



Michael (Mike) Foulds

A message from the OTF President

Colleagues,

I am writing this on January 29, 2025, one day after the issuing of the writ for a provincial election. This *Interaction* newsletter you are reading is due to be released February 26, 2025, one day before Ontarians go to the polls. I have no doubt that between those two dates a great deal will happen to inform your voting intentions.

As your President, I would simply like to encourage you to exercise your right to vote, to raise educational issues you see in your workplaces every day with your community members and urge them to vote. American political journalist Norman Cousins once penned the following:

"What is the eternal and ultimate problem of a free society?"

It is the problem of the individual who thinks that one person cannot possibly make a difference in the destiny of that society.

It is the problem of the individual who doesn't really understand the nature of a free society or what is required to make it work.

It is the problem of the individual who has no comprehension of the multiplying power of single but sovereign units.

It is the problem of the individual who regards the act of pulling a single lever in a voting booth in numerical terms rather than historical terms.

It is the problem of the individual who has no real awareness of the millions of bricks that had to be put into place, one by one, over many centuries, in order for them to dwell in the penthouse of freedom. Nor do they see any special obligation to those who continue building the structure or to those who will have to live in it after them, for better or worse.

It is the problem of the individual who recognizes no direct relationship between them self and the decisions made by government in their name. Therefore, they feel no special obligation to dig hard for the information necessary to an understanding of the issues leading to those decisions.

In short, freedom's main problem is the problem of the individual who takes them self lightly historically."

On February 27, 2025, vote like the publicly funded education system in Ontario depends on your vote.

Yours in education,

Mike

Michael (Mike) Foulds
President

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

Pension Workshops for Members

Winter/Spring 2025



Join the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan for a virtual presentation to learn about one of your most important financial assets: your pension. [Access more information.](#)

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

PREPARING TO RETIRE

(for members within five years of retirement)

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.

Webinar: *Preparing to Retire* (1.5 hrs)

February

[Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

March

[Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 5 p.m.](#)

[Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

[Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

[Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 5 p.m.](#)

[Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

April

[Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

Séances en français : [Mardi le 8 avril 2025 à 18 h](#)

You will receive an email from OTPP confirming your registration. You will also receive a reminder email from OTPP one day before the webinar begins.

BEING A MEMBER

(for early to mid-career members)

Webinar: *Being A Member—Your Life as a Teacher* (1.5 hrs)

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.

April

[Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

[Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

[Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 6 p.m.](#)

You will receive an email from OTPP confirming your registration. You will also receive a reminder email from OTPP one day before the webinar begins.



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 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday



A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Ian S. Pettigrew

North stars and constellations

Recently, I stumbled upon a document in our archives: A September 1999 OTF response to the Ontario College of Teachers' document entitled *Consultation: Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* (April 1999). I was struck by the affirming statement in the OTF response: "Responsible life-long learning is continuous learning that is initiated by teachers, directed by teachers and reviewed on an ongoing basis by teachers [*italics mine*]." As I reflected on this statement, I wanted to believe that this was still true and yet I lament that it is not a blanket statement I can apply to professional development (PD) in which many of our members are engaged or to which they are subjected across the province today. Instead, PD is still "organized as top-down or vertical capacity building" (Katz & Dack, 2013, p. 26).

That's a shame since the stakes are high for both teachers and their students. Effective professional learning for teachers matters. A teacher's practice is fluid and dynamic, often requiring in-the-moment, micro-adjustments as they respond to the spectrum of students' identities, interests, strengths and needs in their classrooms. In his meta study of high-yield strategies, Bob Marzano found that effective teacher-level factors had one of the most significant effect size increases on student achievement (2003, pp. 72–73). A collateral benefit to fostering improved student and teacher learning is that when teachers feel genuinely supported, they are more likely to feel confident, competent and efficacious and to remain in the

profession, reducing turnover rates and maintaining stability within the publicly funded education system. Professional learning that is voluntary, self-directed, job-embedded and addresses real "problems of practice" (Katz & Dack, 2013, p. 24), offers teachers the opportunity to (riffing on Stephen Covey's seventh habit) "sharpen the saw."

Teachers need time and space (in-person, not just online) to network with their colleagues on a regular basis to share experience-based and research-informed developments in areas such as pedagogy and cognitive science, to name just two. Effectively, just like our students, teachers inhabit a zone of near-constant learning. So, when teachers encounter other colleagues' beliefs and experiences, they are able to reflect on their own assumptions and beliefs about learning and interrogate their pedagogical practices. Sometimes that process is affirming and other times it is disruptive, leading to changes in mental models or teaching practice. Donohoo & Velasco underscore the following: "Change is sustainable when it is initiated by teachers—within a supportive professional learning community. Shift in ownership occurs as an internal effort and not an imposed, external reform" (2016, p. 19).

It stands to reason that investing in teacher-focused professional learning opportunities is a value-added proposition, not just for new teachers but for teachers at all

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A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

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stages of their career. Put another way, if the Ministry and school boards truly believe that student learning is the north star, then a sustained commitment to creating the conditions for effective teacher professional learning must be part of the constellation of opportunities available to OTF members.

Ian

Ian S. Pettigrew
Secretary-Treasurer



1989 Pension Rally, Copps Coliseum, Hamilton, Ontario (OTF archives)

Faculty of Education Tablet Draw

Every year, OTF holds Federation Day events for Teacher Candidates (TCs) at each of the publicly funded Faculties of Education across the province.

As an important first encounter with the organizations that represent the voice of teachers, Federation Days help inform TCs about OTF's six legislated Objects:

- To promote and advance the cause of education
- To raise the status of the teaching profession
- To promote and advance the interests of teachers and to secure conditions that will make possible the best professional service
- To arouse and increase public interest in educational affairs
- To co-operate with other teachers' organizations throughout the world having the same like objects
- To represent all members of the pension plan established under the *Teachers' Pension Act* in the administration of the plan and the management of the pension fund.



In addition, TCs learn about their rights and responsibilities as associate members of OTF and about the OTF services and resources available to them as future members of the profession.

This year, OTF held a draw for TCs in which they were eligible to win a Samsung Galaxy Tab A9+ Android Tablet.

The three draw winners are:

- **Candice Benson**—Lakehead University (Orillia campus)
- **Riley Krieger**—Queen's University
- **Razma Nejatie**—York University

Congratulations to the three draw winners and good luck to ALL TCs with your continued studies!

pension FACT



Types of pensions

Your pension, under a defined benefit plan, is determined by a formula that considers how long you work and how much you earn, not the ups and downs of the market.

Do your research before you retire and read about the **pension types**.

**Contact the OTPP
Member Help Centre
for more information.**



Education Minister Marion Boyd and OTF President Guill Archambault signing the agreement for a pension partnership on August 20, 1991 concluding five years of negotiations. (OTF archives)



Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching

The Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching was created in 1996 to recognize innovative and impactful approaches to teaching Canadian history. The award places a spotlight on teachers that foster a deep understanding of the past and actively engage students in historical work through meaningful projects and initiatives.

Teachers working directly with students in a K–12 classroom setting are invited to submit their best history project for consideration of the award. Projects can take place as part of any subject, as long as there is a significant component of Canadian history.

Find out more about the [application process](#).



1982 Rally on Special Education (OTF archives)



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION
CANADA



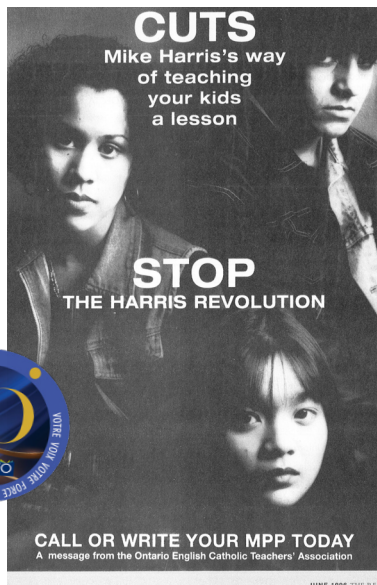
Inspiring Global Citizens

This four-part toolkit equips you with everything you need to teach about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global citizenship.

It includes fun and interactive lesson plans, activities, extensions, videos, real-world examples, discussion guides, and printable handouts that encourage learners to think critically and creatively, linking the personal, local, and global.

The toolkit supports curriculum expectations for Grade 9 to 12 learners across Canada, as well as those enrolled in an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. We hope it inspires both you and your students to take action and help create a more peaceful, prosperous, and equitable world for all.

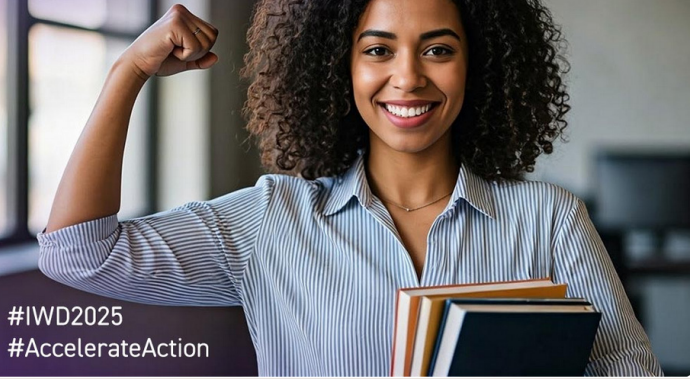
[Access the Modules' toolkits.](#)



(OTF archives)



Let's ACCELERATE ACTION
for women's equality



International Women's Day—March 8

International Women's Day is a global event dedicated to honouring the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. This day also serves as a call to action for accelerating gender equality.

This year's theme is *#AccelerateAction*. *Accelerate Action* is a worldwide call to acknowledge strategies, resources, and activity that positively impact women's advancement, and to support and elevate their implementation.

On International Women's Day, OTF acknowledges and celebrates the incredible women teachers who empower and educate, helping to shape the futures of Ontario students. Their dedication, passion, and hard work make a world of difference in the lives of students. We thank them for being role models and guiding lights.

Significant barriers to gender equality remain, yet with the right action and support, positive progress can be made for women everywhere. Together, we can all support greater momentum and urgency to address systemic barriers to women's equality and advancement.

2025



**Nominations are OPEN
and will close on March 31, 2025**

For more information or to download
a nomination form, visit bit.ly/3OecGSt

2025

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TEACHING
AW★RDS

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**Nominations ARE OPEN and
will close on March 31, 2025.**

Visit teachingawards.ca



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The 2025 Susan Langley Earth Steward Teaching Award

Do you know an Ontario teacher who inspires passion
for a more sustainable future?

The Susan Langley Earth Steward Teaching Award, in
memory of Susan Langley, former chair of Learning for a
Sustainable Future, recognizes exemplary teaching
contributions to sustainability education in Canada.



\$1,000 to the
winning
teacher

Nomination
Deadline:
May 23rd

To see the selection criteria and to
submit educator nominations visit:
LSF-LST.ca/earth-steward

For more info, contact jenn@LSF-LST.ca

LSF
Learning for a
Sustainable Future



Words Matter*: Tools for addressing harmful language in schools —by Harmony Movement

*developed by Harmony Movement

Words have immense power—they shape the environment and experiences of every student and staff member in our school communities.

The [Words Matter Campaign](#) is an opportunity for your school to lead transformational change by equipping your entire school community with tools to effectively address harmful and discriminatory language.

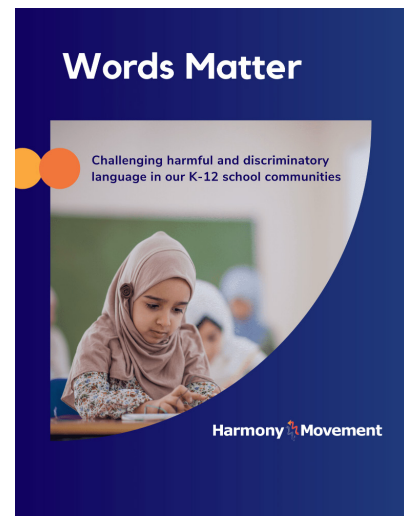
A recent survey of educators participating in the [Words Matter Campaign](#) highlights both the urgency of this issue and the gaps in current support. While 90 per cent of respondents believe addressing harmful language is “extremely important,” only 40 per cent feel their schools provide adequate resources.

Over the last three years, every school community we’ve worked with at [Harmony Movement](#) has identified harmful and discriminatory language as a critical issue. Recognizing the impact of these words and their ripple effects on school culture, our Inclusive Schools Action Network embarked on a journey to understand what schools need to tackle this challenge effectively.

A holistic approach to change

Creating inclusive school environments requires more than addressing harmful language when it arises. This work involves all members of the school community—educators, students, and parents and caregivers—working together to effectively respond to discriminatory language and hate speech.

By engaging educators with practical tools and empowering them to confidently respond to discriminatory language, we can foster a school culture that values respect and unity.



Like any skill, this requires training, practice, and ongoing support. Together, we can address the harm caused by discriminatory language and rebuild a sense of belonging and safety within our classrooms.

The stakes and the solution

We know that many educators struggle to say what they think is the right thing in the moment, and fear being misunderstood. But, we also know that not responding to harmful language also leaves our students feeling vulnerable and unsupported and undermines a sense of belonging.

We have the power to set the tone for our school community as a collective, intervening every time that type of language is used. When we build an understanding of each other’s experiences and develop a greater sense of empathy, we can create safer, more inclusive schools where everyone thrives.

Learn more about the [Words Matter Campaign](#), a whole school-community approach to addressing harmful language.

Additional [educator equity and inclusion training](#) can also be booked.

Harmony  Movement



Bank of Canada Museum's Award for Excellence in Teaching Economics

It's that time again: The Bank of Canada Museum is looking for educators who bring economics into the classroom in new and engaging ways. Do you know one?

[Nominate them](#) for the Bank of Canada Museum's Award for Excellence in Teaching Economics—open to teachers from Grades 6 to 12 who have brought economics into their classroom in a creative way.

Each award winner will receive:

- a trophy and gift basket
- a \$1000 cash prize
- a \$1000 prize for their school

A middle-years and high school award will be awarded.

Whether you teach history, economics, business, math or languages, there are many ways to introduce economics concepts.

Topics may include:

- early trade in Canada
- financial markets
- the future of work
- inflation and interest
- the green economy
- or another connected topic.

[Nominate someone today!](#) You may apply until March 2, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Visit the Bank of Canada Museum [website](#) to see who is eligible, learn about past winners, and how to submit a nomination.

Métis Nation of Ontario

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has developed an *Educator's Kit* for K–12 teachers and educators. The contents include a variety of unilingual, bilingual and trilingual material that provide Métis educational perspectives and voices.

The MNO's goal is to provide a series of resources that support teachers, educators and learners as they explore and learn about the Métis Nations and their people, history, culture and language.

The resources are a simple-to-use tool for teachers, educators and students. The resources allow students, teachers and educators to use the Métis experience to connect with a broad array of academic topics. Some are subject-specific, such as the Grade 10 Civics & Citizenship Guide, which examines Métis governance structures. Other contents of the *Education Kit*, such as a sash, are key pieces of Métis material culture that can be used in various ways within an educational setting.

OTF is giving away **two** of these educator kits: one elementary-focused and one secondary-focused. OTF members are welcome to enter a draw to win one of the kits.

Good luck and click [here](#) to enter the draw.

**Entries will be accepted until 5:00 p.m.
March 31, 2025.**

