

## TSU Weekly Wrap Up – October 16, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU President

Yes, it's Friday, even though it only feels like Thursday. Gotta love a short week!

**Modalities** – We thought we had the working from home situation clarified, however, questions continue to come in to the office, today. The Board has been clear to principals, it says. Here's what we have discussed with them: During the online portion of your teaching, you may teach from home if you wish and there are no supervision requirements keeping you in the building. This applies to afternoon day school teachers and virtual school teachers.

Concerns continued to swirl this week around the simultaneous teaching model being implemented in York Catholic. As mentioned last week, the Board has it as one of many contingency plans, however, it does not have in mind to be going this direction at this time. TSU has been very clear that this is not an acceptable modality. The problems with it for teachers and students are numerous. Apart from privacy, concerns exist around student mental health. As we have seen in the news, yesterday and today, students who are unable to participate in face to face learning will feel all the more isolated being at home and unable to connect with the classmates that would now be in front of them. This is one more example of the problems with using cameras in the classroom, particularly for this modality.

Unfortunately, it needs to be repeated this week, teachers are not required to use live video when doing synchronous teaching. This is clear in PPM 164 and in the Board return to school plans and directions. The Board indicated to us, yesterday, that it has shared all this with principals and principal should not be telling you nor parents that this is the expectation. If the message is being put out there that live video must be used, let us know as it needs to be curbed.

**Health and Safety** – Continued issues over OTs not receiving PPE at the door, this week. We have raised it, again, with the Board. If you are an OT on a daily assignment, do not put yourself in jeopardy by entering a building without the appropriate PPE. There is no guarantee that a WSIB claim would be accepted if you were shown to have been in the building without the requisite medical grade mask. If the PPE is not at the door, call the office and have someone bring it to you.

Staff rooms should not be locked! The Board has said this but some principals are still doing it, claiming H&S is the reason. Not allowing people to (responsibly) use the staff room and keeping them caged in other rooms all day is not acceptable. The locked doors also interfere with our ability to communicate with members through the use of the OECTA Board, if it housed in the staff room. Again, if this continues, let us know so that we can inform the Board of the particular location to have things rectified.

**Bargaining** – The Initial Proposal meeting took place on Tuesday evening. Thanks to all who came out and asked questions. The IP was approved by the membership and we can now move on to attempting to arrange dates with the Board.

**Budget and Finance** – A continuation of the budget setting meeting on Wednesday, this week. The budget is now set to go to the Executive on Monday and from there to the General Budget meeting on October 29.

**Maternity/Parental Leave** – Some aspects of this topic can be conducted virtually and the workshop on Wednesday is one of them. Very successful as always.

Other than that, a number of other committee meetings occurred this week. The weekly meeting of OECTA Presidents also took place to update us on various topics. Information continues to be gathered to assist in understanding and responding to what is happening throughout the province. Bottom line, lots of CA violations! Please continue to check your email and OECTA website for what is happening. And millions of emails and phone calls came into the office. Hopefully, we got to them but if we didn't please be patient, and remind us if you can't be.

This weekend, please take time for yourselves and put work aside. Yes, your job is very important but what you do outside of it is what counts.

Stay safe.