

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – June 5, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU 1st VP

Did someone say, “three more weeks!”?

Distance Learning – As we wander towards the end of June a few people are experiencing a little anxiety over how things will wrap up. We’re hoping it’s “not with a bang but a whimper.” Not that it’s the end of the world, just.... Anyway, there will be specific times set aside for report cards, etc., as some have noticed is the case for elementary teachers. The precise dates are still under discussion. In the meantime, it’s recommended that you assign early deadlines for ISUs to give yourself time to mark and report without too much pressure.

The other big kaffuffle related to this is the access to schools. It was probably the number one topic of calls and emails this week. The Board seems to have sent out messages, written and/or verbal, with some inconsistencies. The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) tried to help clarify those, yesterday. TSU has been clear that Teachers should be allowed access before students for Health reasons, primarily. It seems (to use that word again) that this will be the case. It also seems that there was a mixed message about teacher involvement in assisting/facilitating student clear-out of lockers. And we are still seeking clarification. At this point, teachers are not involved in this, again for Health reasons. Plus, you’ll be busy doing report cards. In the meantime, your principal should have developed a schedule for teacher access for next week.

Grievance and Arbitration – The epic known as Parmar continues. We spent the day on Tuesday listening to examination and cross examination on Health and Safety issues. Future dates are scheduled for August and September. While much has come out of the arbitration, including more DWMs and inspections, as well as a terms of reference for the JHSC, difficulties still exist with the implementation of some of Arbitrator Parmar’s orders. The Board doesn’t like them, apparently...but maybe it’s something else. Either way, we’re hoping this is fully resolved before we’re all retired.

We were also busy this week with writing a number of grievances. And have a few more in the hopper for next week.

Local Bargaining – The Local Collective Bargaining Committee (LCBC) met on Wednesday to have a look at the outcomes of the research team work. We will be coming out with information and requests before the end of June, so that we can develop an initial proposal over the summer. We have not had contact with the Board, yet, over setting dates for bargaining but it’s obvious it won’t be happening before September.

Staffing – Now that you all have your departmental assignments for next year...you do all have them, right? No?! If not, please let us know, because you were supposed to have been given those by May 30! For those who do have them, the conversations about course selection should be starting. It may be a bit more difficult this year with no face-to-face meetings but in some cases, it might make things easier to be zooming in together to make the decisions. Remember that a collegial and collaborative process must occur to sort out the department timetable. The simplest way is to talk to each other at the same time. Yes, synchronously! Don’t leave the task up to the Department Heads, they have enough work to do, and don’t want to have to deal with irate colleagues afterwards. Everyone play nice.

We also had a really nice email from Ian Vaithilingam. For those who don’t know Ian, he is a teacher from St. JPII who has been teaching in the Mattagami First Nation Reserve for the past two years. His energy, enthusiasm, wit and warmth is missed by all of us who know him down here but our loss is certainly their gain. So a shout out to Ian, who receives and reads (he claims) the Weekly Wrap Up each week from his TSU email.

Here he is doing activities with his students. No, it’s not still snowy up there.



Well, that’s it for another week. Hope you all have a great weekend. 3 to go and you’re done.