



The Bare Essentials

January 7, 2008

Volume 11 Issue 6

Collective Bargaining News and Information

Just a reminder that teachers can find the latest news bulletins regarding Collective Bargaining on the ETFO Niagara website at www.etfoniag.com. For the latest developments in bargaining at the provincial level, teachers are encouraged to check the provincial website and/or register for the provincial e-newsletter at www.etfo.ca.

The ETFO Niagara office has been getting several questions about the collective bargaining process in light of the heightened awareness generated by the provincial talks in December. Here is a little **Collective Bargaining 101**.

The process starts with the election of your local bargaining team. From there, the committee works in concert with a provincially assigned staff officer to develop your preliminary submission. This is the document teachers voted on and accepted last June.

Before we met with school boards to discuss our preliminary submission, every local went into provincial takeover upon the direction of the provincial executive. The decision to go into provincial takeover means that ETFO provincial has the ultimate decision making power with respect to what “deal” is brought to the membership for ratification. The local bargaining team works as a resource to the provincial staff officer at this point of the process. However, as indicated in the **Labour Relations Act**, the Union must negotiate with individual boards in order to get settlements.

As indicated in previous editions of the Bare Essentials, the provincial discussions were outside the bounds of the Collective Bargaining Process as the Labour Relations Act dictates that locals negotiate with individual boards. Therefore, if a “framework” had been established, it would have come back to the Local for negotiating the details with respect to how things would look in the Local agreement. Once a preliminary deal has been accepted by the negotiating team (or by the province when in takeover) then teachers are given the opportunity to vote to accept the deal or reject the deal. In other words, an individual teacher’s opportunity for direct impact on the process comes via the election of their provincial leaders, the election of their local bargaining team, their input and vote on the preliminary submission, their decision to accept or reject a strike vote (if required), and a teacher’s decision to accept or reject a presented offer.

Although your Niagara Released Officers and Collective Bargaining team have not been part of the provincial talks, and do not have ultimate decision making power, we do want to ensure that Niagara teachers are fairly represented in the process. As you know, the next step is to negotiate at the local level (still in provincial take over) and as such, your local team continues to advocate for Niagara teachers. We will continue to get developing information to you as quickly as possible via the website and fan-outs and we endeavor to act upon your comments and concerns as the process unfolds. Our mantra, from the onset of

this process, has been that there should not be a disconnect between teachers and the bargaining process.

ETFO Niagara

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Provincial President, David Clegg to Address Niagara Teachers

Recently we are recognizing that the media spin and counter-spin is creating great angst in the membership with respect to collective bargaining, especially in light of the current economic climate. To assist in reducing any mixed messages, teachers will be afforded a rare opportunity to **hear directly from the Provincial President, David Clegg**, on January 19th, about the developments that transpired between ETFO and OPSBA. Furthermore, we hope that teachers take the opportunity to ask any question or raise any concern that may have come about in recent weeks. We understand that a great deal of information and misinformation has been circulating in the media and that having an opportunity to have a direct conversation may be helpful to clear up any misconceptions.

As the head of the provincial organization, **David Clegg**, holds considerable power with respect to the direction of the organization. Therefore, teachers who have specific questions about the Collective Bargaining journey are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting on **MONDAY, JANUARY 19th at JOHN MICHAEL'S CONFERENCE CENTRE** in Allanburg. Please see flyer in this mailing for more details.

Classroom Assessment That Works – 3 Part P.D. Series

Classroom Assessment That Works is a 3 part series of workshops offered in conjunction with the provincial organization. The program is designed to meet and support your daily classroom assessment needs by examining an array of assessment tools and strategies. The cost of the program is \$50.00 and ETFO will cover the cost of an Occasional Teacher. There is a flyer in this mailing that outlines dates and times. To register, please e-mail Sharon Aloian at pres@etfoniag.com by **Monday, January 12th**.

Help Be A Breath of Fresh Air when School Lets Out

Consider helping the **Fresh Air Fund** in the summer of 2009 to give “inner-city” children the opportunity of new experiences and lasting friendships in Ontario. Since 1877, the Fund has provided free summer vacations for more than 1.7 million New York City children. You can sign up to become a host family and discover how a Fresh Air summer makes the difference in the life of a child. On first time visits to host families, Fresh Air children are six to twelve years of age and stay for one or two weeks. Fresh Air children and volunteer families often form bonds of friendship that last a lifetime. For more information, please call Pam Mallysh at (905) 688-6047 or The Fresh Air Fund at (800) 367-0003. You can also visit the website at www.freshair.org.

Payroll Deduction Reminder

The start of a new calendar year brings the “adjustments” (a nice word for reduction) to your pay for the start of 2009. Deductions for Canada Pension and Employment Insurance have begun again and the 2009 Federal and Provincial Tax Basic Exemption rates take effect. The first pay of the New Year also reflects an increase to the Teacher Pension Plan as well as your 2009 membership fee (**raised to \$120**) to the Ontario College of Teachers. If you happen to be speaking to a colleague who is currently on leave, it may be useful for them to know that **teachers on leave have until April 15th to make their fee payment directly to the College of Teachers.**

Teach in China for 2 or 4 weeks in July 2009

Sound interesting? Retired educators Lauren Tindall, Hamilton and Hilda Michel, Halton are taking Ontario teachers to Jiangsu province, China this summer to work with Chinese teachers of English to improve their fluency, expand their vocabulary and boost their confidence in their language skills. To learn more about the project go to www.china-connection.ca. An information meeting will be held at the ETFO office, Fonthill on **Tuesday February 3, 2009 at 4:00**. Meet Lauren and Hilda and learn more about the project.

Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

January 19 th	Collective Bargaining Membership Meeting (with David Clegg) – Plumbers’ Hall
January 20 th	Resolutions for Annual Meeting and Proposed Constitutional Amendments Due
January 21 st	ETFO Niagara Executive Meeting
January 29 th	Collective Bargaining Negotiations
January 30 th	ETFO Trivia Night – Parkway Hotel