



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.



Nathan Core
President