

President's message, December 2019

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 likeminded 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.