

Bare Essentials: April 25, 2018



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Niagara Teacher Local



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Do you read the Bare Essentials but are uncertain of when it comes out? Do you check the website for the newsletter but sometimes forget to check? Fear not, as **ETFO Niagara will make it even easier for you to receive the newsletter, as the Bare Essentials will now be available by subscribing to our mailing list.** To subscribe to receive the Bare Essentials, please visit <http://eepurl.com/RAzFL> to sign up.

Are You Ready For The Provincial Election?

We are forty-four days away (and counting down) from the June 7 election. Are you ready? Make sure your voter registration information is up to date by checking the [Elections Ontario list](#), contact the Local office to see how you can support ETFO election activities, and sign up to volunteer for the candidate of your choice. Even a few hours can make a difference.

ETFO has released a new [Provincial Election page](#) to help you get ready. It includes [ETFO's updated election agenda](#) that promotes policies to improve elementary education, a summary report of [an ETFO public opinion poll](#) on education issues conducted in January 2018, links to the four main political parties and ETFO resources that promote information about the election. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate the Local for more information.

Administering EQAO – Make Sure You Know and Follow The Rules!

EQAO processes must be followed as prescribed in "Professional Responsibilities for the Administration of the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions. **Teachers want to prevent at all cost accusations of improperly administering the test, intervening or assisting students to influence test results, or even changing students answers on the test. Allegations of improperly administering the test, if proven, can lead to severe disciplinary measures against a teacher and an allegation of professional misconduct at the College of Teachers.** An investigation can be launched for any number of reasons including students telling their parents about incidents surrounding the testing or by anomalies uncovered during the marking of the tests (such as eraser marks on all the same questions in a set). So remember to keep this in mind if you are a Grade 3 or 6 teacher delivering EQAO in the upcoming month.

ETFO Niagara Spring AGM – May 23, 2018

The ETFO Niagara Spring Annual General Meeting is slowly creeping up. **It will take place on Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at Amici's in Thorold**, from 4:30 – 6:30 PM. During the aforementioned meeting, constitutional amendments will be debated. Adhering to the guidelines set forth in our Local Constitution, the items to be debated need to be shared with members 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting. **This means that any constitutional amendments need to be submitted to the ETFO office by Monday, May 14, 2018 at 4PM.** The Constitutional Amendment form was sent out with the Mailchimp delivery of this Bare Essentials newsletter. Alternatively, you can find it online at www.etfoniagara.ca, under the "Forms and Documents" tab. Should you have any questions, please contact Brian Barker at vp1@etfoniagara.ca. To register to attend the meeting, please sign up online via Eventbrite at <https://etfoniagaraspringagm2018.eventbrite.ca>.

Day of Mourning – Saturday, April 28, 2018

As teachers, we often take for granted the safety of our workplaces and greet the prospect of doing our Annual Health and Safety training with some chagrin. Please keep in mind that today, like every other day in Ontario, hundreds of men, women and young people will go to work and suffer an occupational injury. Countless others will be exposed to harmful toxins leading to cancer and other occupational diseases. One or more may lose their life on the job. **ETFO Niagara distributed ribbons that either stewards or ETFO Health and Safety site reps can wear through the courier.** On Saturday, April 28, 2018, please consider taking a moment of silent reflection for those who were injured or died as a result of simply going to work.

Retirement Guidelines and ETFO Retirement Dinner – Friday, June 8, 2018

Just a friendly reminder, that for those teachers that are considering retirement this June, that the Collective Agreement (Article 7.01) requires written notice by May 1st of the intention to retire effective June 30 or August 31. While only two weeks is required by the Employment Standards Act, the Collective Agreement timeline was established to help facilitate the system staffing process for the following school year.

Are you ready to send off your colleagues with happy memories and a lot of laughs? **Get your calendar out and circle Friday, June 8th** – that is the night we will be holding our annual ETFO Retirement Dinner. This year, “Escape to Retire-itaville” will have a tropical theme to celebrate our colleagues as they “surf” into their next adventures. Dust off your leis, and enjoy this party, as we wish our colleagues well, helping them “hula” into retirement. If you have any more questions about the retirement timelines or the event, please contact Brian Barker (vp1@etfoniagara.ca).

Upcoming Workshop: Gender and Sexuality 101 – Tuesday, May 8, 2018

What’s the difference between gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality? Find out what they are and why they are different on Tuesday, May 8, 2018, from 4:30 – 6:00 PM. The workshop will take place at the ETFO Niagara office. This workshop will examine ways for participants to increase their understanding of what being transgender means. Participants will have opportunities to learn new terminology and create safe and inclusive classroom space for gender independent/transgender children. The workshop will use personal stories and provide resources and strategies to use in the classroom. Participants will be engaged in purposeful and meaningful conversations and dialogue. To register, please sign up via Eventbrite, at <https://etfoniagaragands1718.eventbrite.ca>. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Brigham, Equity and Social Justice Chair, (jbrigham41967@gmail.com).

Silent Auction Recap

On Friday, April 20th, ETFO Niagara hosted the 20th Annual Silent Auction. We are happy to report that the grand total raised for the auction was \$10,200, which will be shared amongst four different women’s shelters from across the Niagara Region. Thank you to those schools that donated a basket, the attendees that were at the event, and to Gail Dunn, Sharon Ethier (Status of Women Committee Chair) and the Status of Women Committee for all of their hard work in making the event a smashing success!

Application For The Termination of LTD In Unique Circumstances

The payment into the long term disability plan is a mandatory requirement for all teachers in the province of Ontario, however there are two different scenarios where it may be possible to apply for the termination of LTD. The two scenarios are as follows:

- 1) You are eligible for a 62% unreduced service pension, or you are within either the greater of 110 working days, or the expiration of sick leave of being eligible for a 62% unreduced service pension. (A copy of your Teachers' Pension Plan Board service credit statement is required and your current absence balance, consisting of sick leave days plus short term leave days)

- 2) You have reached the end of the month in which you turned age 65, or you are within either the greater of 110 working days, or the expiration of sick leave reaching the end of the month in which you turn age 65. (Proof of age is required and your current absence balance, consisting of sick leave days plus short term leave days)

If you have any questions regarding these unique circumstances, please don't hesitate to call the Local office, and a released officer would be happy to support you through the process.

Reminder: Offence Declarations

Regulation 521/01 of the Safe Schools Act requires Boards of Education to collect Offence Declarations on an annual basis from all employees. The Offence declaration for 2017 is now open on the HR/Payroll portal. **All employees must make their declaration electronically through the employee portal by July 31st, 2018.** You will be reminded of this when you access the HR/Payroll portal and Smart Find. A notice has been sent to all First class staff rooms. As per Memorandum HR-025 from the DSBN, failure to complete an Offence Declaration by July 31 may result in being suspended without pay pending submission of the Offence Declaration. Should you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to contact one of your released officers.

Health and Safety: Refusing Unsafe Work

When learning about reporting and response requirements for health and safety, and the potential for work refusal, members need to understand that:

- Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, there are broad reporting and response requirements related to workplace concerns, incidents and hazard;
- If a member needs support to report a health and safety concern, incident or hazard to the principal, or support to get the action necessary in response to that report, then the member needs to contact their local for advice and assistance;
- A worker can refuse work when there are circumstances that are likely to endanger him or herself, or others;
- The specific requirements for a work refusal are set out under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, with steps that must be followed;
- Teachers have a limited right to refuse work because of their responsibilities for the wellbeing of students, these limitations are set out in Regulation 857, under the OHSA; and
- A member dealing with a potential or actual work refusal situation needs to contact their local for advice and assistance.

In those circumstances where an educator in the workplace has reason to believe that there is a risk of danger to himself/herself, or others, or when a member faces an endangering situation, the primary tasks are assuring student safety, reporting to the principal, and getting immediate assistance. The principal's response would be to ensure that staff and students are safe, and to investigate and deal with the report. If you need help reporting a health and safety concern, incident or hazard to the principal, or you require support to get the action necessary in response to your report, then contact the Local for support.

Keep in mind that **exercising your limited right to refuse work would be a serious step. Please contact the ETFO office** to speak with one of your released officers, and they will advise you accordingly, based on your individual circumstances.

Save The Date

Wed. Apr 25, 2018 – Resume Writing Workshop
Wed. May 2, 2018 – Wellness Wednesday: Sprint Into Spring
Tues., May 8, 2018 – Gender and Sexuality 101 Equity Workshop
Wed., May 23, 2018 – Spring AGM
Fri., May 25, 2018 – PA Day
Fri., June 8, 2018 – ETFO Niagara Retirement Dinner/PA Day
Fri., June 29, 2018 – PA Day/Last Day of Work

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