



# The Sentinel



## An Open Letter To Members

**Michael Totten, President (Acting) & CEO of Elementary**

Dear Members,

For more than 10 years I have represented the teachers of the York Unit in a variety of positions on the unit executive and as a release officer. 2020 certainly provided me with the greatest challenges I have faced in my time at the Unit Office. Immediately following our return from Christmas vacation last year, teachers were faced with labour unrest and the anxiety, stress, anger, and frustration that came with it. Just as a provincial deal was achieved, signalling the end of what had been two troubling months, Covid arrived and so began the lockdown. Members struggled through the spring with many unknowns. The Unit office took call after call from members who shared their frustrations and we focused on providing advice on how best to adapt to this new way of teaching. When the school year ended, local bargaining began. This past summer I had the privilege to be on the bargaining teams representing both the Permanent and Occasional Teachers. It was my first time at a bargaining table and it provid-

ed me with a wealth of experience that will certainly be beneficial in helping me to serve the membership in the best capacity I can moving forward.

The fall brought new realities for all of us. Teachers were expected to adapt to the school board's "Covid-19" plan to return to school safely. Just as we were adapting in our office to addressing the needs and concerns of teachers, in an environment that no one could ever have imagined, our universe exploded. The hybrid model was introduced in the Elementary panel resulting in a massive reshuffling in schools and the ripple effect continues to make waves. Most recently, itinerant schedules have been reworked and with it came some additional angst for our teachers. While no further changes were made in the Secondary panel from the start of the year, our Secondary teachers continue to adapt to the quick pace of the quadmester model, which has also taken its toll on members.

So, in the midst of all of this, I begin my new role

as Acting President. I have never turned away from a challenge and I refuse to do so now. The road has not been easy and I am sure many members feel that they have not been supported in the way they have come to expect. Realizing the daily struggles faced by our teachers and not being able to help each of you from these day to day challenges, has been troubling for me. I do want you to know, however, that it is not for lack of trying. As we continue to make difficult decisions on behalf of members, I am asking you to work with us - the officers you have elected to represent you. Change has become a constant this school year, and I believe that there are more changes coming. Where we cannot avoid these changes, we will continue to work with the Board to ensure any decisions made have a minimal effect on the membership.

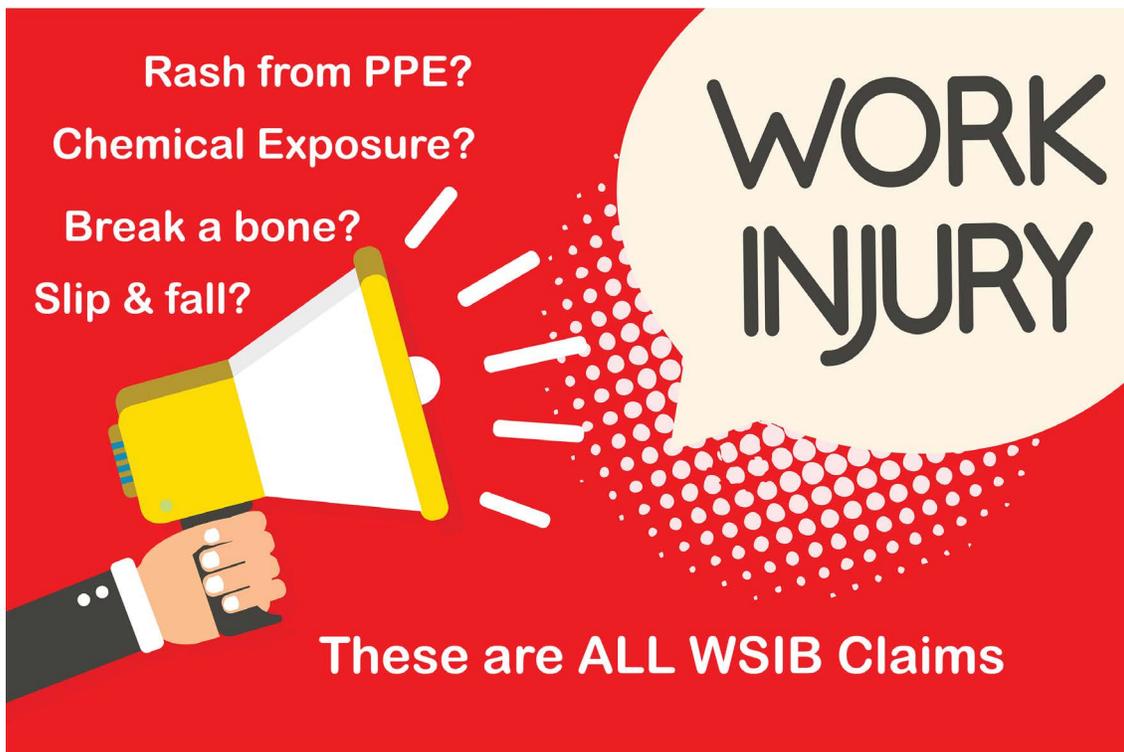
I am proud to represent you, the membership of York Catholic. I promise you I will do my best to support you and to advocate for you. I promise to make every issue you face go away, but I can assure you that I will not give up on you. It is my goal to return members to a place where they feel respected as Educators, where your commitment to your students can shine through without the barriers that are currently placed in front

of you. You deserve a workplace where your health is not suffering as a result of your dedication to your job, a job for which there are simply not enough hours to accomplish what you wish to do for your students. I came across a quote today that sums up where my focus needs to be in the months ahead;

“Maybe it’s not always about trying to fix something that’s broken. Maybe it’s about starting over and creating something better.”

I hope that 2021 can bring change for the better and that those changes move us in a positive direction. I want to wish you, the members I represent, nothing more than good health, happiness, relaxation and time well spent with family and friends during this Christmas season.

Sincerely  
Michael Totten



1. Report the Injury to Admin.
2. Immediately seek medical attention that day.
3. Complete WSIB Form 6
4. Contact the Unit Office

## Statement - Anti-Black Racism in Education: Time for Awareness and Change

***“The time has come to put an end to age-old prejudices, preconceptions and mutual mistrust that are often at the base of discrimination, racism and xenophobia.”***

***Pope Francis***

In light of the anti-racism protests and other forms of activism taking place across Canada, the US, and the world, it is well past time to acknowledge that racism and prejudice exist in our education system, and to take urgent action to address these issues.

The belief that there is little to no racism in our schools is in itself a barrier to addressing it. The truth is that racism exists in our society, and is woven throughout our entire education system – in our classrooms, hallways, schools, and board offices.

Systemic racism is a lived reality for many in our school communities. It is a reality we cannot ignore. We are called to address it, working with our community partners and calling for real change. We all have a role to play in confronting these inequities and in working to build a more just society.

A commitment to positive change also requires us to look inward. Our students who are fighting for justice deserve to know that their teachers support them and embrace the cause. Activism is how we channel our anger to confront injustice. Our students are rising up to do it; we must rise up and fight alongside them.

York Catholic Teachers is committed to working with our educators to dismantle anti-Black racism and teach ways to unlearn it. We are committed to developing a Diversity Committee, offering workshops on white privilege, and looking at ways to decolonize lesson plans.

Our goal is to empower educators with the tools and resources they need to make schools and classrooms welcoming and inclusive. Addressing and disrupting anti-Black racism and supporting Black students demands our dedicated efforts if we are to help shape a society where the human rights of every individual are respected.

Education, as the great equalizer, is ideally positioned to invoke meaningful change in our society. Eradicating anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, and racism against all people of colour is fundamental to our way forward.

*Filomena Ferraro, Former President of York Catholic Teachers*  
*Michael Totten, President (Acting) of York Catholic Teachers*



# SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

By Karen Ebanks

The killing of an unarmed black man at the hands of the police is not news; it occurs with alarming frequency, including recently with the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. Floyd's death unfolded in front of many eyes: police officers who looked on in silence or turned their backs, and civilians who recorded his death on cell phones. All of them were bystanders.

As teachers, our anti-bullying lessons always testify to the power of the bystander, the person who watches on while injustice unfolds. What kind of power does the bystander hold? The police officer who looks on or turns their back as life drains away is useful in the moment to prevent the killing, but only if they choose to intervene. The civilian who records on the cell phone while life drains away is useless in the moment to prevent the killing, but useful afterward to provide documentation of what unfolded.

Our students experience injustice daily. How many teachers intervene when we witness an injustice that wounds our students? There are times when we do nothing. There are times when we are silent and look on while the injustice drains dignity away. This can be especially true if a fellow education worker is the cause of the injustice. Other times, we take action. We document, write a report, inform the administration, and contact a parent. This sequence tends to unfold if a student is the cause of the injustice.

Take a moment to revisit the quotes in this article, the voices of our Black youth in *Hairstory*. What do they speak? What do they ask of teachers? Every unanswered act of anti-Black racism erodes the self-esteem of our Black youth, erodes their trust in teachers, and erodes their ability to respond to future injustices in a way that does not lead to suspension, or expulsion, or worse.

Teachers are the frontline responders in schools. Our response as injustice unfolds is being watched. It is being documented. What do we want our responses to say?

*Hairstory* is a ground-breaking project that shares and analyzes the experience of Black youth in Ontario's care systems. This project began in 2012, through the Ontario Child Advocate, as a discussion on hair- and skin-care for Black youth in care, and found that their caregivers were not meeting many of their needs. This turned into a broader conversation about identity.

What makes *Hairstory* unique is that it unfolds exclusively through the eyes of our Black youth, 130 of whom participated in the ARTS (A Right to Speak) Forum in 2016. Conversations were synthesized and findings presented in a comprehensive report released in 2019, titled *Hairstory: ROOTED - A Firm Foundation for the Future of Black Youth in Ontario's Systems of Care*.

Every teacher in Ontario who has ever taught Black students – whether the young people were in Ontario's care systems or not – must watch this documentary and read this report. The lessons are far-reaching. We may find it a tough read, but to move forward as truly inclusive educators, committed to teaching all of our students, this work is necessary. The *Hairstory* documentary and full report can be found at [hairstory.ca](http://hairstory.ca). The documentary permits Black and Indigenous youth to speak directly to us, in their own voices. The report amplifies these voices and conversations.

Below is just a snippet of what the young people had to say. I challenge each and every Catholic teacher to focus on at least one aspect, start a conversation with a fellow teacher, analyze what you see happening in your local school or board, and step onto the path toward change. Accountability from various groups, including teacher unions, for promoting the well-being of Black youth, is included among the recommendations.

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*Karen Ebanks is a secondary teacher at St. Elizabeth Catholic High School. She is a member of the OECTA York Unit and sits on OECTA's Diversity Advisory Board.*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are from the Education and Employment section of the Hairstory report.

1. Public education programs to eliminate cultural stereotypes about Black youth.
2. More books by Black authors in the school curriculum and to purchase those books directly from Black authors and Black owned businesses.
3. Black history to be part of the curriculum from elementary to post-secondary school for all students.
4. Improved curriculum in faculties of education so educators are better prepared to work with Black students.
5. Curriculum that includes lesson plans about holistic healthcare, cultural teachings and drumming specific to Black peoples and for this curriculum to be taught by respected Black Elders in the community.
6. More Black educators and administrators in schools.
7. Advocates within schools to work specifically with Black youth.
8. Accountability from schools, school boards, the Ontario Ministry of Education, teachers unions, and provincial oversight commissions for teachers in the form of policies and practices to address discriminatory or racist actions, promote the well-being of Black students, and improve the safety and success of Black students in school.
9. Safe spaces in school to meet with other Black youth and opportunities for peer mentorship.
10. A mechanism in schools or the school board to file reports and address the complaints of Black students.
11. More supports to help Black youth transition from elementary to middle school, to high school, and post-secondary education.
12. Curriculum that covers the life experiences of Black LGBTQ2S+ young people for all students.
13. Anti-Black racism curriculum in schools to counter the stereotypes and biased beliefs that lead to the promotion of hate and bullying of Black youth.
14. School curriculum that explores the intersectionality of Blackness with trauma, racism, stereotypes, living in poverty and other factors that contribute to the stigmatizing of Black youth, the criminalizing of our behaviour and the formation of a negative identity.
15. Government to educate employers and provide incentives to create “first jobs” for socially marginalized or racialized youth, including Black youth.
16. Guidance counsellors and teachers to provide individualized support and strategies to Black students to achieve their goals as opposed to dissuading them based on their personal judgements of what is best for the student.
17. The Ministry of Education, school boards, principals, and teachers to focus policies and practice on strategies that keep Black youth in school instead of resorting to suspensions and expulsions.

***“We are concerned that bias and negative stereotypes about Black children and youth held by teachers and others in the education system limit our chances for success in school. We are often labelled as being troubled children and disproportionately targeted for school discipline.”***

***“We want our teachers to believe in us and invest time in us. We want educators to express to us the same passion, belief in our abilities, and encouragement they would any other student.”***

***“We challenge our teachers to see us as individuals not just as ‘another Black kid.’ Do not judge us by our actions or the actions of our peers; rather, try to understand the circumstances of our lives that affect our behavior.”***

***“We feel over-surveilled by teachers. Displays of justifiable anger or defensive reactions on our part to acts of anti-Black racism can get us suspended or expelled from school.”***

***“I trusted nobody at school because the teachers were all the same. Always implying my dreams, hopes, and desires were unreachable, suppressing by abilities, motivation, and determination. Everyone deserves a fair chance. We can’t say what everyone will do with their chance at life, but having an equal opportunity to be successful in life matters.”***

## IT IS TIME FOR US TO BE TRANSPARENT

Contribution from an ARTS Forum participant

Excerpted from *Hairstory: Rooted*

“It is time for us to be transparent. Take away the ignorance; take away the fear of hurting others because kids are already being hurt. Children are already facing adversity. Racism exists and I am Black. A system that automatically designates my people and those of a darker skin tone as inferior is the system I’m trying to navigate.

To teachers I would say, “Check your privilege”. Take note of the Black kids you are teaching and in charge of. Take note of the Black kids you teach in history class who hear that their history stems from slavery while the rich history of Africa and the Moors who travelled the oceans and crossed seas long before Columbus did is ignored.

I would say bring up the topic of anti-Black oppression and not speak of it as something that happened in “19–whatever” because that implies that it was a problem of the past and minimizes the fact that it is the reality of today. Words have power and to take that away perpetuates a system built on, and continues to benefit from, the silence of the oppressed, the silence of Black people.

I would say that this is not a “Black peoples” problem. “White” people or other people who benefit from having privilege, need to be taught from a young age—from the institutions in which they’re learning—that the oppression of others is not okay, that ignorance is dangerous, that Black people are not suspicious and that Black people are not to be feared. All children should be taught not to swallow the distorted and biased beliefs that are fed to them and so easily observed everywhere.

Education in Canada has taught me the resilience of Black peoples, which comes from breaking free of the literal shackles of slavery. Yet, education in Canada does not provide a space to speak of the mental illness and physical trauma encoded into our DNA from anti-Black oppression in the past and present.

Let’s remove the stigma and negativity associated with being Black. Let’s recognize that Black boys and girls are not a problem and teach them in a way that equips them for future and present—day success. School has always been my refuge and learning came easy to me. I understand that education is a key to unlock doors and help bypass obstacles I face. This is what I tell myself and I’m fortunate to have not become a negative statistic.

Even if I had authority figures put limits on me, I would not let that affect my performance or how I react. But for the kids who already struggle it’s not the same. To build on what I said at the listening table, I would say, let’s stop whispering about racism, specifically anti-Black racism and discrimination. Let’s create a dialogue, let’s create schools where educated students know the consequences of racism and little Black boys and girls are united in brotherhood, where inequality is not tolerated, where people can speak up for justice for oppressed minorities, for Black people, where Black youth and Black people can assume their power and achieve success by their own hands.”



*This article (previous 3 pages) appeared in the June 2020 issue of Catholic Teacher magazine, dedicated to raising awareness about Anti-Black Racism. This article led to the author being invited to speak at the Canadian Teachers Federation 2020 National Staff Conference held November 2020.*

### Black Lives Matter

The death of George Floyd has sparked an international movement of civil unrest that has not been seen for decades in support of Black Lives Matter. Here in York Region, peaceful protests were held at several locations including at the YCDSB on June 26, seeking support for black students. Throughout the summer, President Filomena Ferraro and I met with black leaders in York Region to start important conversations, worked through York Communities for Public Education and with Italian-Canadians for Black Lives to draft letters to MPPs and trustees to demand that anti-black racism be addressed, and reached out to all worker groups within

the YCDSB to attend the provincial march for black students held on August 3. Of all the teacher-affiliates present at that march, I am proud to say that OECTA was an impactful presence with the strongest show of flags.

These are all steps at the start of our work. An important step has been hearing the experiences of racism and pain shared by parents and former students of our YCDSB. One experience that stands out in my mind is when a teacher wrote the N-word on the board at school, stating that it was OK to do so because it was Black History Month. I lowered my head and sighed when I heard that. In that moment, I imagined being a black student in that class and wanting to shrink into myself when seeing that word written on the board for everyone to see - a word brimming with racism and filled with a legacy of oppression, being made public and becoming a tangible thing in the classroom, my classroom, where I should feel safe and now do not. Instead of celebrating black excellence, my

teacher had chosen to empower black degradation. That choice would scream volumes, deafening me. That would be a moment of palpable fear, terrified about what the teacher might do next, and worried about my reaction somewhere between shutting down and becoming enraged. None of our black students should ever feel that way.

All of us can help make sure not another black student ever does feel that way. This year York Catholic Teachers will be presenting opportunities to work towards dismantling anti-black racism. Join us in this work. It is the calling and duty of all teachers to protect and keep safe all of our students.

“We cannot close our eyes to any form of racism or exclusion, while pretending to defend the sacredness of every human life.”

Pope Francis.



**YORK CATHOLIC**  
TEACHERS

## Bill 213, Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020

### If You Permit It, You Promote It

Michael Oyston - OECTA Councillor

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You are in your classroom and your students are working on an assignment. A few conversations are happening which mostly tend to be on topic. As students continue to chat the topic of conversation starts to wander away from the task at hand. Maybe the conversation starts to get a little more than off topic. It becomes clear to you that the students don't realize that you are listening to them and they start to make fun of a student. Maybe they are making fun of their clothes, the way they talk, or something that happened on the weekend. As teachers we know that if we permit these conversations to continue and do nothing, then we are in fact promoting the nature of the conversations. What we permit, we promote. Naturally, as teachers, we address these situations. We call out the behaviours and use them as teachable moments so that our students are clear where we stand, morally. We make it abundantly clear that in the classroom community bullying, hate and/or discrimination will not be tolerated!

Many of our elected MPP's in the legislature were faced with a somewhat similar situation. On Monday December 7, Bill 213, *Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020* was passed in the Legislature. Buried in this Act is legislation that allows the Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies to have "College" repealed from its name and amended to "University." This amend-

ment allows the Canada Christian College the power to grant arts and science degrees (Why this provision is included in legislation that is intended to help small businesses struggling with the financial hardships resulting from COVID-19 is an entirely different column).

One does not have to dig too deep to find that the President of Canada Christian College is Charles McVety. The fact that the controversial McVety is a political supporter of Doug Ford should come as a surprise to no one, however, his agenda is one which should be offensive to all Ontarians. McVety was a vocal opponent to Ontario's revised Physical and Health Education curriculum introduced by the Wynne Government. Among the claims that McVety made in regards to the Health and Physical Education curriculum was that school boards were brainwashing kids as young as six that they could change their gender and claimed that children across Ontario were being forced to cross-dress to show solidarity with various sexually confused communities.<sup>1</sup> McVety was removed from Crossroads Television System (CTS) in 2010 following a decision by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. McVety made statements that were deemed to be in violation of the Council's standards and demonstrated a lack of compliance with CTS's own code of ethics. McVety is also known to share Islamophobic views. In one of McVety's

statements he proclaims that "Islam is not just a religion, it's a political and cultural system as well and we know that Christians and Jews and Hindus don't have the same mandate for a hostile takeover." McVety also weighs in on matters relating to science and has been quoted referencing the climate crisis by saying "I believe this taxing and trading of air will fund the one-world government of the Anti-Christ." McVety is also on the record for denying evolution, supporting the theory of creationism while supporting the notion that the earth is 6000 years old.<sup>2</sup> In looking into the well documented history of Charles McVety it becomes clear that his political ideologies are based on hatred, division and a refusal of scientific evidence. Among all of these controversies it also needs to be known that McVety may be using his College as a personal piggy bank owing more than \$860,000 in loans to the College between he and his son who is a College Vice President. For all intents and purposes Charles McVety is not someone who a politician would want to hitch their wagon to. However, McVety was also instrumental in helping to secure the social conservative vote for Doug Ford which helped to propel him to victory in the PC Leadership race. It also appears that McVety either made an illegal donation, or an unaccounted-for rental of space, by Canada Christian College to Premier Doug Ford's leadership

campaign. The Canada Christian College either donated or rented meeting and event space to Doug Ford's leadership campaign when he was seeking the Ontario PC Leadership position. This rental was not reported in the Ford Campaigns financial returns which is illegal in Ontario. Campaigns in Ontario are not permitted to take unaccounted for donations or to fail to report an expense on a campaign financial return. Conversely, it is also illegal for a Canadian charity to make political donations or for a politician to take them. Regardless how this situation is presented it appears that McVety may have now come to cash in on his support for Doug Ford.

In recent weeks MPP's in the legislature have sat uncomfortably as the opposition has hammered them time-and-time again during ques-

tion period. Premier Ford has taken it upon himself to be absent during this questioning and has left his Ministers to respond to the questions. Even within the PC Caucus there is tension when McVety is brought up as evidenced by Deputy Premier Christine Elliott who said "there are questions that are raised, there's no question about that," in regards to McVety and his loans.

Our MPP's have a choice to make. They have decided to support Bill 213, they are promoting hate, division, a refusal of science, election fraud and corruption. They are condoning the notion that homophobia, Islamophobia and hatred have a place in Ontario. They accept and promote views that are divisive and only serve to push communities apart as opposed to bringing us together in a time when unity is needed more than ever.

Keep these MPP's in mind when the next provincial election is upon us. Ask them why they decided to keep quiet and promote these views in their communities.

However, this also falls on us. If we are not reaching out to Doug Ford and our MPP's either through email, phone or social media, then we are also complicit in permitting and promoting these views. Contact your MPP and let them know that the beliefs of Charles McVety have no place in Ontario. Remember, if you permit it, you promote it.



### **Sign up for OTIP's free retirement webinar!**

OTIP's popular retirement workshop "Walk into retirement with a plan" is now available as a webinar!

Learn about retirement planning from the comfort and safety of your own home. OTIP's experts will discuss how to smoothly transition your current health, dental and travel coverage into retirement as well as the flexible plan options available to you.

View the schedule and sign up for a free webinar today at [www.otip.com/retirement\\_webinar](http://www.otip.com/retirement_webinar)

## An Update from Your OTRO, (Occasional Teacher Release Officer)

Anna Polisco

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Our first year as a combined permanent and occasional teacher unit was not for the faint of heart. Beginning the year with provincial bargaining and strike action took its toll on members. The school closures in March 2020, due to COVID, compounded an already stressful situation. I want to thank, and am very proud of, all the occasional teachers who stepped up to the plate and did what was necessary to continue moving forward.

The OT Bargaining Committee is comprised of both members from the OT committee and members at large. The Committee; *Irene Ciotala, Natasha D'Amelio, Marisa Dametto, Maria Ferrulli, John Fitzpatrick, Loredana Foti, Amanda Gervasi, Andrew Hamaway, Maria Santella, and Vito Totino*, and the Bargaining Team; *myself, Bruno Muzzi (Provincial Contract Services Member), Mike Totten (Vice President-Unit Executive & YCOT Grievance Officer), Daniel Fiore (OTR) Loredana Foti (OT, Daily), Amanda Gervasi (LTO, Elementary), and Vito Totino (LTO, Secondary)*, spent many hours preparing and bargaining the best possible contract for our members. You will find our collective agreement (2019-2022) on the board's Google Drive as well as the York Unit and OECTA Provincial website.

The 2020-2021 school year has also proven to be as stressful as the one that ended with everyone home. I am happy to announce however that the OTR has already chaired

our first OT Committee meeting. As well as *Daniel Fiore (OTR) and myself (OTRO)* committee members include *Patricia Dabrowski, Natasha D'Amelio, Loredana Foti, Amanda Gervasi, Patricia Graham, Catherine Leung, Maria Santella and Sarah Welk*. A number of issues were discussed and we are looking to resolve these matters with the help of the President, exec, and the Board. The committee wants to hear from you regarding any opportunities or issues that you would like considered. I cannot stress enough the importance of reaching out to myself, Daniel, and the members of your OT Committee as you journey to different schools. Please introduce yourself and share with them your ideas, concerns or questions. Committee members are all invested in helping to enrich your experiences as occasional teachers, and they cannot do this effectively without your input.

As your Occasional Teacher Release Officer over the past year, I have worked very closely with a number of members regarding a variety of matters. With your continued support, I can assure you no task is too daunting, even in this unusual and unprecedented school year. I will continue to meet with and assist members with day-to-day issues around the SFE system, staffing concerns, sick and maternity leaves, WSIB claims and our Collective Agreement. I work closely with the treasurer, President and our OTR Daniel, regarding the budget, to establish and organize PD opportunities and social events

and activities. Alongside members from all union groups in the Board, and permanent teacher members, Daniel and I also represent OTs on the Health and Safety Committee. Soon, a SFE workgroup will be looking at ways to improve the call-out system and a Budget workgroup will look into maintaining a separate versus amalgamated OT budget.

This year, we will continue to hold OT information meetings as well as sharing updates and changes with you via our union email. To date, about 70% of OTs have activated their secure YCOT gmail accounts. If you have not already done so, it is imperative that you activate your ycot.ca account and check your email daily. It is our primary means of communication regarding all union matters.

In the spirit of York Unit we will continue to give back to our members. We had mixed reviews regarding the Marlies ticket draws -it seems that some prefer Maple Leaf tickets. We are mindful however of our OT budget and we thought it prudent to start off small. PD subsidies for conferences are still available for OTs, and during the months of November and December we are holding weekly draws to support members and keep spirits high. A final big prize draw will take place just before the Christmas Break. The Social Committee, *Chaired by Amanda Gervasi*, will soon announce more events and competitions. We are also aware of our members' needs, especially in

[www.yctoecta.com](http://www.yctoecta.com)

light of last year's school closures, and this year's mandatory self-isolation as required by Public Health. We would like to assist members where we can, but this can only be done if we are aware of a need. Please reach out to ask for our support if necessary.

The key to our continued success as a union of excellent Catholic teachers is to be proactive. It is imperative that you read all the information that comes your way, from both your provincial and local President. Do your best to stay informed by attending meetings - knowledge is power. It is also important to understand that we are in this together and we cannot affect change without compromise. In order to get through this pandemic, it is important to work together and support one another in our work.

As occasional teachers our job is to fill the absence of a permanent

teacher and to support the students and staff. In order to do so we need to work as many days as possible. Our availability is critical to minimize on-calls thereby allowing permanent teachers their scheduled prep time. Permanent teachers can facilitate this by entering their absences into the SFE system as early as possible and by leaving clear lesson plans and attendance lists and indicating the different cohorts or F2F and remote students so that OTs can facilitate the smooth running of their classes. We also endeavour to keep OTs safe and protected while working as often as possible. It is important that you let me know of any safety issues you encounter, especially with regard to the PPE provided upon arrival. Please also note that the Board is offering bonuses to OTs in order to encourage the filling of as many daily vacancies as possible. Bonuses include \$600.00 for 90 days of work (full or half days), and an

additional \$250.00 for working 30 Fridays!

Lastly, due to the changes to the OECTA AGM of March 2020 our Action Directive regarding the ineligibility of LTO teachers to collect E.I. during the summer, was not considered. However, we are planning to bring it back to the floor for consideration at the OECTA AGM 2021.

Should you have any questions, feedback, opinions, or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to me

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I am only an email or phone call away.

Wishing you a healthy and safe school year. I am looking forward to continuing to work with all of you!

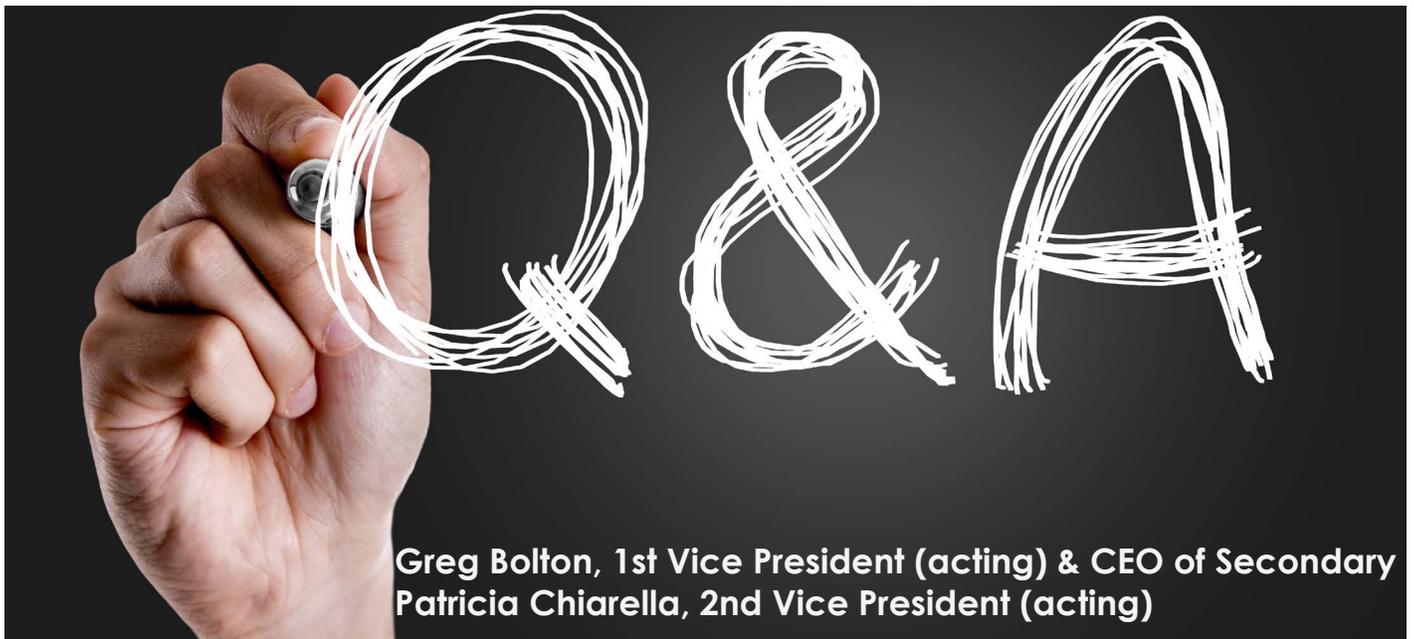
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## 2020 Joan Kamps Memorial Bursary

I am honoured to be named one of the recipients of the 2020 Joan Kamps Memorial Bursary. This award has been used towards my studies to pursue higher education that will inform my teaching practices which will in terms benefit our students. As an occasional teacher in the York Catholic District School Board and a proud member of the York OECTA unit, I would like to sincerely thank the ongoing support that has been provided to me from the unit local over the past years I have been working here. I am blessed to have been provided with this opportunity and will continue to work hard towards creating a better future in education.

Holly Cheng





**Greg Bolton, 1st Vice President (acting) & CEO of Secondary  
Patricia Chiarella, 2nd Vice President (acting)**

**What form do I need to complete to access a Special Leave day?(9.06)(a)**

The TCH12a Form and it can be found here [https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Resources/Board%20Reports//TCH12A\\_Form\\_2018-19.pdf](https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Resources/Board%20Reports//TCH12A_Form_2018-19.pdf)

**What do I do if . . .**

- **the roads are impassable and unsafe in my area**
- **the buses have not been cancelled**

You would report an inclement weather day. Choosing to use either a 9.06a or an MOU day for Inclement weather. You would then be responsible for posting lesson plans to your VLE and attaching the links to the SFE ticket you create for your absence.

**Where can I find a current copy of the Collective Agreement?**

The current Collective Agreement is found on our website under “Resources”. The direct links are below.

- Permanent Teachers - [https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Contract/2019-2022\\_OECTA\\_York\\_Unit\\_Collective\\_Agreement\\_-\\_Nov\\_13\\_2020.pdf](https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Contract/2019-2022_OECTA_York_Unit_Collective_Agreement_-_Nov_13_2020.pdf)
- Occasional and LTO Teachers - [https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Contract/2019-2022\\_York\\_Occasional\\_Teachers\\_Collective\\_Agreement\\_-\\_Nov\\_13\\_2020.pdf](https://www.yctoecta.com/usercontent/Contract/2019-2022_York_Occasional_Teachers_Collective_Agreement_-_Nov_13_2020.pdf)

**When are Occasional Teachers requested?**

**SECONDARY:** You need to request an occasional teacher for **every** absence regardless of your teaching assignment.

**ELEMENTARY:** Classroom, Itinerant PE, FSL and Music teachers request an OT for every absence.

Teacher Librarians and Core Resource teachers request an OT after an absence of 3 consecutive days.

**EXCEPTION:** Resulting from our most recent negotiations, Elementary Core Resource teachers should request an OT when their absence is the result of a Board in-service.

**The employer-provided PPE has given me a rash. What should I do?**

1. Report it to your administrator **immediately**.
2. Seek medical attention
3. Complete a **WSIB Form 6**
4. Notify the Unit Office.

**What is Best Doctors Canada?**

Best Doctors Canada is a service that is available to all permanent members. *Best Doctors* offers the following four services to members for members and for their dependent family members. All services are confidential and the exchange of medical information is encrypted.

1. **Expert Medical Opinion** - provides you a second opinion for an existing medical condition and/or treatment plan. **Best Doctors** will



securely gather your medical file(s) and share it with one of their specialist doctors (world-wide). You will receive a summative report that you can then share with your doctor.

- 2. FindBestDoc** - If you are seeking a specialist this service will provide you a list of specialists (doctors), the wait times and contact information in your area. You could then share this information with your doctor.
- 3. International Facilities** -If you need to receive treatment outside of Canada, *Best Doctors* will assist you in locating a facility best suited to your needs.
- 4. Resources** - Best Doctors offers a variety of resources. Visit the **Best Doctors** website to see what is available.

### **Am I guaranteed to receive Long Term Disability (LTD) when my sick days expire?**

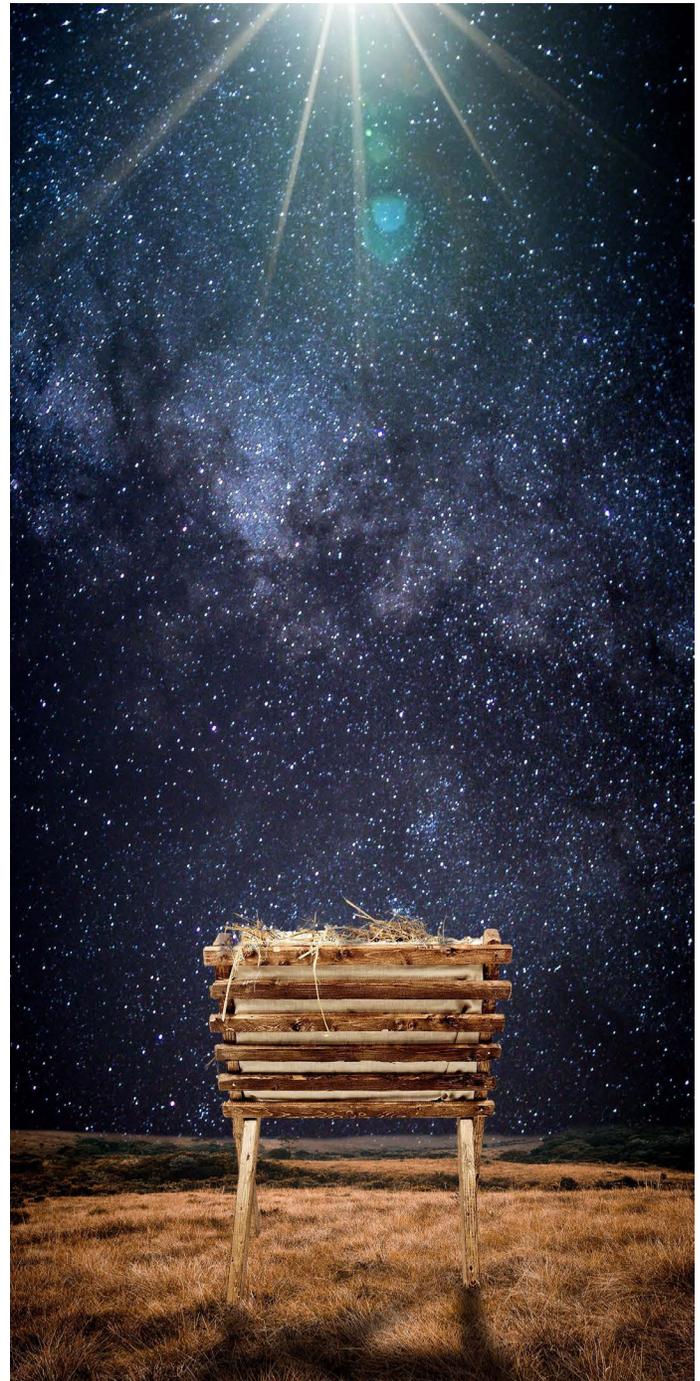
No! LTD is not guaranteed. The process for accessing LTD includes: a completed application; a 40-minute interview with a Disability Analyst; all pertinent medical files and the support of your doctor. All files and related information is provided to OTIP where it will be vetted and approved or denied. The entire application process takes a minimum of 12 weeks. You should consider this wait time if you feel you will be unable to return to work at the expiration of your sick days.

### **Does my eligibility for LTD expire? Am I responsible for informing the Board to stop deducting my premiums (approx \$60.00/month) when/if I become ineligible?**

Yes and yes! The current LTD contract, although mandatory, has an expiration date. Members become **ineligible to receive LTD once they have 30 Credited Service years or reach 65 years of age** (whichever comes first). When you reach either of these thresholds you must inform the Superintendent of HR, (Michael Gray) in writing, (see form on website) that you wish to terminate your LTD premiums. If terminating upon reaching credit service years, you must accompany your letter with proof from OTPP indicating

such. The Board does not have access to this information and will continue withdrawing the premiums until they are directed, in writing, to stop.

**Note:** The Local Unit has forwarded to the Provincial AGM a resolution in this regard; That the provincial association investigate the possibility for members to continue in the LTD plan by purchasing additional coverage at their own expense. We hope to see this resolution passed at AGM 2021.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## **BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS**

Mario Agostino, teacher at St. Cecilia on the birth of his son Francesco.

Maggie (Ieraci) Alonzi, teacher at St. Charles Garnier on the birth of her son Leonardo Anthony.

Cassandra Belcastro, LTO teacher on the birth of her son Daniel.

Brad Blutcher, teacher at St.

Jerome on the birth of his son Malcolm.

Tania Boyes, teacher at St. Emily on the birth of her son Jack.

Rosalyne Busca, teacher at St.

Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the birth of her daughter Dahlia Rose.

Daisy Cabrera, teacher at Canadian Martyrs on the birth of her daughter.

Antonella Cianni, teacher at Our Lady of Fatima on the birth of her daughter.

Amanda Coelho, teacher at St. Cecilia on the birth of daughter Amelia Marie.

Rachelle Colangelo, teacher at St. Benedict on the birth of her son Nicolas.

Francesco Costabile, teacher at

Our Lady of Good Counsel on the birth of his son Leandro.

Natalie Cultraro, teacher at St.

Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the birth of her daughter Aria Rose.

Sonia DiGuglielmo, teacher at

St. John Bosco on the birth of her daughter Emma Claire.

Laura Angela Di Nardo, teacher at

St. Patrick-Markham on the birth of her twin boys Christian and Lucas.

Daniella DiPalma, teacher at St.

Charles Garnier on the birth of her son Matteo.

Marianna Fabris, teacher at Our Lady of Good Counsel and Mauro Fabris, LTO teacher on the birth of their son Mauro.

Stephanie Ferraro, teacher at St. Robert CHS on the birth of her son Massimo.

Carmela Giambianco, teacher at St. Brendan on the birth of her daughter Mia Isabelle.

Stacey Giasson, teacher at St.

Mary, Nobleton on the birth of her daughter Avha.

Anna Iacobelli, teacher at St. Peter on the birth of her daughter.

Patrizia Ierullo, LTO teacher on the birth of her daughter.

Stephanie King, teacher at St. Gabriel on the birth of her son Harrison Christopher.

Erica Lagana Bartella, LTO teacher on the birth of her daughter Madelyn.

Natasha Magni, teacher at St. Margaret Mary on the birth of her daughter Mila.

Joanne Marchesan, teacher at Our Lady of Grace on the birth of her son Alessandro.

Sarah Marziliano, teacher at Light of Christ on the birth of her son Nico.

Laura Mazzitti, teacher at St. Charles Garnier on the birth of her daughter Jenessa.

Stephen McInerney, teacher at St. Br. Andre CHS on the birth of his son Aidan Michael.

Jenny Pagniello, teacher at Holy Name on the birth of her son Graziano.

Lucy Paladino, teacher at St.

Emily on the birth of her daughter Lia Victoria.

Valentina Paniccia, teacher at Our Lady of Fatima on the birth of her son.

Lisa Ridell, teacher at St. Edward & St. Justin Martyr on the birth of her son Dante.

Renee Rizza, teacher at St. Patrick-Markham on the birth of her son Samuel.

Grace Russo, teacher at St. Mary of the Angels and Rob Russo, teacher at St. Cecilia on the birth of their daughter Marchesa.

Sabrina Sbordone, teacher at St. Charles Garnier on the birth of her daughter Nora Grace.

Alicia Scariot, teacher at St. Gregory the Great on the birth of her son Gianluca.

Erica Tucciarone, teacher at St. Cecilia on the birth of her daughter Victoria.

Angela Vecchiarelli, teacher at St. Stephen on the birth of her son Anthony.



Natalie Vena, teacher at St. Joseph the Worker on the birth of her daughter Gabriella.

Ashley Veri-Roy, teacher at Our Lady of Grace on the birth of her son Luke.

Natalie Wong, teacher at St.

Thomas Aquinas on the birth of her daughter Evelyne.



### **CONDOLENCES & SYMPATHY**

**Rosy Cece, teacher at St. Joseph-R. Hill and her family**, on the passing of her husband **Daniel Bertini**, teacher at St. Joan of Arc CHS.

**The Ferrigni-Nardi family**, on the passing of **Erminia Ferrigni-Nardi**, teacher at Good Shepherd.

Angela Adamo, teacher at St. Joseph the Worker on the passing of her aunt.

Patrizia Angelucci-De Paulis, teacher at St. Clare on the passing of her mother.

Carla Anibaldi, teacher at St. Veronica on the passing of her father.

Michael Auciello, teacher at Immaculate Conception on the passing of her grandmother.

Laura Bagnara, teacher at St. Stephen on the passing of her aunt.

Kristen Belvedere, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing of her grandfather.

Marisa Bianchi, LTO teacher on the passing of her grandmother.

Peter Binelli, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of his father (June) and his sister (Sept.).

Roberta Bucci, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of her father.

Mario Bufalini, teacher at St. Mark on the passing of his sister-in-law.

Lori Butrico, teacher at St. Margaret Mary on the passing of her mother.

Stephanie Campoli-D'Amario, teacher at St. Emily on the passing of her father.

Letizia Cappello, Consultant of Special Ed at the CEC, on the passing of her mother-in-law.

Amanda Carino, LTO teacher on the passing of her grandmother.

Nicole Carvahlo, Occasional teacher, on the passing of her grandfather.

Iside Ciccone, teacher at St. Clare on the passing of her mother.

Patrizia Cozza, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing of her grandfather.

Roslyn Deegan Dawes, teacher at Canadian Martyrs on the passing of her mother.

Sandy De Franca, daily OT, on the passing of her father.

Grace D'Elia, LTO teacher, on the passing of her grandmother.

Celeste Di Cosola, teacher at St. Stephen on the passing her father-in-law.

Steve Di Giacomo, teacher at Our Lady Queen of the World CA on the passing of his grandmother.

Valeria D'Orazio, teacher at Divine Mercy on the passing of her father.

Adriana Dominicis, teacher at Our Lady Queen of the World CA, on the passing of her father (Oct.

14), her mother (Oct. 30) and her uncle (Nov.)

Sara Feltrin, LTO teacher on the passing of her grandfather.

Ginnette Ferrigni, teacher at St. Joseph the Worker on the passing of her father.

Trish Festa, teacher at St. Veronica on the passing of her father-in-law.

Joe Fragale, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of his grandmother.

Sabrina Gallo, teacher at Pope Francis, on the passing of her uncle (Oct. 14) and her aunt (Oct. 30).

Patricia Graham, LTO teacher on the passing of her grandmother and her uncle.

Stephen Hull, teacher at Corpus Christi on the passing of his father-in-law.

Antonella Iacobucci, teacher at Immaculate Conception on the passing of her uncle.

Patrizia Ierullo, LTO teacher on the passing of her father-in-law.

Ricki Marie Machala, LTO teacher on passing of her sister.

Massimo Manna, teacher at St. Stephen on the passing of his father.

Luana Marinelli, teacher at St. M. d'Youville on the passing of her aunt.

Christina Mastronardi, teacher at Immaculate Conception on the passing of her father-in-law.

Sean McDermott, teacher at St. Benedict on the passing of his father.

Colleen Miller, teacher at San Lorenzo Ruiz on the passing of her grandmother.

Louisa Mirabelli, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing

of her grandmother.

Cathy Monopoli, teacher at Our Lady Queen of the World CA on the passing of her grandmother.

Stephanie Morano, teacher at Canadian Martyrs on the passing of her grandmother.

Erica Norris, Special Ed. Program Consultant at the CEC on the passing of her father-in-law.

Pina Novelli, teacher at Corpus Christi on the passing of her father-in-law.

Josephine Palmeri, teacher at St. John Paul II on the passing of her father.

Antonietta Parisi, teacher at St. Stephen on the passing of her father-in-law.

Adriano Parravani, teacher at St. Robert CHS on the passing of his grandmother.

Cathy Pellecchia, teacher at St. Emily on the passing of her brother-in-law.

Stephen Peticca, LTO teacher on the passing of his grandmother.

Josephine Pienso, teacher at St. Raphael the Archangel on the passing of her father.

Teresa Potestio, LTO teacher on the passing of her father.

Enza Raso, teacher at St. Mary Immaculate on the passing of her father.

Amanda Riccio, OT teacher on the passing of her grandmother.

Jackie Rocheleau-Morand, teacher at St. Brigid on the passing of her father-in-law.

Daniela Rodrigues, teacher at St. Joseph-Markham on the passing of her father.

Eugenia Romano, LTO teacher on the passing of her father-in-law.

Linda Scanga, teacher at St. Brigid on the passing of her sister-in-law.

Joan Stang-Kim, teacher at St.

Patrick-Markham on the passing of her father-in-law.

Mary-Lou Temperato, teacher at St. Michael the Archangel on the passing of her grandfather.

Angela Tremblay, teacher at Light of Christ on the passing of her mother.

Natalie Vena, teacher at St. Joseph the Worker on the passing of her grandfather.

Anna Venneri, teacher at St. Cecilia on the passing of her mother.

Natalie Wehbe, teacher at San Marco on the passing of her grandmother.

Alice Wu, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of her father.

### Feeling stressed and anxious? You are not alone

There is a 'normal' rhythm to the school year that has been disrupted by COVID-19. This is causing many of you to feel stressed, anxious and maybe a little uncertain about the future. It's important to know this is normal – and it's OK to feel concerned about what comes next. Allowing yourself to acknowledge feelings of stress and anxiety creates an opportunity for learning. It helps you to better understand the world around you and manage your approach to resiliency.

To learn more, visit [www.otipinsurance.com/article89](http://www.otipinsurance.com/article89)

