

News @ 25



Ottawa-Carleton
District 25
Teachers' Bargaining Unit

Update from the Office: 729-7211

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From Your President:

Kerry Houlahan
khoulahan@osstf25.on.ca

A&E Update

Although many teachers began assigning grades to students based only on their achievement of the curriculum expectations as far back as 1999, we only had to ask around our own schools to realize that everyone was not necessarily on the same page when it came to Assessment and Evaluation. In the Introductory Remarks section of the new Ministry document *Growing Success: assessment, evaluation and reporting: improving student learning*, the Ministry acknowledges the issue of inconsistent and uneven implementation.

The Ministry's goal is to have voluntary implementation of the new Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Policy by February 2009 and a mandatory implementation by all Boards in September 2009.

It is important to know that it is the Ministry who, as with curriculum, establishes policies around assessment, evaluation and reporting. As well, individual school boards develop their own policies and procedures and these must be consistent with Ministry policies. At a district level, Boards may choose to provide more detail and direction about a particular aspect as is the case with the OCDSB and plagiarism. Although the Ministry does not specifically reference plagiarism in its new document, it is our Board's position that its approach to plagiarism is in complete compliance with Ministry direction.

The Board's revised policy and draft procedure on Assessment and Evaluation have been the focus of much discussion over the past year or so within the

Board, within schools and departments, amongst teachers, at Teachers' Council and around the table at meetings of our unit's A&E Workgroup. In some cases, these discussions have taken the form of a philosophical or theoretical debate; more often than not, the discussion has centred around the practical applications of dealing with issues like missed/late/skipped assignments and tests and plagiarized work.

The Board's policy was effective as of its passing by trustees on November 13, 2007; the Board's procedure is in draft form and is slated for implementation in September 2008. It is my understanding that principals were asked to have voluntary implementation of the procedure this year. The feedback I have received seems to indicate that schools are at various stages of implementation. Some schools have already developed school policies that fit the Board's direction; others may be in the process of doing so. Teachers should have opportunities to work with the draft procedure that may include discussions about best practices and strategies, opportunities to provide feedback to their Department Heads, to administration, to their in-school A&E Committee, etc...

Where does OSSTF fit in?

Because the topic of A&E is an important for teachers locally, our unit has established an A&E Workgroup. This workgroup consists of: Cathy Bailey (Gloucester), Rachel Collishaw (Glebe), Jane Conn (Osgoode), Alana Cote (Curriculum Services), Sean Goforth (Brookfield), Kerry Houlahan (TBU President), David Plouffe (A.Y. Jackson), Kevin Spence (Adult).

Locally, teachers have been clear – there are problems with A&E. Some of the issues identified by the workgroup include issues of equity, both for

teachers and students, and workload. In addition, the workgroup continues to discuss inconsistent implementation, the training and professional development needed and the Board's implementation date which is fast approaching. Teachers, Department Heads and members of the workgroup were part of the consultation process around the Board's revised AER (Assessment, Evaluation & Reporting) Teacher Manual. The workgroup was also invited to attend the OCDSB Annual Heads' Day in April; the focus of the day was A&E. As well, we were asked by provincial OSSTF to submit a unit response to the Outstanding Issues section of the new Ministry document and teachers were asked to provide input on these questions. The feedback received both at Teachers' Council and from the A&E Workgroup has been and will continue to be shared with provincial OSSTF and with the Board.

Provincially, the issue of credit integrity of which A&E is an obvious component continues to be a priority. Articles about credit integrity have appeared in *Update* and *Forum*. The workshop *Why Johnny Can't Fail?* was offered at the 2007 Summer Leadership. As well, OSSTF hosted a Credit Integrity Symposium on December 6, 2007 which representatives from the other affiliates also attended. The *CBC National News* featured a well-balanced segment on the symposium. The issues of credit integrity and A&E were discussed at length at a Collective Bargaining Conference workshop recently and these issues continue to be discussed at meetings of Teacher Presidents from across the province.

Ultimately, as teachers, we need to realize that it is the Ministry and the Board who set policy. As professionals, we need to ensure that we are meeting the standards of our profession. As Federation members, we need to support one another as new policies are implemented and share strategies that work and that allow us to cope better.

If you would like to share your input on A&E, please feel free to contact me and/or the members of the workgroup.

From Your Chief Negotiator:

Kerri Ferguson
kferguson@osstf25.on.ca

Provincial Discussion Tables

As you are aware, OSSTF has been participating in discussions provincially with a view to lobbying for appropriate funding in order to then negotiate fair collective agreements. There has been a Teacher/Occasional Teacher discussion table and a Support Staff table. At the same time, other education unions (OECTA, AEFO, ETFO and CUPE) have been participating in their own discussion tables. OECTA, AEFO and CUPE's discussion tables resulted in signed agreements that will be incorporated into local collective agreements.

Because of our By-Laws, OSSTF cannot enter into any form of provincial bargaining without a vote of the membership giving approval. The support staff will be taking a vote across the province by June 5, which, if positive, will allow for OSSTF to return to the provincial table and negotiate. The teacher/occasional teacher group will not be returning to the table at this point and will, instead, try to bargain locally to achieve collective agreements.

The different decisions were made based upon the proposals presented to each table and what has been determined to be the best strategy for negotiating timely and fair agreements.

Local TBU Negotiations

The negotiating team for the Teachers' Bargaining Unit consists of Kerri Ferguson (Chief Negotiator), Chris Roy (Sir Guy Carleton SS), Julia Bilenkis (Earl of March SS), Kim Appel (Adult HS) and Al Hempel (South Carleton SS). We have been negotiating for 4 days to date (May 12, 13, 28 and 29) and have 2 further dates scheduled before the end of the year (June 16 and 17). Discussions to date have been very open and fulsome.

Teachers will be updated as we progress through bargaining and/or in the event of further provincial discussions.