

## A message from the OTF President



**Chris Cowley**

**Dear colleagues,**

As we end the calendar year and look forward to the holiday season and 2022, Ontario's publicly funded education system continues to face challenges and uncertainty as a result of poor government planning and inadequate consultation with the teaching profession. Teachers continue to feel alone managing the pandemic in our schools because of the lack of leadership at Queen's Park.

The hybrid model of learning has proven to be an ineffective educational tool that does not provide students with an effective learning experience.

Teachers have been clear: authentic learning takes place in a classroom.

The classroom experience gives students the opportunity to interact and ask questions with the teacher and with fellow students. If Ontario values a quality learning experience, the hybrid model of learning needs to be ended immediately.

A clear theme has emerged since the pandemic began; the Ministry of Education and Minister Lecce are not interested in consulting with teachers on issues that affect our students or our schools. Whether it is proposing effective protocols to slow the spread of COVID-19, hybrid learning, teacher shortages or curriculum changes, this government seems to go out of its way to avoid consulting with teachers. Teachers know their students' needs, know the issues facing their schools and understand effective practices that would help with the issues mentioned above. Successful school systems throughout the world are ones that listen to the voice of teachers.

As we get closer to June 2022, I hope these issues motivate you to get involved with the political process. We need to elect a government that listens to teachers as we continue to advocate for our students, and the publicly funded education system we all care about.

I know it has been a stressful year and I hope you get much needed rest over the holidays. Despite the challenges we face as a profession, OTF and our Affiliates always stand behind you.

In solidarity,

**Chris Cowley**  
*President*

**Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) members attending the Annual Council of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU) in Halifax**



*L to R: Sam Hammond, CTF President; Karen Littlewood, OSSTF President; Paul Wozney, NSTU President; Chris Cowley, OTF President; Shelley Morse, CTF; Justin Matchett, Nunavut Teachers' Association President; and Karen Brown, ETFO President*

# OTIP Teaching Awards 2021



## Four outstanding recipients



**Amanda Cloutier**



**Lauren Chapple**



**Brooks Gorst**



**Tim Langford**

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) have recognized four outstanding Ontario teachers with the 2021 OTIP Teaching Award for teaching excellence.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, OTIP and OTF plan to officially honour these four award recipients with the presentation of their awards in the spring of 2022.

OTIP and OTF congratulate the following outstanding recipients on their awards:

**Amanda Cloutier**

*Bramalea Secondary School, Brampton*  
Beginning Teacher category

**Lauren Chapple**

*Whitby Shores Public School, Whitby*  
Elementary Teacher category

**Brooks Gorst**

*David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute, Toronto*  
Secondary Teacher category

**Tim Langford**

*Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, Toronto*  
Secondary Teacher category

"The four award winners this year exemplify the excellence in teaching across Ontario," stated Chris Cowley, OTF President.

More information on the OTIP winners can be found at [teachingawards.ca](https://teachingawards.ca).

**Nominations for the 2022 awards**  
open on January 10, 2022 and close on March 31, 2022

**Visit [teachingawards.ca](https://teachingawards.ca)**

# A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



**Scott Perkin**

**Dear colleagues,**

As 2021 comes to a close, I invite you to learn about the many things keeping OTF busy at present, some of which are highlighted in this issue of *Interaction*.

First of all, we recognize the 2021 OTIP Teaching Award recipients—Amanda, Lauren, Brooks, and Tim—who were chosen from the many nominations that we received this year for excellence in teaching across Ontario. You can view their videos and read more about them at [teachingawards.ca](https://teachingawards.ca). Nominations for the 2022 OTIP Teaching Awards will open early in the new year.

We also highlight an important research project currently underway for OTF. This project, through focus groups and surveys, is exploring the implications of online teaching and learning as it affects the entire (K-12) publicly funded education system in Ontario.

The curriculum review process in Ontario continues to baffle the profession. The absence of resources and other professional learning supports for teachers, as several curricula undergo review, revision and implementation, means ongoing challenges for those responsible for teaching these new curricula.

Finally, we continue to share information and concerns about governance changes at the Ontario College of Teachers. The

former Governing Council, the majority of members of which came from the profession, has now been considerably reduced in size, and the profession no longer has a significant voice. Professional self-regulation effectively has been discarded.

As the holidays approach, I hope that you, the teachers of Ontario, find time to relax and recharge after what has been another very challenging school year to date.

## Governance Changes at the Ontario College of Teachers

Read about the many governance changes taking place at the Ontario College of Teachers in the article *Protecting the Public Interest? The Devolution of the Ontario College of Teachers*, which can be found on the OTF website under [Breaking News](#).

Be sure to click on the links in the article for more details and background information.

## 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



## Dazed and confused: Ontario's curriculum review process

Since the Ford Government came to power in 2018, the Ministry of Education has pursued a review and revision of nine curricula. The sheer volume of that many curricular areas undergoing a near-simultaneous review is without precedent in the last 20 years in Ontario. To date, the Ministry's curriculum review process has left much to be desired. *A Roadmap for Renewal: Revisiting the Curriculum Review Process in Ontario* (October 2020), developed by OTF and its four Affiliates, articulated and underscored concerns about that very process.



Unfortunately, one can draw a straight line between the Ministry's fractured curriculum review process and expedient political decisions that reflect a persistent indifference to and fundamental misunderstanding of teachers' lived realities at the classroom level. The recent example of a poorly conceived and executed implementation plan for the Grades 1-8 and Grade 9 de-streamed mathematics curricula bear out this fact.

Our members are consistently being left to fend for themselves. OTF continues to impress upon the Ministry the fact that when it abdicates its responsibility either to produce or support the development of revised curricula-aligned resources and to provide for timely and ongoing teacher training to support implementation of them, it leaves everyone in the publicly funded education system in Ontario dazed and confused. By any metric, that is not a standard for success.



### OTF's designated charity, 2021-22

This year, OTF President Chris Cowley, has chosen to support Kids Help Phone in lieu of sending festive season cards.

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7 national support service offering professional counselling, information and referrals and volunteer-led, text-based support to young people in both English and French. Kids Help Phone are always open, providing a safe and trusted place for young people in any moment of crisis or need.

To find out more about Kids Help Phone or to get involved, contact [Kids Help Phone](#).



## YOUR voice is OUR strength: surfacing the implications of online teaching and learning in Ontario

This past spring, OTF engaged the services of a research team, led by Dr. Lisa Bayrami, to conduct an exploration of the current and future implications of online (virtual) teaching and learning in the K-12 educational context in Ontario. The research team anticipates that the research project will wrap up in the new year.

In the first phase of the project, the research team facilitated separate focus groups with educators and parents, guardians and caregivers who shared their insights, and those of their students or children, about their experiences with online teaching and learning. The invaluable information gleaned from these focus groups informed the second phase of the project, now in progress — the design of surveys to gather further meaningful quantitative and qualitative data about the implications of online teaching and learning for teachers and educators, students and their families.

While the educator-focused survey has closed, OTF members with school-aged children, may elect to respond to the parent/guardian/caregiver-focused survey and/or support the participation of their school-aged child/children in the student-focused survey (Grades 5-12). These surveys are due to be released in December.