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EDUCATION FORUM 3







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# Too hot to handle?

## Dealing with protests on sex education

I’LL admit that it is high time we included an article on sex education in *Education Forum*. I knew I wanted Susan Ursel to write the piece because of her long and acclaimed equity work on issues of gender and sex. Originally I wanted to publish a piece that would outline what a progressive sex education curriculum would include, and I hoped that it would precede the unveiling of the provincial government’s new health and physical education curriculum, and possibly influence it. Alas, with the timing of Susan’s schedule and the thematic demands of this magazine, this was the earliest we could collaborate on something.

In retrospect, the timing proved very good. Not only did Susan and her colleague Karen Ensslen have the opportunity to read and comment on the new curriculum, but by chance they were able to put it into historical context using the newly published book, *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* by Jonathan Zimmerman.

I won’t give away their conclusion, but suffice to say they recognize that a progressive curriculum is healthy for students.

But as interesting as I find the article, it is the pockets of protest against the new sex education curriculum that really fascinate me. I am a big believer in the right to protest and when groups of parents gathered to voice their dissent against the new curriculum, I listened carefully. Some of the statements made on camera that struck me most deeply included:

“They want to poison their minds.”

“What’s next? Safe sex with animals?”

“Why bother learning [sic] them anything about something they don’t even know about?”

“Why does my kid need to know the name for boobies?”

I don’t want to dwell too long on such statements, because without hearing the

be disturbing to see those on the outside looking in and foisting their own personal beliefs on us.

I am reminded of Robert Harris’s 1885 painting “A Meeting of the School Trustees,” which hangs in the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. You may remember the Canadian Heritage Minute

based on it. In the painting, a young female school teacher stands and is surrounded by four seated, older men, presumably school trustees. Her hand is turned upward, reaching out as if imploring for understanding while the men stare at her, one with his arms crossed, looking stubborn, resolute and unswayed.

For those of us who have worked in schools and have worked with children, how many times have we felt like the teacher in the painting? We know our students, we know

what they need, and yet we must contend with well-intentioned, but sometimes ill-informed, demands of parents and other members of the public.

We should all be proud to work in schools that people feel are so important that they are compelled to offer specific input on how those schools are run. This is natural in a democracy with publicly funded institutions and especially understandable when it comes to the education of the young. However, we must always be wary that the moral projections of the public do not override the expertise and experience of those who work in education. As society changes, so do the needs of our students, and it is our duty to advocate for progressive change in our schools. ☞





# Les choses se compliquent?

Faire face aux contestations contre l'éducation sexuelle

**J**E dois admettre qu'il était grand temps pour nous d'insérer un article sur l'éducation sexuelle dans *Education Forum*. Je voulais que Susan Ursel rédige le texte en raison de son travail de longue date et reconnu en faveur de l'équité dans le domaine des questions de sexe et de genre. Je voulais initialement publier un article qui décrirait ce que comprendrait un programme-cadre progressiste d'éducation sexuelle et j'espérais qu'il précéderait l'annonce par le gouvernement du nouveau programme d'éducation physique et santé et peut-être l'influencerait. Hélas! Compte tenu de l'horaire de Susan et des contraintes thématiques du magazine, il a été impossible de collaborer avant aujourd'hui.

En y repensant, il s'avère que le moment est très bien choisi. Non seulement Susan et sa collègue Karen Ensslen ont eu l'occasion de lire et de commenter le nouveau programme, mais elles ont pu le situer dans une perspective historique grâce au récent livre de Jonathan Zimmerman intitulé *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education*.

Je ne dévoilerai pas leurs conclusions, mais je me contenterai de dire qu'elles reconnaissent qu'un programme progressiste est sain pour les élèves.

Bien que je trouve cet article intéressant, je suis vraiment fasciné par les contestations contre le nouveau programme d'éducation sexuelle. Je crois fermement au droit de manifester et quand des groupes de parents se sont réunis pour exprimer leur désaccord à l'égard du nouveau programme, j'ai écouté attentivement. Parmi les déclarations faites devant la caméra, qui ont le plus attiré mon attention, notons :

« Ils veulent leur empoisonner l'esprit? »

« Et puis quoi encore! Des rapports

sexuels protégés avec des animaux? »

« Pourquoi prendre la peine de leur apprendre quelque chose sur un sujet qu'ils ne connaissent même pas? »

« Pourquoi mon enfant a-t-il besoin de savoir le véritable mot pour « nichons? »

Je ne veux pas m'attarder trop longtemps sur de telles déclarations, car sans entendre la passion et l'angoisse qui les animent, je crains que l'on m'accuse de me moquer de ceux qui les ont dites. Mais la dernière remarque m'a vraiment frappé. Un adulte qui

Dans le tableau, une jeune institutrice se tient debout et est entourée de quatre hommes plus âgés assis, vraisemblablement des commissaires d'école. La main tournée vers le haut est tendue comme si elle implorait leur compréhension alors que les hommes la regardent droit dans les yeux, l'un d'eux ayant les bras croisés, tous paraissant obstinés, inébranlables et peu convaincus.

Pour ceux d'entre nous qui avons œuvré dans les écoles et travaillé avec les enfants, combien de fois nous sommes-nous sen-

**En tant que travailleurs en éducation, nous connaissons nos écoles sur tous les plans et il peut être déconcertant de voir ceux de l'extérieur nous imposer leurs convictions personnelles.**

est incapable (ou trop mal à l'aise) d'utiliser en public le mot « sein » s'élevait contre le programme d'éducation sexuelle qui était, selon lui, trop révélateur. N'ignorez pas cette ironie; elle est la preuve de la nécessité d'un nouveau programme sur l'éducation sexuelle progressiste et renouvelé.

Mais la question qui suscite le plus d'intérêt n'est pas la refonte du programme, mais plutôt la perception du public que nos écoles sont quelque chose sur lesquelles ils sont obligés de projeter leurs besoins, sentiments et opinions. En tant que travailleurs en éducation, nous connaissons nos écoles sur tous les plans et il peut être déconcertant de voir ceux de l'extérieur nous imposer leurs convictions personnelles.

Cela me rappelle la toile qu'a peinte Robert Harris en 1885 « Une rencontre des commissaires d'école » qui est exposée au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada à Ottawa. Vous vous souvenez peut-être de la Minute du patrimoine canadien qui s'en est inspirée.

tis comme l'institutrice du tableau? Nous connaissons nos élèves, nous savons ce dont ils ont besoin et pourtant nous devons affronter les revendications des parents et du public bien intentionnés, mais parfois mal informés.

Nous devrions tous être fiers de travailler dans les écoles si importantes que la population est contrainte de commenter leur fonctionnement. Ce phénomène est naturel au sein d'une démocratie dont des établissements sont financés à même les deniers publics et compréhensible plus particulièrement quand il s'agit de l'éducation des jeunes. Toutefois, nous devons toujours nous méfier que les projections morales du public ne court-circuitent pas l'expertise et l'expérience de ceux qui œuvrent en éducation. Au fur et à mesure que la société évolue, il en est de même des besoins de nos élèves, et il est de notre devoir de revendiquer des changements progressifs dans nos écoles. ☺



# Transparent and accountable

The need to modernize university funding in Ontario

**ON** March 12, 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities announced it is launching consultations on modernizing the funding formula for the province's universities. Under the current funding model, which was developed in 1967, the allocation of public funds to universities is based almost entirely on enrolment numbers. More than 90 per cent of a university's public funding, in fact, is determined entirely by the number of students enrolled at that university.

It's a matter of speculation as to whether the Ministry has specific outcomes in mind for these consultations, but it does seem clear that Reza Moridi, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, would like to see a move away from enrolment-based funding. At a March 16 question-and-answer session with members of OSSTF/FEESO District 35, Universities and Colleges, the Minister said, "We are changing from a funding formula based on the number of students to a formula based on other parameters."

Presumably those "other parameters" will be determined by the consultations, but Moridi explained that enrolment-based funding was no longer equitable, given the diverse characteristics of Ontario's universities. "We have the University of Toronto with almost 85,000 students, and then we have Algoma University with only about 1,000 students—smaller than many high schools in terms of student population. But each of these universities requires a president. Each of them requires vice-presidents and other administrative personnel. So there are certain expenses that an institution has to bear whether it's big or it's small. And



that's why we believe it's time to revise the funding formula after almost 50 years."

OSSTF/FEESO represents the support staff at five Ontario universities—Algoma University, Brock University, the University of Guelph, the University of Ottawa and Wilfrid Laurier University—and has been calling for improvements to university funding for years. Chief among the concerns is that the level of public funding for Ontario's universities is simply not adequate, regardless of the formula through which that funding is allocated.

Ontario, in fact, ranks dead last among Canadian provinces in per-student funding, and for the first time in the province's history, universities are now relying more on student tuition than on government funding to cover operating costs.

It's no surprise that Ontario university students pay the highest tuition fees in Canada. Alastair Woods, chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario, is skeptical that the consultations announced by the Ministry will do very much to change that. "It's likely



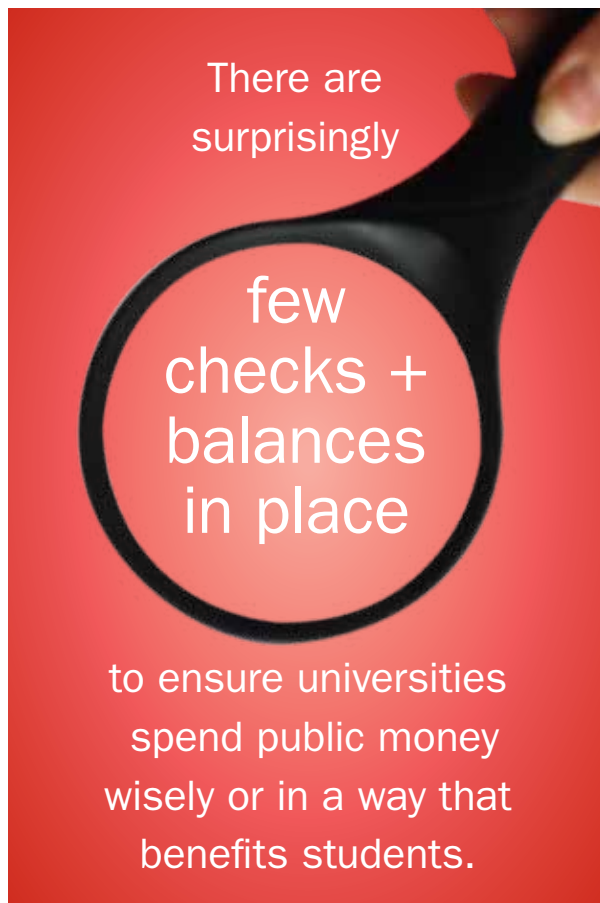
that any change to the funding model will be all about trying to accomplish more with fewer resources, and that won't build a world-class system," says Woods. "You can change the mechanism a million ways, but it won't matter if the funding doesn't keep pace with inflation and with covering the real cost of post-secondary education."

OSSTF/FEESO leaders in the university sector would agree that, whatever kind of formula is adopted, it's crucial the government commit to increased and stable funding. But there are other improvements to the post-secondary funding model for which OSSTF/FEESO has consistently lobbied, and those improvements are mostly related to the current lack of transparency, accountability and meaningful public oversight when it comes to the way universities spend the funding they receive. OSSTF/FEESO members provide a wide array of important services to students on the campuses where they work, including counselling, academic and technical support, funding assistance and procurement, security, maintenance and much more. It has been OSSTF/FEESO's experience, even during periods of growing student enrolment, that funding for these support structures often remains static or decreases even as new management and senior administrative positions—positions that do not directly support student achievement—are created

at a pace that sometimes seems relentless. That is why OSSTF/FEESO has always called for consistent, dedicated funding for all post-secondary institutions to ensure that quality student services are maintained year over year.

But targeting funds to specific services would solve only part of a much larger accountability and oversight problem. Although they fall under provincial jurisdiction, universities have always functioned as autonomous institutions, and are largely treated that way by the government, even when it comes to how they spend the

public money that the government provides. There are surprisingly few checks and balances in place to ensure universities spend public money wisely or in a way that benefits students. Each university has a board of governors or a similar body that approves major expenditures and ostensibly provides oversight on the public's behalf. But the quality of those boards can be uneven, and there are few if any guarantees that a board will include members who have specific expertise in the



administration of a university. It's the perception of many local OSSTF/FEESO leaders at Ontario universities that the boards of governors at their institutions seldom serve as anything more than a rubber stamp for the initiatives of university presidents and senior administrators.

In the current world of enrolment-based funding, which creates fierce competition between universities for new students, those initiatives are often sold to a board of governors as necessary expenditures to boost student recruitment. They might include impressive

new multi-million-dollar academic or research facilities or a massive increase in funding for an institution's varsity sports programs. Boards often approve these kinds of expenditures without seeing any proper research or evidence that the initiatives to which they are committing millions of dollars will produce the desired outcomes, and we have seen more than one university spend its way into financial difficulty through initiatives that ultimately had very little to do with providing a quality post-secondary education for its students.

At Brock University last year, 36 OSSTF/FEESO members were laid off after the university announced a deficit of close to \$15-million. There had been no precipitous drop in enrolment leading up to this stunning announcement, so how did this deficit suddenly appear? Norm Westbury, President of the District 35 Bargaining Unit at Brock, says, "A major contributing factor was that the university simply went ahead with building facilities without ensuring the proper funding was in place for those projects. It put the university into a \$15-million deficit and precipitated a major layoff. So now we have more buildings, and in many cases we don't have enough support staff members to staff those buildings."

When the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities announced the funding formula consultations in March, "increased transparency and accountability" was included as one of the principles to be achieved through the process. Whatever shape a new funding formula takes, a significant enhancement of public oversight, along with increased funding targeted to student needs, will be essential to creating and maintaining a post-secondary system that properly serves the interests of both students and the broader community. ☞

**Michael Young** is an Executive Assistant in the Communications/Political Action Department at Provincial Office.





# A tale of two schools

How one small town is divided by two secondary schools

Less than two kilometres separate St. Joseph's Catholic High School and Renfrew Collegiate Institute but they are kept even further apart by over 100 years of history. According to Statistics Canada, the town of Renfrew, Ontario, has a population of 7,846. If you were to include the surrounding townships you could add several thousand to that total. Surely this is an adequate population to support a thriving secondary school, but does it justify two secondary schools?

St. Joseph's Catholic High School (St. Joseph's) was originally established in 1928 and most recently moved to a new facility in 1994. St. Joseph's has a secondary student body of 380. Renfrew Collegiate Institute (RCI), with a population of 455 secondary students, was established in 1881. RCI continues to sit close to its original site and has had many additions and renovations over the past 130 years. During the post-war baby boom, RCI had more than 1,200 students while St. Joseph's has never exceeded 500 students. As a result of provincial funding programs, both Renfrew County School Boards have recently moved elementary students into their secondary schools to fill empty classroom spaces. If a school is not being fully utilized, the Ministry of Education penalizes the school board by withholding funding. All of the secondary students in Renfrew could be easily accommodated in one building without resorting to housing elementary students and also avoiding penalties.

Funding is critical to the operation of any school. The majority of the funding comes from Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) and the majority of those funds are generated by enrolment. The more students you have in a school or board



directly impacts the funding provided by the Ministry of Education. This year, every student at St. Joseph's generated \$13,048.24 while an RCI student generated \$12,506.50 in funding. There is a difference of \$541.74 because the Catholic board is considered "Rural and Remote" while the public board is not. Money that could be spent on programming and resources is then spent on advertising and competition to draw students to each school in order to generate more funding. A cross-town rivalry

between the two schools in sporting competitions is great for the local paper to write about, but is it the best model for delivering public education?

The number of students in a building not only impacts the funds available to a school, it also impacts the courses a school can offer. More students in a school mean that more courses can be offered. Both Renfrew schools face a similar dilemma in that their enrolment limits the courses that can be offered and ultimately the opportunities available to

the students. Despite the extra money that St. Joseph's receives in GSNs, it cannot offer its students any more opportunities than RCI can offer its students. To the detriment of our students, neither of our high schools can offer the selection of courses provided in larger urban centres, particularly at the senior (Grades 11 and 12) level. Courses such as Grade 12 physics or calculus are not offered in either school every year. Physics and calculus are mandatory courses for students hoping to apply to many university programs. The Ontario curriculum supports many creative interdisciplinary courses (IDCs) that involve interconnected and interdependent aspects of multiple courses or disciplines. Most small schools are limited in the IDCs they can provide. The reality is that if the two small secondary schools in our community were combined into one, the breadth and depth of curriculum that could be offered to our students would improve significantly.

One solution employed in Renfrew to address the inability to offer elective courses is to combine classes (split classes). It is not unusual for Renfrew students to be in a class with Grades 10, 11 and 12 students for music, French, computer science or technology courses. It is not just elective courses that are split in Renfrew. Compulsory courses such as math, English and science are often split with different pathways (Applied, Academic and Locally Developed) in addition to different grades. Being a student in one of these split classes can be very confusing as they simply cannot get the same focussed attention they might in straight grade/level classes.

Despite its small size, Renfrew can be proud of the great facilities it has to offer its residents. There is an excellent public hospital, picturesque parks, a great public library, fantastic arena, tennis courts

and ball fields. As with the two secondary schools, the residents of Renfrew share these facilities with residents of the neighbouring townships. The children from this area grow up together, going to the library program, and playing hockey,

and accommodating for all students. Our schools are the best place to bring our children together; schools should not be where we keep them apart.

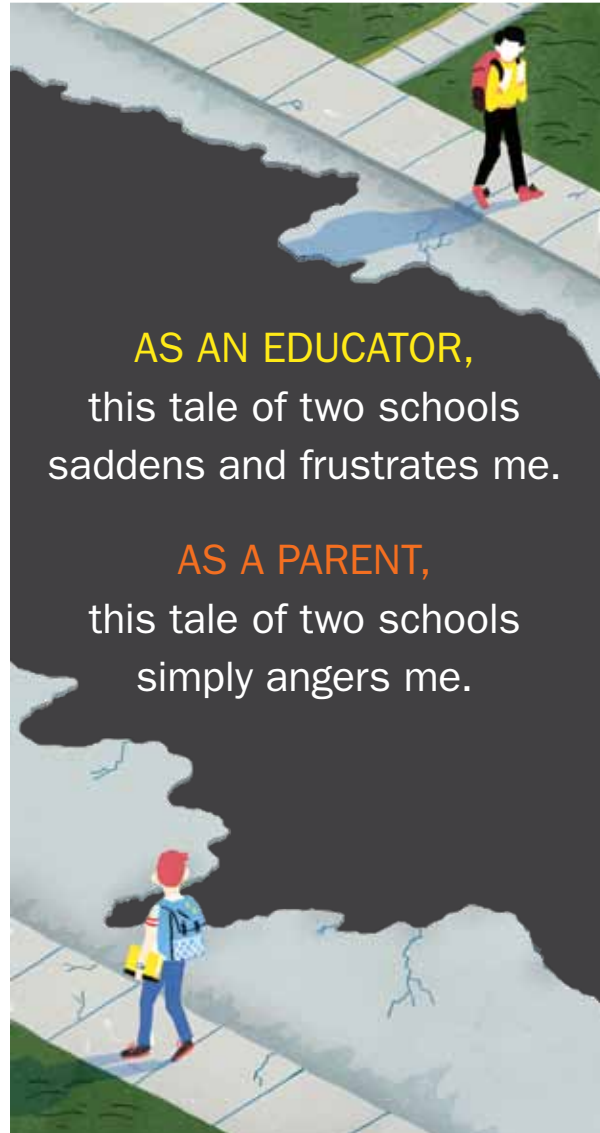
Of course there is a constitutional argument that Roman Catholics have the right to have their children educated in Roman Catholic schools. One innovative solution to the constitutional dilemma worth considering was devised in another secondary school in Renfrew County. Over 20 years ago the residents of Barry's Bay started to advocate for a new Roman Catholic high school in addition to Madawaska Valley District high school (MVDHS). Instead of building a new school, an agreement was struck between the Roman Catholic and public school boards to hire a Roman Catholic Educator/Pastoral Support Worker. The 419 students at MVDHS have the opportunity to take Religion courses and receive counselling and support from a teacher who is employed by the Roman Catholic school board.

As an educator, this tale of two schools saddens and frustrates me. As a parent, this tale of two schools simply angers me. My children have received a great education, but what kind of education might they have had if there was only one high school in Renfrew? What courses might they have taken? What might they have learned from friends

they never had a chance to make?

It would be fantastic if Renfrew had the luxury of supporting two schools but, unfortunately, it cannot. The attempt to support multiple schools is punishing our children and seriously impacting their futures and the future of this province. We must do better in this province! We must do better for our children! ☹

**Jeff Barber** a teacher and the President of District 28, Renfrew.



**AS AN EDUCATOR,**  
this tale of two schools  
saddens and frustrates me.

**AS A PARENT,**  
this tale of two schools  
simply angers me.

soccer, baseball and tennis. They participate in all of these programs together in these publicly funded places but then go to separate publicly funded schools! Students go to school to learn skills and curriculum, but they also learn so much more from the students with whom they spend every day. Being exposed to many different people and ideas only serves to make our students better prepared to live in a world we all share. Schools work very hard to promote inclusion: to make our facilities and programs safe, accepting



# Ontario's new sex education curriculum in context

Can teachers reach students before the Internet does?

The sex education curriculum in Ontario has attracted criticism from all parts of the political spectrum for years now. This is nothing new and is common throughout the world. In a bold move, applauded by some, derided by others, the Ontario government has finally introduced a new curriculum and is rolling it out for implementation this year. This is the first significant change in the curriculum since 1998 and is arguably long overdue.

At the same time, Jonathan Zimmerman's new book, *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education*, has arrived on the scene. It provides a fascinating history of sex education and a welcome context for the recent debates in Ontario's long-awaited changes to the sex education curriculum. This article provides a brief review of the new sex education curriculum in Ontario and then draws insights from Professor Zimmerman's global comparative history.

## Ontario's new sex education curriculum

The new Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education has been most controversial for the topics being introduced in the elementary school years, particularly teaching students the proper names of body parts in Grade 1, teaching students about different family structures (including same-sex parented families) in Grade 3 and teaching students about reproduction and consent in Grades 4-6.

These changes have been made to reflect the fact that students are entering puberty at younger ages than in previous generations: girls are usually entering puberty between the ages of eight and 13 years old and boys between the ages of nine and 14 years old. The changes also reflect the



Ministry of Education's view that students need information and skills to make sound decisions before they face a situation.

In light of the fact that 22 per cent of Ontario students in Grades 9 and 10 report having had sexual intercourse, the curriculum on delaying sexual activity, providing information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and "pregnancy prevention" (as it is called in the Ministry's Parents Guide)<sup>1</sup> will be taught beginning in Grade 7. Students will be expected to understand self concept, gender identity and sexual

orientation, and to consider decision-making around sexual activity, contraception and intimacy in relationships in Grade 8.

Less public attention has been paid to the secondary school curriculum, which has expanded its focus on healthy sexuality and on healthy relationships, and away from the whats and hows of human sexuality. For Grade 9, the curriculum focus is on understanding how to prevent pregnancy and STIs as well as understanding factors affecting gender identity and sexual orientation. Students will also be taught

about skills and strategies for healthy relationships and thinking ahead about sexual health, consent and personal limits.

The Grade 10 curriculum focuses on decision-making, communication and healthy sexuality, the effects of sexuality on oneself and others, and misconceptions relating to sexuality, including the assumptions of heterosexism.

In Grade 11, the curriculum places a central focus on mental health, including understanding the causes, manifestations and effects of addictions and mental illness, reducing the stigma of mental illness and skills for dealing with stressful situations. The curriculum also focuses on proactive health measures for reproductive and sexual health, including regular tests and screening, local health clinics and other resources.

Grade 12 students will be prompted to understand skills and strategies for evolving relationships and maintaining health and well-being when independent. Students will also be expected to consider bias and stereotyping in media portrayals of relationships.

### The curriculum in a global and historical context

In *Too Hot to Handle*, Jonathan Zimmerman reviews sex education around the globe through the 20th century, from early social hygiene curricula focused on venereal diseases to Soviet and Nazi prohibitions on any sex education to the Swedish focus on a healthy sexual life. His history provides information that is unexpected (“Some of the most sexually explicit instruction occurred in Iran, where curricula emphasized ‘the consent and readiness of the woman’ and ‘the enjoyment of each partner.’”), while placing the more familiar 1990s culture wars in their historical context.

Professor Zimmerman reviews the 20th century as the century of sex, but also the century of the school. He places global sex education in the context of the general shift of learning from the home to the school.

Professor Zimmerman describes many of the pitfalls of sex education in the 20th century, particularly unclear curricula and curricula that place discretion with respect

to sex education at the level of individual schools and teachers. He references the experiences of teachers in Sweden faced with parent complaints on both sides: from parents who object to the traditionalist family-and-marriage message as well as parents who don't wish their children exposed to any detailed information about sex. In the absence of clear curricular requirements, many teachers in Sweden in the 1970s minimized sex education. In Ghana, where classrooms in the 1970s were packed full of students and often presided over by teachers with little more training and preparation than their students, any mention of sex in the classroom jeopardized teachers' control over the classroom. In many countries, female teachers faced intrusive questions about their own sexuality when teaching sex education. Professor Zimmerman notes that teachers have been both an obstacle to curricular implementation and the “footsoldier on the firing line of sex education.”

Although *Too Hot to Handle* is focused on schools and curricula, Professor Zimmerman concludes that magazines, films, television and the Internet have been the real leaders of the 20th century in educating children about sex. He gives serious consideration to the limits of sex education. He quotes Scott Thomson, a U.S. educator who said presciently in 1981 that “a few chapters of a textbook on marriage and family cannot really compete with *Hustler*, *Oui* and *Playboy*.... Even more absurd...is the expectation that any significant outcomes will come from that instruction.” While there is no credible evidence that sex education makes young people more likely to engage in sex, “scholars around the world have struggled in vain to show *any* significant influence of sex education upon youth or sex education on youth sexual behaviour,” including rates of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

From his global review of sex education, Professor Zimmerman concludes that schools in the 20th century continuously played catch-up. In the century of the school, students learned more from their peers and the media than from their teachers, parents or other authority figures. In a century where schools became increasingly sexualized spaces, for

the most part, schools taught students what they already knew about sex.

### Where does Ontario's new curriculum fit?

Ontario's new curriculum seeks to upend this trend of teaching students what they already know. The curriculum is expressly designed to provide information to students before they face a situation. It seeks to be the educator of students before they learn about sex from the media and from their peers. Despite this novel goal, the approach of Ontario's new curriculum fits squarely within the predominant model of 20th-century sex education: it seeks to provide students with information to guide them in making their own decisions about a healthy sexual life. As Professor Zimmerman argues, it is this idea that continues to give rise to controversy between those who see sexuality as essentially personal and others who believe in the value of religious and social norms and roles. Controversial or not, in the age of Internet expertise, where information and disinformation are both readily available to virtually all ages, it is possible that even this new curriculum will still be putting schools and teachers in the position of playing catch-up.

Perhaps a better description of the dynamic at work in sex education is not that schools are playing catch-up but that schools are making sure the best information is reinforced through the curriculum. That may not always be cutting edge but in the long run it is healthy. Providing students with the best information is a legitimate and desirable goal for any educational curriculum. ☺

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1. Ministry of Education, *A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum*, online at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/HPEgrades7to12.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/HPEgrades7to12.pdf).





# 2015 ONTARIO PRIDE CELEBRATIONS



## MAY

**Guelph Pride** May 3–10  
[www.guelphpride.com](http://www.guelphpride.com)

**Elliot Lake Pride** May 29–31  
[www.elpride.ca](http://www.elpride.ca)

**Tri-Pride: Kitchener/Cambridge/Waterloo**  
 May 30–June 6  
[www.tri-pride.ca](http://www.tri-pride.ca)

**Pride Niagara (St. Catharines)**  
 May 31–June 6  
[www.prideniagara.com](http://www.prideniagara.com)

## JUNE

**Pride Durham** June 3–7  
[www.pridedurham.com](http://www.pridedurham.com)

**Timmins Pride** June 5–14  
[www.timminspride.com](http://www.timminspride.com)

**Perth Pride** June 6  
[www.facebook.com/LGBTLanarkCountyCivitanClub](http://www.facebook.com/LGBTLanarkCountyCivitanClub)

**Barrie Pride (first)** June 6–13  
[www.facebook.com/BarriePride](http://www.facebook.com/BarriePride)

**Thunder Pride** June 7–14  
[www.thunderpride.ca](http://www.thunderpride.ca)

**Kingston Pride** June 11–14  
[www.kingstonpride.ca](http://www.kingstonpride.ca)

**Grey Bruce Pride** June 12–14  
[www.facebook.com/GreyBrucePride](http://www.facebook.com/GreyBrucePride)

**York Pride Fest** June 13–21  
[www.yorkpridefest.com](http://www.yorkpridefest.com)

**Brantford Pride** June 15–21  
[www.brantfordpride.ca](http://www.brantfordpride.ca)

**Hamilton Pride** June 15–21  
[www.hamiltonpride.org](http://www.hamiltonpride.org)

**Pride Toronto** June 19–28  
[www.pridetoronto.com](http://www.pridetoronto.com)

**Gananoque Pride Festival** June 20–22  
<http://www.1000islandstourism.com/attractions/pride-festival-1000-islands/>

## JULY

**Belleville Pride** July 4  
[www.bellevillepride.ca](http://www.bellevillepride.ca)

**Muskoka Pride** July 17–26  
[www.muskokapride.com](http://www.muskokapride.com)

**Pride London** July 17–26  
[www.pridelondon.ca](http://www.pridelondon.ca)

**Brockville Pride Walk** July 18  
<https://sites.google.com/site/brockvillepride>

**Sudbury Pride** July 19–26  
[www.sudburypride.com](http://www.sudburypride.com)

**Peel Pride** July 23  
[www.peelpride.ca](http://www.peelpride.ca)

## AUGUST

**Simcoe County Pride**  
 July 30–August 8  
[www.simcoepride.com](http://www.simcoepride.com)

**Windsor-Essex Pride Festival**  
 August 7–9  
[www.wepridefest.com](http://www.wepridefest.com)

**Capital Pride** August 14–23  
[www.capitalpride.ca](http://www.capitalpride.ca)

**Chatham-Kent Pride**  
 August 21–23  
[www.pride-ck.com](http://www.pride-ck.com)

## SEPTEMBER

**Sault Pride Fest**  
 September 7–13  
[www.algomaats.wiz.com/sault-pride](http://www.algomaats.wiz.com/sault-pride)

**Peterborough Pride**  
 September 12–19  
[www.peterboroughpride.ca](http://www.peterboroughpride.ca)

Please note: The dates were accurate at the time of printing. Members are encouraged to check the individual websites prior to attending any of the Pride events. To add or edit Pride Celebrations, please contact Wayne Milliner at [wayne.milliner@osstf.ca](mailto:wayne.milliner@osstf.ca).



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TALKS FEDERAL  
POLITICS

Why this fall's federal election  
could change everything  
By Colin Matthew

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Despite 150 years of history and the best efforts of many, the Canadian identity remains elusive. The dream began with Macdonald's railway, or perhaps even before as Europe's hewers of wood and drawers of water. Canadians have sacrificed through Borden's and King's world wars; embraced Douglas's socialized medicare; resisted Lévesque's attempt to tear apart the Two Solitudes; rallied behind Trudeau's Just Society; and watched in belated shame as Mulroney and Chrétien sought truth and reconciliation in an attempt to repair the irreparable, all the while seeking an identity separate from our massive neighbours to the south that protects and honours the best of our Aboriginal, English and French founding nations in an increasingly complex, many-cultured mosaic.

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PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CLC







Whether it is the enormity of the task or growing ambivalence towards it, the modern state of affairs was driven home in a 1997 speech by a 38-year-old Reform MP from Calgary West who cynically quipped to a conservative American audience, “If you’re like all Americans, you know almost nothing except for your own country. Which makes you probably knowledgeable about one more country than most Canadians.” This same MP famously posited, upon his election as prime minister in 2006, that “you won’t

future of Canada but that’s also critical for the labour movement.

**Colin:** I’d like to talk about the economy over the last couple of decades and whether we’re at a point where we can really judge the full impact of the free trade deals that were signed back in the late ’80s and early ’90s.

**Hassan:** I think there’s enough evidence that is available for those who chose to deal with it candidly to acknowledge that the free trade agreements, both NAFTA and the free trade agreements with the United

components of his platform was Standing up for Opportunity, which really focused on cutting taxes for large corporations as well as small businesses, and over the last nine years we’ve seen the Canadian business tax rate dropped down to 15 per cent.

**Hassan:** Given the importance of having social programs in our country, they need to be paid for and there’s only one way to do that: you have to have tax revenue and there’s always been a recognition that everybody should pay their fair share. Both individual Canadians and

“Given the importance of having social programs in our country, they need to be paid for and there’s only one way to do that: you have to have tax revenue and there’s always been a recognition that **EVERYBODY SHOULD PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE.**”

recognize Canada when I’m through with it.” While he was referring to an expansion in the funding and role of the Canadian Forces, the Canada Stephen Harper now governs is in fact dramatically and fundamentally changed from the Canada that elected him to a minority leadership in 2006.

With a federal election looming on October 19 (if it’s not called sooner), I had the opportunity to sit down with Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), to discuss the nine years of Harper’s leadership and what identity Harper was building for Canada. I began by asking him about what was at stake in the upcoming election.

**Hassan:** I think there’s a real sense that this election will determine what kind of a country we’re going to continue to live in, whether it’s a country that’s caring, a country that might want to try and deal with some of the social challenges around poverty, a country that is going to continue to have social programs.... This will be a very crucial election in regard to the

States, fundamentally changed those relationships. There was a huge amount of warning against the impact the free trade agreements could have on the future of the country in regard to social programs, and today I think every social program that we built after the war is threatened. The funding the government is contributing to social programs, that level of commitment from government and what those programs used to provide are no longer there for Canadians to access.

In addition to that, in the manufacturing sector of this country, we lost some 600,000 manufacturing jobs. You see the contraction of the investment and where it’s happening and south of the border so you can measure significantly how that agreement and subsequent re-deal will now alter the direction of our country and will continue to do so because we’ve constitutionalized the rights of corporations, whereas prior to free trade that didn’t exist in the legal context that exists today.

**Colin:** In the current context, then, when Stephen Harper ran in 2006 one of the key

corporations should pay their fair share. What we’re seeing in the history of our country today in regard to the tax rate is that corporations are paying the lowest tax rate in the G7. We’ve got the lowest corporate tax we’ve ever had in the history of our country. It went from 23 per cent down to 15 per cent. It’s the lowest, lower than the United States. The reality of that, of course, is it means the government has less revenue.

This is the same government that has also cut GST by two per cent. At this point that takes a huge amount of revenue that the government would have to have, both to support social programs and make Canada a much more equal place. If you look at some of the challenges we’re faced with in some of our more celebrated social programs like national health care, we are experiencing the lowest levels of funding we’ve ever seen in the history of the federal government contributing to health care in this country. They’re going to take \$36-billion out of health care, and \$14-billion of that will be directly out of Ontario health





care funding, so it's going to dramatically change the social program in Ontario. As I speak to you today, we're at a point in the City of Toronto where only 20 per cent of the unemployed in Toronto get EI benefits. Eighty per cent, even though they've contributed to the unemployment insurance fund, are getting no benefits—and guess who is picking up the tab? It is the taxpayers of the City of Toronto because when people don't get employment insurance, then they have to get social assistance and of course the homeowners are the ones who are paying the cost of that at the end of the day.

**Colin:** You've opened the question of the relationship between the federal government and the provinces. Many of our OSSTF/FEESO members' jobs are funded directly by the provincial government. We heard our own Federation President, Paul Elliott, say in the fall that "OSSTF/FEESO members can't afford not to be involved in this federal election" and I'm wondering if we can take a look at that relationship between the federal government and the provinces and why OSSTF/FEESO members need to be involved in this election.

**Hassan:** The federal government is not some small player in regard to the quality of life of all Canadians. They have a significant role to play in everything that affects our lives at the end of the day, whether they deliver a service directly or they're contributing towards what the provinces are able to do in delivering services. It is true that it is a province's responsibility to provide public education for their citizens but the reality is we live in a federation. The country is unequal in terms of income and geography and ability to get resources and as a result, federal governments have always been there as an equalizer to ensure the transfer of payments to the provinces are balancing and ensure that the "have" and the "have-not" provinces have an equal opportunity to ensure their citizens enjoy the same degree of services. What we have seen with this federal government is they continue to shift the responsibility by downloading what would normally be their responsibility to the provinces.

I'll give you a couple of examples; health care is one of them. Based on the



“The federal government is not some small player in regard to the quality of life of all Canadians. They have a significant role to play **IN EVERYTHING THAT AFFECTS OUR LIVES** at the end of the day.”

“We’re seeing an increase in child poverty despite the fact that over two decades ago, we passed a resolution in the House of Commons committing to end child poverty in this country. **I THINK IT’S A QUESTION OF CHOICE.**”

cuts, the provinces are going to be now left to provide the bulk of the funding for health care and, in the context of provincial budgets, in some cases already over 40 per cent of their provincial budgets is going to health care. If the federal government is not there to provide at some point, the province is going to say we can’t provide these levels of services so we’ll start to privatize certain sections of health care. I don’t think this federal government can go out and campaign to privatize health care because Canadians will not vote for such a government. And so they don’t do it by that, they do it by stealth, by starving the provinces and hoping the provinces will do the privatization because they can’t meet their commitment.

Education, at the end of the day, requires the federal government making a healthy transfer to the provinces. Because of the cuts in the transfer payments to provinces, fundamentally the provinces will have less and less fiscal room as to how they deliver the service. It is true that the federal government gets its resources through taxes, both personal income tax or corporate tax and sales tax or consumption tax. This government has done more to reduce their intake of revenue both in terms of a cut to income tax, a cut to corporate tax and of course a cut to consumption tax. What that means is the federal government does not have the fiscal room it used to have to support the provinces and make sure we have an equal Canada and, of course, it’s going to have a devastating impact.

It’s already having that impact. We’re seeing it in poverty among seniors, we’re seeing it in poverty among young people. Young people are going to university and having the highest debt load any generation has ever had in the history of this country, attending and trying to get a post-secondary education. That speaks volumes that the federal government does not believe it is something every Canadian’s entitled to. Who would believe a country as rich as ours can’t afford to make post-secondary education free? I think it speaks to the ideology of the Prime Minister and his government that fundamentally do not believe working people should have the same rights as those who are wealthy. They don’t believe in it, they don’t share it and fundamentally they’re doing everything in regards to their public policy to ensure they’re going to change that reality. In the nine years they’ve been in power, we’ve already seen Canadians experiencing this reality of what a different Canada it is versus the one we used to have.

**Colin:** You talked about rising inequality in this country and as education workers, our own students are really near and dear to our hearts. What opportunity exists for students entering the workforce?

**Hassan:** For the first time in history, young people are being told that the future their parents used to have or once enjoyed is no longer available to them. They have not reduced the unemployment level around young people since 2008—it’s still there today—and the jobs they’ve been

creating are not jobs we can be proud of, that you would want to have, because they don’t have benefits, they don’t have a pension plan. More likely you’re doing two or three jobs to make ends meet. Everywhere I’ve gone, parents come up to me and say, “The story you just told, you’re talking about my kid, that’s my family’s story you’ve just told.”

We’re seeing an increase in child poverty despite the fact that over two decades ago, we passed a resolution in the House of Commons committing to end child poverty in this country. I think it’s a question of choice. This election I think gives Canadians some very stark things to reflect on. What kind of a Canada do we want to live in? Do we want to live in a more equal Canada, you know, a Canada that’s more fair, that’s more just? And if we are committed to that, individuals have to go out and vote to ensure this government does not get re-elected. It’s not like you have any other choice because of the nine years they’ve been in office, they’ve had choices to make and the choices they’ve made have been bad choices for the working people in this country.

I am hopeful, you know, that Canadians will recognize this as they go to the polls and, more importantly, think about what’s at stake. It’s the future of our kids, the future of our country, more than the future of our labour movement. All of it is at stake from this one election. ☞

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**Colin Matthew** is a teacher and the President of District 15, Trillium-Lakelands.



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Over the past decade one of the most confounding problems for our provincial education system has been the question of what to do with all this excess space and these underutilized schools? There are two interrelated variables increasing the vulnerability of our neighbourhood schools: declining enrolment and a rigid, unresponsive funding formula that continues to calculate maintenance costs on a fixed square-foot-per-enrolled-pupil basis.

What we are experiencing at this critical moment is another ebb tide of declining enrolment in our publicly funded schools. With fewer children in our schools, the pressure is on to reduce government commitment to the funding of schools for all. The common-sense notion is that the demand for school space is down and surplus inventory should logically be discarded. Through this lens, school sites are seen primarily as property, a disposable public asset and a potential public liability if they do not yield a return on their investment. Schools have no place in neighbourhoods too small to supply a large enough clientele to make them

# IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT SPACE

Empty schools are less a liability and more an opportunity

By Domenic Bellissimo

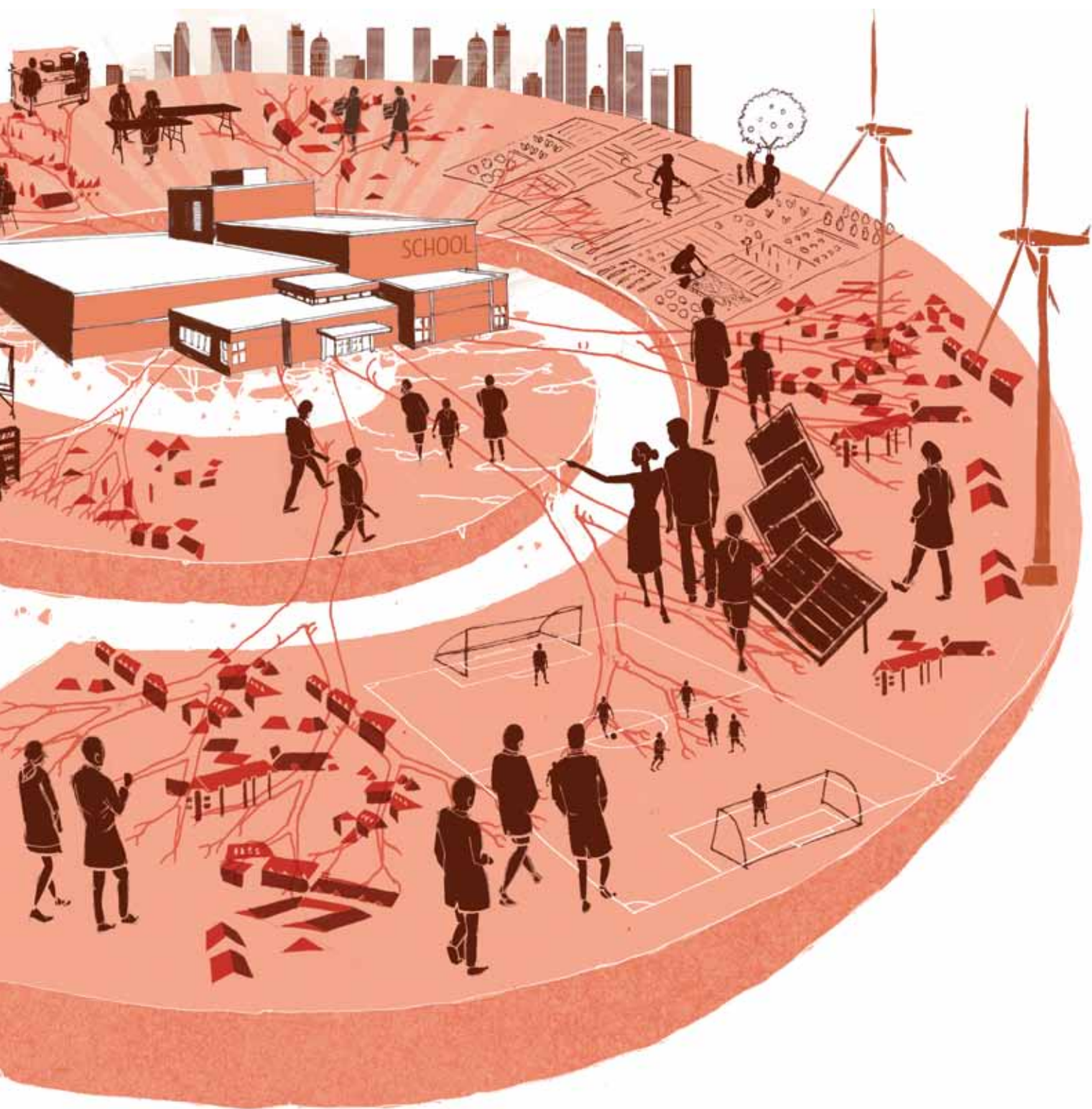
viable. Rural schools likely could never survive this kind of market-driven thinking and larger urban areas would find it difficult to express a local community's democratic desire for their small neighbourhood school to exist.

The parent organization People for Education has documented how this thinking has come down hard on Ontario schools in recent years. It issued a report on school closings during 2009–2012 that documented 172 school closures and a further 163 reviews were still in progress. Over the past three years, the largest school board in Canada, the Toronto District School Board, has been faced with the prospect of an unimaginable 220 possible school closures. This even rivals the Conservative Harris government era in which massive public-funding cuts led to the closing of 250 schools.

ILLUSTRATION: AARON MCCOY/ONYX COLAGNE.COM







OSSTF/FEESO sees the current trend of enrolment decline as both a challenge and an opportunity. In our submission to the Declining Enrolment Task Force, a number of useful and practical recommendations were made that could lead to thriving elementary and secondary schools with lower class sizes and comprehensive services.

The OSSTF/FEESO submission included the following: “Student distribution and school configuration must be considered above political, religious and union demands to provide a sound education for all. Having access to all schools in a geographical area and the freedom to create configurations that respond to enrolment and demographic shifts is essential to responding to this dramatic enrolment drop. A school of JK to Grade 8 students may be the best fit in one area of a school board and a Grade 7 to 12 school may serve the board in another area.” In addition, current curriculum increasingly requires specialized equipment and teachers with specialized education and training, consequently making these Grade 7 to 12 schools attractive. The current practice of bussing a student past one half-full school to attend another half-full school must end.

#### **Fix the flawed funding formula**

It is clear that declining enrolment will create shortfalls in funding for local school boards because the funding generators are based entirely on student enrolment. The government has the opportunity to support student achievement by removing enrolment as the central funding criterion in many of its grants. Ideal school size has long been studied using many variables such as program diversity, sense of community and extracurricular opportunities, in addition to others, to determine an ideal student population. The ideal secondary school size is generally accepted to be below 1,000 students. Unfortunately, many secondary schools in Ontario were built to house numbers beyond that. School boards should not be penalized by having to pay to maintain and run a larger facility with fewer students. All parties understand the significant benefit of lower class sizes on student achievement. We should take this opportunity to maintain funding during the enrolment decline and allow all classes to shrink in size without loss of programs. The existing staff would support much more than the students in their classes.

#### **Saving our public spaces through community hubs**

School boards must resist the obvious and easiest path in response to declining enrolment, which is simply to make drastic budget cuts and/or close schools. After starving boards year after year and forcing them to reallocate resources away from certain sites, trustees often face the unenviable task of closing the local school. Each of the current 72 boards is, in one way or another, grappling with the same dilemma. While one solution cannot be imposed from above, some

short-term relief can be found from the bottom up. The school is and will continue to be the hub of the community. It is considered the safe, comfortable centre of activity in a small community or the fixture in a neighbourhood of a larger urban centre. In many cases, the economic viability of the area is directly reliant on the existence of that school. It is often the most appropriate location for facilities that the greater community depends upon.

A number of years ago while touring Brazil for our Common Threads curriculum resource, *Hungry for Change*, our team was thoroughly impressed with the way schools had been built to integrate a variety of services that residents counted on. The local elementary school in a small town also housed the town li-

brary, national tax-payment department and the municipal public-health office. In the rear of the school, a community garden thrived and provided produce for the school lunch program. Attached to the front of the school building was a local produce food stand and artists’ co-operative selling homemade arts and crafts. Many levels of government shared one school building that acted as the centre of the wheel with many extending spokes.

In Canada, the term “community hub” has recently become a politician’s dream. It is the ultimate in ambiguity and can be spoken by social democrats and liberals alike referring to schools in their local riding. But what do we really mean by the term and how can it save some of our schools from closing or being sold off? Certainly, the notion of strengthening ties between schools and services to their surrounding communities is not new. Community use of schools and parental literacy initiatives can be traced to the early 1920s in rural communities in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. Education pedagogical leaders such as John Dewey, Celestin Freinet, Anton Makarenko and Paolo Freire have written extensively on the school as a community focal point.

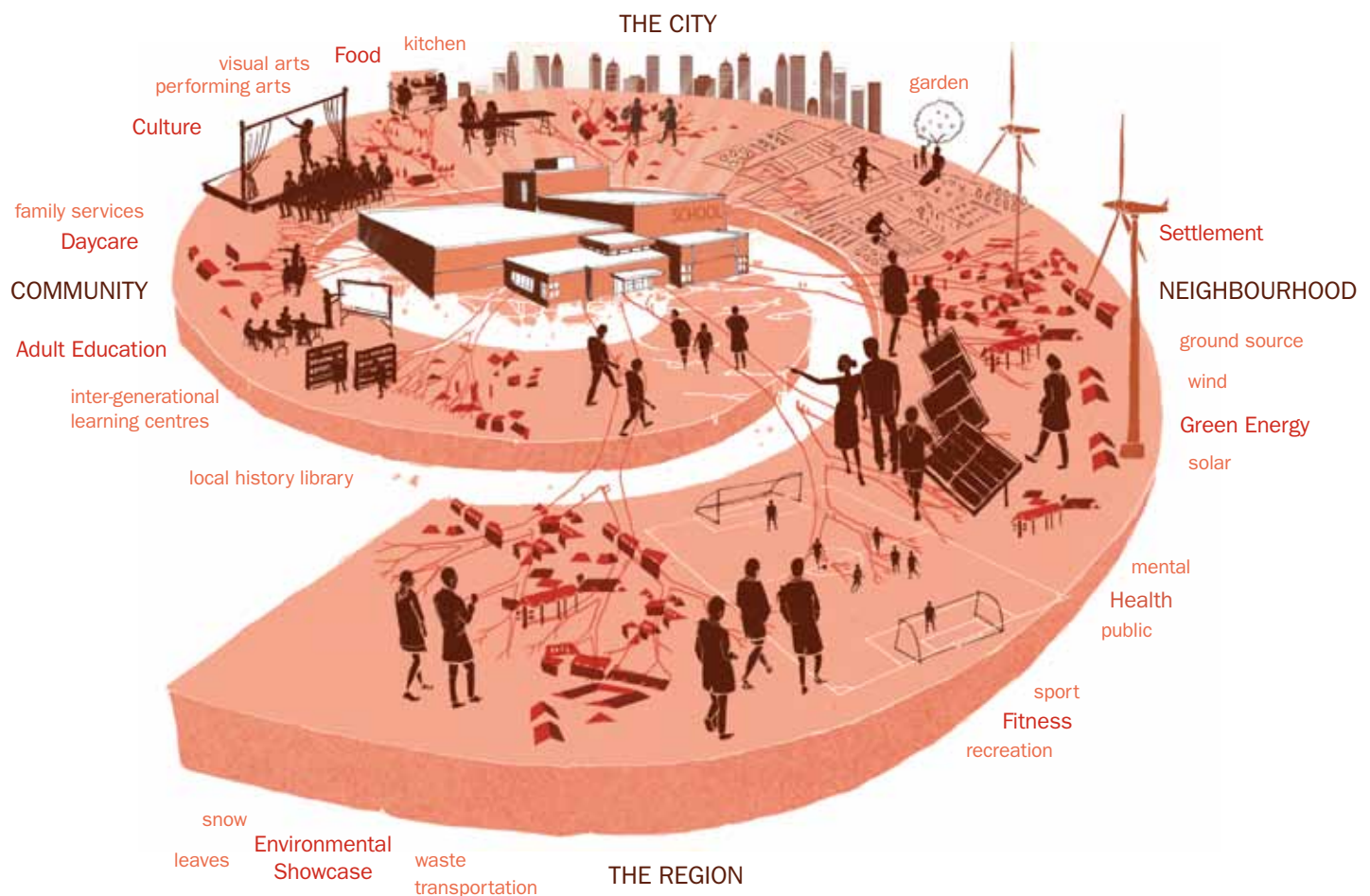
David Clandfield, author, educator and former school board trustee, was an advisor in the Rae government, looking at integrating services within schools in the early 1990s. He recently edited a collection of global experiences in *School as Community Hub: Beyond Education’s Iron Cage* (ourschools/ourselves, summer 2010).

In the opening chapter, he situates hubs along a five-point continuum, extending from the basic community use of schools to the fully integrated school-community relationship, from the simplest form of permitting eligible community groups to book school space for use after hours to the co-location of community services within a single plot of land that may house a school or daycare, a parenting centre, adult education classes etc., and be funded by not only the school board, but also by the local municipality. Clandfield argues that the proper relationship of a school/community hub goes beyond rationalizing services and the use of space. It requires us to imagine a different

**We should take  
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community school: the Two Way Hub, “one where children’s learning activities within the school contribute to community development and when community activities contribute to and enrich children’s learning within the school.” He states, “This does not mean that the school dilutes its commitment to the development of critical literacy and numeracy or to the phased development of higher-order critical thinking over the years of compulsory education. It does mean that what the community has by way of knowledge and skills flows into and across a curriculum based on really useful knowledge—engaging its students in understanding and changing the world.”

Clandfield claims “the full community hub will yoke the interactive neighbourhood school with the multi-use hub to produce a kind of ‘new commons’ where education for all, health, recreation, poverty reduction, cultural expression and celebration, and environmental responsibility can all come together to develop and sustain flourishing communities on principles of citizenship, co-operation and social justice. This is how our schools can become a bulwark against the principles that would reduce them to factories producing skilled elites, compliant workers and eager consumers in a drive to achieve competitive advantage and measurable prosperity in the world of neo-liberal globalization.”

### There are options to closing schools —it’s a question of political will

Once elected as premier, Kathleen Wynne issued mandate letters to each of her ministers in September 2014. Included in the orders to the Minister of Education, Premier Wynne asked select ministries to work together to develop a policy on community hubs. The message was quite simple: “use some empty school space across the province for community resources—or community hubs that could be supported by creative partnerships.” It can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or another public space that offers co-ordinated services such as education, health care and social services.

Initially, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing were asked to consult with community stakeholders to design a policy that supports the development of these community hubs. We continue to watch this development and hope that in the short term, the ministers will freeze any further school closures or sales rather than make it necessary for boards to hand over schools in the most desirable locations to developers. It’s the right thing to do. After all, these are our public assets. 🌀

**Domenic Bellissimo** is the Director of the Communications/Political Action Department at Provincial Office.



# HOW A SOLUTION BECOMES THE PROBLEM

Teach for Canada and First Nations schools

By Dawn Burleigh

You have those critical moments in teaching that define you. You know the ones I mean. They resonate within you. They leave a mark on you, sometimes positive, sometimes negative and most often somewhere in between. I had one of those defining moments about five years ago.

I decided to leave my position as a secondary school teacher in a remote First Nations community in northern Ontario.

It was a hard decision that I was never really sure of, but I knew somewhere deep down it was time to move on. The spring always brought about this decision-making process. The sun would come out and the snow would start to melt and as the school year drew to a close, I would start to think about the next fall. When I was a teacher in the north, I laboured over the decision to return every single year. I would contend with a lengthy list of pros and cons, reasons why I should and should not stay, and eventually came to a decision. After three years, I decided to leave the community and my position as a secondary school Math and Geography teacher. Once the decision was made, I had to figure out how to tell my students. It didn't take long before I was asked in front of a class, "Are you coming back next year, Dawn?" Everyone was looking at me and I had a moment of panic. Perhaps I should stay for just one more year, I thought to myself. I quieted the doubts and held strong to my decision, letting my Grade 12 class know that it would be my final year. And as some of them moved on to post-secondary education, I did too.

I pursued a PhD in education and focused my research on the work of teachers in remote First Nations communities, specifically on the factors impacting teacher retention and attrition. Currently I am an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. I teach Aboriginal Education majors and supervise their practicum placements in both provincial and First Nations schools.

ILLUSTRATION: SOUS SOUS







Recently, an organization was launched called Teach for Canada (TFC). This has necessitated the need to clarify some of the issues and dynamics around teaching in First Nations communities, specifically concerning teacher retention. TFC is a non-profit organization that “works with schools in remote communities to recruit, prepare, and retain committed teachers” (teachforcanada.ca). TFC seeks to recruit teachers, typically straight out of teacher-education programming, and prepare them for their positions as teachers. During an “intensive, community-focused, postgraduate preparation forum” (teachforcanada.ca) in the summer, teachers will take part in an orientation program.

TFC is beginning with a strong focus in Ontario. According to its website, many of the student ambassadors are from Ontario universities and Faculties of Education across the province. The demand for teachers in Ontario’s north is high, and with limited job opportunities in the south, TFC has received over 250 applications for 40 positions. The strategy is to start at the elementary level with goals of moving into the secondary division in the coming years. This is an issue on the horizon for secondary teachers because not only does this impact the practice of secondary school teachers in the province but at some point a TFC teacher may become your colleague. In addition, the urban population of First Nations people is rapidly increasing, so you may also teach a student who has experienced years of high teacher turnover through TFC.

The founders of TFC are Adam Goldenberg and Christine Kneteman. Adam has a BA from Harvard and a law degree from Yale and has extensive political and corporate involvement. Christine has a legal background and was once a volunteer teacher in Ghana. Although perhaps they are well-intentioned, I can’t avoid wondering what stake Adam and Christine have in First Nations education. Despite a significantly high teacher turnover rate in remote First Nations communities, I am concerned with not only how TFC will deal with attrition but, more so, why? Although TFC has some Aboriginal representation within its circle of advisors, I am left with grave concern about the agenda of TFC and those who developed the organization.

Much of the research about teacher retention in the north indicates it is a training ground for new, inexperienced teachers to gain years of experience, hone their skills and then enter southern school boards. The impact of this cycle on students becomes apparent as, year after year, they are taught by new teachers who are beginning their careers and developing their own practice. Teacher turnover is often high in remote First Nations communities

because teachers work on one-year contracts that are renewed each spring. TFC plans to have its teachers sign two-year contracts to increase their retention, during which time they will “provide constant support—mentorship, peer support, personal support, and online resources” (teachforcanada.ca). Although it appears to be a retention plan for two years, I am still left with more questions than answers. What will happen after two years? What will happen if the teacher no longer wants to remain in the community or if the community no longer wants the teacher in the school?

The implications of these questions are most pronounced for the students who spend countless hours with their teachers in the

classroom every day. The students’ sense of trust, stability and school community are all compromised when a teacher either leaves the community or simply doesn’t want to be there and is merely fulfilling their contractual obligations. Trust, stability and school community also happen to be predictors of student success, along with teacher tenure. The Aboriginal achievement gap is often cited as an issue requiring much attention, and various policies and local initiatives have been developed to close the gap. The achievement gap refers to the notion that Aboriginal students are out-performed by their non-Aboriginal counterparts and have much lower graduation rates. The impact of the classroom teacher can have a significant effect on student success. With new

TFC teachers in schools where stability and teacher tenure are needed to close the gap, TFC stands to widen the gap and seriously compromise student success and teacher retention. The best-case scenario for TFC is that the retention issue will

The best-case scenario for TFC is that the retention issue will remain the same.

At worst the implications of TFC could be profoundly damaging, both individually and systemically.



remain the same. At worst the implications of TFC could be profoundly damaging, both individually and systemically.

TFC as an organization is problematic for a number of reasons. Not only is this a recolonization of an education system that has time and time again failed First Nations people across this country but it also introduces the neoliberal notion that a public issue can be mediated by private solutions. In 1972, a policy paper called *Indian Control of Indian Education* was affirmed by Indian Affairs Canada. The policy called for First Nations control of First Nations education, which puts the power and decision-making ability back into the hands of First Nations school authorities and communities. TFC blatantly undermines First Nations control of First Nations education and only serves to recolonize the education system on which it was imposed. The consequences





of colonization in First Nations education are contemporary issues as the inter-generational impacts of residential schools are still evident and felt today. TFC and its agenda contribute to a potentially dangerous and harmful setback in First Nations education by recolonizing a system that is working hard to heal, rebuild and move forward. TFC wants to make “education more equal” but it is undermining the very policy that would bring equity to First Nations education.

One of the overriding questions in Aboriginal education is sustainability. It is important and necessary that programming and organizations that work with issues in Aboriginal education be sustainable in order to have lasting, long-term impacts. Recently, the government of Ontario has supported TFC to the tune of \$70,000 through the Rural Economic Development Fund, with a mandate to increase student success and retain teachers. Not only is this not a sustainable funding source, it funnels public dollars to a private organization to address a public issue. Public funds to support increased teacher retention could better be allocated to community-based First Nations organizations, Faculties of Education or community research partnerships that focus on better understanding the complexities of teacher retention.

TFC is an organization that functions based on a problem it wants to solve. The problem is teacher attrition. The solution is to improve retention and have teachers stay longer. So if TFC is successful in addressing high attrition, it will no longer be needed. It seems unstable to found an organization based on an issue that, if resolved, would fold the organization. It seems then that it would benefit TFC to keep attrition rates high and retention low, which contradicts the overall goal of the organization and arguably the goal of many First Nations community schools. The only way TFC can have a sustainable approach is if it relies on perpetuating the very problem of teachers continually leaving their positions.

Despite the concerns and problems with TFC, teacher retention in First Nations communities remains an issue requiring attention. First Nations schools are federally funded and receive substantially less funding per student each year. This funding gap makes teacher retention a challenge. The teacher attrition rates are cited to be between 30 and 50 per cent each year with some schools experiencing complete staff turnover. Factors contributing to high rates of attrition include salary variability, isolation, lack of support and resources, and a strong draw to teach in urban

centres. Although TFC will operate a summer orientation, it seems unfeasible to mediate some of these retention factors and combat systemic and structural inequalities. Rather, TFC is a façade operating under the guise of equity but in the end, those who benefit will remain the teachers who gain experience and TFC as an organization. Students, communities and First Nations education stakeholders will not benefit because the right to control and decision-making is being eroded, ultimately compromising true and just equity.

It was a hard decision to leave my position and the community but it was much harder to tell my students. When I responded to the question in class, “Are you coming back next year?” I explained I would not be returning and I was going to go back to university. Most of the students understood and asked more questions. One student was very upset with me. She stopped talking to me completely. It wasn’t until my last day that we talked again.

She came to our classroom and said she was upset with me because I was leaving. She explained that it was OK for her because she was graduating and going away to college but she had hoped I would stay to teach her younger siblings as they came to high school in the coming years.

Clearly there was a desire for stability and consistency from year to year that high rates of teacher turnover simply cannot meet. TFC and its two-year contracts will not avoid scenarios such as this. In fact, TFC will create more.

Teacher education and federally funded schools have a commonality. They are both public and both require public, not private, attention.

We need to do better in Faculties of Education across the country to prepare teachers for teaching in First Nations contexts. Today, the First Nations context is not only in the north, it is also in cities and towns in every province. According to census data, the Aboriginal demographic is the fastest rising in Canada and more than half of Aboriginal people are residing in urban centres. This is not a northern issue alone. This is an issue for all teachers and Faculties of Education. This is an issue that needs immediate attention and action. Otherwise, organizations with corporate and private backing will start to infiltrate the public education system. We need to interrupt the agenda of TFC, defend our practice and profession, and critically examine the implications of TFC for the teaching profession in Ontario. ☹

Dawn Burleigh is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta.



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# Mediation in the workplace

OSSTF/FEESO's unique approach  
to helping members in conflict

By/par Paul Wesley

As in any relationship, conflict in the workplace is natural and inevitable. Conflict can also be a healthy response to an unsustainable dynamic, one that involves people working together with various personalities, backgrounds and work styles. It seems only recently that research and media attention around workplace conflict and harassment has

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# La médiation en milieu de travail

L'approche unique  
d'OSSTF/FEESO pour aider les  
membres en situation de conflit

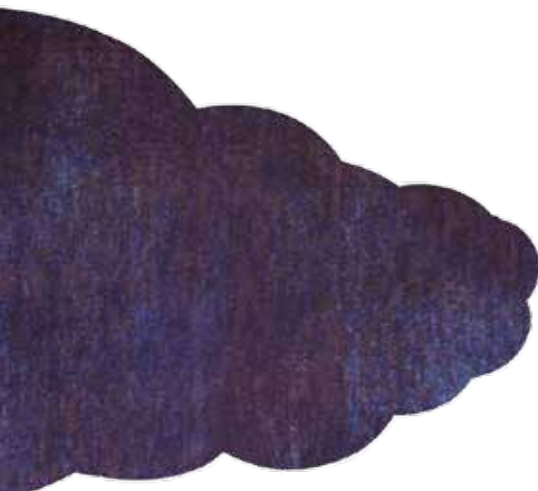
Comme dans toute relation, les conflits en milieu de travail sont naturels et inévitables. Ils peuvent aussi être une réaction saine à une dynamique insoutenable qui implique des personnes qui travaillent ensemble ayant des personnalités, des origines et des façons de faire différentes. Ce n'est que récemment que la recherche et l'attention des médias sur

ILLUSTRATION: SANDRA DIONISI

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Workplace  
conflict is  
not something  
you should have  
to live with,  
and it's certainly  
not something  
you have to try  
to resolve on  
your own.



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started to emerge. It is appropriate, therefore, that as a large organization responsible for protecting our members' well-being, we respond to the concerns arising from conflict in our worksites from a restorative approach. Conflict in any relationship can be a starting point for reflection and positive change if it's navigated in a timely and sensitive manner. Not dealing with a conflict at work can often lead to a poisoned work environment, and also has the potential for the conflict to snowball into a situation where an entire department or even an entire school becomes toxic, making it that much more difficult to untangle and repair the damage. In addition, the emotional exhaustion associated with allowing conflicts to fester can be debilitating and may lead to medical issues and stress leave.

OSSTF/FEESO's Mediation Services Resource Bank (MSRB), a service that is unique to our Federation, consists of 10 OSSTF/FEESO members from a cross-section of job classes from various regions of the province, who are trained and experienced mediators. These mediators volunteer their time to conduct alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for members in conflict. Members of MSRB also provide ADR training for local OSSTF/FEESO District leaders in how and when to intervene in the early stages of workplace conflict before requiring a referral to MSRB.

The services of MSRB are available at no cost to OSSTF/FEESO members in conflict with one another and the process for accessing mediation is straightforward. However, before MSRB can get involved, the following criteria need to be met:

- A specific conflict exists between two or more members.
- The conflict is not already being addressed through other procedures.
- Each member voluntarily enters into the mediation process in good faith with a genuine desire to resolve the issues.

Once these criteria are met, the branch president/workplace rep makes a request to their District office for a referral to be made to MSRB at the provincial OSSTF/FEESO office. Once the referral

is received, the Chair of MSRB vets the case to ensure mediation is appropriate. In the majority of cases, a mediator is subsequently assigned to co-ordinate the mediation with the members in conflict. There are, however, a few scenarios where mediation is not appropriate—in particular if a member has not voluntarily entered into the mediation and/or has felt coerced into participating, or if the mediation process is thought to be being used for reasons other than to meaningfully attempt to resolve the issues. In other words, mediation is not intended as a vehicle to trigger discipline or seek reprisal, and the mediator will abandon the process if there is any attempt to co-opt its authenticity or legitimacy.

Assuming the circumstances are appropriate to mediate, a date and location (usually arranged off-site to maintain neutrality and confidentiality) are confirmed. The amount of time a mediation takes is hard to predict due to the number of members who may be involved and the complexity of the issues. A mediation involving two members with straightforward issues could take a few hours, while a large group with complex issues and multiple conflicts could take a full day—in some rare cases, large-scale conflicts have taken two to three days to resolve.

Although it's difficult to describe a typical mediation, some common elements that have triggered conflicts referred to MSRB have included:

- Personality/work-style differences.
- Members in positions of responsibility misunderstanding their role.
- Adverse reports.
- Sharing of resources.
- Vague job duties/descriptions.
- Mental health.

Although there is a standard Seven-Step process for conducting mediations, each mediation takes on its own life, depending on the mediator's style and other variables that come up throughout the process. However, once the members are sitting face to face, a common framework would look something like this:

- Each party gives his/her description of facts, feelings and perceptions; fully heard without interruption.

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les conflits et le harcèlement en milieu de travail ont commencé à voir le jour. En tant qu'importante organisation responsable de protéger le bien-être de ses membres, il convient donc que nous répondions aux préoccupations découlant des conflits dans nos milieux de travail à l'aide d'une approche réparatrice. Les conflits dans une relation peuvent être le point de départ de réflexion et de changements positifs si on agit à temps et avec délicatesse. Ne pas s'attaquer à un conflit au travail peut souvent entraîner des conditions de travail malsaines et il est possible que le conflit dégénère en une situation dans laquelle tout un service ou même toute une école devient empoisonné, ce qui le rend d'autant plus difficile à démanteler et à réparer les dommages. De plus, l'épuisement émotif inhérent au fait de laisser les conflits s'envenimer peut être démoralisant et peut mener à des problèmes médicaux et à un congé pour stress.

La Banque de ressources en services de médiation (BRSM) d'OSSTF/FEESO, service unique à notre Fédération, est composée de dix membres d'OSSTF/FEESO, provenant d'un vaste éventail de classifications d'emplois de diverses régions de la province, qui sont des médiateurs formés et chevronnés. Ils offrent bénévolement de leur temps en suivant le mode alternatif de règlement des conflits (MARC) pour les membres en situation de conflit. Les membres de la BRSM fournissent également de la formation au MARC à l'intention des dirigeants des districts d'OSSTF/FEESO sur la manière d'intervenir à un stade précoce d'un conflit en milieu de travail et au moment propice avant qu'il ne soit nécessaire de faire appel à la BRSM.

Les services de la BRSM sont offerts gratuitement aux membres d'OSSTF/FEESO en situation de conflit et le processus d'accès à la médiation est simple. Toutefois, avant de faire intervenir la BRSM, il est nécessaire de satisfaire aux critères suivants :

- Un conflit précis existe entre deux membres ou plus
- Le conflit n'est pas déjà traité par d'autres procédures

- Chaque membre entame de son plein gré le processus en toute bonne foi, avec le désir véritable de régler les problèmes

Une fois que ces critères sont satisfaits, le représentant en milieu de travail présente une demande à son bureau de district pour la transmettre à la BRSM, au Bureau provincial d'OSSTF/FEESO. Une fois la demande reçue, la présidence de la BRSM examine soigneusement le dossier afin de s'assurer que la médiation convient. Dans la majorité des cas, un médiateur est par la suite assigné pour coordonner la médiation avec les membres en conflit. La médiation n'est cependant pas applicable à certains scénarios, notamment si le membre n'a pas choisi la médiation de son plein gré et (ou) s'est senti contraint à participer ou

si l'on pense que le processus de médiation est utilisé à d'autres fins que de clairement tenter de régler les conflits. Autrement dit, la médiation ne vise pas à déclencher des mesures disciplinaires ou à chercher des représailles et le médiateur abandonnera le processus si l'on tente de s'approprier son authenticité ou sa légitimité.

En supposant que les circonstances soient propices à la médiation, la date et le lieu (habituellement réservé hors site pour des raisons de neutralité et de confidentialité) sont confirmés. Il est difficile de prévoir la durée d'une médiation, en raison du nombre de membres impliqués et de la complexité des enjeux. Une médiation entre deux membres

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Les conflits dans une relation peuvent être le point de départ de réflexion et de changements positifs si on agit à temps et avec délicatesse.



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- Determining interests of each participant.
- Organizing, prioritizing issues.
- Generating/evaluating options for moving forward.

The key to any successful mediation is *genuinely* listening to the other perspectives, *acknowledging* the emotions of others and focusing on realistic options for *resolving* the issues. Staying stuck in the past or quibbling over minutiae is usually not a productive way forward.

With the success rate of cases brought forward to MSRB at over 90 per cent, it's not hard to appreciate the benefits of the resource OSSTF/FEESO has made available. And the benefits are many! Most importantly, members benefit from having available a professional service that provides confidential restorative alternative dispute resolution.

Members can be reassured there is support available to them if they are immersed in a conflict or hostile relationship with another member, while also knowing the information they provide to MSRB during the entire process will never be disclosed. This confidentiality is paramount in allowing our members to speak candidly, without fear of reprisal from their employer or the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). In addition, this service provides for a safe, facilitative and neutral process for OSSTF/FEESO members to participate in, with the hope they can go back to work with their issues resolved and relationships restored.

Secondary to this, both OSSTF/FEESO and the employer benefit from the services offered by MSRB. By helping to prevent any potential discipline, OSSTF/FEESO benefits from not absorbing any grievance/arbitration costs and the employer benefits from not having to use its own resources to intervene and/or absorb costs associated with medical leaves.

Workplace conflict is not something you should have to live with, and it's certainly not something you have to try to resolve on your own. If you feel that mediation might be appropriate, contact your Branch President to get the process started. ☺

**Paul Wesley** is a teacher at East York CI in District 12, Toronto, and is the Chair of the MSRB.



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Vous ne devriez pas avoir à vivre dans une situation de conflit en milieu de travail et ce n'est sûrement pas quelque chose que vous êtes obligé de tenter de régler par vous-même.



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donc les problèmes sont simples pourrait n'exiger que quelques heures; par contre, un groupe avec des problèmes complexes et plusieurs conflits pourraient prendre une journée entière. Dans de rares cas, il a fallu deux à trois jours pour régler des conflits à grande échelle.

Bien qu'une médiation typique soit difficile à décrire, parmi les éléments communs aux conflits ayant été adressés par la BRSM, on trouve :

- Personnalité/style de travail différents
- Membres occupant des postes de responsabilités comprenant mal leur rôle
- Rapports défavorables
- Partage des ressources
- Fonctions/description de tâches vagues
- Santé mentale

Bien qu'une médiation se mène selon un processus standard en sept étapes, chacune d'elles prend sa propre tournure, selon le style du médiateur et d'autres variantes qui émergent durant le processus. Cependant, une fois que les membres sont assis l'un en face de l'autre, les grandes lignes communes ressembleraient à quelque chose comme ceci :

- Chaque partie donne sa description des faits, de ses sentiments et perceptions; se faisant entendre pleinement et sans interruption

- Détermination des intérêts de chaque participant
- Organisation et établissement de l'ordre de priorité des enjeux
- Génération/évaluation des options afin d'aller de l'avant

La clé de la réussite de toute médiation repose sur l'écoute *active* des points de vue de l'autre, sur la *reconnaissance* des émotions des autres et sur l'application à trouver des options réalistes en vue de *régler* les problèmes. Rester figé dans le passé ou se chicaner à propos de menus détails n'est pas, en général, une façon productive d'aller de l'avant.

Sachant que le taux de réussite des affaires portées à l'attention de la BRSM est de plus de 90 pour cent, les avantages des ressources qu'OSSTF/FEESO met à disposition ne sont pas difficiles à reconnaître. Et des avantages, il y en a plusieurs! Avant toute chose, les membres bénéficient de services professionnels menant à un règlement alternatif des conflits confidentiel et réparateur.

Les membres peuvent être rassurés sachant qu'un soutien est à leur disposition s'ils se retrouvaient en conflit ou en situation de confrontation avec un autre membre, tout en sachant également que les renseignements qu'ils confient à la BRSM durant le processus ne seront

jamais dévoilés. Cette confidentialité est primordiale, car elle permet aux membres de parler avec franchise, sans peur de représailles de leur employeur ou de l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario (OEEO). De plus, ce service prévoit un processus sécuritaire, facilitant et neutre auquel les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO peuvent participer dans l'espoir de reprendre le travail, ayant réglé leurs problèmes et rétabli leurs liens.

Par conséquent, OSSTF/FEESO et l'employeur tirent parti des services offerts par la BRSM. En aidant à prévenir toute mesure disciplinaire potentielle, OSSTF/FEESO profite du fait qu'il n'aura pas à encourir des frais de grief/d'arbitrage et l'employeur du fait qu'il n'aura pas à utiliser ses propres ressources pour intervenir et (ou) absorber les coûts reliés à des congés de maladie.

Vous ne devriez pas avoir à vivre dans une situation de conflit en milieu de travail et ce n'est sûrement pas quelque chose que vous êtes obligé de tenter de régler par vous-même. Si vous avez le sentiment qu'une médiation pourrait convenir, communiquez avec le représentant en milieu de travail pour entamer le processus. ☺

**Paul Wesley** enseigne au East York CI du District 12, Toronto, et préside la BRSM.



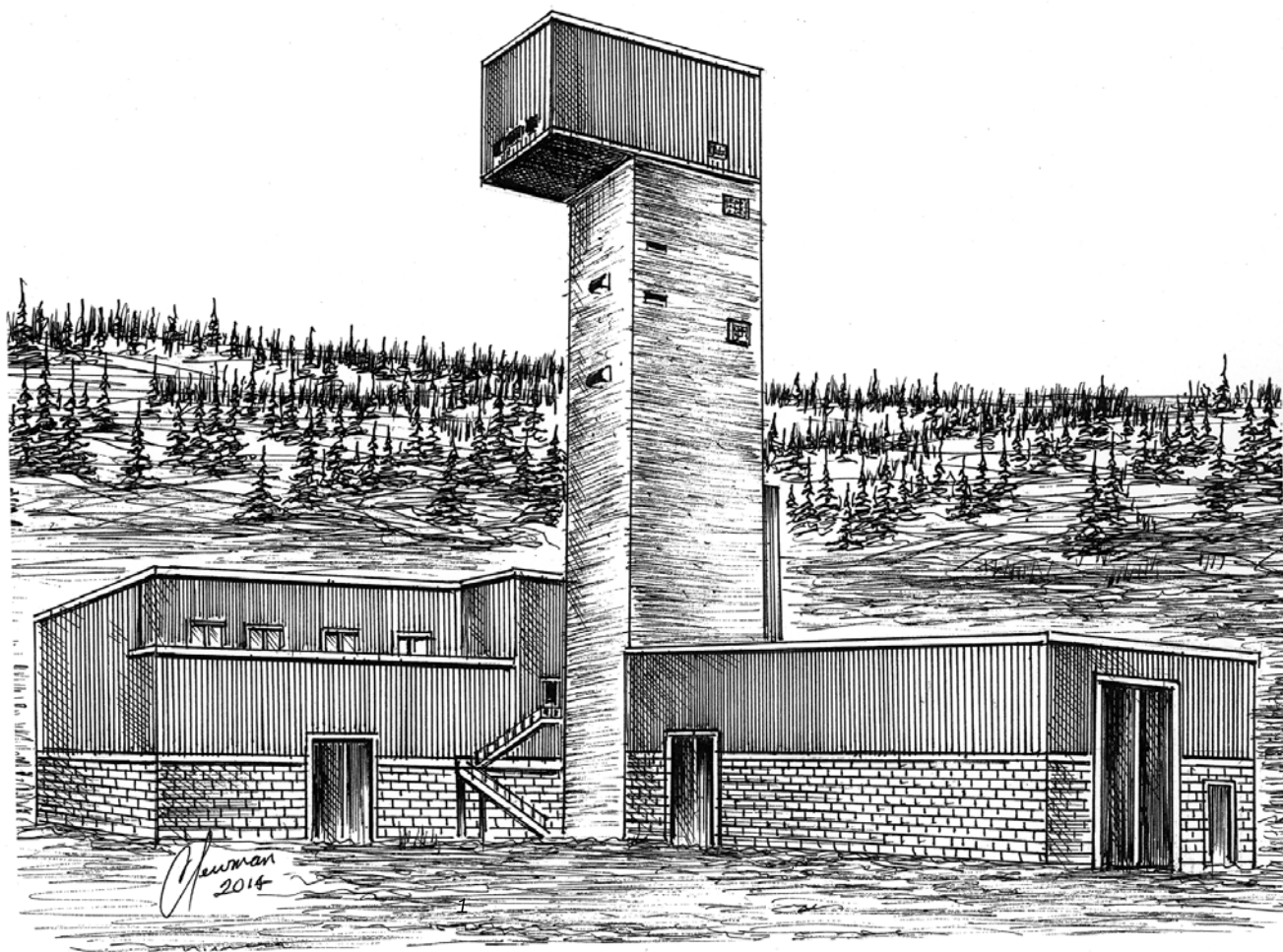


# Reviving ghosts of northern Ontario's mining era

**D**enis Newman has a long-standing familiarity with the north and the mining industry. Born in 1941, he spent his childhood years in the Porcupine Camp (Timmins) on Paymaster, Ankerite and The Dome properties. His father, Frank Newman, was Assistant Manager at the Paymaster and later became responsible for underground operations at the Big Dome. After working at The Dome, Denis graduated from North Bay Teacher's College and Queen's University. He currently resides with his wife, Geneva, in Belleville. Denis' renderings focus on mine-head frames, mine landscapes and historical buildings.

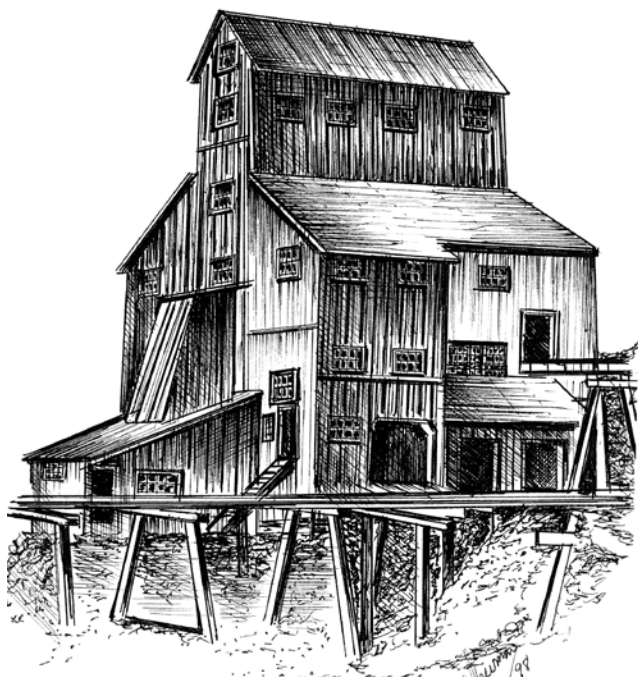
Some of the works from his extensive collection can currently be seen at Cobalt, Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Elliot Lake and Red Lake museums, as well as at the Val d'Or Historical Society. His work is also on display at the Mandeville Gallery at the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office until the end of June.

Denis is grateful to those who have so generously provided knowledge, support and reference materials for his artwork, including mining companies, miners, families of miners, associates of the mining industry, authors, photographers, museums, historical societies, Chambers of Commerce and businesses. ☺

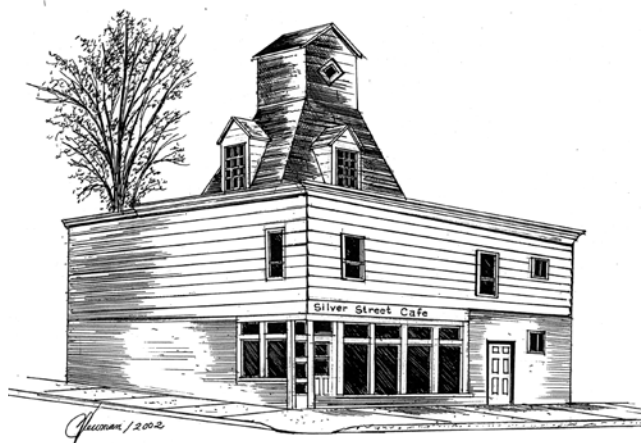


Lockerby Mine, nickel, Falconbridge, Sudbury District, 2011

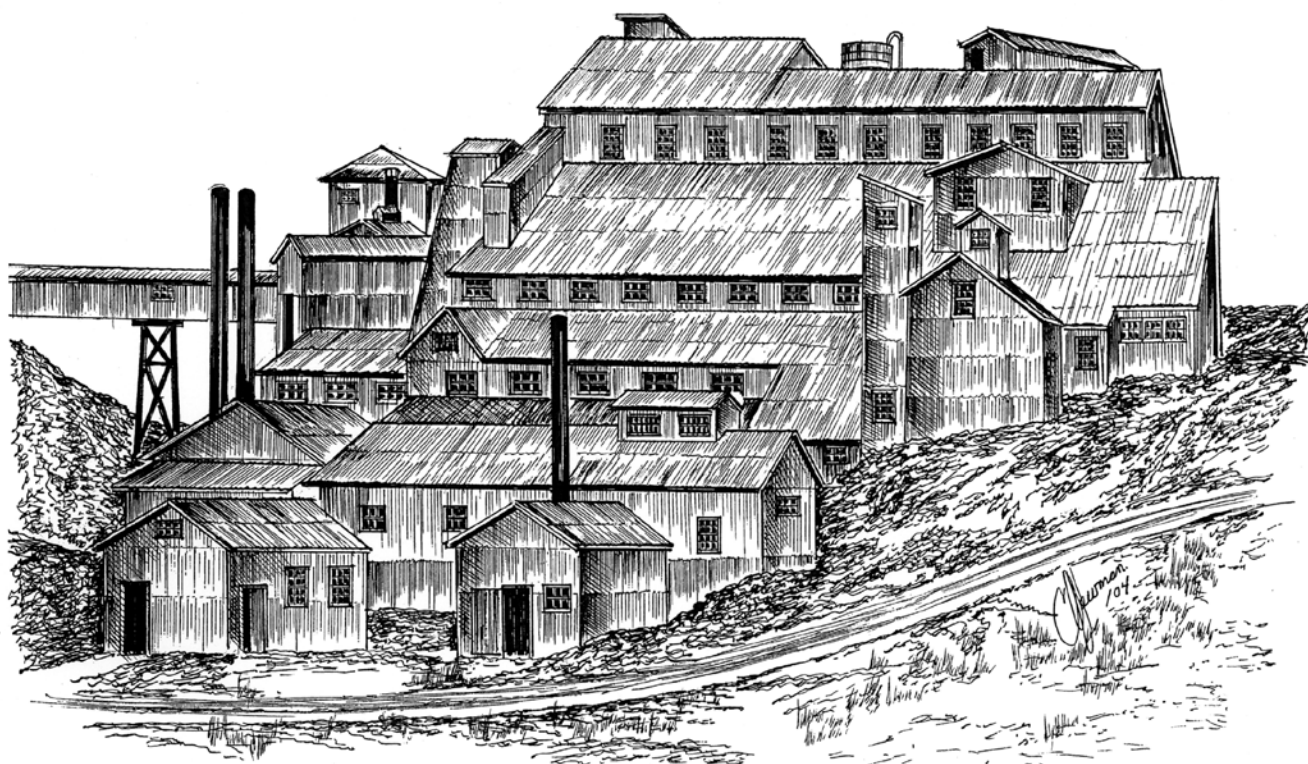




Copper Cliff Mine, base metals, nickel, Sudbury, 1892



Coniagas Mine, #4 shaft, silver, Cobalt, 1916



McKinley-Darragh-Savage Mine, silver, Cobalt, 1916





Crested Gecko  
(*Correlophus ciliatus*)

## Reptilia Zoo and Education Centre

What a surprising delight!

A legless lizard and a snake with feet—who would have thought? That is just some of what I learned about on my recent visit to the Reptilia Zoo and Education Centre.

I wouldn't say I have a phobia of reptiles, but I certainly wasn't jumping for joy at my impending encounter with more than 250 reptiles, amphibians and arachnids on display at the 25,000-square-foot facility. Like many, the thought of the texture of snakes, frogs and lizards, and the quick movements of spiders, made me less than eager to start my journey. However, those squeamish feelings and fears were soon dispelled during my tour, directed by Dr. Andre Ngo, Director of Research and Curriculum; and Chuck Cohen, Educator and Program Director

(and a retired secondary science teacher).

The tour was very enlightening in regard to how many subjects can be covered and lessons learned through reptiles, the most obvious being the reptiles' role in the food chain and the natural self-protection attributes and survival methods used by various species. More intriguing to me are the examples of competitive exclusion displacement, where different species share the same living space, yet compete and manage to survive together. We touched on bioaccumulation, such as how diet can change the toxicity of the poison released by species such as the black poison dart frog. And I learned that the yellow and white python I saw is actually a product of albinism; that the Cape Monitor lizard has the ability to count; and that the monocled

cobra's expanded hood actually occurs through the elongation of its ribs. So many interesting facts and features about reptiles that I would never have known, if it hadn't been for my visit to Reptilia.

My tour guides took some of the reptiles out of their locked habitats, which gave me the opportunity to interact with the critters up close and personal. I stroked a lizard's back (which felt like a beaded purse) and a turtle's hard shell-patterned armour, and got to hold the cutest little gecko, no bigger than my hand. This seems to be one of Reptilia's main objectives: to provide visitors with a real connection that leads to a better understanding of and appreciation for the reptiles and species. The middle of the exhibit even has a glass wall that allows visitors to observe veterinarians as they





Asian Water Monitor  
(*Varanus salvator*)



Green Mamba  
(*Dendroaspis angusticeps*)



American Alligator  
(*Alligator mississippiensis*)



Wood Turtle  
(*Glyptemys insculpta*)

conduct checkups on the reptiles.

Reptilia offers extensive education programs for students of all grades. It finds ways to enrich the Grades 9–12 Ontario Science curriculum, but will also customize tours and programs that use the reptiles as ideal discussion starters for subjects such as geographical topics and issues, or as subjects for life drawing and photography. Its intriguing creatures are used to captivate the students as well as to introduce and reinforce the concepts they are learning in class, prompting students to ask their own questions and apply what they have learned to the world around them. Through interaction with living reptiles, Reptilia lessons not only provide a concrete application of abstract concepts, but also encourage a greater understanding of how we, as

human beings, fit into the big picture.

Some specific secondary school topics that have been covered by Reptilia include native species and conservation; introduction to ecology; biodiversity—species and genetics/methods of measurement; individuals, communities, populations and ecosystems; food webs and energy flow; competition, parasitism and mutualism (some of the ways in which organisms can interact); invasive species; human impacts on the environment; and drift, bottlenecks, mutation and selection (a look at the different causes of diversity and change).

Reptilia offers all audiences an opportunity to learn more about the world of reptiles. And to ensure no one is excluded, they even offer a phobia course. The four sessions, each one hour long, are

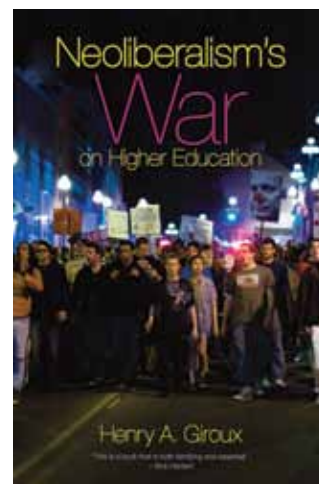
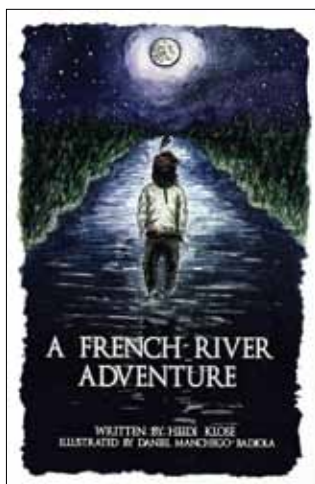
designed with the hope that by the end, frightened participants will be able to interact with the subject of their fear with a new perspective. The facility also offers tours designed for special needs students, which have shown very positive results.

Currently, Reptilia's only location is in Vaughan; however, if that is not easily accessible, arrangements can be made to visit your school. Reptilia has also made many pairings with local libraries so that schools all over the province can get a chance to participate in and experience the programs offered.

For more information on Reptilia, visit [www.reptilia.org](http://www.reptilia.org). To book an educational program, call 905-303-2516. Also, don't forget to ask about Reptilia's Teacher Appreciation Day. ☺

# Keeping you in the loop

Reviews, conferences, PD opportunities and other items of interest



## BOOK REVIEWS

### A French River Adventure

By Heidi Klose

Createspace (2014)

174 pages, \$16.39

Reviewed by Vanessa Woodacre

With summer just around the corner, I am always looking for books to add to my Summer Reads list.

If you can't wait for summer campfires, canoeing and spending time in the great outdoors and you like a good mystery, then you should add *A French River Adventure* to your own Summer Reads list.

This book is written by an OSSTF/FEESO member and self-published. The author, Heidi Klose, is a two-time Grammy nominee and has been writing children's stories, poems and songs for many years.

*A French River Adventure* is appealing to a wide family audience and is a thoroughly enjoyable read that weaves mystery, history and the supernatural into a classic outdoor Canadian backdrop. Curl up in a hammock on a warm summer day and drop into this French River mystery with Abby, Madeline, Michael and David as they discover the answer to "Who is Pierre and what does he want?"

The book blends the history of the voyageurs into a supernatural mystery that draws the family and friends

together into ways that last far past the summer. You'll never guess the outcome of how the mystery is solved, and it's worth the read to find out.

You can be sure you'll want to read the next installment!

Vanessa Woodacre is a member of District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge, and is a teacher in Section 23.

### Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education

By Henry A. Giroux

Between the Lines (2014)

256 pages, \$17.00

Reviewed by Jane Fridrich

Henry Giroux's passion for the subject of neoliberal policy effects over time on higher education is evident in his new book, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*. While the drive for privatization has spawned austerity policies in both the U.S. and Canada, he explains that money does exist for higher education. He discusses how government priorities have increasingly turned into a form of "economic Darwinism that pours money into military and private spending" while continuing to make cuts in the public sphere.

At a micro level, he points out how the system suppresses dissent using tactics such as placing blame on individuals for

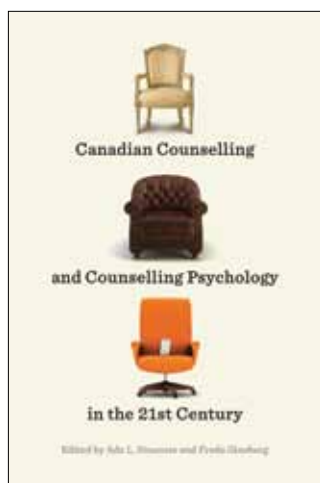
productivity issues in the workplace. If you can't keep up with the pace of work, it becomes your own personal problem rather than cuts and lack of resources. While he speaks mainly of the effects on faculty, it's fairly obvious that his arguments extend to staff.

Mostly American examples are given, which provide a snapshot of how the U.S. is much further along the privatization spectrum. The Quebec student protests are held up as a Canadian example of how a social justice movement can connect citizens in order to intervene in this kind of agenda. The Casseroles movement was a result of the student protests connecting with broader public sentiment. Broad-reaching flaws in political policies were publicly highlighted, which affect not only the quality of education but health care and other public bodies.

While his writing is rather dense and repetitious in places, his message is clear and relevant. All who work in education need to educate others by speaking and writing publicly. We need to create alliances between unions and outside social organizations to address damaging austerity policies in higher education.

Jane Fridrich works as an Assistive Technologist in District 35, Universities and Colleges-WLUSA (Wilfrid Laurier University Staff Association).





### **Canadian Counselling and Counselling Psychology in the 21st Century**

Edited by Ada L. Sinacore and  
Freda Ginsberg

McGill-Queen's University Press (2015)  
392 pages, \$39.95

Reviewed by Kate Davidson

Canadian students have long learned about counselling and counselling psychology from American authors. *Canadian Counselling and Counselling Psychology in the 21st Century* is a long-needed, Canadian-focused contribution to this field. Partially funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, this well-researched book was edited by Ada L. Sinacore and Freda Ginsberg. Both are professors, experienced counsellors and leaders in developing the Inaugural Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference in 2010. Contributions from 28 authors with expertise in various aspects of counselling and counselling psychology at last bring to light a Canadian perspective.

As the title indicates, *Canadian Counselling and Counselling Psychology in the 21st Century* focuses exclusively on counselling in Canada. Chapters on various aspects of counselling include an overview of the current state of counselling in Canada, multi-cultural counselling, counselling with indigenous people in Canada, immigrants, as well as LGBTQ individuals. In addition, authors contribute valuable information

about specific areas of counselling such as health, wellness and prevention; career psychology; assessment; and training and supervision. The extensive list of references supports the deep perspective into each of the areas of counselling covered throughout the book. It concludes with a chapter that provides suggestions for a social justice agenda in Canadian counselling and counselling psychology.

Students of counselling and counselling psychology, along with experienced professionals looking to update their knowledge, are sure to find *Canadian Counselling and Counselling Psychology in the 21st Century* a worthwhile read.

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**Kate Davidson** is a Psychological Associate working in the Peel District School Board as a Psychoeducational Consultant. She is also President of the PSSP Bargaining Unit in Peel.

### **The Battlefield of Ontario Politics: An Autobiography**

By Greg Sorbara

Dundurn Press (2014)  
224 pages, \$24.99

Reviewed by Dave Warda

Unless you are a self-confessed political nerd, Greg Sorbara's recent book is hardly a ground-breaking read. While this book is not salacious or filled with never-before-told secrets kept in Queen's Park from a man who has probably seen it all, it does provide us with a window

into how government has run since the mid-1980s.

Anyone who takes the time and effort to write an autobiography is deeply concerned with his legacy. Sorbara is no different. He was accused of conflict of interest and was forced to leave cabinet until he was finally exonerated. His primary goal, it would appear, was to demonstrate that his long years in office were not lost. He makes a good case for good governance during his time in power.

The question worthy of asking is what can we learn from a man who has dedicated much of his life to provincial politics? Sorbara's narrative follows the usual trajectory of a politician who gets involved out of idealism and then finds himself in a position of power and influence. His lesson for us as public educators? If you want to win or achieve anything in the political arena, you must commit to the long game and you must be pragmatic. You must make many political allies and be prepared to make sacrifices. Sorbara is particularly proud of his work to extend the subway to York University, the effort and time it took to make this dream a reality and all the political connections and sacrifice it took to achieve this.

In the last chapter of the book, he does set out what he believes should be the work of future governments. As a Catholic and a member of the government that extended full funding to the separate school system in the 1980s, he is surprisingly now calling for one public system. Really it should not be a surprise, because it reflects his pragmatic approach to managing costs and providing excellent programs.

If, as public educators, we are to learn from Sorbara's life in politics we must balance our idealism with the pragmatic realities presented today. Can we revolutionize how public education is organized in this province?

Absolutely.

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**Dave Warda** is a member of District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge, and is a teacher at Kenner Collegiate.





## CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**June 22–25, 2015**

Canada International  
Conference on Education  
University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

The Canada International Conference is an international refereed conference dedicated to the advancement of theory and practices in education. The CICE promotes collaborative excellence between education academicians and professionals. Submissions are accepted in English and French. The aim of CICE is to provide an opportunity for academicians and professionals from various educational fields with cross-disciplinary interests to bridge the knowledge gap, promote research esteem and the evolution of pedagogy. CICE 2015 invites research papers that encompass conceptual analysis, design implementation and performance evaluation. This conference covers a wide range of topics concerning teaching and learning. For more information, visit [www.ciceducation.org](http://www.ciceducation.org).

**July 20–24, 2015**

All Things Marine Summer Course  
Huntsman Marine Science Centre,  
St. Andrews, NB

All Things Marine is a hands-on marine experience for teachers, families and friends. Join us as we explore the unique and diverse environment of the Bay of Fundy. What we catch and collect is what

we will study! The all-inclusive course fee of \$670 includes four-night dorm accommodations, meals, boat and lab fees, aquarium admissions and taxes. For more information, visit [www.huntsmanmarine.ca](http://www.huntsmanmarine.ca) or call 506-529-1200.

**October 2–3, 2015**

Ontario Modern Language Teachers'  
Association Fall Conference Getaway  
Nottawasaga Inn Resort, Alliston, ON

The OMLTA is an advocate on behalf of language educators and provides leadership in the development of language policy documents and curriculum. It also provides members with professional development opportunities and resources and promotes the benefits of learning languages. Plans are underway for the 2015 conference. For more information, visit [www.omlta.org/upcoming-events/fall-conference-2015/#](http://www.omlta.org/upcoming-events/fall-conference-2015/#).

**November 4–5, 2015**

Dropping Out—What Neuroscience  
Can Teach Us  
Quebec City, QC

Educators are on an eternal quest to better understand how children learn, what conditions help them learn and how difficulties with learning arise. Emerging discoveries in neuroscience promise to shed light on these very questions: how young learners process information, remember, focus attention, problem-solve, create and construct meaning. Moreover, researchers are starting to uncover how interaction with teachers influences the way students' brains work.

During this international symposium we help participants rethink the long-held paradigms of dropout prevention. For more information about this conference, visit [www.cca-ace.ca/events/dropping-out-what-neuroscience-can-teach-us](http://www.cca-ace.ca/events/dropping-out-what-neuroscience-can-teach-us).

**November 12–13, 2015**

TESL Ontario's 43rd Annual Conference  
Expanding Horizons—Drawing on  
Experience and Knowledge  
Sheraton Centre, Toronto, ON

This annual conference is crucial in providing current education to ESL professionals. A technology fair, a research symposium, daily keynote speakers, combined with in-depth concurrent presentations and workshops provide a variety of educational opportunities for all attendees, while social functions provide networking opportunities. The exhibits offer an opportunity to showcase the latest products, services, publications, software and teaching tools to members, as well as to expand contacts and networks. For more information or to apply to be a presenter, visit [www.teslontario.net/conference](http://www.teslontario.net/conference).

**November 12–14, 2015**

STAO2015—Science Teachers'  
Association of Ontario Conference  
Toronto, ON

You can count on compelling and relevant information, techniques and resources to energize your instruction and invigorate your teaching career. This is the forum to start discussions about science education from the broadest perspective to the specifics of skills and techniques that improve performance in the classroom. Plan now on attending STAO2015 in Toronto, November 12–14, 2015. There is no better way to learn about the latest science and education trends. Witness and experience the latest innovations in science teaching. For more information or to apply to be a presenter, visit [stao.ca/cms/conference-home](http://stao.ca/cms/conference-home).

**November 16–17, 2015**

Ontario Healthy Schools  
Coalition Conference  
Ottawa, ON

Discover how school communities across Canada are enhancing the well-being of children and youth. Be inspired to affect positive change in your school community through dynamic keynote presentations, interactive workshops and presentations, brainstorming sessions and opportunities to connect with others and build communities of practice. For more information, visit [ontariohealthyschools.com](http://ontariohealthyschools.com). ☺

### WINNERS

**JULIE BRYDIE  
LINDA DUTSCH  
HEATHER HENKE  
PATRICIA PORTEOUS  
TRISTAN SPENCER**

Congratulations to our five lucky readers who entered last issue's draw to win a signed copy of Naomi Klein's book *This Changes Everything* by taking our online survey.







Last word

by Paul Elliott, President



This is what happens when the provincial direction of education in Ontario is handed over to 32 school boards... after "cleansing."

Paul Elliott, President







**Mot de la fin**

**par Paul Elliott, président**



C'est ce qui se produit lorsque la direction provinciale de l'éducation est confiée à 32 conseils scolaires... après « l'épuration ».

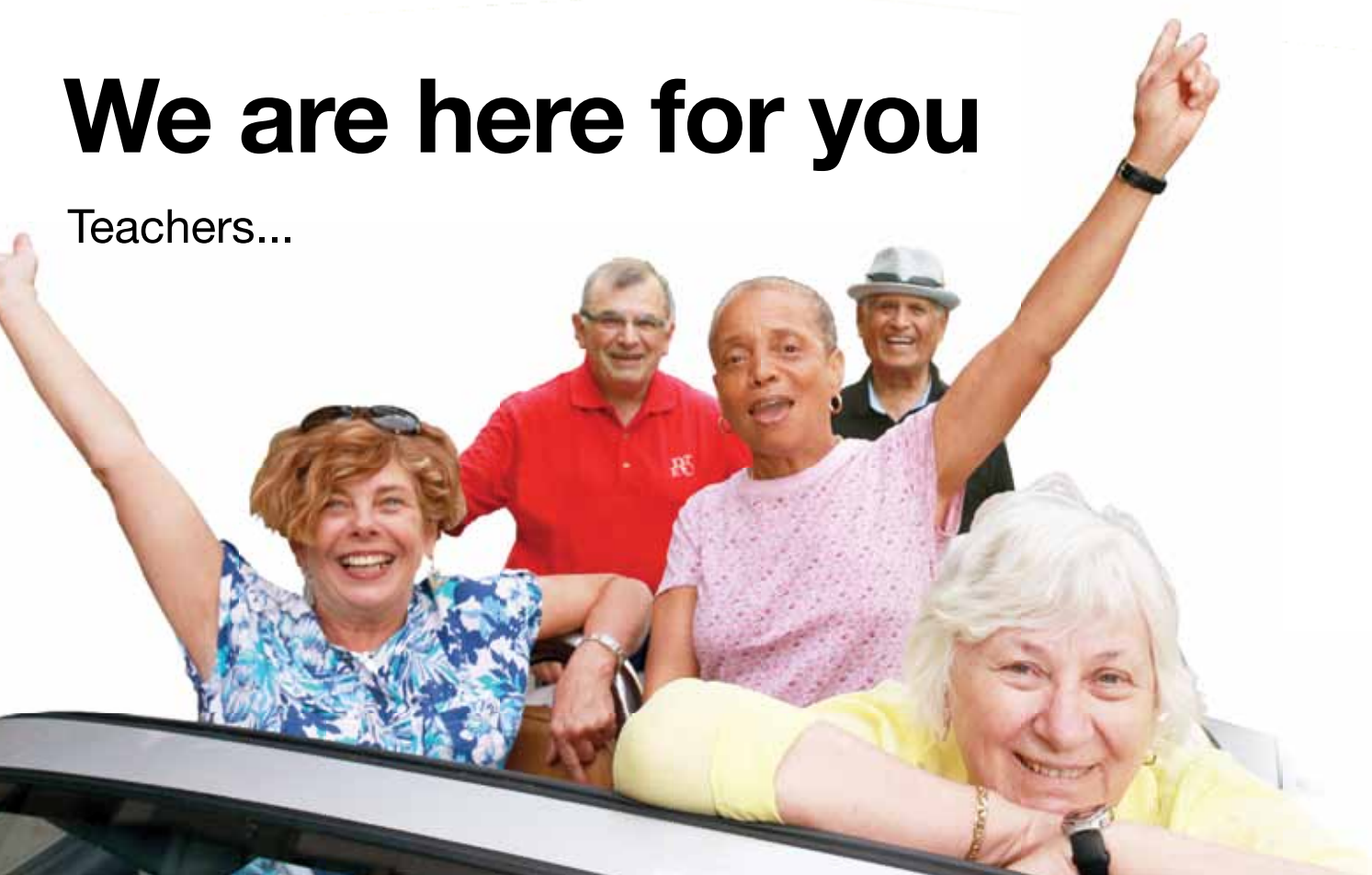
Paul Elliott, président





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