

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