

A message from the OTF President



Parker Robinson

Dear colleagues,

As this most challenging school year unfolds, OTF recognizes the extraordinary work of educators across Ontario. As always, it is the commitment of education workers that allows our publicly funded education system to function during these times of upheaval. Thank you.

OTF continues to advocate for more government support for you in this critical work. The need for appropriate funding and resources has never been clearer. The current return to school plan falls well short of providing the necessary supports to keep staff, students and communities safe.

Decisions and actions taken by the Ford government are very concerning. They appear to be taking advantage of the pandemic to position our publicly funded education system for a move to privatization.

Recent events around standardized testing, online learning and direct payments to parents hint at unlocking the door for revenue generation from our school system. This is unacceptable. Privatization leads to greater inequity in the education sector. Education should provide all students opportunities for success but shifting resources away from our publicly funded system will even further disadvantage marginalized groups within our communities.

It is critical for educators to be aware of their own wellbeing. Your ability to provide the necessary effort to provide support to students, their own family and your family will be significantly impacted if you do not take time to look after yourself. This can be difficult with the demands put on us, but so important. If you need help in any aspect of your professional or personal lives, please reach out for help. Each of the affiliate education federations have resources to assist you.

Once again, thank you for the work you are doing. Please stay safe.

December 6

**National Day of
Remembrance and
Action on Violence
against Women**

The Ontario Teachers' Federation honours the memory of the 14 female students killed on December 6, 1989 at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal.



Geneviève Bergeron
Hélène Colgan
Nathalie Croteau
Barbara Daigneault
Anne-Marie Edward
Maud Haviernick
Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz
Maryse Laganière
Maryse Leclair
Anne-Marie Lemay
Sonia Pelletier
Michèle Richard
Annie St-Arneault
Annie Turcotte

50-Day re-employment rule increased for some OTPP retirees

After careful consideration, the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Government, as co-sponsors of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP), 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.

"While we do not believe this change will have a significant impact on any teacher shortage, OTF has agreed to this temporary change in the spirit of cooperation during these challenging times," states Parker Robinson, OTF President. "The Government of Ontario should commit to addressing any potential staff issues by making our schools safer places to work and learn. Their own medical experts advised them that appropriate social distancing and smaller class sizes would strengthen the return to school plan. These steps are needed. The students and educational workers of this province deserve nothing less!"

A statement on the 50-day rule and OTF's position is available at [Time to set the record straight](#).

Covenant House

OTF's designated charity, 2020-21

Several years ago, the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) decided that, annually, the OTF president would choose an organization or charity to support in lieu of mailing festive cards. Parker Robinson has chosen Covenant House.

The mission of Covenant House is to serve youth who are homeless, trafficked or at risk. They treat youth with respect and unconditional love, help kids who are suffering and protect and safeguard all children in need.

Last year, Covenant House Toronto

- supported 350 youth each day,
- provided shelter to 712 young people,
- supported 113 survivors of sex trafficking,
- reconnected 204 youth with families and support networks, and
- served 180,000 meals.

Help our homeless and trafficked kids by donating to [Covenant House](#) this year.

A roadmap for renewal: Revisiting the curriculum review process in Ontario

Earlier this fall, the Ministry of Education solicited feedback and input on the current Science and Technology (Grades 1-8), Science (Grades 9-12), Technological Studies (Grades 9-12) and Computer Studies (Grades 10-12) curricula as one of the preliminary phases of its current curriculum review process.



Together, OTF and its four Affiliates provided constructive feedback about the Ministry's curriculum review process in recognition of the fact that the current model does not meet the needs of teachers, educators and students in Ontario.

This infographic highlights the 10 recommendations included in our joint submission. To read the full submission, click on the infographic.

Federation guidance for associate teachers during COVID-19



In November, OTF issued an updated guidance document for associate teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ontario's teachers have a long history of serving as "associate" or "host" teachers to literally thousands of teacher candidates across the province each year. OTF and its Affiliates have policies and detailed guides to support associate teachers (ATs). These policies have not changed recently. COVID-19 restrictions make it worthwhile to review them. Check out [Federation guidance for associate teachers](#).

A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



Scott Perkin

A school year for the record books ...

It has been very disheartening this fall to watch the Ontario Government and the Education Minister fumble their way through the matter of school reopening across the province. They refused to listen to educators and they ignored the advice of medical experts when it came to the most basic elements of keeping our schools safe for our students and educators: reduce class sizes, social distancing, mask wearing, and enhanced ventilation.

While OTF agreed to relax the existing 50-day re-employment rule for pensioners (within certain parameters), we did so reluctantly, recognizing that this will not solve the problems that the government has created. Keeping schools safe upon reopening should have been the government's primary focus since last spring's shutdown. By ignoring medical advice and the input of educators, the government has instead created a

potential shortage of teachers and administrators that retirees should not be expected to resolve.

At the same time, OTF applauds the ongoing efforts of our frontline educators who continue to manage through this difficult period. Teaching today's students (and tomorrow's citizens) should not be fraught with the many roadblocks that the government has thrown in the path of educators. All of this comes on top of a lack of funding for our schools, a lack of support for our educators, hurried curricula changes, unwanted EQAO assessments, and various government initiatives towards privatizing our educational system.

Shame on this government - enough is enough!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SP', written in a cursive style.

Under the cover of COVID-19

In early November, TVO informed OTF that TeachOntario, an online professional learning support for teachers, would be decommissioned in December. OTF has had a long-standing positive relationship with TVO so this announcement was received with surprise and disappointment.

Shortly thereafter, in a press release announcing the appointment of a new TVO CEO, the Minister of Education, stated that "TVO was set to become a national leader in remote learning."

This is even more concerning when one considers the recent actions of this government to increase the extent of online learning for Ontario students, by requiring at least two high school courses online in order to graduate; the removal of the requirement for directors of education to hold teaching qualifications and proposals to take the EQAO standardized testing online.



All these actions and more are occurring amid a pandemic and a botched plan for school re-openings this fall.

TVO itself is not a private organization but a public agency and a registered charity. In its 50 years of operation, the organization has always expressed a firm commitment to a strong publicly funded K-12 education system and has valued the critical role of teachers and educators within it. But, what will the future hold? Will TVO contribute to educators losing even more voice in their professional lives? Will TVO position its online learning tools as a means of supplanting teachers? Will TVO's online learning eventually become a private for-profit company?

As TVO itself would say, makes you think

OTIP Teaching Awards 2020



Three outstanding recipients



Deanna Gaughan



Cameron Douglas



Heather Lett

OTIP (the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan) and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) are proud to announce the winners of the OTIP Teaching Awards for 2020.

Because of the pandemic, winners did not receive their awards at an in-person presentation this year. Hopefully, the winners can be honoured in person in the spring or next fall.

The following teachers are outstanding recipients of the awards:

- Deanna Gaughan, James Grieve Public School, Caledon, Beginning Teacher category
- Heather Lett, Eganville & District Public School, Eganville, Elementary Teacher category
- Cameron Douglas, Peterborough Alternative Continuing Education (PACE) at Peterborough C&VI, Peterborough, Secondary Teacher category

"The three award winners this year exemplify the excellence in teaching across Ontario," stated Parker Robinson, OTF President.

"Through the efforts of teachers such as Deanna, Cameron and Heather, Ontario's publicly funded education system remains respected around the world. Our students deserve nothing less."

More information on the winners can be found at teachingawards.ca.

Nominations for the 2021 awards open on January 11, 2021.

The act of Remembrance



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

On November 11, Parker Robinson, OTF President, was unable to lay a wreath on behalf of teachers in Ontario's publicly funded education system at the Ceremony of Remembrance at Queen's Park. Attendance was limited, due to the pandemic. However, Parker visited Queen's Park early that morning to view the OTF wreath which was later laid on OTF's behalf.

OTF staff watched the ceremony together online to honour the incredible sacrifices our armed forces and their families have made and continue to make to protect our freedom.

