



Nathan Core

A message from the OTF President

Hello teachers,

Happy New Year! We hope the holidays and time with your loved ones were fruitful and peaceful. As we enter a new year, we are reflective of all 2022 entailed. Most notably, we saw unwarranted attacks on workers and the collective resistance from concerned community members, parents, workers and teachers across the province.

Although the Ontario Teachers' Federation does not negotiate collective agreements with the employer and the Ministry, our four teacher Affiliates do. The Provincial Government's use of the notwithstanding clause to infringe on Canadian Charter rights in an attempt to legislate a collective agreement on others was unjust and problematic, not just to us but to so many across Ontario and Canada.

However, the workers of Ontario knew that their freedom of association is too valuable of a right to be cast to the wind. It is often the only tool powerful enough for the individual to be able to stand up to a large corporation or imposing government. The Ontario Teachers' Federation was proud to stand with the labour movement as it reinforced the rights of the people. Congratulations to our CUPE colleagues on their ratified negotiated agreement!

Not all attacks on the public good are as blatant as we have recently seen; some changes are incremental, often testing the waters to see what is acceptable and to also influence public opinion and perception. One example of this erosion was the distribution of education money that should have gone into the classroom to support students but was instead sent to parents thus attempting to download

responsibility. The estimated cost of these payments is \$365 million; money that will be included in the budget but not have any accountability within the education system. This act normalizes the distribution of public funds for private business and exacerbates inequities within our system. What could teachers have accomplished with \$200-\$250 per student in their classroom? What supports could have been created or optimized for the students most in need?

Even worse is the undermining of our public education system, one that is recognized throughout the world as among the best. The Ministry must work with educational organizations to find real solutions to the teacher shortages that continue to create challenges for members.

How long can the system sustain this issue of recruitment and retention? What damage is it doing to the reputation of public education? At what point do parents start to look at alternatives?

In 2023, we intend to continue collaborating with stakeholders to be at the forefront of finding the solutions.

We wish you all a productive 2023—we are in your corner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nathan Core'.

Nathan Core
President

Holding the Ontario College of Teachers to account

When the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) was originally envisioned, it was to be a self-regulatory body, following the model of 30 other self-regulating professional bodies in Ontario. The vision was to give teachers the power to regulate their own profession, putting the responsibility for excellent teaching in the hands of those who were best qualified to know what a teacher should and must be, today and in the future. While the OCT continues to state that it is a self-regulatory body, that has not been true since January of 2021.

In 2021, Transition Supervisory Officer (TSO) Paul Boniferro, a lawyer, was appointed by the Ontario government to replace the College's Governing Council for an entire year. During his term, Mr. Boniferro appointed the current Governing Council, which now consists of only six members of the teaching profession and six non-teaching members from the public. The current Governing Council began its term in 2022 with the first non-teacher in the history of the College as Chair. Up to this time, members of the teaching profession had been elected and held the majority of seats on the Governing Council. Today, the members of the teaching profession on the Governing Council, only one of whom is a classroom teacher, were selected by Mr. Boniferro and OCT staff as part of a large governance reform at the College.

The OCT governance reforms have coincided with the COVID Pandemic and a shift to virtual meetings and lower travel costs. While the OCT continues to experience substantial savings related to the increased level of virtual activities, the OCT Governing Council passed a **17.6% fee increase** at its December meeting as part of its 2023 budget, without any discussion or debate. On the surface, this incredible fee increase might in part be attributed to a recent 7% increase in staffing at the OCT to address the abysmal service performance that OCT members have been experiencing over the past two years.

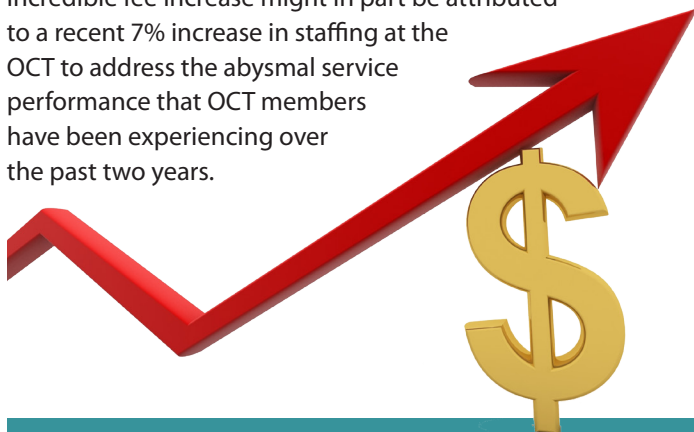


Despite the move to virtual work, the OCT continues to occupy multiple floors of office space in some of the most expensive real estate on Toronto's Millionaire Mile on Bloor Street.

What is not clear is what is transpiring below the surface at the OCT. At a special in-camera meeting in December, the Governing Council appointed a new Registrar and CEO, Linda Lacroix, the fifth individual to fill the role in the past three years! We also understand that there has been a large turnover of experienced staff at the OCT in the last few years, which may have required a substantial amount of budget to cover the cost of losing those individuals. These costs may help to explain why the Governing Council had to draw \$1.5 million from its reserves last year to achieve a balanced budget.

In the past, members of the OCT Governing Council were elected and responsible to the members of the profession who elected them. The current appointed Governing Council cannot be contacted directly by members of the profession, or members of the public. How can this body serve the "Public Interest", when it does not consult or effectively make itself available to anyone aside from OCT staff on its budget?

OTF, on behalf of the four teacher Affiliates and the teachers of Ontario, have spoken out publicly against this fee increase. We understand in a time where you, like many Canadians, are facing the challenges of inflation and a higher cost of living, this fee increase is deeply problematic. OTF has a communications plan to continue putting pressure on the OCT. In the coming weeks, OTF and its Affiliates are calling on members of the teaching profession to sign a petition calling on the OCT to reverse and refund the fee increase. Stay tuned to the OTF social media platforms for further education on the OCT and actions you can take.



A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



Scott Perkin

Dear colleagues,

As we begin 2023, and the second half of the school year, I invite you to learn about the many things that have been keeping OTF busy over the past few months, some of which are highlighted in this issue of *Interaction*.

Last fall, we recognized the 2022 OTIP Teaching Award recipients—Nikita, Nicholas, Elizabeth and Lendyl—who were chosen from the many nominations that we received for excellence in teaching across Ontario. You can view their videos and read more about them at teachingawards.ca. Nominations for the 2023 OTIP Teaching Awards, and for OTF's [Special Recognition Award](#), are now open !

We have received some requests to temporarily increase the 50-day re-employment rule for retirees of the Teachers' Pension Plan. However, we need to ensure that the issue of teacher supply in our publicly funded schools is properly informed and resolved through evidence-based discussions among educational stakeholders. We are hoping to begin such discussions early this year.

And we continue to keep an eye on the College of Teachers: its failing service to the profession, a revolving door for its CEOs, and now an outrageous fee increase for OCT members (highlighted in this issue of *Interaction*).

Finally, on a sad note, we recently learned of the passing of two of my predecessors, and former OTF Secretary-Treasurers: William (Bill) A. Jones, who served from 1974 to 1985, and Susan Langley, who served from 1996 to 2003. They will be truly missed by family, friends, and colleagues, and by their OTF family.



Scott Perkin
Secretary-Treasurer



2023 nominations
are now open and
will close on March 31, 2023

For more information or for a copy
of the nomination form, click [here](#)

Email nomination form to:
specialrecognition@otffeo.on.ca



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

On behalf of all of us at OTF, we would like to wish you all a very happy Black History Month!

This month is a time to reflect on all the contributions, resilience and excellence of Black communities globally and in Canada.

From Bromley Armstrong to Stanley Grizzle, OTF takes this time to acknowledge the profound contributions Black workers have had in building and pushing the labour movement to where it is today.

We take this time to also thank the Black educators who are often a shining light to Black and marginalized students. Your work is greatly appreciated.

Black history is worth remembering and honouring year-round.

We encourage you to take these conversations to your classrooms, hallways and dinner tables.

Helping you help students think critically!

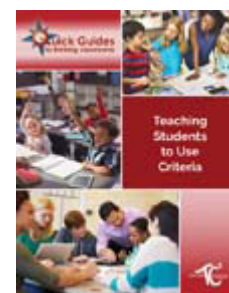
The Critical Thinking Consortium's (TC²) engaging approach enhances learning across the curriculum. By infusing critical, creative, and collaborative thinking in all teaching and learning, we create classrooms where students learn to think and think to learn. Our newest resources can help you with practical and powerful strategies to support critical thinking in many subject areas:

[Supporting All Learners](#) provides simple but powerful starting points for creating inclusive classrooms. Through classroom strategies and examples, this resource helps educators make everyday decisions about instruction and assessment to create inclusive learning environments.

[Assessing Mathematical Thinking](#) presents a framework for effectively assessing and evaluating thinking in math focussed on reasoning competencies. The TC² approach to math embraces the idea that sustained quality mathematical thinking, or reasoning, is the key to the success of math students.

[Teaching Students To Use Criteria](#) explores criteria for judgment: what they are, how to support student use of criteria, when and where to best make use of criteria, and how to assess for effective student use of criteria.

We have thousands of ready-to-use classroom resources on our website and lots of articles, videos, and other supports for your professional learning. Individual members and school/district partners have FREE access to all our online resources. Learn more at: [TC² members](#).





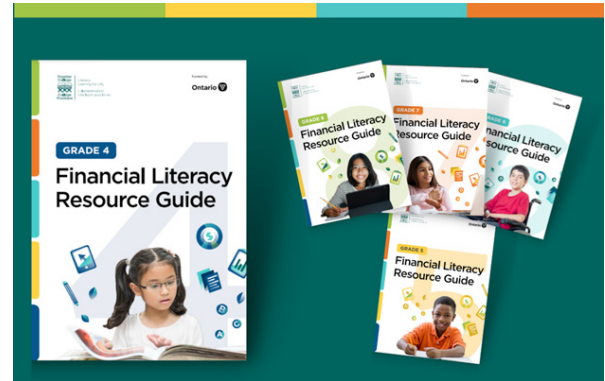
EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Everyone deserves access to literacy and learning. United for Literacy (formerly Frontier College) is dedicated to making that possible. United for Literacy delivers free literacy and learning programs that serve people of all ages, with high-impact, learner-centered solutions through community partnerships.

In collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Education, United for Literacy has developed Grade 4 to 8 Financial Literacy resources for use by teachers, students, and parents. The team is currently developing Grade 9 to 12 resources which will be available in April 2023.

To access these Financial Literacy resources, please visit:
www.unitedforliteracy.ca/resources



Since 2005, United for Literacy has partnered with Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario to offer Summer Literacy Programs to promote a love of reading and help to reduce summer learning loss. These programs have been generously supported by the Ontario Teachers' Federation and its Affiliates since 2009. In 2022, over 1,700 children benefitted from these programs.

Mosque shooting anniversary

Azzeddine Soufiane, 57; Khaled Belkacemi, 60; Ibrahima Barry, 39; Mamadou Tanou Barry, 42; Abdelkrim Hassane, 41; and Boubaker Thabti, 44.

It would be remiss to let the month finish without recognizing the six-year commemoration of the Mosque attack that occurred in Quebec City, January 29th 2017. On this fateful day, a lone shooter walked into a mosque and killed six worshippers and injured 19 others in a hate-fueled attack. The incidents of this day would be one of many catalysts for the Canadian Government to recognize January 29th as the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia.

Despite this, data from Statistics Canada indicate hate crimes against Muslim communities have risen over the past decade. Anti-Muslim tropes in popular culture and policy, religious head coverings being ripped off people; anti-Muslim rhetoric and actions are rampant. Just this month there were reports of a young girl getting her hijab ripped off by another student while in school. A video of the incident was then shared on social media. These too are acts of violence.

We all have a responsibility to disrupt Islamophobia. We are sharing some tips of bystander intervention that

could be helpful in disrupting Islamophobia if you see it occurring:

1. **Discover** – stay calm and assess the safety of yourself and others around you.
2. **Distract** – try to distract the person who is perpetrating the violence or harassment.
3. **Direct** – be direct and ask the victim if they need help. Be direct with the perpetrator to let them know what they are doing is not okay.
4. **Delegate** – get help from others in intervening or call 911 for help.
5. **Document** – if you feel it is safe, take photos or video footage of the incident.
6. **Delay** – wait until the situation has de-escalated or the perpetrator has left and then provide support for the victim.

On this date, and every day, our hearts and solidarity are with Muslim students, teachers and communities. Let us continue to support organizations leading this fight and continue to affirm our solidarity with Muslim communities across Canada.