

For immediate release

OTF declines Ministry of Education's request to amend 50-day re-employment rule

TORONTO, March 18, 2024 — The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) has declined the Ministry of Education's request to support the amendment of the 50-day re-employment rule to 95 days for some retired teachers and administrators for the 2023-2024 school year.

In each of the last three school years, OTF has reluctantly agreed to the Ministry's request to temporarily increase the limit to help address some of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amending the rule was only ever envisioned as a short-term measure. Deflecting responsibility onto retired teachers is neither a sufficient nor a sustainable option to address staffing challenges. Changing the rule for retired members neither encourages working teachers to remain in the system nor does it attract prospective candidates to join the profession.

"The Pension Plan is designed to provide an income to retired teachers; it is not a tool for addressing labour market challenges. Ultimately, the teacher recruitment and retention challenge is a systemic problem that requires systemic solutions," stated OTF President Yves Durocher.

A full year ago this month, when the system was faced with the same issue for a third year in a row, the Minister of Education agreed to OTF's request to establish a multi-stakeholder Teacher Supply and Demand Action Table where long-term and sustainable solutions to teacher recruitment and retention could be developed and implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. With three months until the end of the school year, recommendations from the Action Table are expected in the coming weeks. Instead of relying again on a change to a pension plan rule that clearly has not addressed root causes, OTF urges the Minister to focus on, and commit to, implementing evidence-informed recommendations surfaced at the Action Table.

Ontario's teachers and education workers are eager to continue providing high-quality education to the students of this province. We are also willing to work with the ministry to meaningfully address the serious staffing recruitment and retention issues faced by Ontario schools.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the advocate for the teaching profession in Ontario and for its 160,000+ teachers. OTF members are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all the publicly funded schools in the province—elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and francophone.

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