

ESPecially Yours

Volume 18, Issue 1

December 2017

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Welcome back to everyone for the 2017-2018 school year!

Things have been very busy in District 25 again this fall

As a result of the budget process last year, things have become very hectic at all sites. Although all school sites now have 1.5 office staff, the budget also reduced staffing in some of our larger schools. It is becoming overwhelming.

It is important for all members to remember that you should only be performing duties related to your job. For example

1. We have been told that it is the responsibility of the Principal or VP to be approving absences for staff and making the arrangements for replacements as needed. If this is a regular part of your job, please let me know.
2. Office Administrators are now responsible for the Budget according to the financial guidelines. If it is delegated to another staff member, please be aware that the OA is ultimately responsible.

In our last contract we included a letter of understanding to create a Joint Committee to Review our Competition Process. We have been trying to initiate a transfer procedure for our members. We are currently the only bargaining unit without transfer language in our contract. There will be a survey sent out to Principals for their feedback.

Morale seems to be on a downturn. I have had to work through many mediations with members this fall. I urge you all to be respectful and professional with your colleagues, parents and students. We need to support each other in order to get through all the daily stresses and situations we face. As Ellen says: "Be nice to one another."



a new building at 9 Corvus Court. Our new addition is now complete. We have held some successful events there - our Grand Opening, a Meet and Greet with OCDSB Senior Staff and Trustees, some Bargaining Unit meetings, and ESP and SSP hosted a PD Day event on November 24, 2017.

As a result of the OSSTF negotiated remedy for Bill 115, eligible members received a top up to their gratuity this fall. WE are also expecting a .5% lump sum payout for members who worked in 2016-2017 and were employed on September 5, 2017 in December. It was supposed to be paid by November 1, but due to the complexity of the calculations, it was delayed. Thank you all for your patience.

ESP is planning a special Member Engagement Night for May 4, 2018. Please stay posted for details and "MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU".

Our next issue will be coming out in the New Year, so please enjoy your Christmas/Holiday break!

Nancy

As you may be aware,
District 25 Ottawa
Carleton moved into



PUBLICATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS
OSSTF DISTRICT 25, 9 CORVUS COURT, OTTAWA, ONTARIO K2E 7Z4
PHONE: 613-729-7211 FAX: 613-729-8565 www.d25.osstf.ca

From Your Chief Negotiator

It's December already, and from what many ESP members are saying another year at the OCDSB seems to be flying by. For better or for worse, one of the consequences of work overload is that time often appears to pass quickly, if not in the moment then certainly in hindsight.

As Nancy Akehurst points out in her report this issue, one of the other consequences of work overload can be stress and conflict in the workplace.

In recognition of this reality, your ESP Bargaining Unit and our fellow D25 Student Support Professionals Bargaining Unit recently sponsored a workshop on Managing Conflict, available to all Support Staff on the November 24th system wide PD day. The workshop was presented in cooperation with the OCDSB who provided release time for our members to attend one of the two half day presentations of the training.

By all accounts, the workshop was an all-around success and well appreciated by those who attended (see Melodie Gondek's report in this newsletter.) It was also a great introduction for some of our members to our new training and meeting facility attached to the District 25 offices, and a great demonstration of the value of the new building for our District. We are looking forward to providing more such workshops and training opportunities there for our membership in the near future.



ESP (and OSSTF District 25) President Nancy Akehurst cuts the cake at the grand opening of the District 25 Training Centre on October 12.

ALMOST on schedule with the terms of the OSSTF Central Agreement Extension, the OCDSB will be paying out the lump sum amount of .5 % of 2016-2017 earnings for OCDSB members before the end of the year. After this one time payment, we can look forward to three salary increases that will apply before the ESP - OCDSB Collective Agreement expires:

- 1% on Sept 1, 2018
- 1% on Feb. 1, 2019
- .5% on Aug. 31 2019

For those of our members working under the ESP-OSTA Collective Agreement and therefore not subject to the OSSTF Central Agreement, these salary provisions do not apply. The separate OSTA contract has its own salary

provisions, and is scheduled to expire in August 2018. Toward the goal of renegotiation next year, an OSTA Collective Bargaining Committee has been struck consisting of five of our OSTA members along with Nancy Akehurst and myself. We will have our first meeting in early January to begin discussion of contract goals and the development of a negotiations brief and bargaining strategy for the OSTA group.

In the meantime, and to all ESP members, here is wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Leif

Get to know your ESP executive

Work things to know about me

How long have you been working for the Board?

I have been working in various roles with the OCDSB since 2012. My first position was as an Outdoor Educator, teaching children in grades 4-6 about environmental stewardship through digital photography. We did a photo scavenger hunt at Mud Lake with Regina St PS and that project grew into an amazing initiative that continues today in that school. Kids love nature and any way to use it in the curriculum guarantees success.

What department/school are you in now?

I am the Office Administrator for Elgin St. Public School in Centretown. We are a French Immersion Centre.

ESP things to know about me

How long have you been on the ESP executive?

This is my first year on the executive. I am learning a lot about the inner workings between the board and our bargaining unit. It's easy to have apathy for the union until you start to see the scope of work involved. I hope for more member participation in the future. Even if you're frustrated, your experience has value and you should be heard. Don't be



One of our new members on the ESP executive - executive officer Melodie Gondek

shy. Be bold.

Are you a pet owner?

I have some pet peeves but do not own a pet. We have four children, so if we added an animal, my husband and I would likely never see each other again. Seriously, we did have a service dog for one of our children and since the dog died we all feel a little lost. Pets become family and it's tough to lose them.

If you could be in any profession, what would you be?

I have always wanted to be a 911 dispatch operator. I've memorized 10 codes and perfected my totally detached neutral voice. I even took medical administration to pursue the position but my French is too weak to make the dream come true. I'll have to settle for the Sonim calls from the school yard at recess. 10-4!

Happy Holidays from Your ESP Executive!

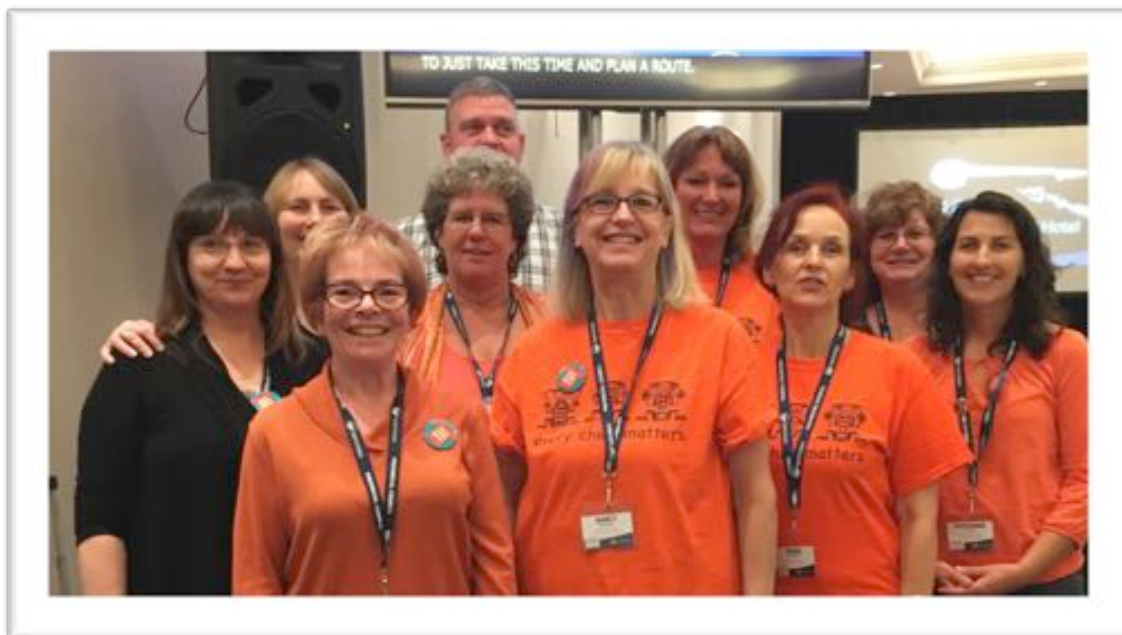
What has your executive been up to?



Jacquelin Hodgson attended the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention in Toronto in November.



L to R: Leif Walther, Judy Soifer, Saul Mogelonsky
They attended the OSSTF Summer Leadership Conference which took place in Toronto in August.



District 25 representatives to OSSTF Provincial Council in Toronto on September 29 are wearing orange shirts in a spirit of reconciliation and because Every Child Matters.

Front L-R: Cheryl Cavell, SSP; Nancy Akehurst, ESP; Biana Gordon, PECCS; Stephanie Kirkey, TBU. Back L-R: Lea Ann Ouimet, PSSP; Kelly Granum, OTBU; Jean Trant, SSP; Andrew Horwood, PSSU; Cathy Bailey, TBU; Kim Appel, TBU.

Conflict Resolution PD Workshop

BY MELODIE GONDEK

The District 25 ESP Bargaining Unit, in partnership with the District 25 SSP Bargaining Unit, held a Conflict Management Professional Development workshop on Friday, November 24. Over two sessions, various members of our bargaining unit came to the new District 25 Training Centre to learn about managing conflict in the workplace.

The presenter of the workshop, Randy Banderob, is an Executive Assistant in the OSSTF Educational Services Department and has worked extensively with the Meditation Services Resource Bank (MSRB). He arrived armed with examples of conflict that can occur in a workplace. Some scenarios he shared seemed insignificant to some participants, yet glaringly important to others. In every case, Randy showed that if the problem had been addressed from the outset, it would have been resolved quickly. In turn, the conflict would have taken up much less emotional real estate for everyone involved.

The primary takeaway of the workshop is that we must solve conflict among ourselves. If the Employer is forced to address it someone must accept responsibility for the conflict. However, mediation among members creates a collaborative solution, which results in the interest of both parties being met. To this end, there is a 3-Step approach to managing conflict that will benefit everyone:

Acknowledgement

- Identify the problem
- Identify needs vs wants
- Identify how you are feeling and, most importantly, why

Communication

- Listen and reflect back on what the member is sharing with you
- Ask clarifying questions until you and the member can agree about your reflection
- Ask: "What do you need?"
- Share your view of the problem
- Identify your interests

Resolution

- Generate possible solutions; invite the other party to suggest options and be prepared to offer suggestions as well
- Be creative and flexible. Consider whether the possible solution will meet your interest
- Agree on a solution that meets the needs of both parties

Information is empowering; know your role's duties and responsibilities and know to whom you directly report. If you are having an issue that you've tried to resolve using these steps but cannot come to a win/win result, consider contacting your bargaining unit for mediation that meets the interest of everyone so all can move forward in a positive way. No one wants to go to work with tension or undue stress.

Suggested reading:

Biff: Quick Responses to High Conflict People, Their Hostile Emails, Personal Attacks and Social Media Meltdowns, by Bill Eddy

Getting to Yes: How To Negotiate Agreement Without Giving In, by Roger Fisher



A workshop in progress at the District 25 Training Centre

Health and Safety - Everybody's Business

BY LANA LOTAN, ESP HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

There has been a great deal of focus this year on stress in the workplace and ways to reduce and cope with that stress. One of the most challenging aspects of most of our jobs is the variety of interactions we deal with daily. As front-line staff who are most likely to deal with students either directly or indirectly in the course of the day, below are some helpful hints to understanding and dealing with some of the more challenging students we meet. These principles can be applied to students (and adults) who may present as being very oppositional or defiant to authority. These tips have been developed by one of our own Board staff members, Bruce Hoey.

Defiant behaviour

- Students goal is to resist being controlled
- Student frequently argues with adults
- Student loses temper often and easily
- Will become defiant with an audience: defies requests and rules
- Sees direction as controlling
- Blames and is unwilling to accept blame
- Angry, resentful
- Spiteful or vindictive
- Positive reinforcement perceived as manipulation
- Stubborn, unwilling to compromise or give in
- Persistent testing of limits
- Often related to other mood disorders or disorders (ADHD/Anxiety)

Defiant behaviour Cautions: Avoid...

- Responding emotionally
- Using "No" or "Do this now"
- Threatening
- Increasing consequences
- Having interactions in the presence of others
- Remaining in interaction too long

Defiant behaviour Strategies

- Build relationships
- Simple directives, choices
- Predetermined consequences
- Listen
- Be brief and direct
- Private discussions – **AWAY FROM ANY AUDIENCE**
- Walk away
- Deflect blame
- Quiet reinforcement
- Allow for choice of consequence if possible

Responses to defiant students:

- "Let me know when you have made your decision."
- "Take some time to think about it."
- "I'm not angry with you."
- "I know you will make a positive choice."

Break eye contact after each response

Bruce Hoey, 2014

Save The Date!



The PD committee wishes to announce that our PD Day event will take place on April 27, 2018 at Colonel By Secondary School. We are embracing the change in timing with a spring theme and are pretty sure everyone is going to appreciate the better weather! Registration forms will be available right after March Break. Hope to see you all there!

Judy Soifer and the PD Day Committee



Colonel By Secondary School
2381 Ogilvie Road
Gloucester

From the Employee Wellness & Disability Management Conference

Information about your Employee & Family Assistance Program

As a regular employee with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board you and your dependents are eligible for free services.

This short video will provide you with good information about the many services available to you:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzgXiTdJpMB3MC1jbWpiY014dnM/view>

You can call Shepell 24 hours a day at 1-800-387-4765 or for more information visit the website at <http://www.workhealthlife.com>



DID YOU KNOW?

Regarding Sick Leave:

Under the terms of our contract, the Standard Medical form provided there (and available from the Employer) is the ONLY medical documentation required from your medical practitioner for confirmation of your medical status in most circumstances. This form allows your practitioner to indicate whether your illness renders you incapable of working altogether or may allow a return to work with limitations or restrictions. With the exception of LTD or WSIB forms, you should NOT be asked by the Employer to have any other medical forms completed. Beyond this, the Collective Agreement stipulates that "At no time shall the employer or any of its agents contact the medical practitioner directly." In all cases, if you are asked to take a letter from the employer requesting further information from your practitioner or to convey any other communication from them, it is very important that you contact someone at the OSSTF office for advice and guidance in the matter before proceeding.

The Editor of *ESpecially Yours* is Margaret Elson. Comments, suggestions and contributions may be sent to her by GEM anytime. Next issue - February 2018

On the lighter side ...



Disclaimer - Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this publication, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions and views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of OSSTF, or District 25.