



The Bare Essentials



September 30, 2009

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Fall General Meeting and Constitutional Amendments

Your Fall General Meeting is scheduled for October 22nd at John Michael's Banquet Centre. General Meetings are held to conduct official business of the local, such as pass a budget, as well as provide an opportunity for the sharing of information and asking questions. We ask that schools please let Todd Rimmington at the ETFO Niagara office know how many will be in attendance from each school, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Among the items of business that are conducted at the General Meeting are the discussion/debate of proposed local Constitutional Amendments *which are due to the ETFO Niagara office by October 5th*. Submission forms that outline the process and purpose of these types of business motions were distributed to schools last week along with the Notice of the Fall General Meeting. If you have any other questions, please contact Todd Rimmington at vp1@etfoniag.com.

Frequently Asked Supervision Questions

Negotiated in the last round of Collective Bargaining was a hard supervision cap of 80 minutes within 5 instructional days or 160 minutes within a period of 10 instructional days (pro-rated for part time teachers). For clarity, supervisory duties shall not be scheduled during a teachers "uninterrupted" 40 minute lunch period.

Often the concept of supervision gets confused with **Regulation 298 s. 20** which states that: *unless otherwise assigned by the principal, be present in the classroom or teaching area and ensure that the classroom or teaching area is ready for the reception of pupils at least 15 minutes before the commencement of classes in the school in the morning and, where applicable, five minutes before the commencement of classes in the school in the afternoon*. In other words, if a teacher is assigned supervision in the morning beyond the 15 minute "Ed. Act Time," then they would be required to be at school to provide the scheduled supervision.

Another area of confusion regarding supervision is a "Superior Benefits Clause" that still remains from Collective Bargaining in 2005. Article 18.06 (b) states that **No teacher shall be assigned supervision time in excess of the equivalent amount of supervision time assigned in his or her school as of March 1, 2005, subject to modifications or changes in assignments or workplace**. Stated another way, if teachers have taught at the same school since 2005, the amount of supervision time they have had scheduled should not have increased since that time. If you have any questions about supervision, please do not hesitate to contact the ETFO Niagara office.

Important Pension Funding Update

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Government, joint sponsors of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, are filing a funding valuation with the provincial pension regulator two years earlier than required by law. Filing this 2009 funding valuation means: 1) NO change is required to contribution rates or benefit levels with this filing and; 2) The OTF and government have additional time to determine how to keep the Teachers' pension plan financially viable and affordable in the future. No changes would be implemented before the next valuation is filed with the regulator up to three years from now.

A funding valuation is an assessment of the long term financial health of a Pension Plan. By filing the valuation now, the OTF and government gain time to address funding challenges that persist because the cost of future pension benefits is growing faster than plan assets.

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Projected funding shortfalls will recur because of factors such as: plan demographics, low real (after inflation) interest rates, which drive up future pension costs, projected modest investment returns, and 2008 losses, which will be realized over the next four years due to the effect of “smoothing.”

The OTF and government, in co-operation with the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan, will develop a plan by mid 2010 to deal with the pension plan’s recurring funding challenges. Members will be kept apprised of their progress through regular updates. Members should be aware that OTF and the government can address funding shortfalls by: increasing contribution rates, invoking conditional inflation protection for pension credit earned after 2009, changing other future benefits, or adopting a combination of these measures.

Pension benefits already earned by working and retired members cannot be reduced under the Ontario Pension Benefits Act. More information is available on the pension plan website at www.otpp.com/funding.

Discount Raptors Tickets

On occasion, the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan offers its members a great deal on Toronto Raptors tickets. The ticket prices range from \$28 to \$94 and this fall the games offered for the promotion are : vs. Boston Celtic on Oct. 18, vs. Detroit Pistons on Nov. 4th, vs. Chicago Bulls on Nov. 11th, vs. Miami Heat on Nov. 20th, and vs. Houston Rockets on Dec. 13th. The link for ordering tickets is <https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/go.html?l=EN&t=raptors&o=8463463&q=158> . If you experience any difficulty, please contact Domenic Gaetano at DGaetano@mapleleafsports.com .

These tickets are usually sold extremely fast, therefore, if you do not have luck with this promotion, but are interested in future promotions, then please consider adding promotions@otppmembers.com to your address book to get the most up to date discount offers.

Professional Learning Community – Women’s Program

The ETFO provincial Equity and Women’s Services staff are pleased to offer a six week Professional Learning Community Program for women members. The first session begins Friday, October 23rd and continues to Monday, November 30, 2009. This is part of ETFO’s commitment to build members’ capacity for social justice and equity work in their classrooms, schools, and other contexts. Participants will explore issues relating to identity, white privilege, pedagogy, and how these intersect and influence teacher practice. For more information please see the flyer and application sent to schools in the September Stewards mailing sent from ETFO provincial or check the provincial website at www.etfo.ca or feel free to contact the ETFO Niagara office.

OTIP Launches “Feeling Better Now.com”

The Ontario Teachers’ Insurance Plan (OTIP) has launched a new web based tool called feelingbetternow.com. Feelingbetternow is a mental and emotional health care program that provides: emotional and mental health assessment, tools that you and your doctor can use to assess, treat and follow-up on emotional and mental health concerns, and information and resources about both health issues. A brochure outlining this new resource is included with this mailing.

DSBN Blood Donor Challenge

The DSBN Blood Donor Challenge is on! The kick-off date is September 30th and the challenge runs throughout the entire month of October. One donation can save up to three lives. *Call 1 888 2 DONATE* to book your appointment. Don’t forget to sign in for your school when you donate. This year’s goal is 150 donations. Thanks to the Niagara Ice Dogs for their support of this worthwhile cause. There should be additional information in your schools.

It’s all on the ETFO Niagara Website

To keep current on what is happening and available for members of ETFO Niagara – Teacher Local, we recommend you access our website at www.etfoniag.com on a regular basis. Our website contains many forms and various pieces of information pertinent to permanent contract teachers including “The Bare Essentials”.

Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

October 9 th	P.D. Day – Board Directed
October 12 th	Thanksgiving
October 22 nd	ETFO Niagara General Meeting
November 13 th	PA Day for Assessment and Completion of Report Cards
November 17 th	Pregnancy and Parental Leave Workshop
December 6 th	ETFO Niagara Children’s Christmas Party