



A message from the OTF President

Michael (Mike) Foulds



Overview of the Teaching Profession Act of 1944 (OTF archives)

“Remember, Remember! the 5th of November...”
 Habing, B. (2006, November 3). *The Fifth of November—English Folk Verse*.

On November 4th Canada lost The Honourable Senator Emeritus Murray Sinclair. I would like to think Ontario’s teachers can honour his legacy best by committing to be agents of change in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Action.

Then on November 5th our southern neighbour went to the polls and elected Donald Trump as their President and flipped control of the Senate to Republicans. Voter turnout is expected to be around 65 per cent in this election.

Recent elections in British Columbia and Nova Scotia highlight the dynamic political landscape in Canada, and these shifts may carry significant implications for Ontario’s future. In British Columbia, the general election held in October 2024 was not the decisive majority for the New Democratic Party (NDP) many assumed when the election was called, primarily because the ‘right’ was unified behind the Conservative Party which went from 2 per cent of the votes in the previous election to nearly forming the government.

Similarly, New Brunswick’s election showcased a tight race between the incumbent Progressive Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. The election race was largely focused on health care and affordability but Policy 713, the Conservative gender identity policy in schools, was also a factor in this election and New Brunswickers rejected the hard right stance of the incumbents.

In Saskatchewan, only one in two residents (53 per cent) who were registered to vote, cast their ballots in the 2024 general election that returned the Saskatchewan Party to their fifth straight victory. This is a concerning low turnout particularly with polls being open for seven days in this election.

The election of Donald Trump to a second term and the polarized political environment in the USA serves as a reminder of the importance of every election in shaping the future. Americans have cast their vote on critical issues like democracy, health care, the economy, and women’s reproductive health and rights. Among others, these issues parallel Ontarians’ and Canadians’ concerns. Provincial leaders would be wise to not only consider provincial matters but also the broader implications of leadership on progressive causes.

This ‘season of elections’ should inspire Ontarians to demand accountability and consider what kind of government will best represent their collective interests in the coming years. Do we want a province focused on building roads in the GTA to line the pockets of developers? A government that thinks a private spa is the best way to use public lands? A government that has failed to maintain inflation increases to education spending resulting in underfunded classrooms and workplaces?

Yours in education,

Mike

Michael (Mike) Foulds
 President

pension FACTS



Occasional teaching can sometimes lower your pension

If you're close to retirement and teaching on a part-time contract, supplementing your income with an occasional teaching assignment may reduce your pension. In some instances, this can result in hundreds of dollars less in pension per year.

The rate of pay for occasional teaching can be significantly less than the rate for part-time contract work. Both rates are used when determining your annual rate during a school year in which you work both occasionally and on contract. This blending of your rate of pay could lower your **average best-five years' salary**, which would result in a smaller pension.

If you're nearing retirement, **contact the OTTP Member Help Centre** before accepting any occasional teaching job to see how it could affect your pension.



National Day of Remembrance and Action on

Violence Against Women

December 6

Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, and Annie Turcotte

This December 6 marks 35 years since the tragic 1989 École Polytechnique massacre in Montréal, Canada, when 14 young women were senselessly killed simply because they were women. Over three decades later, gender-based violence is still an issue and many continue to face violence every day.

Today is a day to honour the lives of the victims, whose bright futures were cut short,

and to mourn with the families who lost those who were dear to them.

We continue to fight for gender equality, safety, and justice in a world that still struggles with issues that deserve front-of-the-line positive solutions.



DOBCEL delegation visit

Delegates from the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) in Australia met with OTF's President Mike Foulds, OTF's Secretary-Treasurer Ian Pettigrew and Senior Staff from OTF and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association to discuss OTF's experience with the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP).



A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer

Ian S. Pettigrew

Sowing the seeds of success

In October, OTF along with our Affiliates, were invited by the Ministry to provide feedback and suggestions for possible updates to [Growing success: assessment, evaluation, and reporting in Ontario's schools \(grades 1 to 12\)](#) (2010), and the [kindergarten addendum \(2018 appendix\) of Growing Success](#) Ontario's assessment, evaluation and reporting (AER) policy document. An overarching fundamental principle set out in *Growing Success* is that the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.

I was reminded of that statement during a series of conversations with my youngest son this fall about his first experiences as a teaching assistant (TA) at an Ontario university where he is doing graduate work. When he and his brother were high school students, I used to share assessment and evaluation (A&E) practices that I was using to animate the fundamental principles in *Growing Success*. As my son shared the A&E guidance he was receiving, or more often, not receiving from the professor, whose students he was grading, it became abundantly clear that the professor's approach was anathema both to sound A&E principles AND practices. Let me illustrate further.

The undergrad students were tasked with writing a 1000-word essay that analyzed the degree to which a (specified) poem accurately reflected what occurred during a (specified) historical event. At no point were students either furnished with any guidelines for the paper (i.e., success criteria) or with a marking scheme (e.g., a rubric). My son and I both wondered: absent a clear target, at what were students supposed to aim? What "landmarks" or "touchstones" might students use to anchor the essay? This oversight was further compounded by

the fact that my son and his fellow TAs were similarly provided with *no* criteria on which to base their grades, save that no A-level grades were to be given for the first paper of the term. In other words, the grading process and the assigned grades would be completely subjective.

Like so many K-12 teachers, having recognized that they were on their own, my son and his TA colleagues arranged to meet and co-created expectations or criteria for the grade levels they would assign. What, they asked themselves, would be the look-fors for a grade of A, B, C, etc.? (note: they decided they *would* give A grades). How much weight would they give to a clear, defensible thesis and framing of an effective argument? How much bearing on an assignment of a grade would syntax have? How granular would their feedback be and how might they frame it for maximum impact and growth?

As my son continues to share his first foray into (and mounting frustration with) post-secondary grading culture, albeit representing only one professor's approach, I have been reflecting on my own secondary school experiences. Early in my career, I had the good fortune to co-create and administer common assessments, accompanied by success criteria, and to participate in collaborative analysis of student work (moderated marking) with my colleagues. Both opportunities allowed me and my colleagues to interrogate our individual and collective beliefs about sound assessment and evaluation principles and practices and to unpack our assumptions or misconceptions about our students' work. The result? When we were clear about what we were asking of our students and could articulate our expectations in student-friendly language, it was clear to them, too. They were set up for success from the outset. *(continued on page 4)*

A message from the OTF Secretary-Treasurer



(continued from page 3)

In the next month, OTF anticipates providing comprehensive and constructive feedback about *Growing Success* grounded at least in part by the contents of OTF's A&E-focused position paper: [More than dots on a chart: Setting a new course for assessment in Ontario](#) (2017). Given that the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning, it's worth considering the following. The Latin root for "assessment" is "assidere," which translates as "to sit beside." When we, as teachers, approach assessment of our students with behaviours more akin to a coach than a judge, students benefit. Similarly, when (or if) the Ministry changes course and commits to creating opportunities for you, our members, to "sit beside" one another ... in person, together and during the instructional day (not alone, online or on your own time), we will once again nurture the conditions that support pooled A&E knowledge and skills. In short, these approaches, in concert with one another, offer a pathway to "growing success" for all.

Ian

Ian S. Pettigrew
Secretary-Treasurer



October 27, 1997, 125,000 teachers protest Ontario's Harris Conservative government's Bill 160. (OTF archives)

OTF Curriculum Forum Fall Meeting

On Saturday, November 2, 2024, Moses Velasco, OTF's Director of Curriculum & Assessment, facilitated the OTF Curriculum Forum fall meeting.

A variety of topics were discussed including the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). They also explored opportunities to collaborate with one another.





Happy Holidays!



The Executive and Staff of the

Ontario Teachers' Federation

Join you in recognizing the renewal and reflection that mark the close of the year. As we gather in celebration, we are also deeply mindful of the journey towards Truth and Reconciliation with Treaty Partner communities in Canada. This time of year reminds us of our shared responsibility to support healing, respect, and equitable opportunities for all.

In the spirit of supporting Reconciliation, and in lieu of sending cards,

President Michael Foulds

has chosen to make a donation to Indspire, contributing to the educational dreams and future success of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students across Canada.



Indspire

Mike

Michael (Mike) Foulds
President

Ian

Ian S. Pettigrew
Secretary-Treasurer

2025
OTIP 
TEACHING
AW★RDS



 

Nominations will open January 20 and will close on March 31, 2025.

Watch celebratory videos of last year's winners.

Visit teachingawards.ca

2025



**OTF
SPECIAL
RECOGNITION
AWARD**

Nominations will open on January 20 and will close on March 31, 2025

For more information or to download a nomination form, visit bit.ly/30ecGSt



Website: Teachers' Gateway to Special Education

Developed by OTF, with initial funding from the Ministry of Education, the *Teachers' Gateway to Special Education* [website](http://www.teachspiced.ca) provides practical strategies and resources to help teachers and school support personnel address the unique needs of students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Well organized and extremely user friendly, the *Gateway* includes definitions of key special education terms and can be used as a practical guide for teachers building Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The website also includes links to school boards' special education plans, Ministry documents and other helpful resources.

To access the *Teachers' Gateway to Special Education*, visit www.teachspiced.ca.

New Workshop: Supporting Exceptional Learners

OTF is pleased to announce the launch of an exciting new face-to-face workshop for teachers, part of our *OTF Connects* workshop series.

Supporting Exceptional Learners is an in-person workshop offered in two parts, which aims to provide teachers with practical strategies to foster inclusive and supportive classrooms for students with diverse needs. Participants will engage with scenarios and share best practices that enhance student engagement. Particularly beneficial to teachers in their first five years, the sessions will also incorporate strategies for accommodating and modifying learning to meet individual needs.

The workshops will take place at the Burlington Public Library on Saturday, February 22, 2025, and Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Registration will open on January 13, 2025, with enrolment on a first come first served basis.

Watch for registration details in future OTF communications.

Lest we forget... November 11

OTF President Mike Foulds attends Ontario's Ceremony of Remembrance at Queen's Park honouring the brave souls who made sacrifices for our freedom.



April 1, 1989, 25,000 teachers and thousands of allies gather at Hamilton's Copps Coliseum in protest against the Liberal Government's proposed changes to the Teachers' Superannuation Fund. This protest eventually leads to the next government (NDP) opening up negotiations for the formation of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan in August 1991. (OTF archives)

NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM



OTF President Mike Foulds attends a press conference on November 22 announcing that Ontario is now the third province to join the National Food Program.

This vital initiative will provide healthy, nutritious meals to more students across the province.

Thanks to the [Canadian Teachers' Federation](#) for its advocacy campaign.



(L-R) Mike Foulds, OTF President; Chris Cowley, OTF Governor; Debbie Field, Coordinator Coalition for Healthy Food; CTF President, Heidi Yetman and Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director



OTF President, Mike Foulds with Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau



OTF President, Mike Foulds with Minister of Education, Jill Dunlop



EST. 1899

United for Literacy Littératie Ensemble



Over the past several years, United for Literacy has collaborated with the Ontario Ministry of Education to develop curriculum-based financial literacy resources. What began as a few resources for elementary and intermediate students expanded far beyond what we could have possibly imagined. In the spring of 2023, we completed our suite of resources ranging from Grades 4–12. At this point, we began a period of educational outreach aimed at students and teachers across the Province of Ontario. Our primary focus was delivering these resources and lessons to teachers working with underserved students living in all areas of the province as well as students in remote indigenous communities. The **Financial Literacy Materials include** Teacher Guides, Power Point presentations, activities, spreadsheets, and more.

For Grades 4–8, the materials directly support the Financial Literacy curriculum expectations within the Math curriculum. For Grades 9–12, we took a cross-curricular approach to ensure they could be used as widely as possible.

Here are some examples of lessons we created:

- Grade 5: Budgeting – Where is My Money?
- Grade 7: The Finance of Adulting
- Grade 8: Business Planning
- Grade 10: What’s Next After High School & Introduction to Cryptocurrencies
- Grade 11: Why “Interest” Should Interest You
- Grade 12: Financial Literacy Case Study—Managing School, Work, Family, and Finances

Access these free [resources](#), (Select “Financial Literacy Guides and Resources” under “Resource Type”)

Access our recorded workshops anytime!

More than 1,000 individuals have accessed our online videos to learn how to use our financial literacy resources. Access these [videos](#). We have videos available in English and French.

United for Literacy was honoured to develop these resources, and we were amazed at the response that we received from educators, parents, and students. Here is what a Grade 4 teacher had to say about our Financial Literacy resources:

“United for Literacy did a great job teaching my students about where their money can go. My students learned about saving, spending, donating and investing in a way that they understood and could relate to. The lesson was wonderfully delivered virtually by a United for Literacy instructor who did a great job engaging my students through discussion and providing a well-organized handout to illustrate where their money goes.”

