

A message from the OTF President

Greetings teachers,

I hope this message finds you well. I am pleased to share with you some updates from the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

First, I want to highlight the cautious optimism that I have in the convening of a "Supply and Demand Action Table" to address the shortage of teachers in some school boards. This was a significant step forward, as we knew that adjusting pension rules for retirees who wish to help in the classroom would only be a band-aid solution. The Action Table, attended by a range of stakeholders including the Affiliates, government officials, directors and school boards, principals and supervisory officers, deans of education, and the Ontario College of Teachers, will develop a comprehensive set of questions and identify possible solutions to the current staffing challenges. Their first meeting occurred on March 27, 2023.



Nathan Core
President

While we celebrate the efforts being made to address the shortage of teachers, it is important to address the prevalence of underqualified and uncertified teachers in the public school system. This undermines the profession and public education. It is crucial that we ensure that only fully qualified and certified teachers are allowed to teach in our schools.

Additionally, the major changes to curriculum by the Ministry of Education that are occurring without consultation with OTF and its Affiliates, and the lack of time and resources for the classroom teacher to implement them, are a major concern. OTF will continue to advocate for meaningful consultation and appropriate resources to ensure that teachers are able to deliver quality education to our students.

Following our formal opposition to the Ontario College of Teachers fee increase, we created an advocacy [website](#) where members could voice their individual opposition. Over 7,000 emails have been sent to the OCT through the website, highlighting member opposition concerns. This website can be used for other future advocacy opportunities.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Affiliates (AEFO, OECTA and OSSTF) for inviting OTF to their recent annual meetings and I look forward to joining ETFO in the summer. These invitations are invaluable opportunities to showcase the unity that OTF embodies across the province. The conduit of OTF should be used as a tool to unite the profession and to advocate for publicly funded education, and the presence of the OTF helps provide authenticity to that vision.

I want to thank the OTF staff for their skills and professionalism; the Executive for their collaboration, guidance, and kindness, and most importantly, the teachers in the classroom who inspire us to continue to advocate for a strong publicly funded education system.

Teacher Supply and Demand Action Table



In early March, OTF agreed to a request from the Minister of Education to increase, on a temporary basis, the 50-day Re-employment Rule that limits the number of days a teacher can work in education once retired. As part of the agreement, OTF and the Minister also committed to a consultation process with other education stakeholders, beginning in March 2023, and to timely implementation of identified solutions during the 2023-24 school year, to resolve the staffing challenges that our education system continues to face.

OTF has accordingly established the Action Table on Teacher Supply and Demand. On March 27, the first meeting of the Action Table took place with major provincial education stakeholders in attendance. In addition to Federation and Ministry of Education

representatives, organizations representing the following stakeholders were invited to participate in the Action Table:

- Directors and School Boards
- Principals and Supervisory Officers
- Deans of Education
- Ontario College of Teachers

In total, 28 participants from across 19 stakeholder organizations attended the inaugural meeting of the Action Table. Participants were asked to consider two main questions:

1. *What do we know about the issues of supply and demand from the perspective of our own organization and how do we know it?*
2. *What evidence do we have or could we get?*

Over the coming months, we will be seeking both quantitative and qualitative data to help us better understand the current state of supply and demand, as it manifests itself in the English and French, Public and Catholic, elementary and secondary schools of Ontario.

Celebrating and supporting Associate Teachers at Western and Lakehead Universities



Over the course of the past 12 months, OTF has been working with the Faculties of Education and local school boards at Western University and Lakehead University (in Thunder Bay) on two collaborative pilot projects that are focused on enhancing supports for Associate Teachers (ATs).

At Western, a highly successful event was held on November 20, 2022 to honour and welcome ATs. Building on the success of that event, a second event to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of ATs who have worked with Western this school year was held on May 3, 2023, and included both in-person and online opportunities for ATs to participate. In addition to thanking ATs for their service, the event served as a kickoff for creating several Communities of Practice for Western's ATs.

At Lakehead, the engagement of the Federation, Faculty and school board partners has been focused on creating a "menu of supports" for ATs, with the explicit long-term goal articulated by the group "to recognize that the work of an AT is integral to assisting the transition from teacher candidate to teacher, and hence a crucial link in inducting teacher candidates into our profession." The partners are now working on developing several pathways to achieving this laudable goal.

For both the Western and Lakehead pilots, the ideas generated and the dedication to doing the required work collaboratively have been remarkable. We look forward to continuing this important work in the months ahead.



A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Scott Perkin

It is hard to believe that another school year is quickly coming to an end. Unfortunately, we continue to face a government that is underfunding the education system, that consistently ignores the voice of the profession, and that constantly changes educational policy without genuine consultation.

On a more positive note, for the tenth year in a row, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (Plan) is fully funded. As Plan co-sponsors, OTF and the government have agreed to file the January 1, 2023 funding valuation with the regulators, classifying the surplus as a contingency reserve. The reserve is intended to reduce volatility in Plan funding and to facilitate stability in Plan members' contributions and benefits, including indexing.

Having also agreed, once again, with our government partner to increase the 50-day re-employment rule for certain retirees, we now have an Action Table underway to finally study the issue of teacher supply and demand and hopefully find solutions to staffing challenges within the system.

Although the Ontario College of Teachers hasn't budged on its latest fee increase, we have created an advocacy website to enable the teachers of Ontario to share their concerns with the College.

I encourage all educators, parents and students to support the efforts of OTF and its Affiliates in advocating to the Ontario Government for a better-funded, more equitable, and truly collaborative education system in the province.

In the meantime, I wish all OTF members a safe and healthy summer, a well-deserved break from the challenges of the past school year!



The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) is pleased to announce that Harold Pretty is the 2023 recipient of the OTF Special Recognition Award.

This award is presented annually to an organization, group or individual to acknowledge outstanding contributions to publicly funded education in Ontario.

Harold Pretty is a music lover who spent 17 years volunteering at the local schools' music programs in Ottawa, Ontario. His nominators describe him as having "immense dedication, teamwork, persistence, punctuality, humility, tact, and an endearing sense of humour."

OTF will recognize Harold Pretty with the 2023 Award at the OTF President's Banquet in August.

A broken cart and no tractor: The revised curriculum implementation plan and process in Ontario

Imagine tasking a farm worker with the delivery of produce to market armed only with a map, a broken cart and no tractor with which to draw it. Absurd, right? And yet, this is precisely what the Minister of Education has been assuming Ontario teachers can and should do since the Ford Government came to power in 2018.

In previous editions of *Interaction* we've underscored both the volume and velocity of curricula that have entered and exited the curriculum review process accompanied by a paucity of appropriate Ministry supports. Indeed, teachers have been largely abandoned and left to "figure it out". The situation was a catalyst for OTF and its Affiliates to submit to the Ministry of Education in October 2020, an OTF/all-Affiliate paper: [A Roadmap for Renewal: Revisiting the Curriculum Review Process in Ontario](#). It helpfully set out a feasible roadmap for the curriculum review process, including an effective implementation plan and process. Alas, teachers are stuck in an educational version of *Groundhog Day* where nothing substantive has changed.

This school year, the Ministry announced it would release a *Curriculum Review Guide* that included a "regular curriculum review cycle that ensures curriculum is up to date and relevant to important job and life skills." Two years into a second mandate and only now there's recognition that there needs to be more transparency about the phases of the process. Really?

Figure 1 charts all the curricula revised (or being revised) since the beginning of the Ford Government's mandate in 2018. Notice the wafer-thin gap between the release dates and mandatory implementation dates. The Ministry has shown a consistent propensity to release revised curricula—many with substantive changes and new content—without a complementary implementation process and plan in place. No one could blame those who feel dizzy, disoriented and disconsolate just from scanning the chart.

The Ministry's hurried release of so many curricula in such rapid succession, combined with a flawed implementation plan and process, is exacerbating conditions in schools still straining with the burdens precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is not a case of *cart before horse* or tractor but rather one of a *broken cart with NO tractor!* While it is a reasonable expectation that Ontario teachers animate the curriculum and activate student learning, it's also a reasonable expectation that they are not treated as

beasts of burden. Neither teachers, nor the students they teach, should bear the brunt of such indifference to classroom realities.

Ontario students deserve to explore up-to-date curricula. However, teachers and educators deserve timely access to the tools and training opportunities that help develop pedagogical approaches that reflect changes in the revised curricula. As the saying famously goes, you can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

The Minister may embrace the view from atop the ivory tower, but his perspective is clearly out of touch with frontline realities and with the experiences of those who are unfairly tasked with turning his poor policy decisions and directives into effective practice in Ontario classrooms.



Acting on all ten recommendations contained in *A Roadmap for Renewal* would be an excellent remedy for the current policy-to-practice divide.

Figure 1: Ontario curricula revised (or still in the Curriculum Review Process), 2018-2023

CURRICULUM DOCUMENT	OFFICIAL RELEASE DATE (MONTH) YEAR	MANDATORY IMPLEMENTATION DATE (MONTH) YEAR
ELEMENTARY		
Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8	(Aug) 2019	(Sept) 2019
Mathematics, Grades 1-8	(June) 2020	(Sept) 2020
Science and Technology, Grades 1-8	(Mar) 2022	(Sept) 2022
Social Studies (Grades 1-3 only)	TBD	(Sept) 2023 ¹
Social Studies (Grade 6 only)	TBD	(Sept) 2023 ¹
Français, Grades 1-8	TBD	(Sept) 2023 ¹
Language, Grades 1-8	TBD	(Sept) 2023 ¹
SECONDARY		
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies, Grades 9-12	(May) 2019	(Sept) 2019
Career Studies, Grade 10	(July) 2019 TBD	(Sept) 2019 TBD ²
American Sign Language as a Second Language, Grades 9-12	(Mar) 2021	(Sept) 2021
Civics and Citizenship, Grade 10	(Apr) 2022	(Sept) 2022
Mathematics, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(June) 2021	(Sept) 2021
English, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(Nov) 2021 ³ (Spring) 2023 ⁴	(Sept) 2022 ³ (Sept) 2023 ⁴
Français, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(Nov) 2021 ³ (Spring) 2023 ⁴	(Sept) 2022 ³ (Sept) 2023 ⁴
French as a Second Language, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(Nov) 2021 ³ (Spring) 2023 ⁴	(Sept) 2022 ³ (Sept) 2023 ⁴
Issues in Canadian Geography, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(Nov) 2021 ³	(Sept) 2022 ³
Science, Grade 9 (De-streamed)	(Apr) 2022	(Sept) 2022
Computer Studies, Grade 10	TBD	(Sept) 2023 ¹
Technological Studies, Grades 9 and 10	TBD	(Sept) 2024 ¹
Business Studies, Grades 9-12	TBD	(Sept) 2024 ¹

¹ Anticipated date, not yet confirmed by Ministry

² New revisions to include new learnings about mandatory mental health

³ Ministry mandates that academic level course (same course description and expectations) be renamed/recoded as de-streamed version for 2022-2023 school year

⁴ Anticipated dates of release and mandatory implementation of revised version of de-streamed course

Congratulations to ten outstanding Fellows!

In 1964, the Ontario Teachers' Federation celebrated 20 years of Federation. In order to commemorate that event, the Board of Governors established Fellowships in OTF.

Intended to acknowledge service to OTF and to the teaching profession, the new honour was given in its first year to George Drew, the Premier of the Province when the *Teaching Profession Act* was passed in 1944.

The other honourees in that first year were all former Presidents of OTF and founding members of the Board of Governors.

This year, OTF would like to congratulate ten outstanding OTF Fellows who will be honoured and presented with their Fellowship at the 2023 President's Banquet, to be held on August 21, 2023 in Markham.



Lindy Amato



Brad Bennett



Nathan Core



Dr. Amy Greer

2023 OTF Fellows



Lorna Larmour



Phyllis Hession-White



Chantal Noël



Martha Hradowy



Tracey Pecarski



Julie Yelle

Pride month is almost here!



The arrival of the festive season welcomes us with rainbow sidewalks, flags and a month-long celebration for 2SLGBTQ+ communities. However, we recognize that Pride is more than just parties and festivities. The month is also an opportune time to reflect on the origins of these celebrations and what it means to the queer and trans communities globally. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera are known as the architects of the 2SLGBTQ+ movement when they threw the first bricks at the Stonewall riots, which served as a catalyst for the 2SLGBTQ+ movement.

Furthermore, it would be remiss in this month to not mention the grim realities of trans people presently. Recent studies published in the [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#) found that trans youth are five times more likely than their peers to think about suicide, and 7.6 times more likely to attempt it. [Cyberbullying, stigma and victimization](#) are known to be common determinants that impact their mental health.

More broadly, as we see progress in [trans-led initiatives, programming](#) and advocacy, there is a fervent attempt to stifle that progress. Specifically, in [cities](#) across the country scheduled Drag Queen Story Time readings have been met with [protestors](#). South of the border, the movement to [ban books with 2SLGBTQ+ topics has been reignited](#). *Them* reports 41% of the banned books were [targeted due to 2SLGBTQ+ content](#). Many US states have introduced [bills](#) to prevent schools from allowing trans youth to participate on sports teams and in competitions that align with their gender identity.

Teachers play a pivotal role in affirming 2SLGBTQ+ students. Asking your students for their pronouns, diversifying your reading material to include 2SLGBTQ+ authors, and teaching about 2SLGBTQ+ leaders and prominent figures are all ways to support your students. This Pride month, we also recognize 2SLGBTQ+ teachers and educators.

From all of us at OTF, Happy Pride!

OTF FEO
Your Voice. Your Strength. Votre voix. Votre force.

National Indigenous History Month
Mois national de l'histoire autochtone