

EA'sy Talk



President's Message



So many rumours have been circulating throughout the county after the news of layoffs for just over 50 Educational Assistants in the Simcoe District School Board. This layoff will affect directly or indirectly approximately 80 Educational Assistants in the public board. This news is devastating for the E.A.'s, parents, students and teachers .

Rumour #1: The Educational Assistants from the public board have been applying to the Catholic Board for permanent and supply positions making it more difficult for those currently on the SMCDSB supply list to find work.

Truth: There will not be loss of work for our supply members. The SMCDSB continues to hire persons to do supply work as the supply list was depleted in the fall with the hiring of about 15 Educational Assistants. There are areas in the board where there are not enough supply to cover all of the leaves and day-to-day absences, often many positions are not filled. There are on average 60 Educational Assistants per day away due to illness, medical appointments, floating holidays and other short term leaves. Additionally, many supply Educational Assistants have their name on both the public board and the catholic board supply list.

Rumour #2: The SMCDSB will be laying off Educational Assistants just like the Public Board.

Truth: You will hear that the SMCDSB is experiencing a slight decline in enrolment. This decline is in the general student population. This does not mean E.A.'s will be laid off. In fact, the number of special needs students requiring support in our school system has increased over the past years and appears to continue to increase. The SMCDSB is committed to providing exceptional programming and support for special needs students. Staffing levels of Educational Assistants is based on need. The allocations are determined based on the needs of the school and students. I have been assured that our board will not arbitrarily reduce the number of Educational Assistants if there is a need for support.



If you hear a story or random information, please call me at the District Office to get clarification before making any assumptions or spreading rumours.

Patty Coates



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Congratulations Richard!

Richard Anderson sits on your executive as your Health and Safety (H&S) Rep. He represents you on the boards H&S Committee which includes reps from all worker groups within our board.. On March 26/09, Richard was recognized by the committee for his work in helping to get defibrillators into our schools. We want to thank Richard for all the work he does on this committee on our behalf. Enda Soostar from Human Resources surprised Richard with his award.

You are the most valuable source of information. We need your expertise. Only **you** can inform us if there is a violation of the collective agreement or if **you** are being asked to perform duties that are not in the job description or the duties of another work group. Only **you** know if **you** have not been properly trained in certain areas of your job that relates to the students **you** are working with i.e.: new equipment, computer program, lifts, physical therapy, occupational therapy etc. Only **you** know if side deals are made with your school's administration in regards to breaks, lunches, arrival or departure times. Call the union office if **you** become aware of a situation. Attend your branch meetings. Attend the Annual General Meetings. Read the OSSTF constitution and your Bargaining Unit constitution. Get involved!



ARE YOU OR YOUR PARTNER HAVING A BABY?



OSSTF has developed a Guide to Pregnancy & Parental Leave for members. This guide has been produced to help you prepare for your pregnancy/parental leave. This guide is intended to answer the questions that often arise and speaks of issues related to your leave and benefits.



If you wish a copy of this guide, please contact Lucy Shepherd at the District Office ~ 726-1722



OSSTF DISTRICT 17 SIMCOE DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING

(This is NOT the EA Annual Meeting)



Monday, May 11, 2009
Georgian Banquet Facilities
52 Morrow Road
Barrie

Social 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Business 5:30 p.m. to adjournment

If you are interested in attending this meeting, please call Terry Smyth at the District Office prior to April 27, 2009.

There will be a \$10.00 deposit that should be directed to PATTY COATES and will be returned to you at the meeting.

A notice of this meeting has been sent to each workplace

OSSTF District Committees

There are two very important District Committees which you, as a member, can attend. Both committees meet on a regular basis at the OSSTF District Office at 5:00 pm.

District Status of Woman Committee

- April 16, 2009 (Maternity/Paternity workshop)

- May 28, 2009 (Regular Meeting Date)

District Human Rights Committee

- April 27, 2009 (Regular Meeting Date)

**FEEL FREE TO ATTEND THE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF YOUR CHOICE**



A Message from Catherine Johnson, Vice-president, E.A. Executive

I want to thank the the E.A. Executive for their support in my pursuit of my B. Ed. The executive has taken over much of the responsibilities of my office so that I can concentrate on my professional development. I would also like to thank and give my appreciation to the E.A.'s at St. Thomas Aquinas. The E.A.'s at STA have always been there with a helping hand and/or encouraging word.

Thank you everyone! *Catherine Johnson*

AMPA

(Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly)



On the morning of Friday, March 13th a group of 26 District 17 members ~ 5 from the Educational Assistants' Bargaining Unit ~ were packing their bags. Not for a trip to the sunny south but for a trip to the jungles of downtown Toronto to spend the first weekend of the March Break at the OSSTF annual convention (AMPA). This is an annual migrating of union activists from across Ontario to participate in this 90 year ritual.

As the group from District 17 congregated on the Friday night in the suite to hear candidate speeches and to go out for dinner to discuss the motions, speeches and other goings on for this year's AMPA, Mother Nature was cooperating (much better than last year). Registration was the first official order for the first night with the main event to begin at 9:00 am on the Saturday morning.

As the delegates filtered into the large convention room there was excitement in the air. The agenda, which AMPA had followed for many years was changing to co-inside with OSSTF's "Student's First Plan". The order of the day brought students from secondary high schools to be honoured as this year's Marion Drysdale Award following the speech from Kathleen Wynne the Minister of Education.

Throughout the next three days, delegates debated and voted on motions, passed an annual action plan, the OSSTF Provincial budget and elected the new Provincial Executive.

As the tired looking delegation was leaving the down town core during rush hour on Monday evening, a member was heard to say "Rest up so we can do this all over again next year!"



Did You Know? By Lucy Shepherd

****If you are called to the office, you are entitled to Union representation. You don't need to represent yourself, and you shouldn't. Call your bargaining union president, Patty Coates @ (705) 726-1722, or on her cell @ (705) 321-1441.**

****Are you being asked to go into the swimming pool with your students? Well, the answer you give to your supervisor is "No". This was discussed at our Labour Management meeting in February and the board agreed that E.A.'s would not be expected to go into the pool. The swimming facility should be supplying the extra staff as is needed. Remember the famous words of our fearless leader Patty, "EA's are not personal floatation devices".**

****Human Rights Code and Board Harassment Policies: Did you know that the Human Rights Code says that "every person who is an employee, has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace".**

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Your Executive 2008-2009

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Health & Safety Officer

Richard Anderson

Executive Officers

Lucy Shepherd

Richard Anderson

Lisa Gauthier

Casual/Supply Rep

Bobby(Roberta) Gamache

Youth Rep

Jenna McGinty

Antoinette Dunmore



Julian (7 months) and Alissia (2 ½ years) along with their mother Melissa Albanese would like to wish everyone a warm and happy spring.



Amanda Shea and her daughter Tia (8 months) hope that everyone had a enjoyable March break and a Happy St. Patrick's Day.



EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS' COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT (The Red Booklet)

Your new collective agreement will be sent to your workplace soon. The SMCDSB is waiting for the shipment of new benefit booklets which must be attached to our agreements. In the event that the benefit booklets do not arrive, the EA Collective Agreement will be sent out with the benefit booklets to follow. Upon their arrival make sure that you read through them, knowledge is indeed power!