

## **Staffing the school year**

**By Gillian Vivona**

It is that time of year again—time to begin turning our minds and discussions to setting up the schedule for the new school year. By the time you read this article, all schools may have had their Form 106 LSSAC meeting. It can be a very intense time for many of our members. The outline below will provide a guide to the process that will occur between now and the end of June.

The breakdown of the process as per the Collective Agreement is as follows:

a) Mid-March—Administration sends out the course requests/wish list to all permanent teaching staff members. This includes those members who are on leave. Members on leave must be consulted as to their timetable development whether they are returning from leave or not as their timetable must be suitable in the event of an unforeseen, sudden return to the school. It is greatly appreciated and incumbent upon members who know they are retiring to declare so as soon as possible to allow permanent TSU members the opportunity to apply for a position at the school through the official posting process. Also, this gives the LSSAC the opportunity to best advise the Administration on how to post the open position. This ensures that the process is transparent.

b) April 1<sup>st</sup>—The Board provides the F106 to the Administrators.

c) Between April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>—LSSAC will meet to discuss the tentative staffing model and review the section allotment outlined in F106. If necessary, decisions regarding surplussing of staff, possible open positions will be discussed/made. Materials required for this review: The F106, teacher seniority list, teacher qualifications, teachers going/staying on leave.

d) April 22<sup>nd</sup>—the Board will release the first list of open positions. Only TSU permanent members will be able to apply.

e) Mid-May—The LSSAC will meet to review the proposed departmental assignments prepared by Administration. Materials required for this review: The F106, teachers requests, teacher qualifications, department assignments. The Department Heads will receive the outline after this meeting.

(NOTE: As per the agreement established with the Board, there may be a one-shuffle movement for the timetable. For example, Teacher A goes on leave. Teacher B from another department takes over Teacher A's timetable which must still be suitable for Teacher A to return to if necessary. The LTO takes over Teacher B's timetable which must be suitable for Teacher B to assume should Teacher A need to return to the school. This one-shuffle may be done for each teacher on leave.)

f) By the end of May—The courses set out in blocks are given to the Department Heads.

g) By mid-June—A tentative schedule is given to the staff. It is possible that changes may still occur but all changes must occur through consultation with the members involved.

h) End of June—Teachers are given an official copy of their tentative timetable for the coming school year. Any changes to this timetable must occur through consultation with the members involved at the earliest possible time as per the requirements of the Collective Agreement.

NOTE to f): Department Heads do not “assign” courses but will review the tentative course selections with their department members in a collaborative and collegial manner as per the requirements of the Collective Agreement. All department members must have collective input with respect to the decision-making of course assignments, including those on leave. Discussions and decision-making can be done in a variety of ways.

The following are the criteria that should be considered during the course assignment process. While qualifications are the most significant item, these items should be considered collectively where possible:

1) Qualifications—Teachers with qualifications should be given first opportunity at course selections. Anyone who is teaching a subject for which they do not hold qualifications must sign a mutual consent form. These forms will be reviewed by the LSSAC in September.

2) Teacher wish list—Department heads may have sent out their own wish list to get an idea of where their member’s interest lay.

3) Past experience

4) Availability of a course in the schedule

5) Professional development/growth—It is understood by the SSSAC that there is no ownership of courses. All members should be given the opportunity to teach courses which will enhance and promote their professional growth. Such decisions should be discussed and determined in a consultative and collaborative manner.

6) Total number of preps—Where possible, no teacher should have more than 4 preps per year, that is, two per semester.

An additional criterion for the Administration may be succession planning, also known in some schools as building capacity. This should not be forced upon members. It is to be developed in a prudent, collaborative and consultative fashion for the future staffing needs of the school. If necessary, discussions and decisions should be brought to the LSSAC and/or SSSAC.

It is understood by the Board and the Teachers that not everyone will be happy with the final scheduling results but it is imperative that consultation must have occurred with each member and that the goal is to achieve the best possible results in building a staffing model and schedule for the school. If necessary, discussions can be brought to the LSSAC and/or SSSAC for assistance and to ensure that the process is transparent.