

Bare Essentials: December 20, 2019



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Niagara Teacher Local



ETFO Niagara Local, 620 York Rd., Niagara-On-The-Lake, ON, L0S 1J0
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Happy Holidays!

Just a reminder that the ETFO Niagara Local Office will be closed from Saturday, December 21, 2019, until Monday, January 6, 2020.

In the event of an emergency, such as an allegation of assault, teachers should:

- NOT participate in or consent to an interview
- Make NO statement to anyone regarding the allegations or charges
- Say "I'm willing to cooperate but am unable to comment until I contact my Federation and legal counsel."
- **Call Professional Relations Services (PRS) at 1-888-838-3836. State that your call is urgent and you will need to speak to the duty officer.**
- If you get voice mail, leave your name, phone numbers and times you are available. State that your call is an emergency. Your call will be answered, but you will be put on hold while a lawyer (on call), is contacted.

If you have any questions about benefits, they should be directed to OTIP by calling 1-866-783-6847. You need your plan information located on your Benefit Card.

On behalf of everybody here at the ETFO Niagara office, we would like to wish you all the best this holiday season. May you enjoy the well-deserved time off with friends and family, and best wishes to you and yours in the New Year! Take care and stay safe.

Peace and happiness,
Jada, Brian, Gail and Tena

New Charter Challenge

On December 12, 2019, four unions representing teachers and education workers across Ontario's publicly funded education system have filed court challenges against the Ontario government's Bill 124, the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*. The 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/FEESO), claim that the legislation violates the teachers' and education workers' constitutional rights to engage in unrestricted collective bargaining activity, which is guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Given the content and timing of the legislation, in the midst of negotiations for the renewal of collective agreements in the education sector, the unions contend that Bill 124 is a direct attack on free collective bargaining in the education sector, and a violation of sections 2(b) and 2(d) of the Charter, which guarantee

freedom of expression and the freedom of association. In addition, the legislation violates the duty of the Crown to bargain in good faith.

"The Charter exists to protect the rights of Canadians, even when those rights are not convenient for governments," says AEFO President Rémi Sabourin. "That is the backbone of our democracy."

"Bill 124 violates the democratic rights of all workers in Ontario's public sector," says ETFO President Sam Hammond. "No employer should be permitted to undermine employees' fundamental rights without facing the strongest possible challenge. The Ford government should recognize these rights and repeal Bill 124 immediately."

"Given the timing of Bill 124, and the haste to get it passed into law, it is clear that it targets teachers and education workers," says OECTA President Liz Stuart. "This legislation effectively ties the hands of both the employer and employee representatives who are currently negotiating collective agreements. This is unacceptable, and in our view, it is unconstitutional."

"Governments should not lightly infringe on the civil rights of their citizens," says OSSTF/FEESO President Harvey Bischof. "They should rely on tried and tested bargaining processes that lead both parties to creativity in the process, and stability thereafter. There is no current economic or fiscal crisis that requires such an extraordinary interference in that process."

Upcoming ETFO Niagara Workshops

ETFO Niagara strives to provide a variety of workshops to assist in supporting our members. Below is a list of upcoming workshops:

- **Pregnancy/Parental Leave Workshop - Thurs., January 16, 2020** - Are you a first time parent, or need a brush up on the processes involved with a pregnancy/parental leave? This workshop is designed to give the important details before the birth of your little one. Register at <https://etfoniagarapregparental1920.eventbrite.ca/>
- **Climate Change and Social Justice - Wed., January 29, 2020** - In this workshop, participants will explore a variety of environmental education practices which support students and their development of 21st century skills needed to tackle issues such as climate change. From an ETFO lens of equity and social justice, participants will explore resources to support facilitation of inquiry and action with their students on the environment, climate change, human rights and social justice. Register at <https://etfoniagaraclimatechangesocialjustice1920.eventbrite.ca/>

Retirement Information Session - Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Are you in the last 5 years of your career and thinking about retiring? ETFO Niagara will be holding a workshop for members to provide them with information to help guide them through this important life decision. [The workshop will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2020, at Amici's Banquet Centre,, beginning at 4:30PM and concluding around 7PM. Topics include benefits that are available to retirees through OTIP, your pension, as well as that the procedures that are required to retire from the Board this year.](#) To register for the event, sign up at <http://www.otip.com/events>. Look for a poster that will arrive shortly at your school via the courier.

Pop Goes The World! ETFO Pop Culture Trivia Night

It's that time of year again! On Friday, February 28, 2020, ETFO Niagara will be hosting its 15th Annual Pop Culture Trivia Night. It will take place at Amici's in Thorold. The cost of the event is \$200 for a table of up to 10. All proceeds from the night will be donated to the Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre in St. Catharines. To register, please send the registration form and a cheque payable to ETFO Niagara through the school courier. For additional information, please look for the poster to arrive shortly in your staffroom. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Brian Barker (vp1@etfoniagara.ca).

Notifying the Local of Your Leave

Are you currently on a leave, or aware of an upcoming leave of absence? In order to better serve you, in addition to notifying the board of your leave of absence (medical, statutory or personal), [the Local is kindly asking that you make us aware of your leave as well](#). The update of your status can be done either by calling 905-641-2911, or via email at admin@etfoniagara.ca. Thanks for your understanding.

Health and Safety: Slips, Trips and Falls and the Importance of Winter Footwear

With winter upon us, it's a great time to revisit how the use of proper winter footwear can help prevent slips, trips and falls. Wearing proper footwear is key when there is snow on the ground. Traction aids can be worn to increase the friction between your footwear and the snow covered ground. If your school does not have traction aids, you can ask your principal and they will be provided for you. [If you are on duty and you find that there are some unsafe areas for both students and staff, including parking lots that aren't plowed, you should report these concerns to your principal and to the health and safety site rep](#). This may result in the principal deeming certain areas of the school yard out of bounds, or contacting Property Services to remedy a situation where there is either major ice accumulation or uneven surfaces that could compromise the safety of all stakeholders.

A Healthy O-TIP: Your Path To A Stree-Free Holiday

From our friends at OTIP:

The colder days of winter are a great reminder to re-stock your car's emergency kit—it's important to be prepared in case something goes wrong. If your car gets stuck in snow or you get into an accident, you might have to wait for help to arrive due to bad weather, even if you have roadside assistance. The following car emergency kit items could help you if the unexpected happens.

Learn more at www.otipinsurance.com/article54



Save The Date

January 16, 2020 - Pregnancy/Parental Leave Workshop
January 29, 2020 - Climate Change and Social Justice Workshop
January 29, 2020 - Retirement Workshop
February 20, 2020 - Winter General Meeting
February 28, 2020 - ETFO Pop Culture Trivia Night
April 30, 2020 - ETFO Niagara Silent Auction
May 27, 2020 - ETFO Niagara Spring Annual General Meeting
June 5, 2020 - ETFO Niagara Retirement Dinner