



# President's Memo

Lamia Sabbagh, President

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October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

- 1. Municipal Election October 22<sup>nd</sup>** - District 13 is offering the following endorsements for candidates of the School Trustee position in the upcoming municipal election. These endorsements were arrived at following a process which included: offering surveys to candidates inviting them to share their position on a variety of education topics; inviting candidates to a meet and greet session where each was invited to speak followed by an informal question period; interviews with selected candidates to gather a deeper understanding of their point of view.

In this current political climate, it is more important than ever for us to have a say in who will become our public school trustees.

Endorsed candidates for Public School Trustee:

Ajax Wards 1&2:	Roselyn Sagar-Lal
Ajax Ward 3:	Donna Edwards
North:	Carolyn Morton
Oshawa:	Darlene Forbes, Ashley Noble
Pickering:	Chris Braney, Michelle Francis
Whitby:	Jim Barkley, Niki Lundquist, Christine Thatcher

- 2. Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment** – DDSB Policy 4245 states: “The Durham District School Board is committed to providing a working and learning environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is further recognized that every individual has an equal right to learn, work and feel safe in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment or objectionable behaviour according to the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). The Durham District School Board has a duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of harassment for all persons served by it.”

Any member who feels harassed in the workplace should contact the District Office for advice in how to access this procedure. Our bylaws also require that prior to registering a complaint of harassment against another member, you must inform the member, either personally or through a representative, that the actions are unwelcome and must cease.

- 3. Mediation Services Resource Bank** – OSSTF’s Mediation Services Resource Bank (MSRB) provides dispute resolution services to members who are in professional conflict with other members. It

consists of mediators who live and work across the province. All are Federation members with extensive training and experience in mediation and conflict resolution. In order to preserve confidentiality, mediators are usually assigned from outside the geographic area of the disputants. Oftentimes, mediation is able to provide an alternative to launching a harassment complaint that is far more productive for members who find themselves in conflict. Please contact the District Office for advice on whether you should request the services of the MSRB in helping you resolve an issue.

- 4. Adverse Reporting** - A reminder to our members that according to our bylaws, on making an adverse report on another member, you must furnish that member with a written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report. The statement shall include the relevant date, details and alleged incidents that were related in the adverse report to the member. On matters related to the Child and Family Services Act, this obligation shall not apply.
- 5. Sick leave notes after 3 days** – It is a member’s responsibility to acquire a medical note in the form of the abilities form available on our website if they have been absent for 3 consecutive days even if they were not 3 whole days. For example, if you are sick for 2 days, go in to work on the third day because you feel a little better but then go home half way through the day, this is still considered to be 3 consecutive days and you will be responsible for getting an abilities form from your doctor. Follow the instructions on how to submit the abilities form also available on our website.
- 6. Legal obligation to follow IEP** – Teachers are expected to familiarize themselves with the IEPs of our students and are legally obligated to follow them. Sometimes the expectations outlined in these IEPs are quite involved. There are several resources for our members – the special education department as well as the technology coaches may be able to provide advice on how to make lessons more accessible and satisfy the requirements of the IEP.
- 7. AQ courses** - Members should be aware that when taking AQ courses for interest and professional development that it can have the unintended consequence of being timetabled into a subject or area at a time when it does not match your career goals. For example, taking a special education AQ course to improve your ability to support students in your classes can lead to being assigned a special education section at any time including many years after. Once a qualification is added to your certificate of qualification by the Ontario College of Teachers it cannot be removed. Participating in professional development opportunities is always encouraged but be mindful of taking courses that actually grant qualification. Before taking an AQ course, it is always encouraged to check with the Certification department at OSSTF to make sure it will count in any pay group upgrade. Contact the District Office or consult the flipchart or the website for more information.