

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – September 25, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU President

Too tired for any pithy comments, so let's get to it.

Staffing/scheduling – So, everyone now has a timetable? You should, although there are quite a few who are concerned that the Board did not follow its own process in placing teachers into courses in the virtual school. Emails have been sent and calls made and, hopefully, there will be some clarification come Monday.

What has not been clarified, as far as we are aware, which in itself would mean it's not clear, is the fact that live video does not need to be used. It seems quite clear that the Board expects it to be used, and in the virtual school there appears to be some direction to use it for opening exercises, attendance etc. There is no need to use it if you don't want to. Any of that can be done in different ways that do not require you to compromise your privacy or safety. According to PPM 164, not even the ministry requires it, although they try to push it.

Conflicting messages also exist regarding on-calls and supervision. Different principals are giving different information to teachers. Some say VS teachers don't do on-calls or supervision in the day school, others the opposite. Some are assigning 75 minute on-calls in the day school, claiming that's half a period. We have been very clear with the Board that the CA must be adhered to with regards to on-calls and supervision. There are four periods in a day, Blocks A-D. Each is 75 minutes. An on-call is to be assigned in a scheduled half period. Therefore, an on-call is to be 37.5 minutes. (Not bad for a history teacher, eh?) if you are assigned anything different remind your administrator, politely of what the CA says. If they disagree, accept the assignment and we will grieve on your behalf after. Everyone should keep a record of on-call assignments. LSSAC should ensure that everyone who is in the building and assigned on-calls or supervision has that recorded on the on-call tally sheet. This includes the VS teachers, who might be assigned to a day school coverage, although that should not happen during their teaching time.

I believe the attendance taking issues have been cleared up. If not, you can only take attendance in the class you are currently teaching. The suggestion that you take attendance for your face to face and asynchronous classes simultaneously is ridiculous and we have indicated as much. Some principals have backed off on the demand, hopefully all.

All those who made accommodation requests should have been taken care of by this point. If you have made application recently, it is, perhaps, still being reviewed. The Board will more rigorous in its examination of requests that have been made since assignments to day or virtual school were made. We will also be rigorous in following up on your requests and ensuring that they are properly dealt with.

Health and Safety – Chemicals were an issue this week. Teachers should not be using chemicals and doing cleaning. It is hazardous in some cases, especially without proper WHIMIS documentation provided. And it is the work of another group, CUPE. Let your admin know if there is something that needs special attention, such as keyboards, and they can arrange for it to be done.

There should be no restriction on PPE. Some principals are asking for forms to be completed to obtain additional masks or the one shield to which you are entitled. This should not be happening. If they are concerned about inventory control, they could set up a sheet and tick off who got what. Health and Safety should be easy and not have roadblocks put in its way.

TSU Office – So, I did manage to get out some info to you this week regarding the Release Officer Liaisons and the DWMs. Please contact the appropriate person for your school to ensure

effective communication and assistance for you. Don't worry, if you contact the wrong person, we will forward your email/call to the right person. By the time we get through that, it might take a bit longer for you to get the answers you need, so have a look at those lists. Speaking of which, I'll apologize again for any delays in any of us getting back to you. As most of you say when you do call or email, we are really busy.... If we don't get back to you, please try us again.

Arbitration – Two full days of Arbitration this week meant that I had even less chance to get through emails and phone calls and explains why I'm still typing this after 5pm on a Friday! The Parmar saga continues and we will be back with her on October 21. Tough to tell if there is progress being made but we certainly feel that our arguments and evidence are good. Hope the arbitrator thinks so, too.

Bargaining – I know someone at the Board is reading this, so I can't say too much. The draft initial proposal was completed this week and has been submitted to OECTA for review. Once we get it back and they have approved it, it will go to the Exec for its approval and then to the membership for your approval. At the IP Meeting, we'll discuss the topics (but not the details) that we will be taking to the Bargaining table. Keep an ear out for that.

Executive – And doing things a bit backwards, we started the week with an Executive meeting. All on Zoom as we attempt to keep the office as sterile as possible. Not much excitement to report, really, other than the updated PD forms were approved.

And after that strong finish, I hope your weekend is more exciting! Stay safe.