

OCCASIONAL TEACHERS' BARGAINING UNIT

OSSTF DISTRICT 17 SIMCOE

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OTBU NEWSLETTER

June edition - 2025

2024/2025 OTBU EXECUTIVE

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GR: Grievance Officer **CN:** Lead Negotiator **CO:** Communications Officer **CPAC:** Communications & Political Action **HR:** Human Rights **H&S:** Health & Safety Officer **S:** Secretary
SW: Status of Women **TT:** Table Team - Negotiations



Dear Member.

2024/2025 has been a topsy-turvy year most of it due to weather issues. This problem has greatly impacted individuals' pocket books. Pay for an extra period is now in place, more info within. There has been a good amount of LTO work this year, the most I've seen in at least 30 years. Unfilled jobs are still a problem throughout the province because of a lack of qualified teachers. April through the end of June are the busiest months of the year for supply work, so buckle up gang.

PLEASE NOTE: Read this newsletter thoroughly as there is a critical amount of info within, and it is your bank account/career to which these items apply.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING!

This year's **AGM** on May 15 was by comparison a tiny affair. There were 19 of us in total with 4 Provincial reps. Amylee Patterson was again our chairperson and did a splendid job all round. Several items were discussed as always plus, as always, our budget. It was passed with a slight increase in levy amounts. Vacancies were filled for next year's AMPA positions (representatives & a possible alternate) were chosen. After our meeting we motored up to **Fred (Red) Lobster** on Bayfield Street and had our traditional all-inclusive AGM dinner.

ATTENTION – IMPORTANT ITEMS!

Below are a few of the more important items which you should be acutely aware of. Some of these things can actually impact you remaining on the Board's Supply List:

- **WORK COMMITMENT - Article 12.03 (a):** The commitment language is set at having to teach 10 assignments in SEM I and 15 assignments in SEM II (totalling 25). Remember, **half day assignments** count as a full day commitment.

- **LEAVES - Article 12.3 (d/e):** Timelines are strict with regards to traditional leaves. Personal leaves commencing in September must be into the Board by **August 1st** and for Semester II leaves, January 1st is the cut-off date. Medical leaves are obviously different so get them into HR as soon as possible once you know.
 - **SUPERVISION DUTIES (APAs - Additional Professional Assignments):** Remember that assigned APAs do not automatically disappear if you take on the new emergency 4th period (i.e.: a hall duty, caf duty etc.). Most administrators do take them away, but it is not contractual, it's just strictly out of kindness. The **Letter of Agreement** was signed in mid-April to work an extra period.
 - **RETIREES:** Remember that with the extra periods soon to be offered, they will be reported to the Pension Board as an extra .33 of a day worked, in other words, it will impact your re-employment days. If you worked a .33 every time you went in this year the rule would drop you down to only 39 days instead of the 50-day re-employment rule. Also remember the rule limits retirees to **50 days** only and that the **95-day extension** is again not in place this year.
 - **PREP PERIODS:** We've had issues over the past few years regarding the understanding of prep period commitments. Once you have accepted a daily job from EasyConnect, your obligation is to stay in the school during an assigned prep period in case of emergencies within the school cropping up. This is now entrenched in the new CA. If you do need to leave the school grounds, **ask for the office's permission** and provide your cell number.
 - **PAYROLL ISSUES:** we ask you to check with the payroll department first before contacting us. They are extremely helpful in solving all sorts of pay issues and over 95% are solved this way. If you're still not satisfied, that's when you get in touch with us.
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BENEFITS FOR LTOs

As you are no doubt aware, benefits for LTOs are available. Once the Board knows your employment status, they get in touch with OTIP, and they then send out an email to you to initiate the plan. You must be locked into a 90+ day assignment (LTO) to qualify.

CERTIFICATION

(The following article is edited from the former OSSTF Certification Department.
QECO now does certification)

Everyone should have a Certification Rating Statement. This is the document that ensures you receive proper grid pay for LTO teaching assignments. These evaluations are now done by QECO, including all supply teachers. If you do not have a CRS, go to the QECO website or call them to see where you are at with respect to your grid level. Having a CRS in hand means that you will receive correct grid pay from the first day of an LTO position. Apply immediately after graduation from Teacher's College as QECO is beyond backed up.

Your goal should be to get to a Group 4 placement as quickly and as inexpensively as possible. QECO criteria changes occasionally, and you may be higher up the scale than you think. Many members will find that these beneficial rule changes will allow for Group increases without any further course work. If you are not at Group 4 level and have not had a re-evaluation of your existing file, then you could well miss out on the opportunity for commensurate salary that will come with a rating change. If you haven't been re-evaluated in a few years, check out QECO soon. Also, plan to complete the courses needed as soon as possible. It is well worth the effort and expense.

Supplemental: Decades ago, teachers lost almost **\$20 million** dollars in remuneration because they didn't heed deadlines or forgot to update their certification status with OSSTF, and now QECO, & the Board. Any related grid placement documents must be hard copies on file at the Board office (emails are fine). Any AQs (Additional Qualifications) you have taken can obviously influence ratings. Don't forget about Contract language regarding experiential work compensation. The Board has made it easier to apply for this and has cleaned up the language involved, especially for tech teachers. If you have previously worked in a directly related field of employment or have additional education, check articles 16:01 and 16:02 in the Collective Agreement regarding this experiential allowance.

Category change (from the Board): For teachers that qualify for or will qualify for a change in category based on additional qualifications (AQs) or degrees, please ensure the following guidelines are met:

1. Go online to the staff website, under "**Human Resources**" and complete the online [Intent to Change Salary Category](#) form indicating the date that the course was or will be completed. This was to be submitted by November 30, 2024.
2. Submit an updated copy of the QECO Rating Statement immediately upon receipt.
Updated QECO Rating Statements can be emailed to HR.

COMMUNICATION

Our membership is highly transitory in nature and many of you do not have permanent work sites, therefore, communication with our members is the most critical element in all that we do. The best way we have found is by direct email and, to that end, we have approximately 50% of your personal email addresses. Please forward your personal email or get a colleague to forward it to Communications Officer Deanna Nelson or Andrew Tam at d17otbu@gmail.com.

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

District Committees

Jeff Parton Human Rights, CPAC, Health & Safety (alternate), Status of Women
Unfilled Health & Safety Officer (Board level)
Deanna Nelson Status of Women
Marcia D'Antimo Status of Women
Matthew Boyd CPAC

CONTRACT

(Collective Agreement)

With respect to our current contract (CA), is the maintenance of that binding agreement. We do this by ensuring that our employer follows the collective agreement's legal intent and interpretation. If you know of any violation in any area, please let us know. An example would be the assigning of extra duties above the actual teacher's timetable, such as extra APAs or flagrant pay discrepancies. Contact me (letterhead) by email or text so I/we have a record of any problems associated with "contract maintenance."

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

DEI (diversity, equity, & inclusion) is a critical component of current Board policy, so be very aware of it and its impact through various APMs. Our main union workload in the last 4 years has been defending members who have somehow not followed those policies regarding DEI. Usually when something happens regarding a DEI concern you will be, unfortunately, sent home almost immediately, but with pay. At that point we will be representing you through the investigative/discipline process. These are difficult times related to DEI and until things come back to centre, it's going to be tough slog with respect to the tenderness of this issue. A word of note is that Trump has just thrown out DEI initiatives in all Governmental agencies or positions in the US of A. That, however, won't happen here for a very long time, if ever.

EasyConnect/ATE

The web page for EasyConnect is <https://scdsb.simplification.com>. The number of supply teachers currently on SCDSB's EasyConnect's Main List is currently 498. To ensure your **daily** pay is correct we advise people to record their job number, assignment date, location, and the teacher

you are replacing. A multitude of data can be accessed on the **EasyConnect (ATE)** web site such as days taught regarding pension restrictions or Employment Insurance hours.

If your job is cancelled, you will only be notified by email/text. Their system does not do a call out regarding this issue. We are trying to put pressure on ATE but they are in no hurry to fix this problem. Another on on-going systemic issue of course is unfilled jobs. The Board and contract teachers obviously have warranted concerns when jobs are not filled, plus members obviously miss out on job opportunities. If you know you're not available for a particular time period, please sign out of EasyConnect (under the heading: Calendar).

FACEBOOK

Don't forget that we have a dedicated Facebook page for **D17 Occasionals**. To join us, search **d17 otbu ossf** and ask to join. Once connected you'll have access to all our posts and current communications regarding Secondary OTs here in Simcoe County.

HIRING PRACTICES

Seniority hiring of OTs into LTOs (Reg 274) was massively gutted by the Ontario Government four (4) years ago (2021). It had been in place for 9 years and hiring is now very different than before. Board hiring policies are in place now and seniority-based hiring is now barely considered. Other important things are now being considered, such as life experience, community work, equity, diversity, languages spoken, etc. The one thing we can also say is that Boards are to be legally cognizant regarding nepotism & favouritism in new hiring policies and to this point are very focused on getting these criteria correct.

NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations, of course, are all wrapped up as you well know last fall and increases in pay are now done for all staff. Also, a previous arbitration was won by OSSTF regarding the offensive Bill 124 limiting wage increases to 1% per year and that gave us an overall cumulative increase of **12.1%** all retroactive increases.

NEW MEMBERS

New members should pay critical attention to the Power Point presentation given to you by the Board when you were hired. There is important info on it to help you navigate the supply experience. Also, it's imperative you contact **QECO** right away upon graduation to establish your grid/group rating (found under **Certification**) as there is no retroactivity associated with late reports. Without this info on file with the Board you will only be paid at the lowest category of pay for an LTO.

OTIP LOYALTY PROGRAMME

We were approached 7 years ago by the Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan (OTIP) to support them through what's known as a Loyalty Programme. By supporting them through advertising (marketing) this teacher-owned insurance company we would be helping get the word out about their services. They are wholly owned by all the Teacher/Support Staff unions in Ontario. Because we support them, they in turn provide a stipend to us that we use locally for members, such as PD funds, charity donations, or overall assistance. You will see the use of their logos, banners, footers, and ads on our many communiques etc. They are highly competitive so we would, of course, highly recommend checking them out.



The days are getting longer, the weather is finally warming up, and the end of another school year is on the horizon. Yes, spring is here, the season of new beginnings and fresh starts. But spring isn't just a time to clean out your closets – it's a great time to declutter your finances, too!

Here are a few ways to help you spring into action and make your money work harder for you:

- Check in on your financial situation. Life events like marriage, children, or retirement can significantly alter your budget and goals. That's why it's a good idea to review your financial situation to ensure your investment plan remains aligned with your current situation.
- Review your mortgage options. Whether you're looking for your first mortgage or coming up to renewal time, navigate the changing mortgage landscape with expert guidance and exclusive rates. Plus, you may also qualify for a cash bonus of up to \$500*. Speak to an Educators mortgage agent today: <https://bit.ly/427jxDK>.
- File your tax return early. By getting your taxes done early, you'll ensure any benefits remain uninterrupted and receive any refund, faster. Expecting a refund? Here's how to make the most of it: <https://bit.ly/4jfbY8>.

For a full list of financial 'to-dos' this spring, check out this article: <https://bit.ly/41R4b7y> (if the link is not live, try clicking right on your mouse, that should do the trick).

Ready to give your finances a spring clean?

Schedule a financial review with an Educators financial advisor to help you tidy up your finances. With nearly 50 years of experience working with educators like yourself, their professional accreditation will help you keep on track to meet your goals.

Visit <https://bit.ly/427jxDK> or call 1.800.263.9541 to get started today.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PD funds are still available but obviously getting lower as we near years end. If you have something that is PD based, such as an **AQ**, download the form from our web site www.d17otbu.ca, scan it back to us, and we will then take it to our Executive for consideration, approval, and subsequent payment (\$300 max). I believe we have only turned down one request in the last 7 years.

REMUNERATION

We have again just signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) which allows you to agree to teach a 4th period. This is the 4th year of it being in place. The only obligation is that you must have completed the 4 emergency periods prior to this arrangement. It must be an emergency such as an unfilled position/something unexpected. You may be asked to top up your original timetable and teach a 4th period. If the person you're filling in for already has a 4th period on call duty imbedded in their own timetable, then it doesn't apply as it's not an **emergency**. The current rate of pay is \$280 and if you do an extra emergency period (4 out of 4) the daily rate of pay then

jumps to \$360. Below is the Board's Letter of Agreement, which will be sent soon to all OSSTF OTs by Board email.

When there are unfilled absences in a school, we (the Board) have agreed to the following:

1. Where there are occasional teachers (OT) who are not teaching 3 periods in a given day, a principal will first attempt to fill an unfilled teaching period by topping up the timetable with an OT, increasing their pay from 0.5 to 1.0, with mutual agreement of the OT;
2. Where unfilled teaching periods remain, a principal may assign an OT who is teaching 3 periods as an additional teacher of record (ATR);
3. An OT who is assigned work as an ATR shall be responsible for teaching 4 periods including any scheduled and emergency APAs (supervision); and,
4. An OT who is working as an ATR and is teaching 4 periods shall be paid 1.33 FTE of their normal salary.

RETIREES

Please note that OTPP re-employment rule is still set at **50 days** this year and we've heard from reliable sources that it will stay that way for a while (possibly years).

SICK DAYS

A full semester LTO (3 periods during a full Semester assignment) gets 5.5 general use sick days, plus 5 supplemental days awarded for bereavement, serious accident, graduations (3 days), special illnesses (2 days), and jury duty (depending on the case of course). If you go beyond 5.5 days and are still in need of sick days, then one can use the Short-Term Disability portion (**STD**) of sick days under the previous Government's Bill 115 (2012). On this you will receive 90% of your pay for 60 days based on, again, a full Semester. Proof must be given to the Board, however, by a medical professional.

TIPS

In house/school Chromebooks do not have HDMI slots. Solution: buy a \$15 USB adapter that gives you extra USB ports and an HDMI plug in slot. These are great for high tech lesson plans.

WEB SITE

Our OTBU web site is located at www.d17otbu.ca. Please take time to check it out, as there is a lot of pertinent information there and contains such items as: Notices of meetings, our Constitution, the current Collective Agreement (*Contract*), posts, emergency sheets download, blogs, archived newsletters, PD fund forms (*a download*), and links to other Bargaining Units within District 17.

Work

Bus cancellations and school closures have been the most we've seen in the last 50 years (seriously). There have been 23 in the Northern area and 21 elsewhere in the County. The problem with so many of these is that it has impacted you, the supply teacher. Twenty-one days equals \$6,440 of lost income, but the thing is, we can't do anything about the weather. **"Personal absence"** days do not apply to LTOs, they are only allowed under the in the Contract teacher Collective Agreement. We tried to incorporate these in the last round of negotiations, but it didn't fly.

Yours in camaraderie,

Jeff Parton

President D 17 - OTBU
Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Unit

