OCCASIONAL TEACHERS' BARGAINING UNIT

OSSTF DISTRICT 17

SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD Units 6/7 - 51 King Street Barrie 705-726-1722 OTBU Web site: <u>www.d17otbu.ca</u>

WINTER NEWSLETTER

February 2019



2018/2019 EXECUTIVE

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Dear Member;

Well, here we are still battling the cold weather with SEM II solidly started. Casual jobs are marginally down along with LTOs down slightly compared to last year at this time. There are various reasons for this and they are explained under the **"Jobs"** section. **EasyConnect** (**Apply to Education**) is working better compared to its original start-up of Oct 4th, 2017. There are still several issues with it, but both we and the Elementary OTs are trying to get positive changes. **Please** read this newsletter over thoroughly; there are some very important issues concerning you and Occasional teaching, **most importantly**, some items related directly to **remuneration!** (\$)



ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Alt schools start/end times are now for the most part standardized. Their doors open at 8:30 a.m. typically and the day ends at approximately 2:15 p.m. The period of the day that usually starts at 1:05 p.m. is actually your lunch period, so I would highly suggest you take in some snacks to get you through the day. Most Alt locations have kitchens as well. Remember to stay in the building as most students there don't leave at any point and supervision is paramount.

APPLY TO EDUCATION

EasyConnect call-out/email/text system.

You have had countless info emails from us and the Board over the last 18 months regarding EasyConnect, so I won't belabour that here, but I will list some important items:

- Please watch out, as EasyConnect uses the pound (#) key not the Star (*) key for logging in and accepting assignments. The symbol * will initiate an immediate hang-up.
- EasyConnect begins call outs 14 days prior to the date of an assignment no matter when the job is posted. *(over)*
- Requests are known as "First Contact" not "requests" like in SCARRI. You cannot accept an assignment by text yet, although they promise they are working on this.
- When requested for an assignment, it calls you first along with a text/email then parks it in the job **archive** area if you missed the phone call. That email will stay in there until the next call out period (24 hours normally), unless it's the night before an assignment and then you only have the regular 3 minute acceptance window. When a request is made, the call can go out almost immediately; therefore, it could happen while in class.
- One can still not change availability, accept requests, or change your phone number by phone. Again, we are asking for changes to all or at least some of these egregious issues.
- Temporarily changing your call out number has to be done by web based input. Personally I use "call forwarding" to do the change.
- Note: Upon cancelling a job it will ask you for a reason, but don't worry, the Board cannot see these.
- Please watch out for cancelled job alerts in the morning. We have had several of these over the last while were a person heads to a job further away early in the a.m. only to find out the job has been cancelled well outside the parametres of the contract (75 mins). The cancellation has gone out but our member/s didn't get the cancellation notice in time due to no call out or late emails. If you have a smart phone, be cognizant of this while driving to your assignment. It's not common but has occurred with more frequency. We are talking to HR about resolving the situation and getting a cancellation call out early.
- **Re-read** your manual to re-familiarize yourself with the system.

BENEFITS

(OTs)

You have no doubt heard of the Provincial Benefits plan for a majority of other OSSTF groups within the Province. Currently there are no updates at this point regarding availability of those benefits to LTO and casual workers here in Simcoe County. Unfortunately, we will have to wait until negotiations start later on this spring.

jeff parton photography

Aerial, Portrait, Sport, & Wedding Photography jparton@rogers.com 705-428-3537

CERTIFICATION

(The following section is edited from the OSSTF Certification Department and is put in every newsletter because of its importance to your pay)

All teacher members of OSSTF should have a Certification Rating Statement. This is the document that ensures you receive grid pay for LTO teaching assignments. Evaluations are done by the in-house Certification Department of OSSTF. If you do not have a CRS you should go to the provincial website at <u>www.osstf.on.ca</u> and follow the Certification "Quick Links" to the applications page. Having a CRS in hand means that you will receive grid pay from the first day of an LTO.

Your goal should be to get to a Group IV placement as quickly and as inexpensively as possible. The Cert Dept is always changing & many members will find that these beneficial rule changes will allow for Group increases without any further course work. If you are not at the highest Group 4 level and have

not had a re-evaluation in a while you could well be missing out on the opportunity for increased salary. Send in Certification Application Form #2 and request a review of existing credentials if you believe any of the changes apply to you. If you haven't been re-evaluated in a few years, send in the form regardless. The Certification Dept is also happy to advise you of the steps required to progress in Group placement. Plan to complete the needed courses as soon as possible. It is well worth the effort and expense.

Supplemental: Three years ago teachers lost almost **\$20** million dollars in remuneration because they didn't heed deadlines or forgot to update their certification status with Boards. Any related grid placement documents have to be hard copies and on file at the Board office. Any AQs (Additional Qualifications) you have taken can obviously influence this rating. Remember the school year end date of June 30th is the drop dead date for any retroactive LTO remuneration in a given school year. If you are thinking of taking an AQ course and you are unsure whether it is an approved one, fill in the forms @ www.osstf.on.ca. This process will take approximately 2 weeks but you will then know if it's an approved course or not regarding advancement. If you have previously worked in a related field of employ; please check articles 17:01 and 17:02 in the Collective Agreement regarding what's known as experiential allowance.

Certification (Category change) info from the Board: For teachers that qualify for or will qualify for a change in category based on additional qualifications (AQs) or an updated OSSTF Rating Statement, please ensure the following guidelines are met:

- Go online to the staff website, under "Human Resources" and complete the online <u>Intent to</u> <u>Change Salary Category</u> form, indicating the date that the course was completed (or will be completed).
- 2. Submit an updated copy of OSSTF Rating Statement. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that this form is submitted to Human Resources by **June 30, 2019.**

*Once received, updated OSSTF Rating Statements can be emailed to the appropriate contact in **Human Resources**:

For LTO teachers, Jane Ryckman jryckman@scdsb.on.ca (last names A-M) or Erin Blair eblair@scdsb.on.ca (last names N-Z)

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Lately a lot of our time as Union Reps is spent dealing with discipline matters related to classroom management. Please remember your professional responsibilities in this matter. Here are some helpful hints towards that:

- ✓ Don't leave EAs, Peer Tutors, or volunteers in charge of your classroom at any time.
- ✓ When ejecting students for whatever reason; call the office and let them know. Don't fear extrication; if they are highly disruptive, any contract teacher would not hesitate to do the same thing.
- ✓ When moving a class from your initial assigned room/area (Library or Computer room), take a second attendance, inform the teacher in charge who you are, what you're doing there, and who you're replacing.
- ✓ Please follow the lesson plan given by the absent teacher & do the required work. This is a constant complaint from our TBU compatriots. If you want to indulge them with your life stories, no issue; just make sure their mandated/planned work is completed first.

COMMITTEES

COMMITTEES
(Our OTBU Reps)
Paul Cudney
Kate Dewey (705-209-3586) katedewey@hotmail.com
Deanna Nelson, Marcia D'Antimo, & J Parton Chris Petersen Matthew Boyd

COMMUNICATIONS

Our membership is, obviously, ever-changing and we are continually improving our ways to communicate with you. We are now in the process of updating our email list for the upcoming negotiations and political upheaval. If we've somehow missed you or another member's email contact, forward it to Chris Petersen at <u>d17otbu@gmail.com</u>.

COMMUNICATION & POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Our OTBU Rep on CPAC is Matt Boyd and the next scheduled meeting for CPAC is February 20. Further details can be found on the District web site if needed. Essentially the committee delves into many aspects of Communication, Political issues, and most importantly, Elections.



CONTRACT

Expiring August 31, 2019

Here are some important items (Articles) you should know about from our Contract:

- Article 12.02 (c), states "A Casual Occasional Teacher who fails to identify their unavailability in EasyConnect will receive a written warning. An OT who repeatedly fails to identify their unavailability in ATE could be removed from the list". If you cannot supply for any given period of time, for whatever reason, make yourself unavailable in EasyConnect!
- Article 12.03 (a) states that you must commit to doing 10 assignments per semester. A half day assignment is counted as 1 commitment day. If you feel you cannot complete these needed commitment days, you may apply for a Board approved leave (12.03 g & h). You must submit a letter to HR requesting temporary removal from the supply list for up to a maximum of one year. Supporting documentation is rare, but sometimes required to support the request, such as a chronic illness, elder care, or parental duties.
- Article 14.01 (a, b, & c): Under Bill 115 LTOs get 5.5 sick days per full Semester. This Article also states you can use incidental days for accidents/illness (immediate family members - 2 days), bereavement of a close relative (3 days), & jury duty (fluctuates on each case of course). One can also tap into STD with Bill 115 (Short Term Disability) of up to 60 days per Semester if needed. Personal Emergency Leave Days unfortunately, have been voted down by Doug Ford's Conservative Government.
- Article 14.02 (a) deals with inclement weather. Simply put; if buses are cancelled in an area your job is located, your daily job is cancelled unless it's an Alt school job. If you live in an area of bus cancellations and your job is not in a cancellation area, use your best judgement to proceed to the school. If it is too nasty or dangerous, call the school if you cancel the job within EasyConnect. You are expected to check an assortment of media outlets regarding bus cancellations. It is also found on the front page of the SCDSB web site. Article 16.10 (a) also deals with cancellations of jobs; "if an assignment is cancelled by EasyConnect within 75 minutes before the start time of an assignment, you will still be paid, but you will have to go to the school to receive an "alternative assignment".
- Article 19.04 states "this article does not restrict the Board's right to assign the time-table of more than one teacher, providing the number of periods do not exceed three (3) unless one of the periods is a **scheduled** on-call period of the absent teacher. This simply means the Board can hire someone for a variety of subjects/periods as long as they don't go over the maximum of 3. Calls outs in

these situations are sometimes indicated by the terminology "vacancy" in EasyConnect.

• Reg 274 governing the hiring practices of the Board is not a contractual item; it is strictly a government regulation of an existing law. Changes have never been implemented since its inception in 2012. At all times we watch things closely to make sure the Board follows these proper hiring procedures. We will grieve any deviation from the regulation's intent. Please remember that the Board does the hiring, thus the only control we have in this department is to insure the Reg is being followed to the letter.

Addendum: I would highly suggest reading over our current contract. You can probably forgo reading things like definitions or Grievance procedures, but there is a lot in there that may surprise you, in the fact that you have forgotten about certain items of concern etc. Our main aim, with respect to the Collective Agreement, is the maintenance of this binding **legal** document and making sure that our employers are following its intent? If you know of violations in any area please let us know. A significant issue is the assigning of extra duties above the actual teacher's timetable i.e.: on calls, hall duties, caf duty etc. Let Ben Andrews know immediately by email of any discrepancies with respect to these "contract maintenance" issues.

EMAIL

(Board email & computer access)

All OTs have a Board email address (2014). This has to be checked regularly as this is where the Board will contact you with important Board related information, such as EasyConnect. Please be very cognizant regarding the content and use of your actual emails. Any email sent through SCDSB is subject to Orwellian type scrutiny (1984). Keep your emails strictly professional limiting personal stuff. The College of Teachers and our Provincial Executive have also sent out directed documents advising members to be very wary of social media.

EMERGENCY DUTIES SHEET

(I.e.: On-calls)

It's become evident that some of you aren't aware of the Emergency sheet (form). Every casual OT should carry the "<u>Occasional Teacher Emergency Record Form</u>". The maximum number of emergency duties for a school year is 4 full periods and these apply to duties that are **not** on the replacement teacher's regular daily schedule. An emergency assignment of 37.5 minutes or less counts as a $\frac{1}{2}$ (.5) duty and more than 37.5 minutes it counts as a full (1.0) duty. At the end of the day, make sure you get the sheet signed off by an Administrator. After you have completed the 4 full period duties, scan a copy to Human Resources. After that you can contractually & legally opt out of any more emergency duties. Do **not** volunteer for any extra on calls as you may be inadvertently depriving another OT of potential work.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Reference codes are not necessary if you are applying for EI during March Break this year. Also, it has been reported to us that there have been some gross errors at Board level regarding Records of Employment (ROE) hours. Please be extremely cognizant of this and of your worked hours with regards to EI.

FACEBOOK GROUP JOIN our FB CONTEST

We have very few members on our FB page currently, so why not join up and get important information from us via that social media platform. To that end we are going to hold an FB contest until after March Break. All FB members in the group will be thrown into a hat for the prize drawing, so join up soon to take advantage of the contest. On March 26th at our Exec Meeting, we will draw for a 1st prize of a \$50 Gift Certificate for the new south end Barrie **Keg** and another 5 Tim Horton gift card prizes of \$10 each. It is a closed group made up of SCDSB Secondary OTs, so please, just hit "**like**", we will then authorize it and you get to stay current with all of your D17 OT comrades. Information from FB is obviously instantaneous and it's easy to access from a myriad of devices & places.

JOBEN VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Special Event Videos, Documentaries,

Editing, & Titling of Home Videos

CONVERSIONS TO VIDEO ETC.

BEN ANDREWS

GRIEVANCES

705-727-2729 benjaminandrews@mac.com

We have outstanding grievances right now that were initiated originally by our Contract Teachers compatriots regarding job postings. It is a policy grievance as to how the Board posts certain job requirements as needing "preferred" or "required" qualifications for specialty jobs.

A majority of potential grievances arise over extra assigned duties (above and beyond the teacher's timetable) and classroom management; namely discipline or abuse (physical, sexual, or verbal). In other-words, to avoid the launching of a grievance in the first place, please maintain a well-run classroom environment and watch what you say to students.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All incidents of aggression/violence in the classroom should be reported. The full time Teachers' Bargaining Unit (TBU) and your OTBU Health & Safety Officer (Kate Dewey) are requesting that you report all of these incidents. You **must** complete an Aggressive Incident Form available in the school's office or online. If you need assistance with this form contact the OSSTF TBU Branch Rep in your school or call/email our H&S officer Kate Dewey at 705-209-3586 (katedewey@hotmail.com). This is for everyone's safety; employer, worker, and student.



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

District 17 OSSTF Human Rights Committee is always looking for new members. HR works to promote human rights in our workplaces by increasing awareness and encouraging positive change related to human rights concerns & OSSTF Human Rights policies. Former initiatives have included a focus on socially responsible investing, reducing homophobia in schools, community resources for parents & students, and fair trade practices & products. For more information on the Human Rights Committee and future meeting dates, visit the District website or contact our own OTBU Rep Kate Dewey at 705-209-3586 or katedewey@hotmail.com.

JOBS

Some general observations of OT work are:

- EasyConnect currently has 417 supply teachers County wide.
- Student enrollment is starting to creep up ever so slowly again.
- Newer and, on average, younger contract teachers don't use sick days as often.

• In the fall of the year active retired teachers on EasyConnect, are trying to do their required 10 day/semester commitment days.

• Because of the educational climate right now EasyConnect is made up of very dedicated/eager supplys willing to take on virtually any job and will go far & wide to do so.

• The number of supply teachers making themselves unavailable on a daily basis for various reasons such as appointments or sickness etc. has declined over the past few years.

- Inclement weather is here and along with it; airborne illnesses.
- Supply usage/coverage remains high especially compared to the 1990s for plenty of reasons.
- Bill 115 sick day rules finds teachers taking more sick days compared to the past (as a result of non-accumulating sick days anymore and a yearly 11 sick day cap/allotment).
- One has to realize that your discipline/s have a lot to do with call outs. For example Math & English disciplines are going to be called out more often than certain other subject areas, as there are simply more classes.
- Obviously the more schools you are sign on to dramatically increase your chances of job offers.

STAYNER CAR WASH

3 BAY SELF-SERVE CAR WASH

STAYNER, ON.

(Through the traffic lights, west of Tim Horton's on Hwy. # 91)

LEGAL ASPECTS

If you are involved in situations involving sexual harassment, over-reactive discipline, innuendo or any type of assault (even verbal) etc., you need to contact your union reps immediately after the accusation/altercation/incident. Do not say anything inculpatory to your accusers; wait until OSSTF support arrives.

***A WORD OF NOTE:** Please keep your hands off students. They know their rights more than ever and even a backpack is considered part of the student's anatomy. If you have a discipline problem, send the pupil to the office and phone down telling the office the student is on the way. I've usually found that most kids in your classes will cooperate and fellow students will almost always inform you of the name of the ousted student. If he/she refuses to cooperate at all, call the office and have them send up an Administrator for removal. Let Admin handle it when all else fails!

NEGOTIATIONS

Our Contract extension with the former Liberal Government expires on August 31st of this year (2019) so negotiations are but months away. You will be getting a survey in the spring from our Collective Bargaining Committee plus there will be a Province wide survey from Mobile Drive (our HQ).

NTIP

New Teacher Induction Program

This program is for new teachers, be it contract or LTOs. If you are an LTO you can be considered for this assistance if you are teaching over 97 days in a given year or basically teaching well over a Semester. Please ask your administration about it as it offers you a paid day off for mentoring purposes. Also, there are seminars/workshops at the Board office to assist & guide you through being a new teacher.

OTIP PARTNERSHIP LOYALTY PROGRAMME

We were approached 4 years ago by the Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan to support their company through what's known as a <u>Loyalty Program</u>. By us supporting OTIP we help to get the word out about their services as they are wholly owned by all the Teacher/Support Staff unions in Ontario. By us advertising for them, they will in turn provide a stipend/donation that we can use locally for our members. As a result you will see the use of their logos, banners, and ads on our communiques, hand-outs, web site, etc. They are highly competitive so we would most certainly recommend checking them out.



*6 Winter Activities for the Outdoor Enthusiast

One of the many things that makes Canada such a great place to live is its array of beautiful natural landscapes and the outdoor activities that they offer. Just because its winter doesn't mean that you can't enjoy them. In fact, there are many outdoor activities that are still possible (if not better!) in the winter months. Since Canadian winters can seem to drag on forever, there's really only one thing left to do: bundle up and embrace the great outdoors.

To learn more, visit <u>www.otipinsurance.com/article34</u>

PENSIONS

The web site for the Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) is <u>www.otpp.on.ca.</u> It can supply you with information on many aspects of your pension including supply teaching info with respect to what you have contributed over the years and to pay out schedules using various scenarios. This year's increase to those already collecting a pension is 2.2%.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We still have funds available for PD funds (\$) for OTs. Please go to our web site at <u>www.d17otbu.ca</u> to download the application form/s. Scan it back to us for approval by the PD committee. The PD committee consists of the whole Executive and meets monthly.

REGULATION 274

(& Amendment #148/15)

The Government's Reg 274 hiring policy is now 6½ years old and still problems exist with it. Most of you now understand how it works and, therefore, I won't be redundant in explaining it in detail again. I will, however, list a couple of important things about it below that are still pertinent in its understanding:

- Seniority is based on the most recent hire date to an OT list, in our case; EasyConnect. The number of days/years a person has worked for the Board are only used in breaking ties. A quick example of teachable/discipline seniority is you could be #233 on the overall LTO Hiring List, but when it comes to your particular subject area of say, "Science", you might jump up to be ranked as high as #22. The Board has indicated to me that these change almost weekly and is near to impossible to post a seniority list based on disciplines.
- At any time one feels there is a discrepancy in a recent hire, please contact Ben Andrews or me by email and we will investigate it with Abigail Desforges – Manager of HR at the Board.

REMUNERATION

Our casual daily rate of pay is set to increase Feb 1 to \$231.22 per diem, a whopping 1% increase. To avoid any pay issues in future, write down your job number, school, and the teacher you are replacing for each casual day worked. An Occasional Teacher who teaches a minimum of 10 consecutive days for the same teacher/assignment becomes a Long Term Occasional (LTO) teacher and will be paid retroactively according to your grid placement. You are paid after teaching on the 10th consecutive day inclusively. The formula for working out your LTO per diem rate of pay is to divide your yearly grid salary by 194 days (4% holiday pay is included in this amount). Pay particular attention to your pay stub in Payroll Portal as the Payroll Department is known to encounter errors due to its sheer size.

RETIRED TEACHERS on EASYCONNECT

(Active Members)

As an active retired member still working as a supply teacher, one can work 50 days without penalty to his/her pension. The 50-day restriction can also be fractionalized. As of now there are 73 retired teachers on ATE compared to 128 eight years ago. Please pay attention to your number of days worked as the penalty for exceeding these limitations is a cessation of

your monthly pension. This applies to all educational jobs, not just teaching. The Board has a duty to report the number of days worked by retirees directly to the Pension Board (OTPP). You can check the number of days you have worked by checking the staff web site (under Payroll), going to ATE (checking the Archive job area), or using the new OTPP app (found on their web site).



1st VP & Communications Officer Chris Petersen.

SUPPLEMENTAL LIST

We established a **Supplemental List** five years ago to hopefully solve the problem of unfilled jobs. These persons will only be called out when all persons on our main EasyConnect list have been offered a job for a given day. Supplemental people cannot be requested and will not, **in any way**, affect the Main EasyConnect list call outs. There are currently a mere 28 teachers on this list.

STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

There is a very active Status of Women Committee here in District 17. This group usually puts on a Maternity/Paternity Workshop and their next meeting will be held on April 17. If you are interested, please contact Jeanette Parker at <u>missparkerposter@gmail.com</u>.

WEB SITES

Our web site is found at <u>www.d17otbu.ca</u>. We recently updated our site; please take time to check it out as it contains:

- ⇒ Our Constitution
- \Rightarrow Emergency on call form
- ⇒ The current Contract
- ⇒ Professional Development Application form
- \Rightarrow Posts/Blogs
- ⇒ FAQs regarding Reg 274 (& 148/15).
- ⇒ Recent newsletters Archives

The **District** Web site is <u>www.d17.osstf.ca</u>.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Ben Andrews and I meet with Human Resources several times throughout the year to discuss various working condition items on your behalf.

Yours in pedagogical solidarity,

Jeff Parton

President - D 17 Simcoe OTBU (Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Unit)



NOTE: You are receiving this Newsletter electronically. This is a cost saving measure, as well as, being environmentally considerate. Those wishing a hard copy can still get one. Please inform Chris Petersen, our Communications Officer, at <u>d17otbu@gmail.com</u> and we will send you out a hard copy via Canada Post.

