

## **TSU Weekly Wrap Up – November 27, 2020**

By Pete McKay-TSU President

**Hybrid Model** - Some concerns this week over an edict from the Board to have students and teachers sign a contract indicating that students are doing online learning. It also lets them flip back and forward, so people are not clear why this is necessary. More unfortunate than that is the requirement for teachers to take on an additional workload. Initially, I addressed the fact that there is no need for teachers to sign the form, to which the Board agreed. Subsequently, however, concerns arose over the additional amount of work involved in emailing to students, receiving the return emails then saving and uploading in a particular format to a site created by admin. I have addressed the fact that these expectations are outside of what teachers normally do and considering how much more you are already doing, this is an unreasonable addition. It is also a strange situation that teachers are telling admin which modality within the hybrid model the students are choosing rather than the other way around. Additionally, I don't know where teachers will find the time to be doing this extra work. If you are asked to be involved with these letters, let the admin know that you are happy to comply and will take care of it as soon as you are able. Or, perhaps, suggest to your admin that they have the information and capability within the front office to have this done.

**Resolutions Meeting** – Wednesday we held the annual meeting, with an unusually large crowd, especially when there was only one motion being put forward, and it was an action directive. Action directives don't carry the same weight as bylaw resolutions. Nonetheless, the motion was passed with little debate and everyone got to go home early. Thanks to those who came out. Of note, was the use of Closed Captioning in the meeting. Thanks to Lisa Stuckey and Shurly Arnold for pushing us to address this lack of accessibility for those who may have difficulty with hearing some of what goes on in meetings. It's important for us to continue to be educated on matters about which we might not be aware and to ensure full inclusivity of all members.

**Association Reps** – We had our meeting on Monday this week. Lots of questions on a variety of topics, primarily to do with staffing and Covid, as if there's much else going on these days. Your Rep has the full package of materials with notices of upcoming events, dates, etc., which they will have posted or emailed to you, already, probably.

**Advent Prayer Service** – Some quiet contemplation on Tuesday evening as the Religious Affairs Committee helped us prepare for the Advent season. (No, there were no pancakes!) Hopefully, everybody walked away inspired.

**International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** – This important day was commemorated around the world on November 25. The UN held an online event that I was able to attend on Wednesday morning. It was great to see the steps being taken in various countries to help counter this blight. Domestic violence is the predominant form of violence against women in most parts of the world, although public violence is significant and systemic in a number of places. We are not immune from this in Canada, of course, as we continue to deal with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report. And, perhaps, the worst single incident of violence against women will be commemorated on December 6, the Montreal Massacre. Obviously, a lot of work is still to be done in this area.

**Messages** – It's been an active week, again, with messages from different sources. I shared with you the Young Authors Award Material. The process is streamlined this year, with online submissions being accepted. You also received a MoE memo from me, which dealt with the pause on TPAs and had some teacher resources in it. You have also received some important emails from OECTA on a number of matters. The OCT cover email, I followed up on with the recommendation that members return the magazine to the sender, which should let them know that we reject their portrayal of teachers. And you should have received an email from OECTA shortly after 3pm, today. This deals with some matters discussed with Unit presidents in our biweekly meeting held on Thursday.

**Teacher Mental Health** – If you are feeling the same frustration that we do in the office, not being able to keep everything on track, and that Provincial Office is also feeling, then I'd like to provide this, again: A reminder that there are a variety of supports within the OTIP Benefits plan as well as assistance through the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). [workhealthlife.com](http://workhealthlife.com) and 1-844-880-9142. Please call.

**Miscellaneous** – Angela and I attended the OECTA Grievance Officers Seminar on Monday and an Arbitration date on Tuesday. Some helpful information for Angela as she gets into the role. Sick Leave grievances were on the docket on Tuesday. We are trying to convince the Board to treat members with compassion when they are suffering and not throw up roadblocks. This could take some time. A number of sick leave calls and an accommodation meeting occupied some of Paul's time this week. Of course, for all of us there were the myriad calls and emails from far and wide. The OT Article 9 meeting also took place on Wednesday, featuring JoAnne and Angela. And to top off the week, we held (will hold) a special Executive meeting to address the OT Bargaining Advisory applications. Who schedules meetings for 3:30 on a Friday?!

Think that's probably more information than most of you can handle at this point, and that I can remember, on a Friday afternoon. Have a great weekend.