

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – April 3, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU 1st VP

Another week, another twist...or two...or three!

Stress – We have been hearing about significant amounts of stress for members this week as various things happen and others don't. Many of you are dealing with children and elderly parents, others with technology challenges, and quite a few are concerned about keeping up with their peers. Ultimately, each of us is only expected to do what we can. It is very important that we not accept pressure being placed on us from outside sources, as we have enough internal pressures, already. The fact that you are not able to teach as brilliantly in this model as you normally do in the class is the reality for everyone. None of us should feel any shame or embarrassment because we can't produce the quality of videos or other engaging online activities for our students that a colleague might be. This is not what we have been trained for and certainly not the circumstances in which we have honed our craft. Focus on looking after yourself and your family and do what you can for your students.

If anyone is looking for some supports, please use the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP) available from the Board. It is completely confidential and free. <https://www.workhealthlife.com/>

Distance Learning - Again, a number of meetings have occurred between TSU and the Board this week leading up to the Distance Learning Implementation Plan (DLIP) being sent out by the Board. The size of the document may appear a little overwhelming at first, and might take some time to get through. The bottom line, though, is that you are only expected to do what you can. The DLIP provides guidelines in a number of areas to assist you in providing learning for your students, which is what we are trying to focus on starting next week. You may notice that the expression "professional judgement" has been included in the document a number of times. This was done deliberately by the Board, even though the Ministry document, from which the Board developed the DLIP, did not include it. The trick will now be to balance your professional judgment with your personal circumstances. Hopefully, the end result will be smooth once we get into the groove over the next couple of weeks.

TSU continued to express concern about teacher vulnerability in distance learning, which you can see reflected in the DLIP. Teachers should not be engaging in synchronous video conferencing with students, the Board has indicated, as this raises privacy concerns for both teachers and students. And that's before the FBI warning about Zoom. We do still have reservations over any video or audio communication or teaching but, again, professional judgement should be prudently exercised. I would hate to see students manipulating audio and video and placing your image in an inappropriate video, altering your speech to sound like you just had a stroke or are drunk, or editing the audio to make it sound as if you said something completely inappropriate. As funny as they might find that, it isn't good for us.

And lastly, the DLIP is seen by the Board as a framework for what could happen. It is not purely prescriptive. Implement it as best you can, with professional judgement and in the best interests of your students.

Bargaining – We should all have received communication from OECTA this week regarding the ratification vote on the tentative deal. We will have from noon on April 7 until noon on April 8 to cast a vote. If you did not receive the information about how to do this, please contact OECTA.

OTs – Good news this week regarding a payment system for daily OTs for the two weeks of school closure following the March Break! Please check your TSU email for information from Gillian on that, if

you haven't done so already. Discussion continues on the issues of the 20 days of service to be reassigned to the OT list as well as the 50-day requirement to qualify for benefits.

Staffing – LSSACs will be meeting this week now that the SSSAC has had some meetings and worked out some of the details for this year. While secondary enrollment is down and, therefore, staffing levels are lower, retirements will offset all of these losses. There will be a few positions needing to be hired for in the end. Not great news but at least we will avoid the Supernumerary situation.

Strike cheques – Some are still waiting for strike cheques. Again, OECTA is working on it and will get it to you as soon as they can.

Here's hoping things go smoothly next week.

Stay safe.