

September 1, 2020

To the members of OSSTF/FEESO

The OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Executive thanks you for the work you do for students and for publicly-funded education in Ontario. Your commitment and professionalism during these difficult times demonstrates the strength of publicly-funded education in our province.

There is no doubt many of you are feeling anxious and apprehensive about the start of the school year. This is a unique situation for all of us. The reopening of schools this fall, from kindergarten to post-secondary, will be a new and unknown experience.

OSSTF/FEESO has continued to work on your behalf on a number of fronts since March when the government closed schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our efforts have faced many obstacles from the Ford government, including its unwillingness to engage in meaningful consultations on emergency remote learning and the development of a safe school reopening plan.

Put simply, the Ford government has kept OSSTF/FEESO and the other education unions in the dark, and has failed to tap into the expertise of the tens of thousands of education workers and teachers in Ontario. More troubling is that the Premier of Ontario and his Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, have taken opportunities to publicly criticize and question your commitment to working with students as schools reopen. But rest assured, our advocacy will not waiver and your safety is our first priority.

Our message to the government and to the people of Ontario is clear—reopening schools must be safe for students, educators, and communities. Parents, medical professionals, school boards, community organizations, and many others are clear with their expectations for a safe reopening of schools. We remain united in our call for a safe return for all.

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy, solidarity, and support as we approach the reopening of schools in this province. In addition, we acknowledge the efforts of parents, parent groups, labour affiliates, and other community organizations who have voiced their concerns about school reopening.

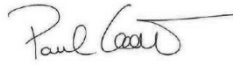
OSSTF/FEESO continues to explore all options to maintain pressure on this government to do more to ensure your safety at work. Along with other education unions, we are pursuing legal avenues to keep you safe. We have also provided special training to local leaders on the most up-to-date legal advice regarding steps members can take if they find themselves in an unsafe workplace.

A safe work environment for you is a safe learning environment for students; a safe work and learning environment creates a safe community for all. We encourage you to continue to review information and updates from Provincial Office and your local leaders, and to stay informed.

We will get through this together.



Harvey Bischof
President



Paul Caccamo
Vice-President



Karen Littlewood
Vice-President



Earl Burt
Treasurer



Martha Hradowy
Executive Officer



Malini Leahy
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