



Yves Durocher

A message from the OTF President

Dear colleagues,

The year surely begins with gathering clouds on the horizon.

As with September 2022, this school year begins in the midst of negotiations for the four teacher Affiliates and much uncertainty.

At the same time, we have a Government that brags about “investments” in education, but must surely realize, as do you and I, that our students need much more than dollars that don't seem to make it to the classroom.

Take a look at the latest news from [People for Education](#) and you'll see that the rhetoric is just that. What young people need, and what we need, is support, encouragement and appreciation. In short, Ontario needs to nurture a culture that enhances the image of teaching and the professionals who carry out this work, this vocation.

It wasn't so long ago that society prioritized what happened in our schools. In fact, right after health care, education was the top priority for Ontario voters. But in recent years, perhaps since 2018, it's as if education has become just another issue, like housing, transportation and energy.

And yet, we know that it is through a strong, well-functioning publicly funded education system that future generations will be able to meet the challenges of an aging population, environmental degradation, a changing economy, the growing role of technology, the erosion of confidence in democratic institutions, and so on.

This is where OTF wants to put its energies and resources. Let's make sure that education remains a priority, so that together with our students, the teachers of this province can build the flourishing society of tomorrow.

Yours in education,



Yves Durocher
President

Join the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) for a virtual presentation to learn about one of your most important financial assets: your pension



Each session is about 1.5 hours with a Q&A session

Preparing to Retire (for members within five years of retirement) - 1.5 hours

You have been contributing to your pension throughout your career. Now that you're thinking about retiring, find out how this asset fits into your financial picture.

This interactive and informative presentation will provide you with everything you need to know about preparing for retirement, and what to expect throughout the retirement application process.

You have seven dates to choose from. Each presentation will be the same, so please choose a date below and click on it to register.

October

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 4:30 pm

Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 4:30 pm

Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 6:00 pm

November

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 4:30 pm

Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 4:30 pm (en français)

You will receive an email confirming your registration. You will receive a reminder email one hour before the webinar begins.

Being A Member – Your Life as a Teacher (for early to mid-career members) - 1.5 hours

Your pension is one of your most important financial assets.

Consider this your Pension 101. Designed for all early to mid-career members, you will gain an understanding of how your contributions and pension are calculated, how to maximize your pension benefit and how some life events may impact your pension.

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 4:30 pm

You will receive an email confirming your registration. You will receive a reminder email one hour before the webinar begins.



**ONTARIO
TEACHERS'**

PENSION PLAN – RÉGIME DE RETRAITE
DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS

Email: inquiry@otpp.com

Phone: 416.226.2700 or 1.800.668.0105 (toll free)

FAX: 416.730.7807 or 1.800.949.8208 (toll free)

Call service hours: 9 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday



A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Scott Perkin

Dear colleagues,

As a new school year begins, we celebrate Ontario’s educators as they welcome their students back to the classroom for a productive year of learning.

At OTF, we continue to defend publicly funded education and to speak out about the challenges facing the education system that the Government continues to ignore, including inadequate funding for schools and significant curriculum changes without any meaningful consultation.

When will this Government and the Minister of Education begin listening to Ontario’s educators, those dedicated professionals who are determined to protect the learning environment and also the supports necessary for student success? In this edition of *Interaction* we recognize some of those same dedicated professionals—this year’s OTIP Teaching Award recipients!

At OTF’s Annual Meeting in late August, OTF Governors ratified the appointments of two new Directors—Martine Irman and Jaqui Parchment—to the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan Board.

At the Annual Meeting, we also bid farewell to Nathan Core as his term as OTF President concluded, and we welcomed Yves Durocher as he begins his term as the 80th OTF President. We wish Nathan well as he returns to his work representing and supporting occasional teachers in Waterloo, and we look forward to working with Yves on various initiatives over the course of this next year.

This school year will no doubt present its own challenges, but also an opportunity for OTF to celebrate 80 years of representing the voice of teachers and the teaching profession in Ontario!

Yours in education,

Scott Perkin
Secretary-Treasurer



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Action Table on Teacher Supply and Demand

Is there a teacher shortage in Ontario? There certainly seems to be a lot of talk about one these days.

But what do we really know about how issues of supply and demand are playing out across the province? Are the shortages across all school systems—Public/Catholic, English/French? In all locations? For all divisions? Are new graduates from Ontario's teacher education programs finding jobs in teaching? Both during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers across the province witnessed challenges that schools encountered in finding sufficient numbers of daily occasional teachers to fill absences. Are the shortages limited to daily occasional teachers?

What evidence do we have and what additional information do we need to collect?

These are the questions currently under consideration by the Action Table on Teacher Supply and Demand, a deep-dive consultation involving education stakeholders, that was established by OTF in conjunction with the Ministry of Education (EDU) last spring. The Action Table members have committed to identifying solutions that can be implemented during the 2023-2024 school year.

In early summer, key stakeholders worked collaboratively with OTF and EDU to develop and administer a series of surveys and data requests for stakeholders, including:

- a survey for school boards
- a survey of recent graduates by faculties of education
- a data request for all Federations
- a data request for the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)
- a data request for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP)

We are now in the process of examining the data that was collected and working together to make sense of what the numbers tell us. The Steering Committee of the Action Table met in mid-September and early October and will take its findings to the members of the full Action Table, which is scheduled to meet on October 17, 2023. While we may not yet hold all of the answers in our hands, we are hoping that this data collection exercise will continue to be strengthened and will position us collectively to make sound decisions regarding teacher supply and demand over the coming year and in the future.



Our Ici on parle français PD grant program is back this year!

Once again, participants can partner with other FSL teachers in a collaborative learning team of two to four teachers or apply for an individual grant. For those working in a team, the maximum grant is \$500 per team member (maximum \$2,000 per team), and for those working individually, the maximum grant is \$250.

You can use your PD grant to participate in a French as a Second Language (FSL) professional learning program/activity of your choosing or to purchase teacher/educator resources to support your own FSL proficiency and teaching.

The deadline for applying for a grant is 5:00 pm on Monday, October 16, 2023. Successful applicants will be notified by early November 2023.

To find out more about the Ici on parle français 2023-24 grant program and to apply, click [here](#).

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Orange Shirt Day

September 25-30th is recognized as the National Week for Truth and Reconciliation. In schools, September 30th specifically is observed as Orange Shirt Day. This time is intended to recognize the atrocities committed against First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities. Honouring this day is call #80 of the [94 Calls to Action](#) of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

Reconciliation is not possible without truth-telling. Residential schools were created in Canada to assimilate and eradicate the language and culture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Students placed in residential schools were not allowed to speak their native languages, practice their spiritual beliefs, or wear their cultural outfits. Hundreds of thousands of students experienced physical, sexual and psychological abuse. To date, there are hundreds of unmarked graves still being discovered at sites where residential schools operated.

Having conversations with young people about residential schools is one of the most important ways to learn from Canada's atrocities and avoid repeating history. It sets the stage for students to understand the longstanding impacts of residential schools and colonization and, further, for all of us to understand our collective obligations to dismantle oppressive structures that target First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

There are many ways to reflect on this day within your classrooms. In no way is this a conclusive list, but merely a starting point:

- Host Orange Shirt Day assemblies;
- Encourage everyone to wear orange;

- Speak about [Phyllis Webstad's story](#);
- Invite Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, and speakers to your classroom;
- Read books and course material by Indigenous authors;
- Host field trips to Indigenous events in your neighbourhood.



Here are compiled resources to introduce conversations in your classrooms and recognize the National Week for Truth and Reconciliation

- <https://nctr.ca/education/coming-soon-truth-and-reconciliation-week-2023/trw2023-gen/>
- <https://www.angeshirtday.org/>
- <https://brainnijas.ca/orange-shirt-day-every-child-matters/>
- <https://creativeclassroomcore.com/activities-for-orange-shirt-day/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/kids/articles/what-is-orange-shirt-day>

Lastly, we also acknowledge the impact this day may have on Indigenous teachers and students alike. Please ensure to take care of yourselves, unplug, spend time with your kin and communities, and any other methods that are helpful to you.

October 2–6 is National Healthy Schools Week!

This week is an opportunity to prioritize, plan, and engage in conversations surrounding healthy schools. To find out more and to access the NSW tool kit, click [here](#). The Canadian Healthy School Alliance engages students, staff, and community members in conversation, experiential learning, and action planning to support the well-being of school communities throughout the entire year.

The work for healthy schools continues with the 2023 Healthy Schools National Forum taking place

Nov 8–9 in Ottawa. This year's theme is *"Changing the System – From Roadblocks to Opportunities."* The Forum will bring together system leaders, educators, and community members and engage them through learning opportunities and discussions to move from thinking to action. You will be able to network with experts, connect with passionate educators, and make your school a healthier community. Register **now!**

NATIONAL
HEALTHY
SCHOOLS
WEEK

OTIP Teaching Awards 2023



Three outstanding recipients honoured



Lara Gudelj



Katherine Dumoulin



Sierra Miller

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) are proud to announce the recipients of the OTIP Teaching Awards for 2023.

The following Ontario teachers are outstanding recipients of this year's awards:

- **Lara Gudelj**, St. Jean de Brebeuf Catholic High School, Woodbridge, Secondary Teacher Category
- **Katherine Dumoulin**, Williamson Road Junior Public School, Toronto, Elementary Teacher Category
- **Sierra Miller**, West Rouge Junior Public School, Scarborough, Beginning Teacher Category

"The OTIP Teaching awards recognize and celebrate teachers who make a difference—teachers who inspire and empower their students. Teachers who foster a love of learning through engaging classrooms and experiential opportunities," says Vic Medland, CEO of OTIP. "This year's award recipients represent these qualities and more."

"OTF is proud to recognize the tireless work these teachers do for their students. As a classroom teacher myself, I appreciate the dedication, perseverance and creativity all of the winners exemplify," stated OTF President Yves Durocher.

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

Create a classroom where discussion thrives!



Heightened social tensions and the erosion of democratic norms around the world have underscored the need for constructive civic discourse. Democracy requires bridges between different perspectives. But too often we approach differences of opinion with judgement, rather than curiosity and empathy.

The [PoliTalks](https://politalks.ca) program, developed by CIVIX, builds constructive discussion skills among students by fostering active listening, perspective-taking, and respectful self-expression.

PoliTalks materials include lesson plans, online interactives and structured activities that build confidence and discussion skills among students. Lesson themes focus on values and perspectives, as well as cognitive biases, including confirmation bias and in-group bias.

Registered teachers will receive free classroom resources that will allow students to play a perspective-taking card game, as well as a copy of the *Constructive Discussions* handbook. *Constructive Discussions* is a flexible and practical guide for building a discussion-friendly classroom that includes an activity for establishing classroom norms and step-by-step instructions for a variety of protocols that you can use to discuss any topic you choose.

CIVIX is also offering free virtual workshops to introduce the program and review the available materials.

To register for access to the *PoliTalks* resources and to learn more about the workshops, please visit politalks.ca.

5 OCTOBER 2023
World Teachers' Day

The teachers we need For the education we want

The global imperative to reverse the teacher shortage

#WorldTeachersDay

On October 5th, we celebrate World Teachers' Day. Here at OTF, we are incredibly proud of the teachers in our publicly funded schools in Ontario.

The sacrifices it takes to lead the next generation's future leaders is a significant mandate. Across the globe, teachers provide pathways to knowledge; collaborate with their colleagues and pour creativity and innovation into the profession, and they support students to achieve their highest potential.

In Ontario, we have a world class education system, and it is thanks to the tireless efforts from you, the teachers. From all of us at the Ontario Teachers' Federation, thank you for all you do.

Happy World Teachers' Day!



THE SUSAN LANGLEY EARTH STEWARD Teaching Award

Sarah Lowes winner of LSF's 2023 Susan Langley Earth Steward Teaching Award

Sarah Lowes, a teacher at Pilgrim Wood Public School in Oakville, was chosen because of her exemplary contribution to sustainability education and her exceptional leadership in inspiring her students and the school community to take on creative, innovative projects to advance sustainability in education.

Sarah is committed to seamlessly integrating sustainability into all of her lessons. She frequently provides opportunities for learning outdoors, using an inquiry and action-oriented approach to teaching to get her students actively involved. Her students were inspired to take action and led school-wide sustainability initiatives such as "Meatless Monday", "Turn It Off Tuesdays", and "Waste-Free Wednesdays. Sarah's impact also ripples throughout the broader community.

Sarah has been instrumental in helping facilitate various workshops, panel discussions, and opportunities for fellow teachers to develop their knowledge, empowering them to also be sustainability leaders. As the elementary teacher representative on the school district's Sustainability Committee, she continues to advocate for board-wide sustainability changes. Sarah inspires students, teachers, and the community to become responsible global citizens!

Sarah Lowes is presented with her award at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the OTF Board of Governors



L to R: Scott Perkin, OTF Secretary-Treasurer; Pamela Schwartzberg, Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) President & CEO; Sarah Lowes, Award Winner; Laurent Joncas; and Elizabeth Davidson