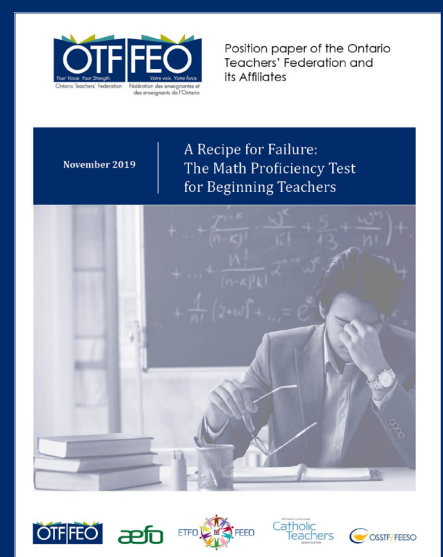
underscoring the lack of research to support the benefits of such a test.

These are certainly trying times and, with the holiday season quickly approaching, it's not difficult to conjure up images of this government offering lumps of coal to the teachers of Ontario. We can only hope that the Premier and Education Minister, like Ebenezer Scrooge, will wake up and realize that their current approach to educational policy (such as increased class sizes, significant cuts to funding and the misguided math test for beginning teachers) is wrong and mustn't haunt Ontario's teachers and students for years to come.

A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test for Beginning Teachers

On November 15, OTF and its Affiliates submitted *A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test for Beginning Teachers*, a position paper on the Math Proficiency Test (MPT) for beginning teachers to the Minister of Education.

OTF and its Affiliates consider the MPT an affront to the teaching profession in Ontario and are unequivocally opposed to it. They have indicated that they are willing to meet with the Minister to discuss several viable, alternative approaches which are outlined in the paper.



What's old is new again

OTF is nearing the end of the celebration of its 75th anniversary. The accompanying photos capture the first OTF Board of Governors and the 2018-2019 Board of Governors. Although their appearance may be very different, many of the current issues OTF and its Affiliates face are similar to those faced by our founders.



One teacher leader promoting the passing of the *Teaching Profession Act* made the following statement, "Teachers and other sincere friends of education realize that something tangible and practical must be done to rescue the vocation of teaching in Ontario. All is not well and has not been well for many years. The old, old babble of lip-service in praise of teaching and education provides neither solace nor inspiration to those who are now prepared to take a fundamental step to safeguard the ancient and honourable calling of teaching."



The message in this statement is as appropriate today as in the mid-1940s. If you wish to view more of OTF's history of the last 75 years, check [Live and Learn](#), the 75th anniversary video.

Teacher learning opportunity for 2020-2021



We hear so much about STEM, STEAM, and Coding as a required skill in today's world.

Are you looking for a chance to deepen your professional practice in this area? Do you see a need to explore how computational thinking and coding might have a place in your classroom? If you are interested in participating with a group of your colleagues in a teacher professional inquiry about how computational thinking and coding can positively increase student learning and well-being, then our OTF Coding Connections project may be perfect for you.

Here's what you need to know:

- Applications from teacher-led teams to build an OTF Coding Connections project will open this January.
- Small grants will be available for 10 to 20 teams, with preference given to those in rural, remote and Francophone school settings.
- Participants will receive training and free access for themselves and their schools to Microworlds JR and Lynx software.
- Access to free online courses, webinars and a designated space for project communication and collaboration will also be provided.
- OTF mentors will help guide and support your Coding Connections projects as you administer them in the 2020-21 school year.

Stay tuned to hear more in the coming weeks about how you can apply for OTF Coding Connections funding in January 2020!