

# interaction



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A message from the OTF President  
**Julie Pauletig**

## Dear Colleagues,

The OTF Executive met in December, shortly after the Governing Council of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) voted to increase the membership fee to \$150. This increase attracted the attention of teachers throughout the province. On your behalf, I expressed concerns to the Chair of the College. Teachers currently face a wage freeze and unpaid days. Many certified teachers are still seeking their first teaching job or have only found occasional employment; as a result, the flat fee of \$150 has been regarded by many as inappropriate. Teachers told us that they feel the College should work within its current budget at a time when restraint is expected elsewhere, especially given the College's pledge in 2012 that the fee would remain frozen at \$138 for three years.

When asked about the increase, the College notes that their fee is low compared to other professional bodies. In many other professions, however, members are often self-employed and pay only one professional fee. While that fee may be larger, it is often for services beyond regulatory requirements. In education, teachers pay dues to the OTF and the Affiliates for such professional and protective services. When comparing membership numbers with other professional bodies, the OCT is significantly larger. Since the College was created in 1997, its total revenues have increased from \$15.3 million to just under \$40 million in 2014 as a result of fee increases and membership growth. These are the concerns that, as President of OTF, the statutory professional body representing the profession, I shared on your behalf.

We take it for granted that Ontario's teachers understand the differences between the various organizations to which they belong or with which they interact, but, frankly, it is complicated. Ontario is one of only two provinces with a separate regulatory body, the OCT. Most provinces have only one federation whereas Ontario has four Affiliates and different educational systems. Many education faculties in Ontario grant education degrees and multiple organizations offer accredited additional qualification courses and ongoing professional learning. Teachers are evaluated for salary placement based upon qualifications by one of two organizations. Schools, school boards and the Ministry all have different, complementary roles to play in how public education is delivered.

When OTF representatives present to teacher candidates (associate members) at Ontario faculties, we try to bring some clarity to the education system in Ontario. We thought this *Interaction*, the (short?) and sweet version of who does what, how and for whom in education, might be useful for practicing teachers too. The teachers are at the centre of the graphic overleaf for a reason. We hope this issue of *Interaction* makes it clear to teachers that they are not caught in the web of education in Ontario—but rather, at the centre of it. As a Federation, we want to encourage you, the teachers, to feel empowered within education and within the organizations that make up Ontario's publicly funded education system.



A message from the Secretary-Treasurer  
**Rhonda Kimberley-Young**

# Ontario Teachers' Federation



The **Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)**, established by the *Teaching Profession Act* of 1944, is the professional organization for Ontario's teachers. All teachers are required by law to belong to the Federation as a condition of teaching in the publicly funded schools of Ontario. The four teacher federations are the Affiliates of OTF: **l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)**, the **Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)**, the **Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)**, and the **Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)**.

OTF's primary role is advocating for the teaching profession and for its member teachers. It is OTF's statutory duty to work explicitly and implicitly in the interest of the province's teachers. Unlike the Affiliates, OTF does not engage in collective bargaining. However, we do take positions to support teachers' ability to offer the best professional service and we speak out on issues of general education policy. OTF is the Partner (or Sponsor) along with the Government of Ontario in the **Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan**; it is charged with representing the interests of all teacher pension plan members—active and retired.

Before the creation of the **Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)**, OTF served the dual role of regulating teacher discipline and being an advocate for the profession. With the creation of the OCT in 1997, a line was drawn between professional advocacy and professional discipline with OTF filling the former role and OCT the latter.

The OTF fee is included in the tax deductible dues a teacher pays to his/her Affiliate. For each full time equivalent teacher, the four federations remit an annual fee of \$30.40 to OTF. Unemployed teachers do not pay fees. OTF's fee has remained constant for almost 20 years; the core work of OTF is supported entirely by these fees, which are approved annually by the Board of Governors.

The OTF Board of Governors includes 40 members—10 from each of the four federations. The OTF Executive, which meets more often than the Board, includes the President, General Secretary and elected Table Officer of each of the four federations (AEFO, ETFO, OECTA and OSSTF) along with the appointed OTF Secretary-Treasurer.

# Ontario College of Teachers



The **Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)** was established by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996 and is responsible for regulating key aspects of the professional lives of 237,000 members. Its role is to foster public trust and confidence in education. It is accountable to the public for how it carries out its responsibilities. It ensures appropriate standards for teacher training and accredits faculty programs. OCT issues teaching licenses to teachers who have met the criteria

and publishes a register of all members. It sets and enforces professional standards of practice for teachers. In the work of the College, the public interest is paramount—rather than the individual or collective interests of teachers.

The Governing Council of the OCT is responsible for the development and approval of the policies that regulate the teaching profession of Ontario. It also sets the budget and the fee which is collected for all teachers wishing to maintain a licence. The 37-member Council includes 23 elected College members and 14 members of the public appointed by the Government. All College members are eligible to vote in Council elections, although participation in the last two triennial elections has been less than five percent.

Teachers are most likely to interact with the College by taking the necessary steps to acquire and maintain their licence. Teachers may, however, be the subject of a complaint that results in investigation and discipline by the College; in those cases, the College acts as prosecutor and the member must defend him or herself. If the teacher is also a member of a federation, he or she may receive support from their federation in protecting their right to due process and a fair defence.

Unlike the four federations (or Affiliates), OTF does not represent individual members at the College. OTF represents the views of the profession to the OCT on broader policy measures which impact the teaching profession as a whole.

# The Federations or Affiliates



By virtue of the *Education Act*, all teachers in publicly funded schools belong to one of the four federations. All teachers who teach in a francophone board, Catholic or public, are members of AEF0. Teachers in English Catholic school boards are members of OECTA. Elementary teachers in English public boards are members of ETFO and English public secondary teachers belong to OSSTF. Teachers may be members of more than one Affiliate; for example, if they teach occasionally in different systems or panels. Some Affiliates have only teacher members and others include education staff such as educational assistants, office and clerical staff and psychologists, among others. Affiliates direct fees to OTF, based only on their number of full time equivalent teacher and occasional teacher members, since only teachers are members of OTF under the *Teaching Profession Act*.

While each Affiliate offers a wide, and slightly different range of services to its members, they are all recognized as unions and charged with representing members in their employment relationship with school boards—individually and, through negotiations, collectively as well. The Affiliates typically offer many supports beyond protective services, and they advocate for their members through political engagement, education research, interaction with government and other partners in education and the broader society and, of course, by providing various professional services and supports to their members. They are outspoken advocates for quality public education for students and the conditions that help make that goal possible. Each Affiliate exists to support and protect its members and ensure they are treated fairly, including support for due process in disciplinary matters with employers or with the College of Teachers.

Each Affiliate collects tax deductible dues from members at source. It sets its own fee and budget through its governance structure but the ultimate decision takes place at annual meetings which are democratic, representative assemblies of members. From the total fee collected, each Affiliate funds the services it offers to members and makes remittances to other bodies to which they belong, including OTF.

The Provincial Executives of the four Affiliates vary in size but, in all cases, teachers in each Affiliate are eligible to run for office, to elect local leaders and, through those local leaders, have a voice in provincial decision making and elections. In addition, Affiliates have additional governance structures such as councils of presidents and local and provincial committees to allow for member input and participation.



For more information on some of the organizations described, check out the [OTF website](#).

# The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan



Given the complexity of the relationships in education, in some respects, the **Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP)** is simple. All teachers who work in the publicly funded school system along with others who hold teaching certificates, such as administrators in Ontario and other teachers who work for designated employers or designated private schools, are automatically members of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. All service in the Plan is seamless since a teacher can move from one school board to another, from elementary to secondary, or between systems (ie, public to Catholic) and their pension service stays intact and accumulates. It is province-wide and participation is mandatory and automatic for OTF members.

The other critical point about the OTPP is that it is a partnership. The actual administration and investment decisions of the Plan are left to the experts who are hired to perform that role—the CEO of the Plan and Plan staff. Plan oversight, however, falls to the nine-member Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board (the OTPPB). OTF appoints four directors, as does the Government of Ontario; the Partners also mutually appoint the Chair of the OTPPB. Partners take this responsibility very seriously and ensure that the OTPP Board reflects the significant talent and expertise required to oversee the management of a \$130+ billion pension fund.

# Teacher Certification



When a teacher graduates from a faculty, or later in their career if they upgrade their qualifications, their academic credentials and courses are measured against a set of criteria to determine their initial salary placement, or to change category if they enhance certain qualifications.

The **Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO)** evaluates teachers wishing to teach in the French or English Catholic systems or in public elementary schools. Three Affiliates (AEFO, ETFO and OECTA) oversee the work of QECO. For public secondary teachers, **OSSTF (OSSTF Certification)** assesses and assigns salary placement.

Teachers may also choose to be assessed by both OSSTF and QECO if they teach, or intend to teach, in different panels and systems.

# Faculties of Education

While teachers may have earned their teaching qualifications elsewhere, the majority of Ontario's teachers graduate from one of the many education faculties in Ontario. The faculties provide the initial teacher education program to Ontario's teacher candidates. Faculties interact with the Ministry of Education (EDU) and with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU) from whom they receive funding. The program offered must be accredited by the OCT. Faculties also commonly offer Additional Basic Qualification and Additional Qualification Courses to certified teachers through the school year or in the summer months. These programs are also offered by other accredited providers, including some teacher Affiliates.

OTF and the Affiliates interact with the faculties in a number of ways. OTF liaises with the **Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE)**

including, typically, offering a joint conference annually. At each faculty, a Teacher Education Liaison Committee (TELC) exists, including faculty members and representatives of the teaching profession who are local Affiliate members. The TELC ensures that the programs offered adequately equip teacher candidates to become competent educators. Through the practicum, an integral part of the pre-service program, teacher candidates work with practicing volunteer teachers called Associate Teachers.

# School and Board Administration

Like teachers, school principals and vice-principals may belong to associations depending on the system in which they work. Unlike teachers, principals and vice-principals do not belong to OTF or an Affiliate. After they were removed from the teacher federations in 1998, they established voluntary organizations to act on their behalf and to provide various services and supports to their respective members. The three Ontario principal organizations are *l'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)*, the *Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)* and the *Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)*.

Superintendents and directors may also be involved in associations. For

example, the Council of Directors of Education of Ontario (CODE) includes all directors in the system; superintendents and directors may also be part of another organization of supervisory officers more specific to their system. As a group, school and board administrative teams (directors, superintendents, principals and vice-principals) carry out functions at their respective levels in overseeing delivery of education in the province. Like teachers, school and board administrators are members of OCT and subject to the same professional standards.

In addition to the administrative side, there is also the governance side of school boards. The 72 Ontario school boards (6 French Catholic, 6 French public, 29 English Catholic and 31 English public) are all governed by boards of trustees. School board trustees, elected through municipal elections, are charged with broad-based decision-making within the parameters of Ontario education policy, regulations and funding. They are a conduit for communication between their local constituents and local board administrators as well.

## The Minister and Ministry



The Minister of Education, appointed by the Premier, provides overall direction for education in the province. He or she can make regulatory changes through Cabinet and the Government can bring forward changes to the *Education Act* or other legislation that impacts education in the province. The Government sets the provincial budget for education and the Ministry of Education determines the grants to school boards to fund education on that basis.

An individual teacher may feel removed from the decision-making at Queen's Park, but the decisions made reach into his/her classroom in many ways. The Deputy Minister and his/her staff in the Ministry, through provincial and regional offices, oversee the new policy directions and initiatives of Government as well as many aspects of regulatory compliance with various education statutes.

Teachers, as individuals, have the obvious right to vote in provincial elections. As OTF and as Affiliates, we regularly provide collective advice and input to both the Minister and the Ministry. It is quite common for OTF and the Affiliates to be consulted by Government. We represent the views of the profession when sought; equally, when issues are important to the federations, we offer unsolicited advice as well.

Teachers are well aware that education is very political; as federations, we maximize our opportunities to share the expertise and advice of teachers on issues important to education.

# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## OTF Connects: A key to unlocking ongoing professional learning

Here's what's coming to **OTF Connects** in March and April!

March

**March 5**

Making Student Thinking Visible: How Can Technology Help?

**March 18**

Twitter As "Assessment For Learning"

**March 19**

Teaching Financial Literacy

**March 25**

Domestic violence in the workplace: recognize, respond and refer

**March 27**

Using iPads for Effective Feedback

**April 2**

Nurturing Creativity in 21st Century Learners - Part 2

**April 9**

Coming of Age in the Digital Era

**April 10**

A Technological Twist On Inquiry

**April 23**

Inquiry & Multimedia: Are Students Really Constructing Knowledge?

**April 30**

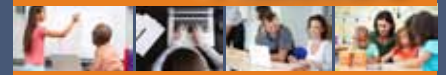
They're Doing The Same Work...It just looks a little different

April

Please note that, at this time, **webinars** are available only in English.

## All Aboard OTF Planboard

 **Planboard**



**OTF Planboard** simplifies lesson planning and scheduling for teachers and supports collaboration among teachers. Free to all OTF members, OTF Planboard provides access to over 250 sample lessons—created by Ontario teachers for Ontario teachers— which can easily be added into your daily lesson plans. Please note that at this time OTF Planboard is an English-only platform.

Want to learn more or need a free OTF Planboard account? Click [here](#).

New to OTF Planboard or just want some ideas about how to use it effectively? Click [here](#).

To view the full Calendar of Winter/Spring, 2014 webinars, visit [click here](#).

Unable to participate in the live webinars? Be sure to visit the **Past Webinars** archive for asynchronous, on-demand learning.

To view Past Webinars, click [here](#).