



Interaction

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Yves Durocher

A message from the OTF President

Dear Colleagues,

When I delivered remarks to the Board of Governors of the Ontario Teachers' Federation in mid-April, I took the opportunity to highlight what I believe is a threatening undercurrent in education across our province. As I begin my eighth month as OTF President, with just a short few months to go before I return to my classroom in September, I can confidently state that I've had hundreds of interactions with OTF members, retired teachers, heads of organizations, decision makers and politicians who make it clear that education is headed in the wrong direction in our province.

I'm sure this statement comes as no surprise, since Naomi Klein observed in her work *Shock Doctrine* that an ideologic government (such as the Conservatives in Ontario), will use a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, to push through policies that systematically exacerbate inequality, increase the concentration of capital, and further harm those who are already marginalized. The Ford Government and the Minister of Education appear to be following the "Disaster Capitalism" playbook to weaken publicly funded education. They see education spending as a drain on government funds, ignoring the economic benefits it brings.

Consider, for instance, that the Conference Board of Canada found that for every \$1.00 invested in education there is a return of \$1.30 to society. For proponents of a market economy without social safeguards, every dollar spent is a dollar lost.

This Government's penchant for virtual schooling, online courses, funding for for-profit tutoring, and support for private schools and learning pods, undermines publicly funded education. Despite claims of increased investment, independent sources like Statistics Canada and the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario predict a \$2 billion shortfall in education funding within three years. I think that's rather historic. One has to only look at the provincial budget to realize that we are fighting for the survival of the province's education system.

That's why, as teachers, we can't give up. That's why we need to put pressure on our partners, especially our employer associations, to join us in this fight to defend Ontario's school system. That's why we need to talk to our colleagues, our families and our neighbours so that they understand that the status quo will only exacerbate the economic and social problems we face.

That's what Ontario's teachers have always done, and it's what we plan to do today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

Yours in education.

Yves Durocher

Bill 124: Overview and what's next



A message from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

Bill 124 capped salary increases for public sector workers to one per cent a year for three years. Following various orders and agreements relating to Bill 124, retroactive salary increases are being paid and reported for impacted members.

Working through Bill 124 changes is a top priority. Rest assured, we'll be reviewing our records and where applicable, will adjust pensions retroactively, with interest. However, this will take some time due to the complexity of the process and volume of adjustments. We ask for your patience as we work through them all.

Understanding the process

The process to complete all changes related to Bill 124 is a complicated one with a lot of moving parts.

We rely on employers to provide us with accurate and timely data. However, the accuracy and timing of this data will vary from employer to employer. This means that some of you will see the adjustments sooner or later than others.

Retroactive payment process

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Step 1 | Ministry of Education provides funding to employers |
| Step 2 | Employers make payments to employees impacted by Bill 124 |
| Step 3 | Employers provide required information to us |
| Step 4 | We process retroactive salary increases and pension recalculations where applicable |

By the numbers

The administration of Bill 124 retroactive salary increases for eligible members involves significant effort, representing more than five times the volume of updates we typically process each year. We anticipate changes and challenges along the way while we review and process files for:

- **160,000** working members with benefit service within the retroactive period
- **22,000** pensions put into pay within the retroactive period

Timeline: What to expect next

We're aiming to complete all the work by the summer of 2025, with steady progress starting in the fall of 2024. This will take some time because the high volume of adjustments, on top of our regular service commitments, is unprecedented.

Still working?

There's nothing you need to do, we'll update your service record once we receive and process the required information.

Planning to retire or already applied?

Whether you're still thinking about retiring this year, or recently submitted your application, we've got you covered! If applicable, we'll adjust your pension once we receive and process the required information.

Already retired?

We'll be informing you directly if your pension changes due to Bill 124 retroactive salary increases.

If you're an eligible pensioner and your address or other important details have changed since you retired, ensure your former employer has your current address and other important details. They may need to reach you with additional information.

Check FAQs for additional information and updates.

Keep an eye on our Bill 124 FAQs online in both the [working members](#) and [retired members](#) section.

Our contact centre won't have any further information to share with you at this time, so there's no need to call.

Stay tuned!

With permission from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan - April 16, 2024 <https://www.otpp.com/en-ca/members/news/plan-updates-and-news/bill-124-overview-and-whats-next/>



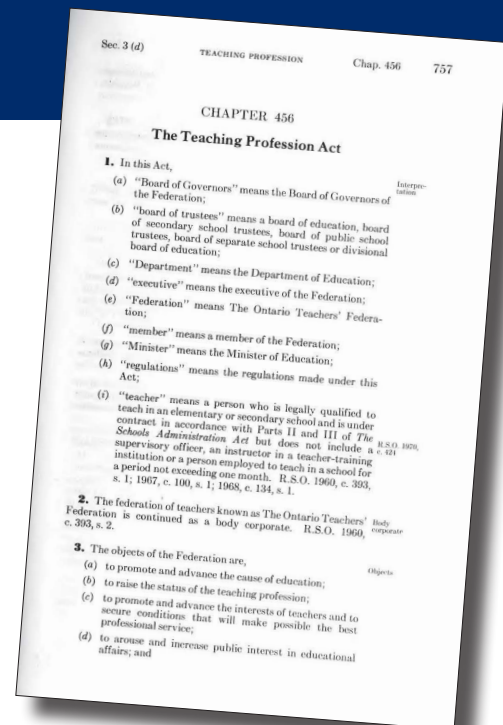
A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Ian S. Pettigrew

**PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS
C'EST PAREIL**

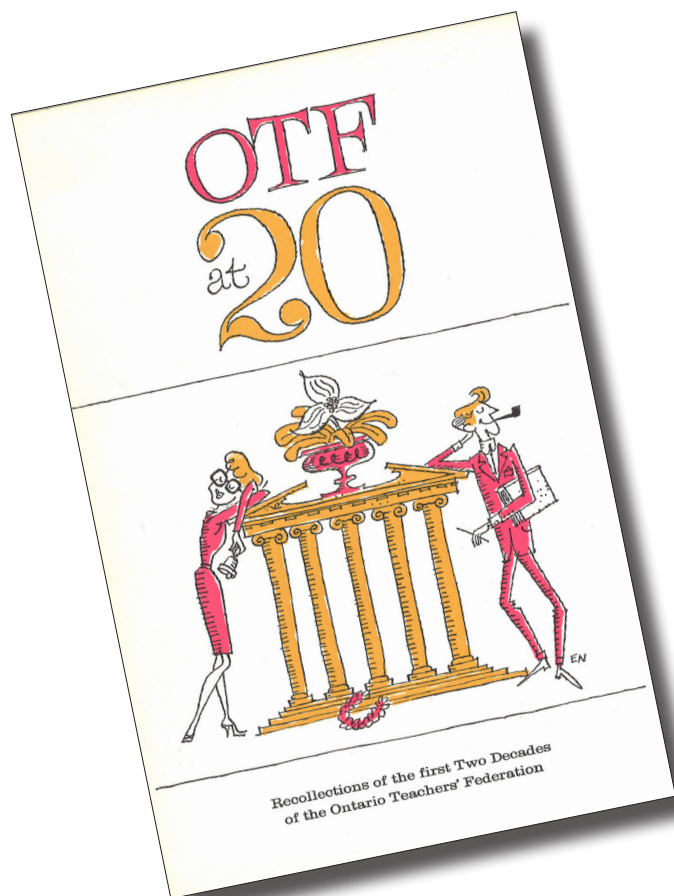
Dear colleagues,

At 10:21 pm on April 5, 1944, the *Teaching Profession Act* passed third reading in the Provincial Legislature, officially creating the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the umbrella organization for five teachers' Federations: The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, the Ontario Public School Men Teachers' Federation (these two would be amalgamated into the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario in 1998), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and L'Association des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens (which would later be renamed L'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens). The first OTF Board of Governors' meeting occurred on June 8, 9 and 10, 1944. Since 1998, it has operated as the umbrella organization for its four Affiliates.



In the lead-up to our 80th year, I asked our Records Department for several anniversary publications (the covers of which are featured in this spring edition of *Interaction*). I randomly opened the 40th anniversary publication—the *Ontario Teachers' Federation at Forty*—to a spread and my eye fell upon two headings: “*Inflation*” and “*Teacher Shortage*” and that was the catalyst and inspiration for the title I chose for this piece. These are just two issues with which we are currently grappling yet again.

"Teachers and other sincere friends of education realize that something tangible and practical must be done to rescue the vocation of teaching in Ontario. All is not well, and it has not been well for many years. There is too much instability and insecurity in this particular vocation...." OTF members could easily be forgiven if they believed that these sentences were ripped from the body of a recent editorial. It is in fact, drawn from a 1943 pamphlet of three teacher Federations called "We Seek a Professional Act" that appeared in the 1964 commemorative publication *OTF at 20: Recollections of the first Two Decades of the Ontario Teachers' Federation*.



Over the course of its history, OTF members have experienced both tumultuous times and halcyon moments. Cycles or periods—when they seemingly repeat—do not do so in precisely the same manner, but they often rhyme. There are cycles in education, just as there are in politics. In fact, the cycles in education frequently intersect with political pendulum swings. Indeed, I wonder whether a more accurate title for this column might actually read "Plus ça change, plus c'est presque pareil".

Another anniversary (a 50th) is that of this very newsletter—*Interaction*. It was first published in 1974, replacing the *OTF Reporter*, the first regular publication for OTF members produced in 1965. Since 1974—first in print and later in its current digital format—*Interaction* has been published three to four times annually. Over the course of the next three to four editions of *Interaction*, members and other readers of *Interaction* will be treated to 80th anniversary "digital inserts" featuring material—text and photographic or visual—drawn from OTF's extensive archives. These artefacts will provide an opportunity for all of us to reflect on what elements have remained relatively static and stable and which have undergone seismic change. I hope you, like me, are curious to see what we end up surfacing in our "dives into the archives".

I'd like to end by re-surfacing the words of Ruth Clarke, OTF President (1955-1956) who wrote the following in a 20th anniversary column entitled *What the future holds*: "To promote and advance the cause of education and the interests of teachers with the best conditions for professional service has been one of the major aims of our Federation."

Indeed, that aim remains one of OTF's six core objects established under the *Teaching Profession Act* (1944). We look forward both to sharing highlights of our journey of the past 80 years and standing with you as we navigate in Federation whatever the future holds and brings.





Projecting the profession!

In April, OTF celebrated the start of its 80th year.

To celebrate this milestone year, we want to invite you, our members, to reflect on the incredible journey that generations of Ontario teachers have shared together.

THE ASK/INVITATION

OTF's motto is *Your Voice, Your Strength*, so we're inviting you to share YOUR VOICE by recording a short (up to 30 seconds) celebratory video.

Below you'll find important information about shooting and sharing your video.

SHOOTING YOUR VIDEO

You don't need a production firm but do watch this [short how-to film](#). It provides important tips to help you create the best-looking/sounding video.

You could film yourself solo or alongside a colleague or colleagues. You can keep it simple with a thumbs up or hold up a sign reading Happy 80th Anniversary or use one of the prompts below for inspiration.

- What moment or person inspired you to become a teacher?
- What's the most memorable moment from your teaching career so far?
- Why does public education matter?
- What keeps you going and motivates you year after year?
- What service or resource, provided by the OTF, has been useful to you?

- What inspirational or hopeful message do you have for your Ontario colleagues?

So, get the creative juices flowing and remember... have fun and make it playful.

SHARING YOUR VIDEO

Step 1: Give the video this file name [Your last name]OTF80video

Step 2: Upload your video to our designated Dropbox at the following link: <https://bit.ly/OTF80VIDEOS>

Step 3: After uploading your video, please fill out this short, five-question [Google Form](#) to help us keep track of video submissions.

Submission deadline

Friday, June 28, 2024

RECOGNIZING YOUR VOICE

If you send us a short video, we'll enter your name in a draw to win a prize.

Thank you for helping us celebrate OTF's 80th year. We look forward to showcasing your video messages during our celebrations throughout the coming year!

Congratulations 2024 OTF 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 nine outstanding OTF Fellows who will be honoured and presented with their Fellowship at the 2024 President's Banquet, to be held on August 19, 2024 in Markham.



Gundi Barbour



Nathalie Drolet



Lavinia George



Hayssam Hulays



Gabrielle Lemieux



Colin Matthew



Malisa Mezenberg



Andrew Robertson



Pauline Scott



National Indigenous History Month

Every day, Ontario teachers live, learn and work on the ancestral lands and traditional territories of First Nations people. National Indigenous History Month provides us with an occasion to both celebrate the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous people and communities and to acknowledge the past and current injustices perpetrated on them.

We honour the diverse cultures, languages, and traditions of Indigenous Peoples—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—recognizing their enduring contributions to the fabric of our lives and this land.

We recognize the Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, leaders, and non-Indigenous allies who have tirelessly advocated for the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Their teachings and actions continue to constructively disrupt our understanding of a shared history, enrich our understanding of culture, and underscore the intricate connections between humans and the natural world.

We acknowledge the painful legacy of colonization, dispossession, and systemic injustices endured by Indigenous Peoples in Ontario and Canada and recognize our duty to confront this legacy with humility, compassion, and a commitment to truth and reconciliation.

As we celebrate National Indigenous History Month, let us recommit ourselves to the ongoing and important work of decolonization, healing, and building just, meaningful partnerships and relationships underpinned by truth, respect and understanding. This month should serve as a catalyst for renewed dialogue, action, and solidarity in support of Indigenous People's rights, sovereignty, and self-determination.

May we walk together on a shared path towards truth, reconciliation and justice!



OTF recognizes June as Pride Month...

As a Federation, we also acknowledge our collective responsibility to address and combat homophobia and transphobia.

While this month is a celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, it also represents a reminder of a quest that is far from being fulfilled. Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, along with their advocates and allies, continue to fight for queer and trans-affirming spaces and 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and freedoms.

Acknowledging Pride Month means recognizing the ongoing struggle for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, both globally and locally. It's about standing in solidarity with those who continue to face discrimination, violence, and marginalization simply because of who they are or whom they love.

Let us honour the courage of those who have fought and continue to fight tirelessly for equity and justice, often in the face of adversity. Let us also use this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to creating a society where every individual can live authentically and with dignity, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Our collective efforts can model a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Happy Pride Month!