

## Strike!!!



### Lamia Sabbagh *President's Report*

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, OSSTF, frustrated with the lack of action at the bargaining table, announced Phase 1 of strike action. With a mandate of 95.5% of teachers and 92% of support staff workers in favour of strike action, our union listened to our members and took action against a government set on bringing harm to public education in Ontario. Provincial OSSTF announced a limited withdrawal of services commencing on November 26<sup>th</sup> with no set end date. The limited withdrawal targets the Ministry and some Board administrative tasks and is designed to not affect student learning in any way. These sanctions include the following:

Phase 1: Limited Withdrawal of Services. Members shall not:

- Participate in EQAO preparation or testing
- Complete Ministry of Education Reports

- Participate in Board PD
- Participate in unpaid staff meetings outside the scheduled school day
- Provide comments on any secondary provincial report cards
- Perform the work of another Bargaining Unit, even if directed by administration

At the same time, OSSTF members took part in 5 days of information pickets where thousands of leaflets were distributed to parents and the general public explaining the main issues at stake.

Phase 2 - Full Withdrawal of Services:

Unfortunately, although 4 days of bargaining were scheduled shortly after Phase One was announced, the government did not respond to the seriousness of the situation and chose not to meet in any significant way at the Central bargaining table. And so, OSSTF had no choice but to escalate its actions and announced Phase 2 – a full withdrawal of services on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Instead of responding with serious action at the bargaining table, the

Minister called a press conference a few hours before the strike deadline. He demanded that OSSTF call off its strike. He did not propose a solution. He did not back down on his cuts. He simply hoped that we would not draw attention to his government's shameful proposals of saving money on the backs of our students' education. Even the media were confused at why he would call a press conference with nothing meaningful to offer.

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## Strike!!! (cont'd.)

I am pleased to say that no one whose true interest is in preserving public education paid his comments any attention. On a snowy Wednesday in December, 60,000 teachers and support staff workers walked off the job to protest what this government is doing to public education. The public support was overwhelming.

I was proud to visit with so many members across Durham. Some were counting this as their third strike, some as their first. All were united in the knowledge that we are doing the right thing. And the car horns and donations of donuts and coffee by the public just reinforced the message.

We were thrilled to see so many supporters joining us on the line. Our secretaries and EAs from CUPE came out on their lunch hour. Three of our trustees – Chris Braney (Chair of the Board), Niki Lundquist (Vice Chair) and Ashley Noble (Oshawa Trustee) joined our lines. Our new DDSB Associate Director (Norah Marsh) came out and showed her support. Principals and superintendents were seen offering support. Support from our retired members, our elementary colleagues at ETFO and from other labour unions under the OFL were seen joining our members in protest at many schools. Our Provincial Secretariat members Bob Fisher

(Director of Member Protection) and Jim Spray (Associate General Secretary) came to several lines to offer nourishment and to walk with our members. Harvey Bischof came home to Durham and visited four sites offering support and messages of solidarity. And the media had a field day eagerly reporting the events in Durham and across the province to a supportive public.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our local leaders for the work they have done organizing this day. And to all those on staff at the District Office as well. It is work that is rarely acknowledged and yet so very essential to the success of any organized action. Without leaders like the ones we are

truly blessed with in Durham, we would not be able to realize our objectives of safeguarding our values. Please take a moment to say thank you to your strike and picket captain!

Our fight is not over though until we sign a deal and these cuts are stopped. We know there is more coming and we know that we must be ready for whatever this government intends to throw our way. We have to stand together in the defense of public education no matter what it takes because we are fully aware that if we don't, who will? And then what...classes of 40 plus students, e-learning delivered by a private company, schools closing down, programs lost forever, teachers losing their jobs? The list is endless.

**The Doug Ford Government has pushed**  
**The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation**  
**(OSSTF/FEESO)**  
**Into a Legal Strike Position**

**We are standing up for publicly-funded education.**

The Ford Government	OSSTF/FEESO
Class size average increases	Restore last year's class size average
Funding reductions to school boards	Fund schools to ensure all students have the supports they need
<b>Results:</b> fewer education workers and supports to students	Ensure all schools have the education workers needed to provide those supports
Mandatory e-learning courses	Conduct a comprehensive study on the merits of mandatory e-learning before making changes to graduation requirements
Legislated 1% maximum compensation increase	Compensation tied to inflation

**Please contact your MPP and Trustees**

**NO CUTS TO EDUCATION**

See all the proposals at [nagatahagradefoodition.ca](http://nagatahagradefoodition.ca)

Learn more at [bettereducationforontario.ca](http://bettereducationforontario.ca)

Lend your support and email your MPP at [HereForDurham.ca](mailto:HereForDurham.ca)



## Negotiating in the Post-Truth Economy—A Tale of Two Juggernauts



**Ryan Kelly**

### *Chief Negotiator's Report*

We called it. When the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario was elected to government in 2018, speculation of an impending crisis in government spending was anticipated. Indeed, within a month, the then Finance Minister announced a deficit spinning out of control to the tune of approximately \$15 billion. Belt tightening was deemed necessary... we were told we were facing unprecedented danger.

Fast forward to Spring of 2019, and unilateral cuts continued to be announced to supposedly protect our future generations from a woefully broken system.

In this climate of conflicting messages, how do we navigate such incongruence? Here are some points for your consideration:

The Ford government touted running the largest public consultation on public education in history. To date, after endless pleas, no details of these results have been shared. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association ran a similar poll and found policy advanced by the government was not aligned with the wishes of the people of Ontario.

In September, the government's own Financial Accountability Office projected the deficit for the previous year to be less than half that which was reported. This has had no discernible effect on the government's trajectory.

Adding further confusion to the destructive measures advanced by the government, the Conference Board of Canada reported that every dollar invested in public education would pay back \$1.30 to the system. The opposite is inversely proportionate.

Moreover, we have been challenged with rhetoric by the Minister suggesting that he is

seeking a negotiated settlement in earnest, yet has found opportunities to work toward a deal elusive. To date, over all bargaining dates, we have had less than a total of an hour in time at the table. The government has continued to resist any efforts to discuss substantive issues important to reaching a comprehensive deal.

The list of contradictions continues, and confusion remains a central obstacle in demystifying the line between fact and fiction. To combat this, OSSTF has created a website – [bargainingforeducation.ca](http://bargainingforeducation.ca) – to provide transparency to what exactly is offered at the bargaining table. With this, our members, and the greater public can access each pass at the table to lay bare the inconsistency between words and actions.

Be vigilant and educated. Talk to your elected officials. Ask questions. Being engaged and well-informed can go a long way in improving accountability. The government serves at our will. It is only through asserting this will that democracy can be a true representation of our needs in our Province.

## 12 Tips for Safer Holiday Home Decorating

Provided by OTIP

For many, the holidays are a joyous and busy time of year. Between entertaining guests, decorating your home and shopping for gifts, it's easy to get wrapped up (no pun intended) in the holiday cheer – leaving safety as one of the last things on your mind. However, certain holiday decorations can introduce new risks into your home that you need to be aware of and plan for. Before you start 'decking the halls' this holiday season, here are twelve practical safety tips you should follow to keep you, your home, and your loved ones safe. For more information, visit [www.otipinsurance.com/article55](http://www.otipinsurance.com/article55).



## Strike December 4, 2019



Jeff White, JCR



Jennifer Seif, Lamia Sabbagh, Jenifer Mascoll



Henry St. staff at Lorne Coe's office



Brooklin HS



Uxbridge SS



Port Perry HS

## Strike December 4, 2019



DDSDB Trustee Niki Lundquist at Sinclair SS



DDSDB Trustee Ashley Noble at MCVI



Donald A. Wilson SS



George Chaktsiris, Maxwell Heights SS



Pickering HS



## New Teachers' Workshop



### Shane Stagg Executive Officer's Report

In November, new Permanent teachers were invited to our District Office to attend a full day workshop. We were happy to welcome over 20 new teachers into the profession and the District. Topics for the day included: key features of our contract, sick leave, pension, certification, rating statements, the salary grid, and the NTIP program. The day also included a session on maintaining boundaries and professional interactions with students.

These new teachers have entered the profession at a tumultuous time. Attendees expressed concern about cuts to education and the threat to their positions. Considering how long it has taken many of them to finally earn a Permanent position after up to a dozen years as an occasional teacher, it is understandable that they would be worried about attacks to public education at a time when they are building families and looking for stability. We outlined the surplus and redundancy process as described in the collective agreement. As well, we assured



Nicole Bléau presenting at the New Teachers' Workshop

them that we are applying every effort to combat cuts to public education. They were encouraged to contact their MPPs to tell their story of how cuts to education are affecting them.

As new teachers enter our schools, they build important relationships with colleagues who help them navigate the professional demands of the

job. It is also valuable for new teachers to understand that they are supported by a federation that works on their behalf and provides professional support and services. Members can contact the District office in both times of crisis and at times when they have routine questions or would like assistance with understanding the complexities of employment as a teacher.

## 10 Items You Need in Your Car Emergency Kit

Provided by OTIP

The colder days of winter are a great reminder to re-stock your car's emergency kit—it's important to be prepared in case something goes wrong. If your car gets stuck in snow or you get into an accident, you might have to wait for help to arrive due to bad weather, even if you have roadside assistance. The following car emergency kit items could help you if the unexpected happens.

Learn more at [www.otipinsurance.com/article54](http://www.otipinsurance.com/article54)

## PSSP News



### Jennifer Seif *PSSP BU President's Report*

The cuts to education in the form of provincial government funding are directly linked to our Professional Student Services

Personnel (PSSP) staffing. Educational Support Staff (ESS) and PSSP Bargaining Units across the province have had a number of positions eliminated due to the cuts that have been made to education. Greater Essex County DSB, Peel DSB, Toronto DSB and Upper Canada DSB all experienced PSSP layoffs that have come in the form of reductions to services. These reductions jeopardize the availability of services and

supports that vulnerable students depend on.

We must stand together in solidarity to fight back against these cuts to education. Durham is not immune to the devastating impacts of these cuts.

Your PSSP Executive and Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC) appreciate your continued support in this fight. Together we will stand up for the students that we service.



From left to right: Stephanie Pritchard (Health and Safety Officer), Cathy Pearson (CBC-SW), Elizabeth MacDonald (Education Officer), Jenifer Mascoll (Chief Negotiator/Grievance Officer), Jennifer Seif (President), Amanda Frumkin (Executive Officer), Esther Somogyi (Secretary/Treasurer), Tracey Grose (Pay Equity Officer), Andrea Malyon (Vice-President), Jacquie Westcott (CBC - Intervenor) and Linda Temple (CBC-SLP).

### FeelingBetterNow®

Connecting Mental Health Problems to Solutions

**Stressed, anxious or depressed?**  
Go to: [feelingbetternow.com/otip](http://feelingbetternow.com/otip)

Assess your mental health

View your action plan

Access your self-care toolbox

**Resources in Your Toolbox include:**

Helping Yourself

Stress Reduction

Helping Others

[www.feelingbetternow.com/otip](http://www.feelingbetternow.com/otip)

OTIP BAEO

## LACE UP YOUR SKATES

**For the D13 Annual  
Family Day Free Skate**

**February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**1-3 PM**  
**McKinney Centre Whitby**  
**Arena #3**

Please bring a cash donation or non-perishable food item.

See your Branch President for free tickets

## Our OSSTF Benefits—Where Do We Go From Here?



**Nicole Bléau**

### *Executive Officer's Report*

As we are in the midst of tense contract negotiations with the Ford government, it's important to take a moment and reflect on the role and importance of our benefits plan. The funding for this plan is part of what's on the table during negotiations. It's easy for us to simply take our benefits for granted and assume that they will always be there. But that is because OSSTF has always negotiated strongly for the value of our benefits. Our new PSSP bargaining unit joined our plan this September and now they too can enjoy the fruits of our labours. I have written before about the funding model of our plan, but in light of our new members and the ongoing negotiations, I thought it worthwhile to take another look.

What is the ultimate purpose of the benefits plan? What should it provide to us? It is tempting to treat our benefits plan like an all-you-can-eat buffet: get as much from it as you can even if you don't really need that 12<sup>th</sup> helping. Why not buy a new pair of glasses or maybe some sunglasses even if your prescription hasn't changed and your current glasses are still just fine? Why not get a new pair

of orthopaedic shoes even if you still haven't worn the first pair?

So why shouldn't we think of our plan in a gluttonous way? Why not take advantage of every benefit our plan has to offer? That question comes back to WHY we have a benefits plan in the first place. Our plan is designed to provide a full and comprehensive benefits program that covers the health needs of members and their dependents. Having so much available on the buffet is great but if we all load up all the time, can it continue to be offered in this same way? The answer to that is a resounding "NO".

The funding for our plan is a combination of plan sponsor (i.e. government) contributions and member contributions. The government contributions are negotiated within our collective agreement, with our current one having expired on September 1, 2019. (Since the expiration of our collective agreement, the plan has continued to be funded at the prior rate pending the outcome of negotiations or until the government decides to change terms and conditions. In our proposal to the Government, to maintain the plan going forward, OSSTF is proposing annual increases in keeping with inflationary costs.) Based on these contributions, a plan is purchased. The costing of this

plan is based on the benefits offered and our usage rates. Of course, the cost of drugs and services under all benefit plans continue to rise steadily, which is why we are proposing inflationary increases in bargaining. If our plan starts to cost too much to sustain as it is, the ELHT Trust is obligated to make any necessary changes to balance the books. Since the government contributions are itemized in our contracts and can't be altered during the life of the collective agreement (and who knows what those will look like going forward), the only way to balance the books would be to change things on our end: either increase how much each member pays every month or reduce the benefits offered.

Of course, we want to avoid ever having to exercise either of those options. So, outside of bargaining, the only way to make sure that the plan remains sustainable over the long-term is for us to always be judicious users of our benefits. That is not to say that we should not use the benefits that we need. That is what they are for. What I am suggesting is that we should explore where savings are possible and that we should not be wasteful with our benefits. For our plan, long-term sustainability is key and only we can ensure that. So keep that in mind the next time you step up to the buffet.



## Better Together—November 15th PD Day



### Shane Stagg *Executive Officer's Report*

The November PD Day is unique in that it is a partnership between OSSTF and the DDSB. This year, there were over 80 session titles and between both AM and PM slots, there were over 150 offerings. The theme was “Better Together” with a focus on mental wellness. A special thank you to presenters, hosts and participants for making the day a success.

A terrific assortment of sessions were available to support participants in their own personal wellness as well as how to support mental wellness in their classroom. There were connections to community resources, fitness activities, outdoor events, field trip ideas, hands-on activities and plenty of opportunity to share ideas with colleagues.

The feedback flowing in from participants who completed evaluation forms has been very positive. Comments include:

- Great presentation – good to know as a new teacher
- Outstanding!

- Amazing, Supportive
- Creative ideas, excellent job
- A great experience
- Good strategies for self and for students
- Superb, talented, patient, kind, generous, encouraging teacher
- Informative and inspiring
- The perfect health and wellness session

- Such a professional, caring, friendly atmosphere

A clear message delivered by the comments is that members truly value professional development that is delivered by colleagues. Please consider what you have to offer when the call for proposals comes out next year.



Rock Climbing



Soup & Spices workshop at MHSS

## One Strong Woman: 2020 Student Achievement Awards



**George Chaktsiris**  
*Communications' Chair*

This year's OSSTF Student Achievement Awards in honour of Marion Drysdale saw several submissions at the District level in a variety of categories. The result was great debate and discussion for the Communications Committee to pick winners for entry into the Provincial competition in their respective categories. As the Chair of the Communications Committee, this was once again nothing shy of an absolute pleasure and honour to judge the fantastic pieces of work by our students.

The theme this year was "One Strong Woman". Each student artist was to create a piece of work that followed this theme. Specifics as to what this means and how it is represented was not provided and is where each student was given the creative and intellectual freedom that was on display for the committee to see. There were as many interpretations as there were entries.

Also important to note is that each of these students needed a teacher to support them and their work. Just another example of things that we as teachers do above and beyond the call of duty to help shape the future. Thank you for showing how high quality publically-funded education continues to pay dividends to society.

This year, District 13 is pleased to announce the following entries to represent Durham for the 2020 Student Achievement Awards: One Strong Woman and submitted to OSSTF Provincial.

Category A1  
Intermediate, Grade 9-10  
Academic Prose/Poetry  
Dunbarton High School  
"Unsilenced"  
Teacher: Julie Gallagher  
Category A3

Senior, Grade 11-12 University  
Prose/Poetry  
Anderson CVI  
"Miigwetch, Thundergirl"  
Teacher: Theoni Andrikakos

Category B1  
Visual, Intermediate, Grade 9-10  
O'Neill CVI  
"The One That Will Change the World"  
Teacher: Chantelle Lacoursiere

Category B2  
Visual, Senior, Grade 11-12  
O'Neill CVI  
"Woman of Colour"  
Teacher: Chantelle Lacoursiere

The provincial winners will each receive a cash award of \$1,000 announced at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly in March. On behalf of District 13, congratulations and all the best to all District winners!

**CAREpath**  
The Health Care Navigation System



CAREpath provides support for our teachers and their families when they are faced with a new diagnosis or a recurrent diagnosis of cancer. The support also includes a cancer survivor support program which can assess health risks in order to reduce the risk of recurrence.

If you, your spouse or children need this support, call today! Contact the District Office for the LTD Policy #. If you want cancer treatment information for friends and extended family members, you can call the free Cancer Info Line at 1 800 290 5106.

## OTBU FAQ's



**Avril Burns**  
**OTBU President**

Here are answers to the questions OTs have been asking recently....

### **When will my OCT Fees be paid?**

Your OCT fees will be deducted from what you earn during the December 01 - 14 pay period which will be paid to you on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you will not receive any pay on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, or if the pay was not large enough for the Board to deduct the increased \$170.00 fee, you will need to pay your fees yourself. Go to [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca) to pay your fees directly to the OCT. Teachers who let their fees lapse are not eligible to teach in the public school system and there is a significant additional fee to be reinstated.

### **Do I have to do supervision duty before or after school?**

Teachers are required to do all of the scheduled duties of the absent teacher – including before and after school. The Education Act requires all teachers to be “in the teaching area” 15 minutes before the morning start time, so in most cases you will be able to manage a morning duty. After school duties will not last more

than 20 minutes, so this will not unduly delay you after school. If you're not sure whether the duty added to your assignment actually belongs to the absent teacher, you can verify it for yourself. Supervision schedules can be found in each school's OT Information Package, in most work rooms, the mailroom, and, if all else fails, it should also be posted in the office.

### **How can I get one of those awesome red Together t-shirts?**

Wear it anywhere, any time but be sure to wear Red for Ed every Friday! Drop into the District 13 office at 601 Palace Street, Whitby to pick up your very own T!

### **How can I stay informed about what's going on?**

For regular updates and information that matters to

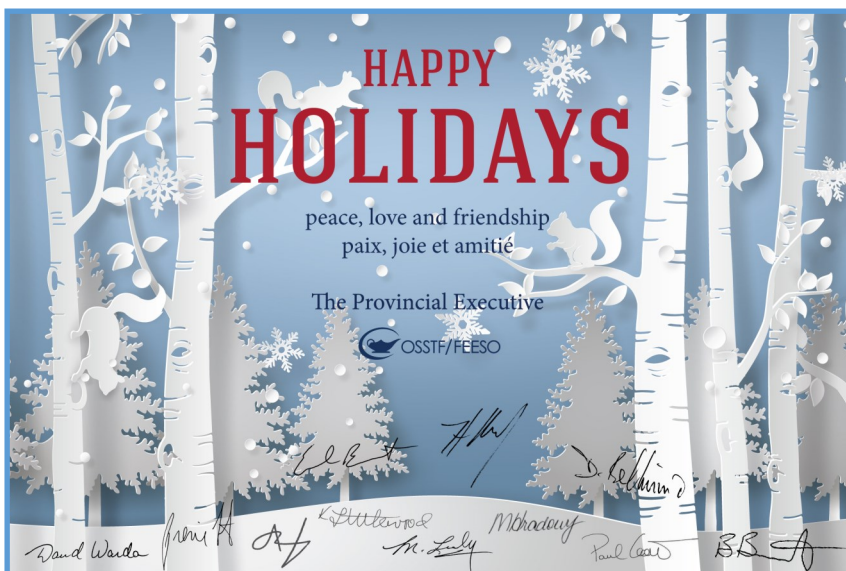
OTs, please sign up to our Member Contact List by sending an email from your personal (not Board) email to:

[avril.burns@d13.osstf.ca](mailto:avril.burns@d13.osstf.ca) with Subscribe in the subject line and your name in the body, if it is not clear in your email address.

### **What if I have other questions or concerns?**

If you have an urgent matter while you are at school, please contact the District 13 Office at 905-668-7100. If you have been asked to speak to an Administrator in the office, let the Admin know that you will speak with them, but that you'd like to speak to the school's OSSTF Branch President first.

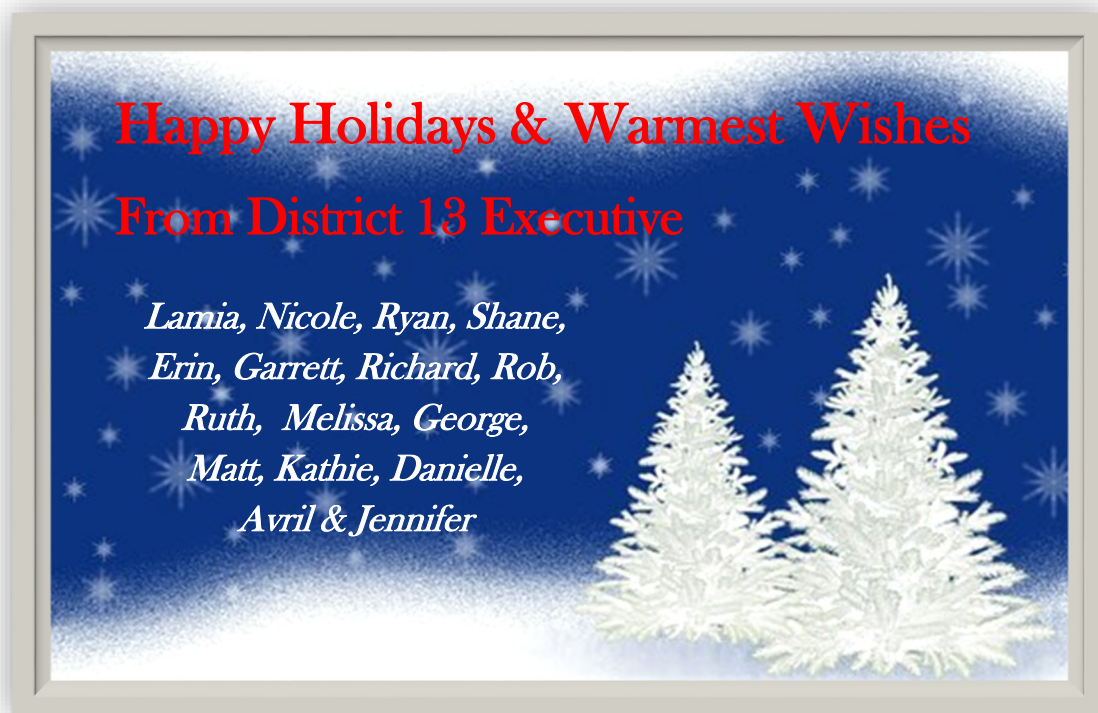
If you have any other questions or concerns, contact us by email at [avril.burns@d13.osstf.ca](mailto:avril.burns@d13.osstf.ca) or by phone at 905-668-7100.





## Upcoming Events for D13—2019-2020

February 17, 2020	Family Day Skate @ McKinney Arena, Whitby, 1—3 pm
February 26, 2020	Pink Shirt Day
March 3, 2020	OTBU PD Workshop @ D13 Office, 4:30 pm
April 15, 2020	OTIP/EFG Retirement Workshop @ Ajax Convention Centre, 4:30 pm
April 16, 2020	D13 Maternity Leave Workshop @ D13 Office, 4:15 pm
April 22, 2020	OSSTF OMERS Pension Workshop @ D13 Office, 5:00 pm
April 27, 2020	OSSTF OTPP Pension Workshop @ D13 Office, 4:30 pm
April 28, 2020	Day of Mourning
May 7, 2020	District Annual Meeting @ Ajax Convention Centre, 4:00 pm
May 3, 2020	Steps for Life @ OPG Pickering, 10:00 am
May 14, 2020	PSSP District Annual Meeting @ D13 Office, 5:00 pm
May 21, 2020	Student Award Night @ D13 Office, 7:00 pm
May 28, 2020	OTBU Annual General Meeting, details to follow
June 7, 2020	Durham Pride Parade, details to follow
June 12, 2020	District 13 Golf Tourney @ Lyndebrook Golf Course, 4:00 pm
June 28, 2020	Toronto Pride Parade, details to follow



### DISTRICT 13 OSSTF

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[www.d13.osstf.ca](http://www.d13.osstf.ca)

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