

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – December 11, 2020

By Pete McKay -TSU President

My apologies for last week's musical offering. Some were quite offended that I didn't use the Bing Crosby version of the song. Others were upset because they couldn't get the damn thing out of their heads.

Teacher Mental Health – To repeat: I hope the underutilization of the EFAP that the Board is reporting is a reflection of people doing well. But I doubt it is. Realistically, many are too stressed out and have too little time to think about looking for assistance. Perhaps, when you have a chance over the holiday, you will be able to look after yourself better. Remember there are a variety of supports within the OTIP Benefits plan as well as the assistance through the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). workhealthlife.com and 1-844-880-9142. Please call.

Hybrid Model – The intention of the Board, at this point, appears to be to maintain the current Hybrid Model for Quad 3. This would involve the same process as before, in which the students who want to “learn” remotely, would do so with their scheduled day school teacher and cohort, rather than transferring into St. Anne.

We have made it clear to the Board that we are opposed to the Hybrid Model. This is based on a couple of concerns. The first is that you are being swamped with work, as it is, and to add the additional expectation to be teaching in two different modalities simultaneously, is unacceptable and unreasonable. Also arising from the development of the Hybrid Model is concern over the harassment of teachers. Parents have been watching you and complaining about how you are teaching, and whether it is being done properly. The St. Anne principal sent out a message to parents and students last Friday about the code of conduct, which was certainly welcome, and we hope that it will curb some of the issues there. In the day schools, though, we need to continue to monitor the situation. If you have any concerns about parents interfering with your class and your teaching, please contact your liaison at the office. And dare I say, as I have since March, using cameras is a problem!

Executive – We met, today, wrapping up just a few minutes ago at 5:15. (Who schedules meetings on a Friday?!) Along with the usual reports and solidarity donations, we looked at some committee initiatives, such as the Covid survey and the planned province wide GSA via Zoom. The Exec also continued its mission to pay off the mortgage as soon as possible, and expect to be there in the not too distant future. A review of the list of applicants for the AGM also occurred and decisions on that will occur at the January meeting.

TPH Covid Questions – Hopefully, you saw the email I sent out on Thursday about the opportunity to present questions to TPH. They don't want to meet face to face with teachers but have agreed to provide answers to our questions in writing. We are very happy to be involved in this collaborative effort with OSSTF Toronto and the Elementary Teachers of Toronto, as well as TECT. Submit your questions by the 16th of December and we should get answers some time in January. See the email for details.

Committees – A few meetings this week. Human Rights and Communications gathered. I mentioned the provincial GSA coming up, and we can look forward to the newsletter coming out next week, now that it has been put together. It will be available on the website, as well as through emails and hard copies in schools. And continue to look at the website for updated information on events and other information you might want. There was also an SSSAC meeting on Wednesday, with the usual level of productivity and open discussion.

To add to all that, Angela and Paul met with TECT to discuss sick leave issues and I attended, yet another, Parmar hearing day. There was also the OECTA Townhall on Monday night, where you were provided with all the exciting news that the presidents heard, again, on Thursday. Hope it was helpful, if not hopeful.

I hope you had a good week. Only one more to go before you get to crash. Have a great weekend and stay safe.