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# ESSP / ECE CONNECT

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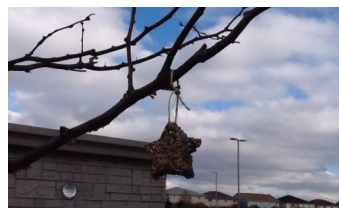
## President's Report

Happy January! I think winter has finally arrived, but today as I'm writing this it's raining? There certainly has been some strange weather for January!

As you all know it's been a busy time for your Executive. We have moved to new digs in Elora @ 294 Mill Street E. We have more offices to accommodate our growing district.

You also know that our Collective Bargaining Team has settled both our local and central agreements and they have both been ratified by all parties involved. I'll be putting highlights of our local deal and some central items in each newsletter for the next few months. We are the only support staff group in D18 that has settled.

We have loved looking at all the wonderful Facebook posts of your classrooms and staff events. Feel free to post anytime because we want to share and be



Outside Ken Danby—Taken  
by Sandra Spence.

involved in what happens in your worksites. We will be having a new contest for February that will be started February 1st and we will also be starting a sock drive for community people who

are living without homes. Did you know that the number one needed item for people with precarious housing is socks? The number two item is feminine hygiene products and we will be putting together a drive for that in the spring.

Our PD planning is well on it's way and we are bringing some really fun, physical and wellness activities and information for our June PD day.

ESSP Gala planning is in full swing. Board senior administration and trustees have been invited and we have sent out the GALA nomination forms to your non board emails. Curious about the GALA? Read on to find out more.

Warm regards, Tracey

## Our ESSP Annual Gala for student's with learning differences

Each year our Executive team hosts a Semi formal GALA for our students with learning differences. We send out nomination forms to you and ask that you nominate your students for one of the categories listed. We have a judging committee who chooses both an elementary and secondary winner for each category.

We invite all the winners to an evening out with their EA's, their parents, teacher/admin and siblings and of course the Union. It's a lovely evening with great food, entertainment, focusing on the amazing talents of our students and the dedication of our Educational Assistants. Never nominated a student? It's really

easy, it's a free event and the students are so proud and happy for the entire evening. There are always surprises, emotional speeches from kids, fun photo-booth and a really awesome art display showcasing the talents of students. Need more info? Contact Tracey Marshall @ [essp.ecepresident@gmail.com](mailto:essp.ecepresident@gmail.com).

# Family and Children's Services (FCS)



<http://www.fcsgw.org/>

One of the most difficult things that I do is represent members who are involved in a FCS investigation. Your entire professional career and personal life (if you have your own children) is brought under scrutiny. Here are suggestions to avoid having charges brought against you.

\* Know your students well.

\* Avoid closing class/workroom/office door when you are with a single student.

\* Place your work area so that activity behind the work area can be easily observed from a doorway.

\* Avoid keeping students for long periods after dismissal.

\* When disciplining students or discussing a contentious issue, call in another colleague.

\* Do not go behind tall room dividers or tall bookshelves with a single student.

\* Do not go into a dark room, small change room, concealed cloakroom or storage room with only one student.

\* If you have a window in your door, don't cover it up.

\* Respect student's privacy. Restrict physical demonstrations of caring and affection. If a student

initiates physical contact, respectfully establish a boundary for any physical contact.

\* Be aware of preadolescent and adolescent students who seem to find you attractive. Subdue the flattery. Cool the attention. Avoid and discourage teasing. Remember the danger of a lover spurned, real or imaginary.

\* If you feel that you're at risk, document it immediately, talk to your Principal and call your union. We also have helpful pamphlets, just ask an Executive member for one.

## How are we doing?

*"We also want you to read what we send you and we want it to be relevant and of interest to you."*

Are you receiving information from your Union? How do you like receiving the information that we send to you? Are you communicating with us on a regular basis? Do you find the ways we communicate helpful? Is there more things we can do? Is there any method of communication that we aren't utilizing but that you would like to see from us?

These are some of the questions that we will be asking you in our 2016 Communications Audit. We want you to be able to talk to us anytime and, of course, we want you to be able to receive communications in a timely manner. We also want you to read what we send you and we want it to be relevant and of interest to you. In the short term, we will be

conducting a survey on just that thing. It will be anonymous and it will be a quick commitment from you to help us communicate with you better. We will let you know when it's arriving in your inbox and we hope that you participate in order to help us serve you in a method to which you are comfortable with.

## Our next community initiative

*"Socks are the #1 needed clothing item of people living on the streets."*



Have you ever been outside in the snow or wet weather and got a wet sock? Well, of course you have. It's uncomfortable, right? Now imagine that you don't have another pair of socks to change into.

You're stuck wearing that cold, damp sock for the entire day, or week. Socks are the #1 needed clothing item of people living on the streets. We want to help spread a little sock love around. We are asking that you send us a pair of socks. If every ESSP/ECE member donated one pair we'd have over

700 pairs of socks to donate to our local shelters and drop in centers. This initiative will start sometime in February with instructions going out in your non board emails. Please watch for it and donate, because it's just socks after all, but it means warm, dry feet to someone on the streets.

## Synopsis of our new local collective agreement—Unpaid Leave Days



In negotiations, we were able to secure up to 5 unpaid days for you to take a leave for whatever you choose during the school year. Keep in mind there are some restrictions, and those are listed in

**Need a day off? Now it's easy! Apply for our UAD.**

the collective agreement (Not yet compiled or available in your worksites). The restrictions are things such as you cannot take the days the week before and the week after March break and Christmas break. Check the agreement for a full list of restrictions. You can take the days together or spread them out. Currently, there is no allowance to have those unpaid days taken out of each pay to

lessen the impact of a week without pay. If your Principal needs to approve the day(s) and you need to book a supply. If you apply at least 3 weeks prior and there are not too many other people in your school taking the same leave, it should not be reasonably denied. This is a great way for all members to access unpaid days for vacation, personal or family events. Please remember to call us if you have a difficulty applying for or accessing this leave. Remember to check the agreement for all the details first!

## What's happening in our committees?

We have three committees working hard for our members this year. Our workplace violence, EA and ECE committees meet to work on education, templates, guidelines and professional development. Right now our EA committee is working on support staff appreciation day events. The ECE committee is planning an education piece, for parents, regarding the role of an

Early Childhood Educator in the FDK classroom. The Workplace Violence committee is planning on another '3 R's for Workplace Violence' workshop and also working on an infographic and a video for our members. We still need members for our Workplace Violence Committee. Each of our committees is in year one of a two year term. The commitment for the

committee members is small. There isn't much homework. There are only 4 meetings per year. The impact though, is huge. Not only do they have a direct line to our executive, but also give input to provincial members who sit at government working tables. It's a great way to have a voice. Consider getting involved and having influence in our direction!

**"It's a great way to have a voice. Consider getting involved and having influence in our direction!"**

## In the Loop—For our casuals—Shelley Matson

We want to keep all of our members in the loop, especially our casuals! Don't think that we aren't thinking of you. Often, we don't get your emails or contact information from the board. If you're an EA or ECE casual or LTO, then we'd love to hear from you! You can email us @ [essp.ecepresident@gmail.com](mailto:essp.ecepresident@gmail.com) for a data sheet. Fill it out and send it to

Tracey Marshall, OSSTF Office. We will then add you to our email list and you'll receive everything from us. It's important that we have your non board email to receive info from us. If you also give us a school you attend, we can send you a union orientation package with a great deal of super helpful information regarding our school board and your union. If your on

our casual supply list and haven't received a phone call from me, Shelley, then email me and I'll give you a call and answer any questions you might have. Spread the word...if you know of other casuals, give them my contact information.



**mail to:**  
[garrnich2010@gmail.com](mailto:garrnich2010@gmail.com)  
**Don't hesitate to contact me!**



**“These incidents may be intentional or unintentional, but they are still defined as violent incidents.”**

**“Remember that, even though the Act does not state reasonable grounds to suspect, it will make it a difficult call.”**

**“We have \$5000/school year set aside for PD for our members to access on a first come-first served basis.”**



**IF I DIE**

I hope it's during an inservice because the transition to death would be so subtle.

## A Message from Julie Wagner—Health and Safety

**All** accidents and incidents (violent or otherwise) **must** be reported to the Principal/ Vice Principal or designate.

Each employee who is involved in an incident is responsible to complete the relevant form(s) as it is required by **Board policy and legislated under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.**

A violent incident may be defined as **but is not limited to the following:**

Grab (on any body part)

Kick  
Punch (fist)  
Slap (open handed)  
Bite  
Pinch  
Poke or stab with any object  
Spit  
Hair pull or cut  
Scratch  
Verbal or physical threat  
Throwing of any object  
Assault  
Robbery  
Extortion

Bullying  
Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or harassment  
Racial/Ethnocultural harassment  
**These incidents may be intentional or unintentional, but they are still defined as violent incidents.**

Completing paperwork documents the incident and works to protect not only you **but also your colleagues.** Work together to advocate for a safe workplace for each other and your students!

## Your Duty to Report

The Child and Family services act impacts our jobs everyday. The legislation in this act states that “members of the public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly report any suspicions that a child is or may be in need of protection.” You must report if:

\*You have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (15 years or under) has suffered physical harm caused by the caregiver(s) or as a result of improper supervision or neglect.

\*A child has a risk of suffering physical harm that might be caused by the caregiver(s) or as a result of improper

supervision or neglect.

\*A child has been sexually molested or exploited or might be at risk of same.

\*A child requires medical treatment and is unable to consent.

\*A child has suffered emotional harm, demonstrated by serious anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behaviours, or delayed development.

\*Emotional harm resulting from neglect.

\*There is a risk of emotional harm.

\*A child has been abandoned.

\*A child has killed or seriously injured another person or has damaged another person's property and the caregiver does not seek services or treatment.

\*The above acts are the result of inadequate supervision and the child is under 12 years old.

Remember that, even though the Act does not state reasonable grounds to suspect, it will make it a difficult call. If in doubt, contact your union for advice. If you fail to report and are convicted of this offence, you may be subject to a fine of \$1000. Failure to report may also become a matter with a professional college.

## Bargaining Unit PD funds—Cindy Scholten

Bored with regular PD? Did you know that in addition to money available at the Board level for personal PD, we also have Bargaining Unit funds for your professional develop-

ment? We have \$5000/school year set aside for PD for you to access on a first come-first served basis. You only need to fill out an application form, get approved and then attach the proof of payment of your professional development course and I will write you a check to cover up to \$500 for your PD

activity. Remember to apply early! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Cindy for more information. **Remember it's first come-first served.** Contact Cindy Scholten, [whitemancindy2@gmail.com](mailto:whitemancindy2@gmail.com) for an application form.



## Finding Time to Plan—Cheryl Lampkin



**Where** do we find time to plan in FDK when we are given no time? Unfortunately, there is no perfect solution to this on-going problem but perhaps we can give you a few ideas on how to make things work for you.

**One** way some ECE's have found time is with flexibility with their Principals. The Principal could limit supervision...the time when students are out for recesses or at the beginning or end of the day can add up to a lot of time for planning and prep. Not all admin are willing or able to allow for this flexibility in the daily schedule, but it might be worth a conversation.

**Other** ECEs use quiet time in the latter part of the day. If students are settled in the room for a version of quiet time, you could use this time to sit with your teaching partner to talk about your upcoming plans and ideas, as well as organizing any materials you may need for activities or centres for the next day. Obviously the children's needs come first and this time may be interrupted frequently.

**ON THE FLY**...probably the most common but least ideal way to plan/prep any program. The FDK classroom is a busy place and things are changing and developing from one moment to the next. When we observe and follow the lead of our students we can jot down ideas and even add to the program in the moment. The students can be part of the planning and prep with us. One thing that I have done on a weekly basis is make play dough with the students. There is many math, language and science domains covered in this activity. The chil-

dren look forward to it each week and I get a job done that I would otherwise need to take my own time to do. Also, in a program where worksheets should not be used, trips to the photocopier should be limited. We should also be avoiding preparing crafts that require us to prep them in order for students to do them, this is our work not theirs. I also use my teaching partner. She does get planning time and is paid a lot more. If something does need to be typed and photocopied, like a note home to families my teaching partner does it. That's not to say we don't draft it together in rough (on the fly or during quiet time) and I proof read the final draft but the actual work is done by her on her planning time. Not ideal, but the way things are at the moment.

**These** ideas are far from perfect, this is merely a suggestion on how to make things work for you in a imperfect situation. We can always help give you ideas too, so don't hesitate to 'pick our brains'.

## Random Acts of Kindness—Jen Hillen

As I had some extra time over the holidays, I enjoyed reading many Facebook posts and other on-line stories about random acts of kindness that were happening right here in our community. People were intentionally setting out to make strangers smile – offering donations to charity, buying a chocolate bar for the grocery store clerk, volunteering precious time to help others, etc. It's amazing how even the smallest gestures can spiral into bigger movements and really make a difference in someone's life.

Some might call me a little sensitive – I have been known to shed a tear for these touching stories. It is so

inspiring and motivating. It definitely makes me want to do more, but I've decided not to limit myself to random acts of kindness. I want to spread kindness to the people I see every day. Given the past year for us has been politically challenging, this is a great opportunity for us to move forward as a group, offer kindness to each other, and demonstrate solidarity. When I looked up "solidarity" at dictionary.com, it said "fellowship arising from common responsibilities and interests, as between members of a group or between classes, peoples, etc." This does not limit us to only other members of OSSTF, but all people in the field of education.

Our students are our common responsibilities and our common goal is to educate them. I would love to foster "fellowship" or kindness between all educational staff. I think (as evidenced on our Facebook page) we are an amazing group of EAs and ECEs and I hope you all do too. Remember that the Gala is approaching, as well as the ECE and EA of the Year awards – consider getting involved and nominating a worthy candidate. Join us at the Annual General Meeting to get to know your colleagues a little. Let's take time this year to appreciate each other, offer kindness and patience, and reach out when we can

"It's amazing how even the smallest gestures can spiral into bigger movements and really make a difference in someone's life."



Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this publication, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions and views expressed do not necessarily represent OSSTF District #18. We reserve the right to edit for content and/or space.

### Tracey Marshall, President

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Have you been sick? Are you worried about Mat leave? Call Cindy Scholten 519-835-0249

Are you an ECE and having issues in your school? Call Cheryl Lampkin 519-820-3989

Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another.

### Important Upcoming Dates:

**February 4—PD Day**

**February 15—Family Day**

**March 12—20—March Break**

**March 22—Workplace Violence Committee**

**March 25—Good Friday**

**March 28—Easter Monday**

**March 29—ECE Committee**

**April 7—EA Committee**

**April 20—ESSP Annual GALA**

**April 25—PD Day**

**April 27—ESSP/ECE Annual General Meeting**

**May 23—Victoria Day**

**May 24—EA Committee**

We're on the web! [www.osstf.ca](http://www.osstf.ca) [www.d18.osstf.ca](http://www.d18.osstf.ca) FACEBOOK OSSTF-D18-ESSP/ECE MEMBERS and LIKE D18 Educational Assistants and Early Childhood Educators

## Did you know?

**The Upper Grand District School Board has an Indoor Walking Club?** The Wellness Department welcomes you to join the UGDSB Indoor Walking Club at the Mount Forest and District Sports Complex in Mount Forest. This a great way of staying active during the Winter months, a chance to see co-workers outside of work and to meet new people! The benefits to walking as part of a club are that you have people who are there to support and motivate you. This is open to all UGDSB employees every Tuesday starting February 2nd until March 29th starting @ 4:30pm. Cost is \$2/day or \$15/monthly pass. All track users must change into clean indoor shoes. No black soles.

**The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation established**

**this fund to assist financially the children of OSSTF/FEESO members (or deceased members) to obtain their first degree/diploma/certificate or apprenticeship.** Ten \$1,500 bursaries are available this year. Bursaries are awarded through a lottery process.

The following are the criteria for the Federation Family Education Fund:

The applicant must be a dependent child or ward of a member, or deceased member, of OSSTF/FEESO in good standing.

The applicant must have applied to enter a publicly-funded post-secondary college or university program or an apprenticeship program that includes an academic portion offered through a college.

Interpretation and administration of the terms of this fund are at the discretion of the OSSTF/FEESO Educational Services Committee subject to the approval of the Provincial Executive.

All awards are made conditional upon the recipient being enrolled in the program and proof of tuition paid equal to or greater than the \$1,500. It is the responsibility of all successful applicants to ensure that documentation confirming enrollment and paid tuition is received at:

OSSTF/FEESO Attn: Karen Metherall  
60 Mobile Drive Toronto ON M4A 2P3. Only on-line applications will be accepted. Although one may apply multiple years, applicants may only receive funding in the amount of \$1,500 once in a lifetime.