



President's Memo

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- 1. Staffing Update** - You may be aware from the last email we sent out to our members titled "Staffing Update" that the Board was staffing the schools according to the Ministry directive from the memo released March 15th which had raised the funding ratio for class sizes to 28:1. Our Federation fundamentally disagreed with this ratio and upheld the clause in our Collective Agreement which maintains that the ratio should remain at 22:1. OSSTF believes emphatically that an increase in class sizes will devastate programming, especially specialized programs, the arts, the smaller rural schools, and our most vulnerable students who need smaller ratios in order to access individualized attention. It will eliminate student choice in terms of the classes that they can select. We believe staffing at a ratio of 28:1 breaks our Collective Agreement and we were going to grieve this decision.

Today, the Board received clarification from the Ministry which appears to have backed off on the legal battle that was about to explode from every district with similar language in their collective agreement. They have been told that if language exists which protects the staffing ratio of 22:1 that they should abide by that language. Therefore, we will be revisiting the staffing numbers in collaboration with the Board through Operations this week to determine which of our members will be surplus under the 22:1 ratio and which of our schools will be in a hiring position. As we are a growing Board, we expect this to be good news. The Board will be respecting the Collective Agreement language which states that surplus teachers will be made aware of their situation by the end of the first week of April. April 3rd is the date when any surplus member will be asked to meet with their principal and their Branch President to discuss their situation.

The dates for composite postings will need to be readjusted and we will share them with you as soon as possible.

Although this is definitely a good news item for Durham, this cannot be seen as a complete win. It is only a temporary reprieve. For those districts who do not have similar language protecting them as we do in Durham, it seems as though they will have no choice but to staff at 28:1. And for those of us who do have this language, we know that our Collective Agreements will expire at the end of August and we have all seen the writing on the wall when it comes to class sizes.

We cannot sit back and let the inevitable unfold. We must continue to message the Ministry that their decisions will have a devastating impact on public education. We may have dodged the class size issue for one year but there are other issues to tackle as well. The minimum 4 credits of e-learning imposed on our students as a requirement of graduation if delivered centrally and not through the school boards as the ministry is proposing will be just as devastating to our staffing numbers as the 28:1 ratio could be - and there is no attrition funding protection for that. Also, the changes to the Autism funding will result in an influx of very vulnerable students to our schools with no resources to accommodate their needs.

It is more important than ever to make your voices heard in opposition to this new vision for education: Education That Works For You.

What you can do:

Talk to your neighbours, family members and friends. Let them know how badly this new vision will affect public education and our students.

Send a message on the “Here For Students” site at www.hereforstudents.ca where parents, educators, concerned citizens and students can send an email directly to the Premier and their local MPP letting them know that they do not support crowded classrooms, disappearing programs and cuts to our education system.

Join your colleagues and allies in education at the Rally for Education planned next Saturday, April 6th at noon at Queen’s Park. Details to follow by mailchimp and on our website.

2. **Staffing questions answered for those on leaves:** The last President’s Memo had some details from our Collective Agreement about how staffing works but we have received a few more questions specific to leaves. If you are on a leave (either mat leave or unpaid leave) you will not be surplus while you are away but could return during the year to a surplus situation. For example, if you are scheduled to return from a leave in semester 2 and you are on the surplus list, you would be surplus to your school in semester 2. If, however, your leave were for the entire year, you would not be surplus at your school that year but may end up on the surplus list the year of your return.
3. **Student Walkouts** – Clarification - the student walk out that was organized last week was not endorsed by OSSTF as had been reported by the Board. We endorsed the walk outs that Post-Secondary students were organizing. The Board is sending a correction notice to all principals retracting their statement that we endorsed the walk outs. Our members are reminded to never bring politics into the classroom. Redirect attention back to the lesson at hand and follow the instructions provided by your administration. There is another protest being organized by high school students for April 4th that is circulating on social media. Again, although we admire that our students are speaking out about the future of their education system, we do not endorse walk outs.
4. **Social Media** – A reminder to members to be careful of what they post on social media. You cannot post anything that could be considered a breach of professional ethics or misconduct. You also cannot post statements that are disrespectful to your employer which is the DDSB or the administrators within it. You can, however, engage in political discussions about what the government is doing to education.
5. **Centre for Success** – The Board has indicated that this program is still intact and running next year.
6. **District 13 Email** – Are you receiving information from District 13 to your personal email account? If not, email shane.stagg@d13.osstf.ca with your personal email address. Indicate your school or that you are an occasional teacher and we will add you to the District 13 email list. It is particularly important that we are able to communicate with all our members during these ever changing political times.