

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – December 18, 2020

By Pete McKay -TSU President

While 2020 might be going out with a bang, I think most of us are going with a whimper. But we've made it! A chance now to sleep, perchance to dream...of a much better 2021 to come. There is hope on the horizon, regardless of what might be ahead of us in the short term. Take the long view.

A much quieter week than usual in some ways. But that doesn't mean we could tell whether any pins were dropped. It did give some time to think back through what we have endured this year.

This time last year, we were celebrating the paid parking being defeated. Remember that? But we were also looking in trepidation to the possibility of job action in January as the Central Bargaining occurred, or didn't. January, February, and March saw us involved in that job action, including hitting the bricks on four occasions, and in historic fashion.

Just as we thought we had achieved something worthwhile, Covid, which had been creeping up on us, hit hard and we were shut down. Three plus months of distance learning turned us upside down but we managed to stumble into the summer. It didn't provide us with much relief, though, as the government did virtually nothing to prepare for whatever circumstances might exist in September. Eventually, we found out that there was no real plan, like we didn't already know, and the new chaos ensued.

Whether we were teaching in front of students or online had to be resolved, as did what timetables would be like. Those in the virtual school waited longer for that to be worked out, which it was in the end. In the meantime, the Board decided to run roughshod over many aspects of the CA. A virtual school was, perhaps, the start, then the movement of teachers involuntarily to it, alleged LTOs were created, followed by on-call violations. Throughout that there was ongoing concern over Covid exposure, PPE, and student supervisions in the morning intake.

Just as we started to get used to the situation, although never accepted it, the Board went and threw hybrid learning at us. How much this had to do with the government not properly funding the boards or the Board not using the money effectively, we may never know, but we were screwed either way. The past month has seen many of us trying to juggle chainsaws and basketballs simultaneously. And, as we've seen, it cannot be done effectively. Despite being pushed into situations for which we have no training or experience, whether in class or online, we have done an amazing job of holding the system together. Without us, the Board would have crumbled. So, regardless of our levels of frustration, anger, mental health, or physical exhaustion, we can be proud of our integrity and our ability to rise to the challenges as well as we did.

As for this week, a couple of quick items:

Hybrid Model – Might there be no hybrid model come January 4? If there isn't, it will only be because the face to face component of teaching is paused. Whether the government will do that remains to be seen. The sooner we know the better, though.

TPH Covid Questions – Thank you to those who submitted questions for TPH. They have been collated and sent on. We hope they are able to get answers to us in January.

Teacher Mental Health – 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.

And that is a wrap.

I truly hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas and return refreshed for a happy new year. Stay safe.