



The Bare Essentials



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Welcome Back!

Best wishes for a great year for you and your students. We were excited to visit so many of you while we were delivering apples to our schools last week and look forward to serving you in the year ahead. Thank you for all you do to provide the learning and laughter!

A Change to the Professional Development Fund

As you may recall, the ETFO Niagara Professional Development Fund has a significant change as a result of Collective Bargaining in the spring. The PD Fund no longer has a restriction which prevents teachers from using the fund for courses which may result in a salary category change. Therefore, teachers no longer need to worry about having their application for PD funds denied if the course they wish to take, namely an Additional Qualifications course, results in an improvement in compensation. You work hard and you deserve it.

The ETFO Niagara Professional Development Fund was very well utilized in the 2008/2009 school year and applications were plentiful throughout the summer months. The fund is being accessed at a constantly increased rate; therefore, those interested in applying for funds are encouraged to do so early. Furthermore, as the DSBN inter-school courier has moved to every other day deliveries, teachers are asked to place their application in the courier bag at least **five school days** prior to the commencement of the PD event for which they are seeking approval. For piece of mind, teachers should consider faxing in their application to the ETFO office at 905-892-9733 and then following up with an e-mail to Terri Beck at vp2@etfoniag.com.

ETFO Niagara would like to remind prospective applicants that **P.D. Fund requests must be submitted and approved prior to the P.D. event, in order to be eligible for funding.** *It is with much regret that the PD Fund administrator has to deny applications that are not received prior to commencement of the PD activity.* However, a prior approval funding model exists to ensure equitable distribution of funds to teachers and it is the best accounting mechanism to allow the fund administrator to accurately track the remaining funds available to distribute to members. Copies of the current Professional Development Fund Procedural Guidelines and P.D. Fund Request forms are included with this mailing and can also be found on our website at www.etfoniag.com.

Did you Move?

At ETFO Niagara, we are constantly attempting to keep our member database current. Up to date member records allow us to remain in contact with you on those rare occasions that we cannot reach you at your school or in instances when it is more appropriate to correspond with you at home. We take great care in safeguarding your personal information and retain it only for ETFO Niagara purposes. If your personal information has changed such as your name, address, and/or phone number please contact Tena at the ETFO Niagara office either via e-mail (admin@etfoniag.com) or via board courier.

Work to Prevent the Spread of H1N1

We are concerned about the health and well-being of our members. With the expected spread of the H1N1 virus this fall, we are hoping that members take necessary precautions to help maintain their good health. The medical community is promoting prevention strategies such as frequent hand washing, sanitizing frequently used items, and proper sneezing and coughing etiquette. For more information regarding the H1N1 virus, please visit the DSNB website at www.dsnb.edu.on.ca.

ETFO Niagara

2601 Hwy. 20., East, Units 5 & 6, R.R. #1, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E6

905-892-2917 or 1-866-419-9484 www.etfoniag.com

Steward Information Needed

Last June we solicited volunteers to serve teachers as workplace Stewards. Recognizing that June is a busy time, there are still a number of schools that have not forwarded their Steward information to the ETFO Niagara office via e-mail to admin@etfoniag.com.

Again this year, the mailings will arrive in clear plastic envelopes. To return the envelopes, simply empty the contents and place the poly-envelope back in the mailbag **without relabelling the envelope**. Thank you in advance for serving your union and your colleagues in this vital role.

Forms to Help Serve the Membership

Included with this mailing are a couple of forms we are encouraging teachers to use on an ongoing basis. A **Mileage Log & Claim Form** is included for teachers attending federation business such as our General Meetings. You will notice that the claim form contains a voluntary program to help offset Carbon Dioxide emissions generated by automobiles when members attend activities of ETFO Niagara. This is one of the only programs of its kind within your federation. We value your commitment to the organization and hope that you will submit claims for mileage.

Similarly, we have also included **Dependant Care Forms**, wherein teachers can recover the cost associated with providing child care while they are working on behalf of the federation. The Dependant Care Form and the Mileage Log Claim Form are also located on our website at www.etfoniag.com.

With so many teachers and just three of us, we appreciate any help you can provide the local in ensuring that we have sent the appropriate correspondence, (congratulations, regrets, sympathies) to teachers and their families in times of celebration and in times when support is needed. ETFO Niagara is also still conducting the **Ready to Read** program which sends a bag of baby books to **ANY newborns** in the school community. Therefore, we ask that teachers continue to pass along the completed forms to the local office, so that we can continue to be effective goodwill ambassadors on your behalf. Included in this mailing are a Goodwill Notification Form and the Ready to Read Form that can be sent to us via fax or courier. These forms can also be found on our website.

Your Federation at Work in the Summer

Although your local office does not maintain regular office hours, advancements in technology make it easy to stay connected to our members. Sharon, Todd, and Terri were pleased to respond to hundreds of e-mails and dozens of telephone calls from members asking questions, accessing the Professional Development Fund, and working to support their teacher colleagues. In fact, a number of your colleagues took time out of their summer schedules to represent ETFO Niagara in a number of activities that promote teachers and the profession. In July, Niagara hosted four Summer Academy courses for more than 90 teachers from across the province, confirming our commitment to self directed professional development. In August, fifteen of your colleagues represented Niagara at the ETFO Annual General Meeting in Toronto for 4 days, where your delegates participated in the decision making process for your organization. And, in case you haven't heard, ETFO now has a **new provincial president, Sam Hammond** from Hamilton Wentworth. It was one of the most interesting and exciting Annual Meetings in years.

ETFO Niagara once again made a positive presence in the community through initiatives such as the United Way Backpacks For Kids Program. Thank you to all of the members that participated in these events.

PenFinancial is Helping Our Kids

The first annual **Skates for Kids** Program is a community fundraiser organized by PenFinancial Credit Union to support two deserving schools in Welland and St. Catharines. Donate your family's gently worn skates in all sizes from child, youth and adult between August 27 and September 16, 2009 at any PenFinancial Credit Union branch, at Silvestri Sports in Welland, Front Row Sports (Thorold and Sportsplex locations) or at the St. Catharines Standard or Welland Tribune office locations. Please see flyer included in this mailing for more details.

Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

September 22 nd	ETFO Niagara Executive Meeting
September 25 th	Early Release Day
October 9 th	P.D. Day – Board Directed
October 12 th	Thanksgiving
October 22 nd	ETFO Niagara General Meeting
November 17 th	Pregnancy and Parental Leave Workshop
December 6 th	ETFO Niagara Children's Christmas Party