

Update

2017-2018 • VOL. 45 NO. 2

LOCAL LEADERS GATHER FOR ELECTION READINESS CONSULTATIONS

More than 160 local leaders and Political Action officers, as well as members of the provincial Communications and Political Action Committee and the Provincial Executive, met in Toronto on October 20 for the first in a series of election readiness consultations in preparation for the June 2018 provincial election.

President Harvey Bischof spoke to the delegates about the importance of political engagement, and said that election readiness was among the most important activities OSSTF/FEESO would be undertaking over the next several months. He noted that October 27 marks the 20th anniversary of the 1997 political protest in response to the draconian measures of the Harris government's Bill 160. Bischof pointed out that while we now commemorate that two-week protest as a tremendous demonstration of solidarity, OSSTF/FEESO and the other education unions would not have had to endure that battle if the 1995 election had not resulted in a government intent on creating a crisis in public education and removing the rights of union members. "If there's

one crucial lesson we learned from the 1995 election and the events that followed," he said, "it's that we absolutely must be engaged in the political process in Ontario."

Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Es-sensa, spoke to delegates about Elections Ontario's efforts to improve voting procedures and encourage voter engagement, particularly among younger voters. Marc Zwelling, president of Vector Research, guided delegates through some recent polling results concerning the issues that are resonating with Ontarians with the election now just eight months away.

Legislative Observer Paul Kossta, of the Communications and Political Action (CPA) Department, explained how OSSTF/FEESO will be affected by the new rules eliminating financial contributions from unions to political parties, and restricting third-party participation in Ontario elections.

The CPA Department provided delegates with a tentative list of issues for inclusion in OSSTF/FEESO's education platform. In small group discussions facilitated by members of the Communi-

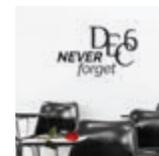


cations and Political Action Committee, delegates considered each issue in detail and provided comprehensive feedback and recommendations. The CPA Department will take that feedback into consideration as it works toward a final draft of the Platform.

An additional election readiness consultation will take place on February 22, 2018, and pre-election preparations will be finalized at the Communication and Political Action Committee's regional meetings in various locations around the province in May. 



HIGHLIGHTS



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RASSEMBLEMENT DES DIRIGEANTS LOCAUX DANS LE CADRE DES CONSULTATIONS PRÉPARATOIRES AUX ÉLECTIONS

Plus de 160 dirigeants locaux et agents d'action politique, ainsi que des membres du Comité provincial des communications/action politique et de l'Exécutif provincial, se sont rencontrés le 20 octobre à Toronto, à l'occasion de la première d'une série de consultations préparatoires aux élections provinciales de juin 2018.

Harvey Bischof, président, s'est adressé aux délégués sur l'importance de s'engager politiquement et a indiqué que la préparation aux élections constitue une des activités les plus importantes qu'entreprendra OSSTF/FEESO au cours des prochains mois. Il a également fait remarquer que le 27 octobre marque le 20^e anniversaire de la manifestation politique de 1997, en réaction aux mesures draconiennes



de la Loi 160 du gouvernement de Mike Harris. Harvey Bischof a indiqué que tandis que nous commémorons cette protestation de deux semaines comme un immense témoignage de solidarité, OSSTF/FEESO et les autres syndicats en éducation n'auraient pas eu à endurer cette lutte si l'élection de 1995 n'avait pas amené un gouvernement qui avait l'intention de provoquer une crise au sein de l'éducation publique et de supprimer les droits des membres syndiqués. « S'il y a une leçon capitale que nous avons pu tirer de l'élection de 1995 et des événements qui s'en sont suivis », a-t-il dit, « c'est que nous devons impérativement nous engager dans le processus politique de l'Ontario ».

Greg Essensa, directeur général des élections de l'Ontario, a informé les délégués des efforts d'Élections Ontario visant à améliorer les procédures de scrutin et à encourager l'engagement des électeurs, particulièrement parmi les plus jeunes. Puis, Marc Zwelling, président de *Vector Research*, a guidé les délégués dans les résultats de certains sondages sur des enjeux chers aux Ontariennes et aux Ontariens, maintenant que nous ne sommes plus qu'à huit mois de l'élection.

Paul Kossta, observateur législatif et membre du Secteur des communications/action politique (CAP), a expliqué la manière dont OSSTF/FEESO sera touché par les nouvelles règles éliminant les contributions financières des syndicats aux partis politiques et limitant la participation d'un tiers aux élections ontariennes.

Le Secteur des communications/action politique a fourni aux délégués une liste d'enjeux provisoires à inclure dans le programme politique d'OSSTF/FEESO en matière d'éducation. Lors de discussions en petits groupes, animées



par des membres du Comité des communications/action politique, les délégués ont étudié minutieusement les enjeux et ont fourni des commentaires et recommandations détaillés. Le Secteur des CAP prendra cette rétroaction en compte lors de la concrétisation de la version définitive du programme.

Une autre consultation préparatoire aux élections se tiendra le 22 février 2018 et les préparations aux élections seront finalisées à l'occasion des rencontres régionales du Comité des communications/action politique qui auront lieu en mai dans plusieurs endroits de la province. 



Update

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NEVER FORGET

You may notice that this year's December 6 commemorative poster, an initiative of OSSTF/FEESO's Provincial Status of Women Committee, has a different look than it has had in the past. Instead of the icon of the rose in isolation, this year's poster features a photograph of an empty desk, with a rose placed on it. The image is realistic; some may even say it is cold, or stark.

This year, the Status of Women Committee felt it was time to shift our dialogue around December 6, 1989. Time continues to distance us from the events of that day, and it becomes easy to look at the things women have accomplished in Canada since then, without asking ourselves what the lessons are that we can continue to take away from the tragedy. Recently, the hashtag #metoo circulated widely on social media, with women sharing experiences of sexual assault, violence, and harassment. Clearly, we cannot absolve ourselves of the misogyny that existed in 1989. In the past, we have said, "we remember." This year, instead, we compel members of OSSTF/FEESO to "never forget."

Never forget that women face real threats every day, on public transit, in workplaces, in schools, online, and at home. Never forget that the world is a particularly unsafe place for women of colour, trans women, and women of First Nations, Métis and Inuit heritage. Never forget that, in 2017, our communities are filled with women who posted "Me, Too." Never forget that Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Na-

thalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz were murdered because they were women. Never forget that it's now up to us to honour their lives with action, and with change.

So, post this new, powerful poster in your worksites. Talk with your colleagues and students. Call out injustice. Support your sisters. Never forget.

/Lauren Simmons is a teacher in District 12, Toronto and is the chair of the Provincial Status of Women Committee. 🌐

N'OUBLIONS JAMAIS

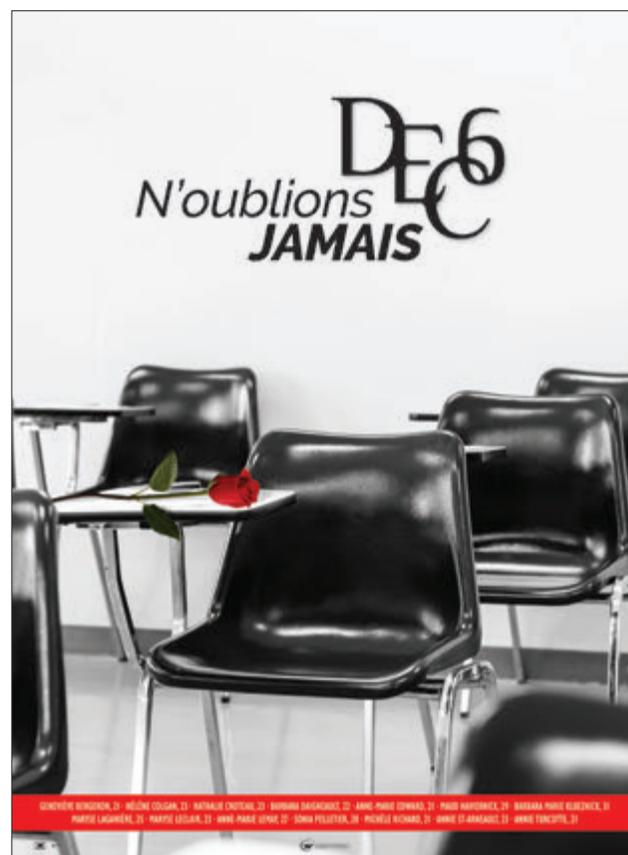
Il se peut que vous remarquiez que l'affiche commémorative du 6 décembre de cette année, une initiative du Comité permanent provincial du statut de la femme d'OSSTF/FEESO, ait un aspect différent comparativement aux années précédentes. Au lieu du symbole de la rose, traité isolément, l'affiche de cette année présente une photo d'un bureau vide sur lequel est posée une rose. L'image est réaliste, certains y verront même quelque chose de froid, voire d'austère.

Cette année, le Comité du statut de la femme a jugé qu'il était temps de recadrer notre dialogue autour du 6 décembre 1989. Le cours du temps nous distance de plus en plus des événements de cette journée et il est facile d'examiner les choses que les femmes ont accomplies au Cana-

da depuis lors, sans nous demander quelles sont les leçons que nous pouvons continuer de tirer de la tragédie. Récemment, le mot-clic #MoiAussi (#metoo) a largement circulé sur les médias sociaux avec des messages de femmes dénonçant leurs expériences d'agression, de violence et de harcèlement sexuels. Nous ne pouvons, manifestement, nous décharger de la misogynie présente en 1989. Par le passé, nous disions, «Souvenons-nous». À la place, cette année, nous incitons les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO à «N'oublions jamais».

N'oublions jamais que les femmes font face à de vraies menaces chaque jour, dans les transports en commun, sur les lieux de travail, dans les écoles, en ligne et à la maison. N'oublions jamais que le monde est un endroit particulièrement peu sûr pour les femmes de couleur, les transsexuelles et les femmes de culture des Premières Nations, Métisse et Inuite. N'oublions jamais qu'en 2017, nos communautés regorgent de femmes qui affichent des messages de «Moi, aussi». N'oublions jamais que Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte et Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz ont été assassinées parce qu'elles étaient des femmes. N'oublions jamais qu'il nous appartient maintenant d'honorer leur vie par l'action et par le changement.

Alors, placez cette nouvelle affiche, au message très fort, dans vos lieux de travail. Parlez de ce sujet à vos collègues et élèves. Dénonçons l'injustice. Soutenons nos sœurs. N'oublions jamais. */Lauren Simmons, UPE D12 Présidente, Comité provincial du statut de la femme.* 🌐



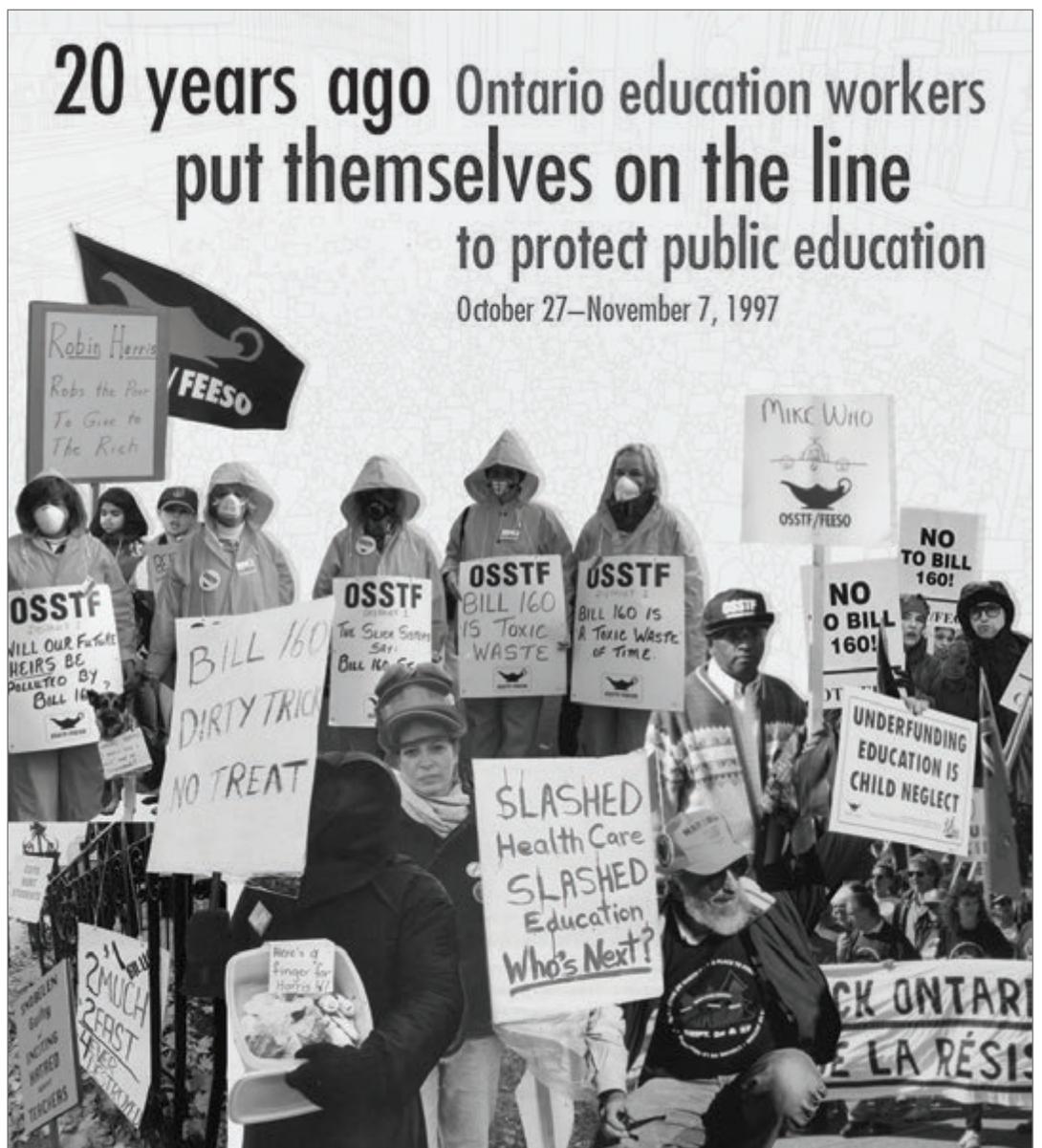
TWENTY YEARS LATER, WHY COMMEMORATE THE BILL 160 PROTEST?

On October 27, 1997, in a job action that remains the largest political protest ever undertaken by education workers in North America, over 125,000 teachers and support staff forced a two-week closure of more than 5,000 Ontario schools. The reason? Bill 160—The *Education Quality Improvement Act*. Bill 160 was introduced by Progressive Conservative Premier Mike Harris, and was intended to drastically change the face of publicly-funded education in Ontario. The proposed changes would have had such negative impacts for staff, students, parents and communities everywhere in the province that education workers were willing to engage in a full walkout under the specter of harsh government reprisals and a potential public backlash.

If Harris and his Tories had had their way, schools would have been treated like corporations. Education budgets would have been cut, significant increases in workloads would have been imposed, and the government would have stripped away all democratic mechanisms in place in the education system.

It's true that a watered-down version of Bill 160 was eventually passed, and that it did inflict some serious damage on Ontario's public education system. However, many of the most draconian measures that were contemplated in the original bill were ultimately withdrawn, and that would not have happened if education workers had not taken a bold and unprecedented stand. The mass walkout by educators deflected some of the worst elements of Harris's full-scale assault on public education, and mitigated the damage. The ensuing cold war between educators and the Progressive Conservatives would last until the government changed hands in 2003, but the Harris government never again tried anything quite as heavy-handed as Bill 160.

Why we do commemorate that protest now, 20 years later? Is it still relevant today? In many ways, the events of 20 years ago shaped both the environment we work in and the character of our union today. Sadly, we are still saddled with fallout from the Harris years, most notably an antiquated, wrong-headed funding formula that has never adequately addressed student needs. But had we taken no action in 1997, things would be very much worse, and we look back on those protests now as a turning-point in the history of our



Federation. We demonstrated to the government of the day, and we proved to ourselves, that when we act collectively and stand together in solidarity, we can have a significant impact—even in the face of a majority government determined to simply dismiss our concerns.

We commemorate the 1997 protests not only to remind us of the power that lies in solidar-

ity and determined collective action, but also to keep us vigilant. We don't know what the next provincial election will bring us, and even though we will do what we can to advocate for a positive outcome, we must always be prepared to take a stand should we be faced with another government that's hostile to the interests of public education. 🌊

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS: THEIR MORTGAGE OR YOURS?

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is expected to propose a member fee increase of almost 20 per cent for each of the next three years. While details of the College's proposed budget for 2018 are not

yet available, it is believed that the chief rationale for the fee hike is the College's desire to pay off the mortgage on its office building in Toronto's Yorkville area. The 2018 budget will be debated and voted on at a meeting of OCT's Governing Council on December 7–8, 2017.

OSSTF/FEESO has expressed concerns in the past about the ways in which the College spends the fees collected from Federation members and the members of other teacher affiliates. From lobbying the government to increase the scope of its mandate, to attending political fundraising events, and even hosting wine and cheese events and golf tournaments, the College has habitually engaged in activities well outside its original mandate as a regulatory body. OSSTF/FEESO will be watching closely to see how the College's budget deliberations impact our members. 🌊

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

November 19–25, 2017

For 15 years, educational workers have been supporting bullying-prevention initiatives across Canada. This year, bullyingawarenessweek.org Canada has identified “Stand Up! (to bullying)” as the theme for Bullying Awareness Week.

It has never been more important to stand up and challenge bullying. Incidents of bullying continue to affect the lives of countless young people, and whenever we hear of such incidents, whether they happen locally or around the globe, we must all work together to stand up and stop them.

Fifteen years ago, Bill Belsey, a Canadian educator and father, came up with the idea of a Bullying Awareness Week. A short time later he was asked to make presentations about the idea, and soon he was travelling across the country. Unions, boards of education and many other groups and organizations picked up on the importance of highlighting the fight against bullying and this week is now recognized in many countries around the world.

Depending on where you live, bullying awareness may be celebrated on different dates and with varied events throughout the year, but the theme of ending the damaging effects of bullying is always at the core. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has identified November 19–25, 2017 as the week for schools to highlight bullying awareness and prevention. We encourage all members to take this opportunity to raise awareness and stand up to bullying. 



ORANGE SHIRT DAY 2017

Members across Ontario took part in the commemoration of Orange Shirt Day in late September and early October. The event is marked annually on September 30, but because it fell on a Saturday this year, Orange Shirt Day was recognized on different dates across the province, including on September 29 by OSSTF/FEESO at Provincial Council.

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission residential school commemoration event held in Williams Lake, BC, Canada.

The initial commemoration was in the spring of 2013, and grew out of an account by a First Nations residential school student who had her orange shirt taken away from her on her first day of school at the Mission.

That first commemoration has evolved into a nation-wide opportunity to promote the discussion of residential schools and move forward toward reconciliation every year.

The end of September was selected as the date of recognition because it represents the time of year when First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were taken from their homes to be placed in residential schools.

Members of OSSTF/FEESO know the importance of commemoration, of educating current and future generations about the residential school system, and exploring how we can all work together in the spirit of reconciliation. 



OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Council (above) and Provincial Office staff members (below), wearing orange in recognition of Orange Shirt Day 2017

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PRESIDENT AND VP ATTEND SADTU NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul, than the way in which it treats its children.”

—Nelson Mandela

Two Provincial Executive members, President Harvey Bischof and Vice-President Cindy Dubu , attended the National General Council (NGC) of the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU), in Johannesburg from October 4–7. SADTU has been in existence for only 27 years, and in that short time has grown from a body of 30,000 teachers to more than 260,000 educational workers. SADTU currently represents nearly 70 per cent of all teachers in South Africa. The NGC is the union’s highest decision making body between conventions and is made up of hundreds of national, provincial and regional leaders.

On October 6, 1990, SADTU became the first national unitary, non-racial and non-sexist union to have been formed in South Africa. Its leadership and members have steadfastly pursued and linked its organizational objectives, as well as its education programs, to the broader politics of the liberation struggle and the development of a democratic state. Prior to liberation, teachers and education workers took the lead in their resistance to Apartheid and its inferior education for Black South Africans. Following the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, the union turned its attention to building one unified education system for all rather than the 13 systems that existed under Apartheid.

This visit allowed our

Federation to examine the progress that has been made since liberation, and witness the excitement and dynamism of this most political union. Given its history, SADTU members play a crucial role within the governing African National Congress (ANC) and, according to their President, their role in the upcoming national elections is to “help the ANC save itself from self-destruction”. There are accusations of corruption within the ruling party, and the current President is set to step down in December. SADTU members welcomed Cyril Ramaphosa, currently the Deputy President and SADTU’s chosen candidate to replace President Zuma, and invited him to open their new facility, called SADTU Village, during the NGC.

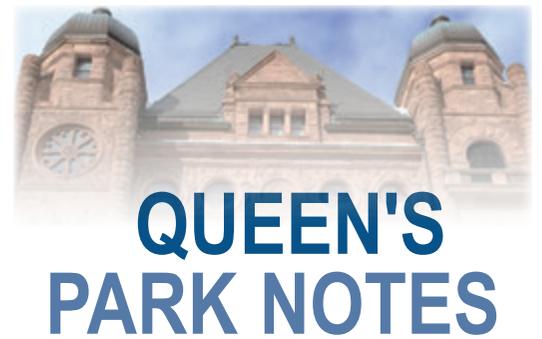
SADTU has had a long-standing relationship with our Federation, which has included completing the Common Threads curriculum resource entitled “From Canada to South Africa: Combating HIV/AIDS Together.” The partnership has also included visits by SADTU leaders and staff to AMPA and to our annual Leadership training, while members of our executive have attended a number of SADTU Congress meetings over the years. Our two unions have also shared resources and expertise regarding site steward and workplace representative training.

President Harvey Bischof was invited to address the gathering during a special dinner organized for the international guests in attendance. He stressed the strong history of solidarity our unions have shared, congratulated SADTU on its 27th birthday, and expressed our desire to continue our partnership in the future. 🌐



Photo above: Magope Maphila presents a gift to OSSTF/FEESO President Harvey Bischof

Photo below: International guests and SADTU representatives



More Liberal Cabinet Ministers to retire

Deputy Premier and Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development Deb Matthews (London North Centre) and Treasury Board Secretariat Liz Sandals (Guelph) have both announced that they will not be seeking re-election in the 2018 provincial election. Both Ministers were first elected in 2003 and gradually rose in prominence, particularly under Premier Kathleen Wynne.

In addition to Matthews and Sandals, Economic Development and Growth Minister Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre), former Seniors Minister Mario Sergio (York West), MPP Monte Kwinter (York Centre) and Speaker of the Legislature, MPP David Levac, have also announced that they will not contest the next election. Three additional Liberal Cabinet Ministers, David Orziatti (Sault Ste. Marie), Madeleine Meilleur (Ottawa Vanier) and Glen Murray (Toronto Centre), have already resigned over the course of the past year.

While resignations and retirements are not uncommon during the parliamentary term on all party sides, the retirements of both Matthews and Sandals are particularly significant, since both were widely seen as close confidants of Wynne. Matthews, who has served in a number of portfolios, was Deputy Premier and was seen as one of Wynne’s most trusted allies. She had even served as campaign co-chair for Wynne’s successful bid for the Ontario Liberal Leadership in 2013.

As for Sandals, she was Wynne’s first Education Minister and was tasked with rebuilding the relationship with education-sector stakeholders, particular education worker unions, in the aftermath of the Liberals’ imposition of Bill 115, the *Putting Students First Act*. With Wynne’s prior history of education activism, the appointment of Sandals to that role was seen as an important demonstration of Wynne’s trust and faith in her.

As the two bid farewell to their political careers, Matthews summed up her retirement by saying, “And now, the time has come for me to step aside. To let another have the opportunity that I have had, bringing new energy, new ideas and a fresh perspective with them.” It will be interesting to see if any other Liberals follow her advice. Especially, since opinion polls paint a bleak picture of their re-election hopes. 🌐

OSSTF/FEESO WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS



D. 16 York Catholic DSB PSSP Bargaining Unit Executive
 Back Row l-r: Michelle Poschar, Educational Officer; Emanuela Ruth, Chief Negotiator/Grievance Officer; Patricia Delmore-Ko, Executive Officer; Sherry-Ann Bowen-Gordon, President and Julie Lambertson-Western, Vice-President
 Front Row l-r: Lesley Visconti, Health & Safety Officer; Patricia Woolcott, Secretary/Treasurer and Cynthia Medeiros, Executive Officer
 Absent: Jenifer Dykeman, Executive Officer

Following a Certification Vote on April 12, 2017, OSSTF/FEESO now represents the YCDSB PSSPs. This 99 member Bargaining Unit includes Speech Language Pathologists, Behaviour Resource Personnel, Psychologists, Psycho-Educational Consultants and Psychological Associates, Electronic Resource Technicians, Mobility Instructor, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Communicative Disorders Assistants, and Attendance Counsellors.

The Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) from the York Catholic District School Board was one of the last two large PSSP groups that were not yet members of a union. Considering the changing landscape in education, some felt that it might be time to become members of an organization such as OSSTF/FEESO that understood their issues and concerns, and could offer a level of professional support.

Following information meetings, a card-signing campaign was initiated and on April 12, 2017, the majority of the membership voted to become OSSTF/FEESO members. At their Inaugural Meeting on May 17, 2017, the general membership adopted their constitution and elected their officers.

In late May 2017, trustees attempted to eliminate close to 10 per cent of the positions in the Bargaining Unit, which included all of the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist positions. OSSTF/FEESO reacted and intervened immediately! PSSP members were pleased when in June, the trustees subsequently rescinded their original motion to eliminate the positions, thereby safeguarding the jobs of OSSTF/FEESO's newest members.

The process to negotiate the unit's first collective agreement is well under way, and OSSTF/FEESO looks forward to many years of involvement by these new members. 🌐



André Lécuyer Award

Award of Merit

Bob Brooks Award

Comité des services en langue française Award

Communication Award

Environmental Award

Honorary Membership

James Forster Human Rights Award

Which members should we recognize and celebrate this year?

OSSTF/FEESO AWARDS OF RECOGNITION FOR MEMBERS

The nomination process is outlined on our Awards of Recognition for Members web page (bit.ly/2ysppve). There are various deadlines that you should be aware of – with a January 31 deadline for the majority of the awards.



Jennifer MacLean Health and Safety Award

John McNeil Award

Kelly Ann McKenzie Award

Nancy Warrener Award

Norm Snyder Award

Political Action Award in honour of Wendell Fulton and Larry French

Provincial Executive Award

Liz Barkley Status of Women Award

14TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION WILL MARK 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF OFL

From Monday, November 20 to Friday, November 24, 2017, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) will hold its 14th Biennial Convention at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario.

Pre-convention events will include the Equity and Justice Summit, taking place on November 17 and 18, and the OFL Young Workers' Assembly, taking place on November 18.

Delegates are welcome to attend the Human Rights caucus on the evening of November 20, and the Women's Caucus on the evening of November 21. A number of election caucuses for Executive Board representatives will occur throughout the week.

OSSTF/FEESO will have a delegation in attendance, and will be working with our affiliates to ensure that we come out of convention with a stronger and more united labour movement.

This convention marks the 60th Anniversary of the OFL—60 years of solidarity with affiliated unions across Ontario, fighting for justice and fairness to improve the lives of all workers, their families and communities. The occasion will be celebrated at a 60th Anniversary reception and dance on the evening of November 23, 2017. 

Correction

In the article "October is Women's History Month" in *Update* Vol. 45 No. 1, the "Famous Five" were erroneously associated with the women's suffrage movement. In fact, the Famous Five were the petitioners in the "Person's Case," which resulted in women being formally recognized in Canada as persons under the law. We apologize for the error. 

OSSTF/FEESO TO SPONSOR researchED CONFERENCE

Teachers, education workers and others with a stake in education policy and practices often struggle with what to do with new ideas and initiatives for schools.

New books, articles, fads and theories in education inundate us, but how many of these ideas are actually valid, and how can we tell?

Tom Bennett, a secondary teacher in the UK, struggled with this same frustration, and confronted those questions in his popular book, *Teacher Proof: Why research in education doesn't always mean what it claims, and what you can do about it*. In it, he debunks several popular educational myths, such as Multiple Intelligences, Brain Gym, and Thinking Hats. Bennett has also cultivated a large online community of like-minded educators interested in holding new ideas in education up to scrutiny and demanding scientific evidence of their efficacy.

This movement eventually spawned a new organization, researchED, whose moto is: "Work out what works." Its goal is to provide low-cost, research-based professional development to teachers, education workers, administrators and academics. Over the past few years, researchED has facilitated education research conferences across Europe and North America.

The first researchED conference in Canada will be held on November 11, hosted by the University of Toronto. On Saturday, April 14, 2018, OSSTF/FEESO will be sponsoring its own researchED conference in Mississauga. This conference will be of particular interest to Education Services Officers, although all members are encouraged to consider registering. While the list of speakers and presenters has not yet been confirmed, more information will be available in future issues of *Update*.

If your education practice is informed by research and you would like to be considered as a presenter at our conference, please contact Randy Banderob at randy.banderob@osstf.ca. 



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OSSTF/FEESO ARM Chapter 25, Ottawa-Carleton giving a donation to the Alzheimer Society. The funds were raised throughout various events.

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