

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – October 30, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU President

How appropriate that the big news the week before Hallowe'en is a horror story.

Staffing!! – Well, I said last week that details of the Quad 2 reorganization would come from the Board this week. Unfortunately, the reorg is not what was discussed last week. Thursday, this week, they announced to us that they would be going to a hybrid/simultaneous delivery model for day schools. So, what does this mean?

First, the virtual school will continue as is. There will be minimal movement of teachers, if any, between day schools and the virtual school.

Students opting out of face to face (f2f) for Quad 2 will not be moved to the virtual school. They will remain as part of scheduled Q2 classes in the day school and be taught online simultaneously with the f2f students.

For **teachers**, the expectation is that you will continue with the cohort model with some students online and other students in the classroom with you. How you do that will be up to you.

More details about how this will roll out should be coming to you next week, if this plan is the one that is still in place next week.

Please note that, PPM 164 does not require the use of video, or audio, live or taped. TSU does not recommend the use of video in any manner due to the jeopardy in which it places teachers.

We have made it clear to the Board, repeatedly, that this is not an acceptable model for teachers. Nor do we believe this is a good model for students. As OECTA said in this afternoon's Covid email, "the frustration that teachers, education workers, parents, and students are feeling is palpable." To add to the stress on teachers and undermine their mental health by this move is not showing enough concern for our members, and will lead to increased absenteeism. The York Catholic Unit, which moved to this model a couple of weeks ago, reports that there have been over 100 teachers who have gone off on sick leave within that time period. Concerns have also been raised around the province about the increase in parental interference as they insert themselves into your classrooms, commenting on what teachers are doing. We strongly recommend that you not open the door to these attacks by keeping the camera and audio off. I appreciate that what is expected in the virtual delivery involves audio and video but even the government has indicated this is not required.

Teacher Mental Health – We are hearing more and more about the strain on teachers and your mental health as you have worked valiantly the past two months to make work what has otherwise been described as "an absolute shit show". Studies and reports have been in the news recently indicating that teachers are just hanging on. I will once again say, please take care of yourself first. The job is not as important as your health, your family, your general life. We work to live; we do not live to work. Use your weekend and your evenings for recharging and reconnecting with what matters most in your life. For those who are struggling with the stress of the current crisis, there is help available. As well as a variety of supports within the OTIP Benefits plan there is also assistance available through the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). workhealthlife.com and 1-844-880-9142

Budget and Finance – The draft budget sent to you last week was passed at the Budget Meeting on Thursday night.

TSU Black Teachers – Hopefully you saw the flyer that went out this afternoon for the TSU Black Teachers Meeting. As part of our actions against racism, this meeting will provide the opportunity for a unique component of our community to share experiences and discuss ways forward. The hope is that as well as being a safe space for the members to meet there will be material and information generated for all of us to consider in dealing with Anti-Black Racism, particularly as it relates to us as teachers.

Association Reps – Wednesday night's meeting generated a lot of discussion and questioning of where things are at in the schools and the next steps. Of course, the next day what we had described to the Reps about student movement and surplus teachers got thrown out the window by the Board. There were also a number of events discussed and for which flyers were provided. Please check the OECTA Board in your school for those flyers. Additionally, you can find them on the events page in the Member Section on the TSU website

TSU Website – We encourage you to check the TSU website on a regular basis to keep apprised of what's happening in the Unit. Every effort is being made to upload the information that also gets sent out to members. Events, calendar, meeting minutes and more are there for you.

And after all that, I hope your weekend isn't scary!

Stay safe.