

INTERACTION

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A MESSAGE FROM THE OTF PRESIDENT



Bill 101: *Putting Student Achievement (last) Act*

Colleagues,

The Ford government's *Putting Student Achievement First Act*, 2026 carries a reassuring name—but a closer look at what Bill 101 actually does reveals a bill that serves neither students nor the communities that depend on public education.

At its core, the legislation replaces the Director of Education with a 'Chief Executive Officer' (CEO) who must hold business qualifications—and who, crucially, trustees can hire but not fire. This structural shift places a corporate governance structure at the heart of an institution whose purpose is child development, not profit generation. When a CEO answers only to the Minister rather than to locally elected trustees, accountability flows upward to Queen's Park—not outward to parents and communities.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has documented troubling decisions already being made under supervised boards without public consultation—including lifting class size caps, eliminating programs, and reducing supports for students in high-needs communities and those

with special education needs. These are precisely the students Bill 101 claims to champion.

Decisions in supervised boards are being made by highly paid individuals—earning as much as \$350,000 annually—accountable only to the Minister of Education, not to local communities. That is not increased accountability. It is increased authority, disguised as accountability, transferred to those less accessible to the public.

Meanwhile, school boards have accumulated an inflation adjusted funding loss of approximately \$1,500 per student since 2018, and the 2026 provincial budget includes a further 3.5 per cent cut to education. Bill 101 does nothing to address this structural underfunding—the actual driver of school board instability.

Ontario students deserve legislation that invests in classrooms, supports vulnerable learners, and strengthens local democratic oversight. Bill 101 does the opposite.

In solidarity,

Chris

Chris Cowley, President





A MESSAGE FROM THE OTF SECRETARY-TREASURER

Systems Thinking: Constellations vs. A Sky Full of Stars

Recently, I got to thinking about the title of Coldplay's song "A Sky Full of Stars" and its relation to how Ontario ended up with the Math Proficiency Test (MPT) as a certification requirement for prospective teachers.

Some members will be aware of our May 4, 2026 media release—**A formula for systemic failure: Ontario's Math Proficiency Test marked with serious flaws** in which we unveiled the previously unreleased results from four administration windows of the MPT. In that same release, we indicated that a Freedom of Information request was necessary to get those results from EQAO. Once we saw the disaggregated results, it affirmed the concerns we raised in our 2019 position paper—**A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test**—when the Ford government first proposed the MPT as a certification requirement for all prospective teachers in Ontario.

Neither the government's initial decision to introduce an end-of-the-line testing regimen (the MPT) nor its subsequent decision to hide the results would have been necessary had the Ministry engaged in systems thinking.

Predicated on the assumption that the Ministry had actually engaged in authentic and sustained collaboration and consultation with OTF and its Affiliates and the Faculties of Education, systems thinking would have:

- created the conditions for policy-to-practice coherence, not chaos and collisions
- uncovered hidden assumptions and biases

- identified systemic barriers to, and disparities of access among, equity-deserving teacher candidates
- surfaced root causes of uneven math knowledge and pedagogy and encouraged imaginative and innovative strategies to address them
- led to the adoption of high-impact interventions and sustainable solutions, not perceived and ineffective quick fixes
- led to consideration of appropriate and targeted resource allocation
- anticipated and helped avoid unintended consequences.

When political bodies and organizations overlook systems thinking in education policy, they create the conditions for a widening, not shrinking of the policy-to-practice divide. In contrast, applying systems thinking to education policy development and implementation leads to more holistic, coordinated, and effective decisions.

Put another way, adopting a systems thinking approach to teacher education (and the system writ large) would have allowed political leaders to consider the publicly funded education system not as a sky full of stars, but a constellation.

In solidarity,

Ian S. Pettigrew, *Secretary-Treasurer*



pension FACT



WHAT IS A DISCOUNT RATE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Economists tell us that the value of \$100 today will be less in one, two, three ... years' time. So, if you expect to need the equivalent of \$100 in five years' time to meet your expenses, you would use a discount rate to estimate how much money you need to set aside today to make up the difference in the dollar value.

Consider this scenario: you invest a sum of money today anticipating that it will grow over time. If you predict that your investments will grow quickly, you would use a high discount rate since you would need to put aside less money today to meet tomorrow's financial obligations. However, if you envision your investments growing more slowly, you would use a lower discount rate since you need to save more money today.

For example, if you plan to have \$1,000,000 in 25 years:

- Using a 5 per cent discount rate, you need about \$295,300 today
- Using a 2 per cent discount rate, you need about \$609,530 today

So, lower rates = higher amounts held now, and higher rates = lower amounts held now, with investment returns growing the funds today to match the amount needed in the future.

In an actuarial funding valuation, pension plans use discount rates to estimate whether money held and received today, alongside future expected contributions to the plan, is sufficient



to meet future benefit payouts. Funding discount rates are tied to long-term investment return expectations and may include "margins" to account for risks such as those that the pension plan expects to face in order to achieve those

Margins lower the discount rate and thus increase the amount of money required to be held today. Without the use of margins, if investments don't perform as expected, either higher contributions could be required to fund promised benefits, or future entitlements could be decreased. With margins, there is an implicit buffer to help protect against risk which supports the stability of both contributions and benefits.

It is also important to remember that pension funding happens gradually. Contributions are made and invested over time to build the assets required to pay pensions for life. In the end, the discount rate reflects a balance between affordability today and security for the future.



**ONTARIO
TEACHERS'**

PENSION PLAN – RÉGIME DE RETRAITE
DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS

For more information, connect with OTPP by email, phone or fax:

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)

Contact centre hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,
Monday to Friday

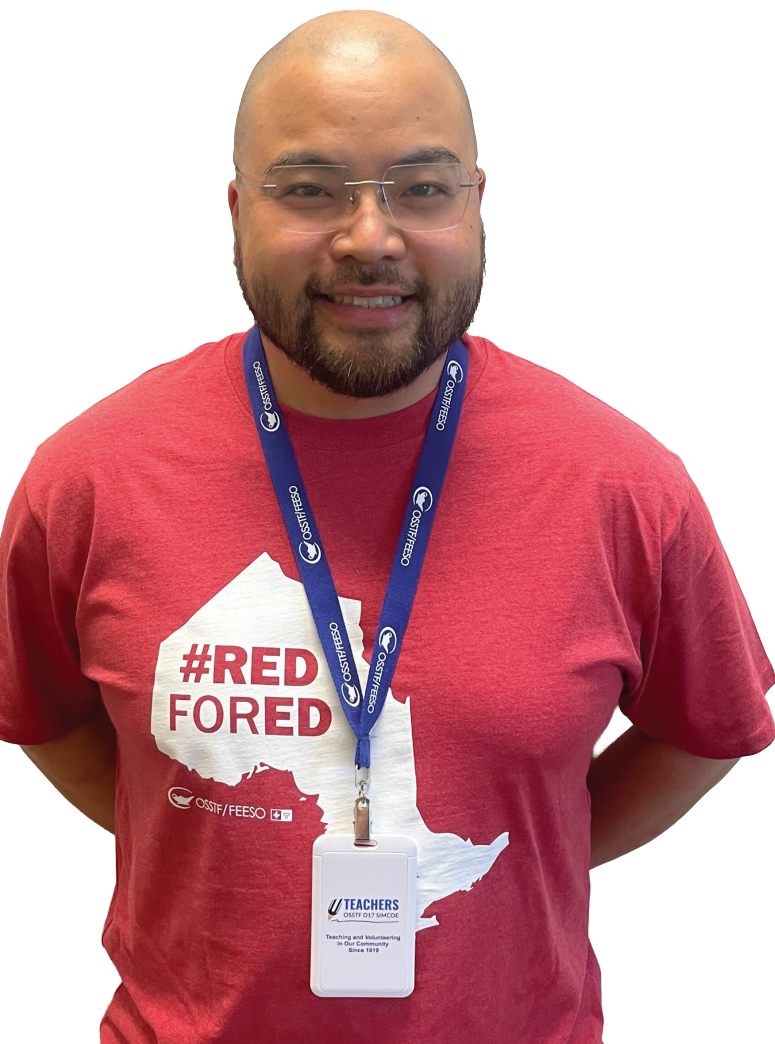
OTF MEMBER PROFILE: STEVE HOANG

OTF Affiliate: Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO)

Grade(s) and subject(s) taught: Grades 9–12, Hospitality & Tourism, Business/Accounting, Junior Math

School: Collingwood Collegiate Institute, Collingwood

School Board: Simcoe County District School Board



Years of teaching: Six years

What motivated or inspired you to choose teaching as a career? I started a second career as a cook/chef. I fell into coaching, mentoring, and teaching young cooks while being a “young” cook myself.

What part(s) of being a teacher give(s) you the most joy or are most rewarding?

The best part is seeing students grow into better versions of themselves.

What part(s) of the job do you find the hardest?

The hardest part of the jobs is that you can’t save them all ... but we will try.

What has surprised you the most about being a teacher?

That you can become so invested in students while accepting you will only be there for a small portion of their lives.

What’s the biggest myth or misconception people have about teaching?

That it is an easy job. Well ... it’s an easy job if you don’t care about students.

What tip could you provide for a new teacher?

Remember why you chose this profession. Stay positive, and keep away from the negativity.

OTF/FEO 2026 PENSION FORUM

OTF's work is guided by its Board of Governors that represent all four Affiliates. The 40-member Board is invited annually to the Pension Forum, which is the principal training opportunity for Governors to gain knowledge about the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, as well as their duties and responsibilities to active and retired teachers of the province.

The OTF Pension Forum occurred on April 16 and delivered a day that was as insightful as it was engaging.

The goal was for attendees to leave with a stronger appreciation for the complexity of managing a pension plan in a rapidly shifting global landscape and delivering exceptional pension services as members' needs evolve. Conversations about geopolitical change and economic uncertainty stood out, alongside a clear message: protecting members' pensions remains a top priority. Participants clearly appreciated the expertise and energy of presenters, who brought depth and clarity to complex topics.

From eco-friendly seeded name tags and expanded bilingual materials, to a streamlined registration platform, the Forum felt more inclusive, accessible, and polished than ever.

Feedback also pointed to what members want next: more interaction, more time for questions and answers, and more real-world examples—like walking through a full investment cycle or unpacking challenging cases. OTF is already responding, and in 2027, small changes to the format will put participants at the centre of the learning experience.

A symbolic start to that shift also came at the beginning of this year's Forum, when OTF presented OTPP with an antique oak and iron student desk which has been in OTF's possession for generations—a reminder and symbol of the mission that unites everyone involved in delivering the pension promise.



L to R: Jo Taylor, OTTP CEO & President; OTTP Board Chair, Steve McGirr; and OTF President Chris Cowley



Jo Taylor, OTTP CEO & President



2026 OTF Pension Forum



Yves Durocher, OTF Director, Pension & Economic Affairs



Globe Furniture Student Desk, circa 1920

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2026 FELLOWS!

In 1964, the Ontario Teachers' Federation celebrated 20 years of Federation. In order to commemorate that milestone, 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 is again proud to congratulate ten outstanding OTF Fellows who will be honoured and presented with their Fellowship at the 2026 President's Banquet, to be held on August 24, 2026 in Markham.



Peter Beens



Denis Bonin



Jeff Denys



Mary Fowler



Stephen Helleiner



René Jansen in de Wal



Bruno Muzzi



Sabrina Sawyer



Michaël Tousignant



Heidi Yetman

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 A11+ Android Tablet. The three draw winners are:

- **Christina Tonnu—University of Windsor**
- **Somer Blight—Brock University**
- **Liam Boyle—Brock University**

Congratulations to the three draw winners and best wishes to all TCs with their continued studies!

QUEEN'S PARK LOBBY BREAKFAST

On March 25, the OTF President and staff attended an education breakfast reception at Queen's Park titled "The Power of Publicly Funded Education: Building a Prosperous Future for Ontario."

This event, hosted by Ontario's major teachers' unions, including OTF's four Affiliates—AEFO, ETFO, OECTA, and OSSTF/FEESO—brought together education leaders and MPPs to discuss the essential role of publicly funded education in strengthening communities, supporting student success, and building a prosperous future for Ontario.



L to R: Chandra Pasma, ONDP MPP; David Mastin, ETFO President; Martha Hradowy, OSSTF/FEESO President; René Jansen in de Wal, OECTA President; Jennifer K. French, ONDP MPP; Chris Cowley, OTF President; and Gabrielle Lemieux, AEFO President



L to R: Lee Fairclough, OLP MPP; Chris Cowley, OTF President; and John Fraser, OLP Interim Leader



The EdCan Network is a national, bilingual charity dedicated to empowering K–12 education professionals with the knowledge, tools, and networks needed to support thriving school communities and healthy learning environments.

Subscribe to the EdCan Network's monthly newsletter to receive timely research informed insights, practical resources, and invitations to events and conversations with colleagues from across Canada.

Ontario PRIDE Celebrations 2026

Event	Date
Barrie Pride	June 20–21
Bay of Quinte Pride	June 1–7
Binbrook Pride	June 14
Brockville Pride	June 1–6
Cambridge	June 13
Chatham-Kent Pride	August 6–16
Collingwood Pride	July 10–12
Dryden Pride	June 27
Pride Durham	June 6
Grand River Pride	June 13
Grey Bruce Pride	June 13
Guelph Summer Pride	June 5–14
Pride Halton	July 19
Pride Hamilton	August 21
Huron County Pride	June 6
Kenora Pride	June 18–26
Kincardine Pride	June 20
Kingston Pride	June 6–14
Lanark County Wide Pride	June 6
London Pride	July 10–19
Pride Manitoulin	August 6–9
Muskoka Pride	July 18–26
Pride Niagara	May 30–June 7
North Durham Pride	
– Scugog Pride	June 20
– Brock Pride	July 11
– Uxbridge Pride	August 15

North York 2-Spirit Pow Wow	June 6
Ottawa Capital Pride	August 22–30
Oxford County Pride	June 13
Perth County Pride	June 7
Peterborough-Nogojwanong Pride	September 18–27
Pride in the Highlands (formerly Minden Pride)	August 17–23
Sarnia-Lambton PrideFest	July 13
Sault Pride	July 19
Strathroy Pride in the Park	June 13
Sudbury Pride	July 12–19
Timmins Pride	May 29–June 7
Thunder Pride	June 6
Toronto Pride	June 25–28
Toronto Trans March	June 27
Toronto Dyke March	June 27
Tri-Pride: Kitchener/Cambridge/Waterloo	June 6
Windsor-Essex Pride	August 9
York Pride	June 13
York Trans March (Newmarket)	June 13

Happy Pride!

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION NETWORK GATHERING

In 2016, the year following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation convened a roundtable of education stakeholders from across Canada. This group of stakeholders, which eventually came to be known as the National Indigenous Education and Reconciliation Network, has continued to host a three-day Gathering (The National Indigenous Education and Reconciliation Network gathering or NIERNG) each year in the late spring. The Gathering brings together organizations from across Canada that are involved in education for reconciliation.



Staff from OTF and its Affiliates were among the representatives from across Canada who attended NIERNG this spring, which took place in Richmond, BC, May 19–21, 2026. Hosted by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), this year's event brought together approximately 50 participants from diverse organizations, including teacher federations, faculties of education, the National Film Board (NFB), Canadian Geographic and the Rideau Hall Foundation, to name but a few.

As has been the tradition at prior Gatherings, NIERNG once again included a series of rich and informative presentations, Dialogue Circles and cultural celebrations consisting of song, dance and art. As in the past, all who attended felt enriched by the activities, interactions and the information that were so generously shared.



Shane John and Indigenous staff from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) perform a drumming song at NIERNG.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

June is National Indigenous History Month in Canada, a time to recognize the rich history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Explore resources such as lesson plans, reports, maps, podcasts, and videos to better understand the experiences, traditions and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Learn more about National Indigenous History Month and how you can participate.



A SPECIAL SUMMER OPPORTUNITY FROM NFB EDUCATION:

Educators are warmly invited to join one in a series of online professional learning sessions this summer exploring **Indigenous Voices**, a new National Film Board of Canada learning resource created in collaboration with Indigenous educators across the country. This resource is in a soft-launch stage, and we are thrilled to invite Ontario educators into this stage.

Led by Indigenous education consultants Bobbie-Jo Leclair and Joël Tetrault, these interactive sessions will engage participants with Indigenous-made films, inquiry-based learning pathways, and conversations around land, justice, governance, healing, and reconciliation. Sessions will be held online on June 18 (English, Indigenous Leads and Educators), June 19 (French, Indigenous Leads and Educators), August 24 (French, all educators welcome), and August 25 (English, all educators welcome). Please register here: **Indigenous Voices: Professional Development Sessions**—Fill out form or feel free to reach out to e.maloney-lebensold@nfb.ca.

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



**Parents of
Black Children**



*L to R: Charline Grant, PoBC CEO;
De'Ann Edwards, PoBC Outreach and Government
Relations Analyst; Moses Velasco, OTF Director,
Curriculum & Assessment; and
Chris Cowley, OTF President
On screen: Ian S. Pettigrew, OTF Secretary-Treasurer*



*CTF hosted a virtual national panel discussion
on April 14, 2026, titled Violence in Schools:
Beyond Quick Fixes. The conversation featured
educators and federation leaders*

CityNews



*L to R: Martha Hadowy, OSSTF/FEESO President; Chris Cowley, OTF
President; and Gabrielle Lemieux, AEFO President comment on the
Government of Ontario's release of Bill 101,
Putting Student Achievement First Act*



*L to R: David Mastin, ETFO President; Martha Hadowy, OSSTF/FEESO
President; Joe Tigani, OSBCU President; Chris Cowley, OTF President
and René Jansen in de Wal, OECTA President*

*L to R: Mark McAllister,
Senior Journalist,
CityNews Toronto, interviews
OTF President Chris Cowley for
comments on the Government
of Ontario's announcement that
Ontario's two-year Initial Teacher
Education Program will be
shortened to a 12-month,
three-semester model*

