

## A message from the OTF President



**Anne Vinet-Roy**

Colleagues,

As I write these words, Minister Lecce has just announced that schools will remain closed until at least the beginning of May, and that a plan is in place to formalize distance teaching and learning for students. I intentionally do not call it e-learning because I, like many others, do not believe that what teachers and education workers are doing to enable students to keep learning is the e-learning that the government has proposed in negotiations.

Distance learning cannot replace the in-person interactions between teachers and students and, in fact, the whole school community. Although it helps students somewhat to continue learning, it is also very challenging for everyone involved. Everyone should take one day at a time, while also going easy on themselves. Everyone should keep in mind their own wellbeing.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective bargaining process and the various strike actions were on everyone's mind. I was glad to stand proudly on the picket lines, with the OTF team and our Affiliate colleagues, in support of our collective fight to protect our publicly funded education.

Another important issue is the Math Proficiency Test (MPT) for teacher candidates who are OTF associate members. The government still has not cancelled the test, as it has some other EQAO standardized tests. As well, the schools' extended closure means that many teacher candidates could not complete their program practicums which also requires flexibility on behalf of the government so that there is no barrier for these new teachers in joining the profession. Our publicly funded education system cannot afford an even bigger teacher shortage. In concert with the Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council (OTCC), OTF and the Affiliates continue to advocate for these issues.

Even with the current COVID-19 crisis and with the OTF office team working from home, we remain active and committed in our collective support of issues having an impact on the teaching

profession, education workers, and student wellbeing.

I keep hoping that we will soon be "back to normal" even though I am unsure what that "normal" will look like.

I mostly sincerely wish that everyone remains healthy and strong.

In solidarity,



L to R: Anne Vinet-Roy, OTF President; Sam Hammond, ETFO President; Harvey Bischof, OSSTF President; Liz Stuart, OECTA President; and Rémi Sabourin, AEFO President



## Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA)

COPA and OTF are long time collaborators who have worked together on many projects and resources for many years. The close ties and shared visions of the two organizations have resulted in some valuable resources for educators.

### Among them are

- [Safe@School](#), a comprehensive website with four professional learning modules and an online course on bullying prevention for educators
- [Joining the Circle](#), a multimedia toolkit to support educators in Indigenizing and decolonizing their classrooms
- [7 Capsule videos](#) for educators about creating conditions that support parent-teacher cooperation and collaboration.

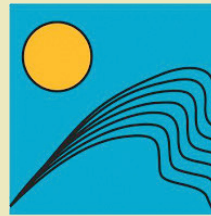
### What's new at COPA?

- [A film about CONSENT](#) (in French only). COPA uses the term authentic consent, which means that the person asking for consent needs to be absolutely sure that the other person is really, truly saying yes – that it's really clear. This 5-minute film is a very whimsical yet concise presentation of authentic consent and is a great tool for students and educators.
- [A new webinar](#) (in French only) is full of resources and tools for students and educators who want to start or support a Gay-Straight alliance in their school.
- The "Collectivité Résiliente" project is designed to build capacity and resilience in the Franco-Ontarian community, through sharing experiences and practical tools and resources.

### Coming soon!

- A new website with an extended catalogue of training and resources
- New guides (in French only) on intervention strategies for staff, students and parents - accompanied by animated shorts.

E-mail us for information about any of the above, or to [sign up](#) for our newsletter!



Learning for a Sustainable Future

# LSF

## Learning Inside Out

### At-home education resources for parents and teachers

If you are not familiar with this organization, Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) is a non-profit Canadian organization which works with educators, students, parents, government, community members and business leaders to integrate the concepts and principles of sustainable development into education policy, school curricula, teacher education, and lifelong learning across Canada.

To support parents and teachers, LSF is curating a weekly collection of activities drawn from their Resources for Rethinking (R4R) database. These activities have been vetted by teachers and connected to Canadian education outcomes.

The activities are both indoor and outdoor but with an emphasis on outdoor. Please remember to observe any and all social distancing practices in place in your area.

You can sign up to receive these weekly emails direct to your inbox.

Go to [Learning Inside Out](#).

Recently, LSF conducted a nation-wide survey, in partnership with Ellen Field, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University and Leger Research Intelligence Group, of students ages 12-18, parents of K-12 students, K-12 teachers/administrators, and members of the general public. The goal of the survey was to benchmark knowledge and perceptions of climate change and its risks, assess Canadians' views on how the education system should respond to climate change, and provide a snapshot of climate change education practice in Canada.

To access the results, the executive summary and video, go to [LSF survey](#).

# A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



**Scott Perkin**

## Welcome to a strange new world ...

### Dear colleagues,

Perhaps we thought that the novel coronavirus would stay elsewhere or that it wouldn't spread so easily or so invisibly. But now we know differently, as we all do our part to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe and healthy.

When we shut down the OTF office on March 16, I thought it might last only a few weeks, like the initial closure of Ontario schools. I soon realized how optimistic this was. But the work of OTF has continued in various remote ways, including online meetings. My thanks to OTF and Affiliate colleagues for their ongoing efforts in working remotely during these challenging times!

Throughout January and February, we supported our Affiliate colleagues – on the picket lines and on social media – in

their collective efforts to force the Ford government to back down on damaging proposals regarding class sizes, e-learning and funding cuts. And we were proud to join tens of thousands of OTF/Affiliate members as they marched on Queen's Park on February 21 in an historic show of protest.

We have also continued our support for the new Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council and their challenge of the government's ill-conceived Math Proficiency Test for beginning teachers. As all teacher candidates at Ontario's faculties of education are Associate Members of OTF, we continue to oppose the government's efforts to impose this test.

Despite many years of partnership with the Ministry of Education supporting

teacher professionalism through initiatives such as the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP), we were unable to reach an agreement with the Ministry to hold the TLLP in the current school year. Unfortunately, much of the other collaborative professionalism with the Ministry has also seemingly ended with this government.

As the current health crisis continues to evolve, we look forward to a time when things are back to "normal" or, perhaps, a "new normal."

In the meantime, I encourage everyone to heed public health warnings, while supporting your families and your communities in staying safe and healthy.



## Docs For Schools

### Source of documentary films for the classroom

Bring the world to your classroom with free, curriculum-linked documentary films that engage students in the issues of today.

The Hot Docs' Docs For Schools program offers free, online documentary films for in-school viewing throughout the school year for Grades 7-12 teachers. Each film includes education resources.

To aid teachers as we journey through COVID-19, the Docs For Schools program has been adjusted to offer [Docs For Schools At Home](#). Free online documentary films, with accessible content to supplement at-home learning, are added each week to aid teachers and parents.

The fall program, Focus, offers films based on a theme. Teachers book a film for the week when content connects with their curriculum.

**hotdocs**  
OUTSPOKEN. OUTSTANDING.

February offers the February In-School program with films about Black history, stories, and the intersectionality of today's world. The popular Docs For Schools Festival In-School program coincides with the Hot Docs Festival each year. Films may be selected to create a Docs For Schools Festival within a school. The annual Docs For Schools Teacher Conference informs and inspires teachers in this free, one-day event each February.

For more information, contact [Lesley Sparks](#).



## FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

People make choices. Choices make history.

## Many online resources

Facing History and Ourselves uses lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate. Their vision is to create the next generation of caring and informed citizens who have the civic agency to transform their communities and thrive in a global society in the 21st century.

During this difficult moment in history, the organization is committed to supporting educators online through professional development, teaching strategies, lessons, and free streamable multimedia resources for students.

### Support for teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Find [readings, scholar videos and primary source documents](#) for students to explore, analyze and discuss using a [teaching strategy](#) that encourages independent, student-centred work.
- Access a free, curated [Two-Week Unit Plan](#) for teaching [the history and legacies of Canada's Residential Schools](#) (also available [in French](#)).
- Access a free, curated [Unit Plan](#) for teaching the [Holocaust and Human Behaviour](#).
- Access lesson ideas: "[Coronavirus: Protect Yourself and Stand Against Racism](#)" to address scapegoating and discrimination in the wake of an outbreak. Invite students to explore [Who we Are, or Could be, in Times of Crisis](#).

### Get what you need to feel inspired and learn

- Discover [upcoming webinars, on-demand webinars](#) and Self-paced online courses such as [this one on teaching Canadian History](#).
- **Check out the** [FacingCanada.facinghistory.org](#) blog for lesson ideas.

Stay connected to us through [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [email](#).



## New online resources

In these unprecedented times that require both students and teachers to grapple with the challenges of distance learning, educators can be confident that The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>) will never sacrifice educators' goals of nurturing student thinking and building important competencies.

TC<sup>2</sup> has launched a new webpage, [Materials to support student learning online](#).

- ready-to-post student learning materials for various grade levels and subject areas including PDF or PowerPoint lessons, background briefing sheets, activity sheets in Word format and notes for posting instructions for your students about each lesson
- tips for teachers including practical and adaptable ideas
- materials that are ready to share with parents including ideas on how to engage with children in meaningful ways that nurture thinking through play and everyday activities.

The webpage is populated with an initial set of materials but the collection will be added to continuously and TC<sup>2</sup> is always looking for partners to support further development.

For questions about facilitation and professional learning, please contact [Victoria Campoli](#). For questions about resource development, please contact [Andy Nesbitt](#).