



President's Memo

Shane Stagg, TBU President

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March 27th, 2020

1. **District 13 Office** - The District Office is following advice regarding social distancing. As such, the office will not be open during the school closure. We are still working and available for Members however. Please visit the [contact page of our website](http://www.d13.osstf.ca) (www.d13.osstf.ca) for information on how to reach us.
2. **Posting Content Online and Communication with Students** – The DDSB and Provincial OSSTF have been offering information at a time of quickly changing circumstances.

Instructions from the Board and advice from the Union are in agreement. At this time there is no expectation for teachers to be posting content online. Teachers should direct parents and students to the resources offered by the Ministry and the Board.

There are inequities that need to be addressed. It is important that students not miss out on opportunities because they do not have access or their individual needs are not being met. As well, there are circumstances that prevent many teachers from being able to be online. These inequities are understood and there are ongoing discussions taking place by the Board and Ministry in consultation with the Union to determine what options can be made available to support learning for all students. As better information becomes available it will be shared.

Meanwhile, teachers are also receiving the message that they can apply their professional judgment when communicating with students and parents. Given this information, the following advice applies:

- Student participation in online activities should be optional for students at this time. There should be no impact on a student's grade. The world has grown strange for students and while it can be comforting to see that there is content online, it could be unduly stressful to see it attached to instructions indicating that it is mandatory.
- There are concerns with members putting themselves at professional risk by engaging in online conversations with students either with text or video. There are opportunities for misunderstanding. Items should be posted to the entire class and responses to questions can be phrased as, "I have gotten the following questions..." All platforms used by teachers should be those supported by the Board. Any accounts required by teachers and students to access online tools should be those provided by the Board. Student data, images, or videos should not be stored on personal devices or accounts. Any online activity should

take place at reasonable hours. Any discussion should remain focussed on the curriculum and not become casual in nature.

It is worth repeating: the instructions from the Board, the employer, and the advice from the Union is that teachers are not expected to be posting content online. There is no negative judgment of teachers who are awaiting further information.

3. **Strike Cheques** - The Coronavirus has interrupted our usual routine of handing cheques to branch reps for distribution at schools. As well, recommendations regarding social distancing prevent pickup in our office. We are exploring how we can get cheques into the hands of members if school closures continue. Members are encouraged to make sure that their mailing address is accurate. This can be done by logging into the: [MyOSSTF area of the Provincial OSSTF website...](https://www.osstf.on.ca/Home/services/member-login/members-login)

<https://www.osstf.on.ca/Home/services/member-login/members-login>

Look for the option to confirm or update your address in the menu at the left.

4. **Staffing** - All surplus teachers in the DDSB are expected to have a job in the Board. They are just surplus to a particular school. Staffing is currently underway at a ratio of 22:1 according to our local collective agreement. The declaration of surplus is determined by regional seniority (length of time in the bargaining unit). Surplus staff can expect to be notified by their principal by March 31st. The first round of composite postings is scheduled to go online in Apply to Education on March 30th.

ANYONE wishing to apply for a position will be required to set up a profile on ApplytoEducation.com. Instructions on how to do this can be downloaded from the bottom of the "Recruitment" page under "My Employment" on the [DDSB Portal](http://Spark.ddsb.ca) (Spark.ddsb.ca). This information was also sent to staff in an email from Arlene Walkes on March 26th. If you have any questions about the posting process or about seniority, please contact a District Officer. Email addresses are listed under Contact on our website.

5. **Bargaining** – Provincial OSSTF is in communication with the Ministry regarding the potential for future bargaining dates. There is information circling on social media regarding the OECTA tentative agreement. It is not yet clear what impact this may have on an OSSTF agreement. There are no local bargaining dates scheduled.
6. **Posaction** - Posaction is a program that provides up to 12 hours of psychosocial counseling per year. There is a wide variety of counselors available to aid with work-related problems, personal difficulties, family difficulties and substance abuse. The program is completely confidential, available to yourself and immediate family members. If you are not happy with the counsellor that is assigned to you, Posaction will work to find another local practitioner for you to work with. Call 1 800 668-0193. You must get the LTD Plan Contract Number from the District Office.
7. **District Annual Meeting** – Timelines for items related to the District Annual Meeting are still in place at this time. They can be reviewed in the [February edition of Inprint](#) which can be found under the Publications menu item of the District 13 website (www.d13.osstf.ca). The deadline for nomination for elected positions is April 9th. Information regarding nominations is available on the front page of our website. The March edition of Inprint will include ads for elected positions.