

Time to set the record straight on OTPP pensioner re-employment



For decades, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) has had re-employment rules to limit the amount of employment in education that a retired teacher or administrator can perform while also receiving their OTPP pension. The current rule is 50 days, which means that a retiree can work to the end of the month in which they exceed their 50-day limit while drawing **both** employment income and their pension. If they choose to continue working beyond that month, their pension is simply suspended until they stop working or until the following September 1st, whichever occurs first. Each new school year (beginning in September) provides a brand new 50-day limit for all retirees.

This brings us to recent statements made by the Minister of Education in the Ontario Legislature regarding the Ontario Teachers' Federation's (OTF) refusal to relax the 50-day rule to assist with an anticipated shortage of teachers and administrators during the current school year, as a result of the pandemic.

First of all, OTF is aware that there may be shortages in certain areas of the province or in certain subject areas. This is nothing new. However, there are thousands of new teacher graduates and occasional teachers available for employment. OTF strongly believes that, if more robust health and safety measures were implemented in our schools - such as appropriate social distancing, mask wearing for all students, class size reductions (per recommendations made by Sick Kids medical experts), and enhanced ventilation - it would not only help protect against potential teacher absences due to illness, but it would also encourage new graduates and existing occasional teachers to make themselves available. This would strongly mitigate the need for additional retirees (average age of which is 72) to somehow fill any void, given the current environment.

The shortage of administrators (principals and vice principals) in the school system is nothing new. We have heard from administrator groups in the past that they face challenges

regarding the supply of principals and vice principals in the system. And we have consistently advised these groups that this is an issue to be resolved with the Ministry of Education and with school boards, not by simply letting retired administrators continue working after retirement without limit, drawing both income and full pension (many refer to this as "double-dipping").

OTF respects the right of all OTPP members to make their own retirement decisions, weighing their own financial and personal factors in the process. Having made the significant decision to retire, they understand that working after retirement rules provide an opportunity, not a barrier, to providing their talents to the school system within reasonable limits.

After careful consideration, OTF and the Ontario Government, as co-sponsors of the OTPP, have agreed to temporarily increase the 50-day re-employment rule to 95 days for teachers, principals, and vice principals in the publicly funded school system until June 30, 2021. As part of this agreement, school boards will be required to meet strict reporting measures to ensure that this increase will not adversely impact existing occasional teachers and those at the beginning of their careers. While OTF does not expect that many retirees are interested in working in the current environment, this change may extend the number of days that some retirees choose to work. OTF does believe that more robust health and safety measures would not only help protect against potential teacher absences due to illness, but it would also encourage more occasional teachers to make themselves available to the publicly funded school system.

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