

Update



One Public System campaign generates discussion

OSSTF/FEESO formally launched the One Public System website in October 2016 after that year's Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) passed motions to provide funding to initiate a campaign. At AMPA 2017, members approved funding to extend the campaign into the next school year. The onepublicsystem.ca website is complemented by issue-specific Facebook and Twitter accounts, all promoting OSSTF/FEESO's policy that calls for a single public education system in Ontario in each official language.

At AMPA 2013, members approved two policies advocating the move to one public system, which state:

It is the policy of OSSTF that there should be only one publicly funded school system for each official language;

It is the policy of OSSTF that no OSSTF jobs should be lost as a result of moving to one publicly funded school system for each official language.

The online campaign had a successful push during the winter months, gaining visibility through the use of social media advertising that drove traffic to our campaign website. This has prompted some discussions and inquires in the media, including a number of letters to the editors of large publications, including the *Toronto Star*.

The issue has also emerged recently in the province of Alberta, where Catholic schools are also government funded. Former Alberta Education Minister Dave King recently announced the launch of a public campaign calling for the merger of the Catholic and public systems of education in that province. He has helped to establish a website in Alberta to promote a province-wide campaign: www.ouridea.ca.

A report in the *Edmonton Journal* on the launch of the one public system campaign in Alberta cited our campaign in Ontario and provided a link to our onepublicsystem.ca website. This has also prompted some media discussion of the issue in the province of Saskatchewan, the only other province to provide government funding to Catholic schools.

The focus of the One Public System campaign is to kindle public discussion about the future of publicly funded education in the province, and to prompt the Ontario government to take a serious and thorough look at the merits and challenges of moving to one system in each official language. In the meantime, OSSTF/FEESO stands by its policy of promoting one system, but will not support any changes that would lead to significant job loss for our members, or which would use any savings generated by merging the systems for any purpose other than reinvestment back into public education. ☺

Paul Elliott receives Life Membership

Paul Elliott, OSSTF/FEESO's 65th provincial President, received a Life Membership at the June Provincial Council meeting. The honour was presented by incoming President, Harvey Bischof. Paul has been giving his time and energy to OSSTF/FEESO since his second year of teaching, when he became a Branch President in District 5B, Rainy River. He was elected to the Provincial Executive as an Executive Officer in 2005, and then served as Vice President from 2007 until 2013, when he was elected President.

Paul has earned a reputation not just as a steadfast advocate for OSSTF/FEESO members, but for building strong relationships within the labour movement both across Canada and internationally. His final term as President ends June 30, but Paul will continue to serve OSSTF/FEESO even in retirement, serving as the Federation's representative on the OMERS Board of Directors.

OSSTF/FEESO is extremely grateful for Paul's many years of dedicated service, and we wish him all the best. ☺



(l-r) Harvey Bischof, President-elect presents outgoing President Paul Elliott with OSSTF/FEESO Life Member Award

The Fight for \$15 and Fairness begins to pay off

On May 23, 2017 the final report of the *Changing Workplaces Review* was made public. On Thursday, June 1, the government introduced *Bill 148, Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017* aimed at amending both the *Labour Relations Act* and the *Employment Standards Act*.

Bill 148 is only an initial step toward more fairness in Ontario workplaces. Better wages, equal pay provisions for part-time and temporary employees, more vacation time and access to paid sick days will help to create better and more secure working conditions in a province where tens of thousands of workers are dealing with precarious or part-time employment in low-wage jobs.

OSSTF/FEESO welcomes the steps that the Ontario government has undertaken to update the province's employment standards and labour laws, and to increase Ontario's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2019.

None of these changes would have been possible without the dedicated activists who put in countless hours informing Ontarians and pressuring the government to understand the struggles of workers trying to make ends meet with regulations that have not kept pace with changes in work.

Unions, partnering together through the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign, can celebrate the recommendations and draft legislation aimed at helping workers, but the fight is by no means over. We must continue to work to discredit the fear mongering by those members of the business community who continue to advocate for business models that keep people in poverty. We must all speak up to ensure a better Ontario for all workers. 🌊

End the Silence → Stop the Violence

End The Silence → Stop The Violence is the slogan that the Violence in the Workplace Task Force has adopted in its continued work to ensure that OSSTF/FEESO members have safe and healthy workplaces. As we learned from **Phase 1** of our interviews with front-line members—we will not stop the violence until all members recognize that getting injured is not part of the job, and that there is an important connection between reporting and resolution.

Phase 2 interviews of members in their Districts is continuing with a goal of completing the interviews by mid-June. All of the data will be compiled and a comprehensive report will be presented to local leaders attending the Leadership Training Conference in August 2017. At that time, initiatives that members can participate in, planned for the fall, will also be outlined.

A significant positive outcome of the dogged work that has been done to keep members safe at work came when Minister of Education Mitzi Hunter and Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn attended the June 2 meeting of Provincial Council. The ministers made a significant announcement with four key components:

- An enhanced enforcement initiative will begin this fall, specifically targeting workplace violence in schools. Every single school board in the province will be visited by a manager, regional program coordinator and by an inspector from the Ministry of Labour. In total, more than 70 district school boards across the province will receive a visit in 2017–2018 from ministry officials.

- With input from the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety, which was established through the central bargaining process, the Ministry of Labour will be creating education sector specific guidance documents which will have the same authority as those produced by a Section 21 Committee under the *Ontario Health and Safety Act* (OHSA). The guidance material will be completed and published during the 2017–2018 school year. Ministry of Labour enforcement teams will be visiting every school board in the province to review the boards' obligations under the OHSA.
- Keeping in mind that highly sensitive and privileged information may be contained in a student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), the government is committed to ensuring that all education workers have access to the information they need to protect themselves and maintain a safe and inclusive classroom for students and other staff. Next steps will be predicated on advice from the Working Group, whose experience and expertise will inform next steps to expand access to information by the spring of 2018.
- A full review of reporting requirements for violent incidents will be undertaken, with the goal of creating a simple, standardized reporting process that is accessible online, and will facilitate the collection of accurate data with implementation in the spring of 2018.

This announcement comes just two months after more than 120 OSSTF/FEESO members from across the province converged on Queen's Park to meet with MPPs, including cabinet ministers and opposition leaders, to lobby for precisely this kind of action.

In his remarks to Provincial Council, Minister Flynn said, "I want to let you to know that you have my personal commitment to this...Instead of having a long drawn-out process, we can do something very quickly, so I am going to attend as many of the Working Group meetings as possible, and personally work with you on this... Let us find out what it takes to move to the next level when it comes to addressing violence in our schools."

OSSTF/FEESO will be holding Minister Flynn to his commitments. We will be closely monitoring the development of the resource guide and the review of the reporting process to ensure that, for OSSTF/FEESO members and all education workers in Ontario, violence in the workplace is finally being addressed. 🌊



Update

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A year in review— 2016/2017

There is no doubt it was a busy year for everyone in their schools and worksites. A lot happened this past year when it comes to OSSTF/FEESO. Here is a brief retrospective of the school year that was.

Summer 2016

Mitzie Hunter was named the new Minister of Education in June, and took the summer to introduce herself to the education sector.

September

Bill 132 was passed, which strengthened the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* by expanding the responsibilities of employers to have programs around workplace harassment and worker protections. The government approaches OSSTF/FEESO to talk about a contract extension and remedy agreement to the Bill 115 Charter Challenge.

October

The Rally for Fairness was held on October 1 in Toronto, calling for better labour laws as the Ontario government embarked on its *Changing Workplaces Review*. EQAO's experiment with online standardized testing on October 20 failed miserably as significant technical issues shut the test down province-wide.

November

Contract extension talks that had begun earlier in the fall came to a halt after the government was unwilling to guarantee that the school boards' associations would not be allowed to play a significant role in the discussions. The Ontario government passed the *Protecting Students Act*, which changed how the Ontario College of Teachers conducts investigations and publishes decisions.

December

The federal government announced that it will create a regulation that will ban the production, use, import and export of asbestos in Canada. But, that same government issued a report that saw its promise of electoral reform disappear.

January

New provincial election rules took effect in Ontario, forbidding unions or corporations from making donations to parties, and placing limits on third party advertising.

February

A tentative agreement was reached between OSSTF/FEESO and the government on both a two-year contract extension and a remedy to the Bill 115 Charter challenge. Ratification meetings are arranged across the province.

March

The OSSTF/FEESO Student Achievement Awards presentation is a highlight at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) 2017. In addition, a new Provincial Executive was elected to two-year terms starting July 1. Local leaders and representatives descend on Queen's Park for an OSSTF/FEESO Lobby Day to talk to MPPs about addressing the issue of violence in schools and the workplace.

April

Members ratified both the two-year contract extension and the Bill 115 Charter challenge remedy. The government released the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs), which contained a modest increase to overall funding due mostly to provisions negotiated during extension talks.

May

The Minister of Labour releases a summary report of the *Changing Workplaces Review*, which includes recommendations around increasing minimum wage to \$15 per hour, paid sick days for all workers and better protections for all workers.

June

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour address the June 2 meeting of Provincial Council and make a significant announcement about violence in the education workplace. (See End The Silence → Stop The Violence on page 2). 

La campagne « Un système scolaire public unique » engendre des discussions

OSSTF/FEESO a officiellement mis en ligne le site Web *Un système scolaire public unique* en octobre 2016 après que la Réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée provinciale (RAAP) ait adopté des résolutions visant à verser des fonds pour lancer une campagne. À la RAAP 2017, les membres ont approuvé du financement afin de prolonger la campagne pendant la prochaine année scolaire. Le site Web onepublicsystem.ca est rehaussé de comptes Facebook et Twitter sur des sujets précis qui font la promotion de la politique d'OSSTF/FEESO demandant un système scolaire public unique dans chaque langue officielle.

À la RAAP 2013, les membres ont approuvé deux politiques favorisant le passage à un système scolaire public unique qui stipulent :

C'est la politique de la FEESO qu'il doit y avoir un seul système scolaire financé à même les deniers publics pour chacune des deux langues officielles.

C'est la politique de la FEESO qu'aucun poste de la FEESO ne doit être perdu du fait de l'adoption d'un système scolaire financé à même les deniers publics pour chaque langue officielle.

La campagne en ligne a connu une forte poussée au cours de l'hiver, améliorant sa visibilité grâce à de la publicité sur les médias sociaux qui a augmenté la fréquentation de notre site Web de campagne. Cela a suscité des discussions et des demandes d'information dans les médias, y compris de nombreuses lettres à la rédaction de grandes publications, notamment dans le *Toronto Star*.

Récemment, l'enjeu a aussi vu le jour en Alberta où les écoles catholiques sont également financées par le gouvernement. Dave King, ancien ministre de l'Éducation albertain, a annoncé dernièrement le lancement d'une campagne publique réclamant l'intégration des systèmes d'éducation catholiques et publics de cette province. Il a aidé à créer un site Web en Alberta pour promouvoir une campagne provinciale : www.ouridea.ca.

Un article portant sur le lancement de la campagne *Un système scolaire public unique* en

Suite à → la page 7. Un système

Human Rights and Status of Women conference focuses on intersectionality

What happens when you spend a Friday night in early May in the company of Susan Ursel, (Human Rights Lawyer), Renu Madhane (Chief Commissioner, Ontario Human Rights Commission), Sandra Hudson (Black Lives Matter), and Hibaq Abdi (Froshability)? You get a jet-fuelled introduction to the most scintillating and stimulating conference on intersectionality you ever hoped for!

Intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, which can give rise to overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and understand the differences between us, and the related challenges.

The conference began with a passionate and evocative speech from OSSTF/FEESO President Paul Elliott, followed by a panel discussion entitled, "Linking not Ranking," skillfully moderated by



Ursel. Two hours flew by, ending with a rapid-fire discussion based on participants' texted queries to the panel. This set the scene for the following day's events. On Saturday morning all participants attended three 45-minute workshops by community groups exploring a vast array of issues. The conference brought participants face-to-face with some of the critical issues of our time: Islamophobia, transphobia, rape culture, online hate speech, Anti-Semitism, ableism, Truth and Reconciliation, gender-based violence, and more. The morning ended with a closing plenary facilitated by Sheetal Rawal (Miss G Project for Equity in Education), who led District groups in discussions focussing their disparate knowledge gleaned from their workshops, into activities and actions that would strengthen equity and human rights work in their respective Districts.

Eunice O'Mahony, Chair of the provincial Human Rights Committee, noted that this conference was three years in the making. The Human Rights and Status of Women Committees spent

many months attending joint meetings, exchanging emails, conferring with community leaders, and considering ideas. Many attendees remarked on how well all aspects of the conference were organized. Thank you to the members of the Status of Women and Human Rights committees, and members of provincial staff, for pulling off this remarkable conference.

We heard from panelists and presenters from diverse backgrounds who challenged us to use our power and privilege to lift up those at the margins, to bring them to the centre of the choices we make, both as individuals and as a federation. Lauren Simmons, Chair of the provincial Status of Women committee, reflected, "For me, the resounding message was that, as a white person with access to power, I can change institutions from within, and also within myself, every day."

Eunice O'Mahony is the chair of the Provincial Human Rights Committee and Lauren Simmons is the chair of the Provincial Status of Women Committee. 

Tri-National Summit on NAFTA

On May 26–28, a gathering of social justice advocates and organizations from Canada, the United States and Mexico took place in Mexico City to discuss alternatives to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This meeting took place at the same time as government representatives from those same three countries met in Mexico City to have discussions of their own about the renegotiation of NAFTA.

Networks from Canada representing labour unions, Indigenous Peoples, women's groups, farmers, migrant groups, environmentalists and other international solidarity groups joined their American and Mexican counterparts to discuss the adverse effects of the current global eco-

nomic model. The goal was to offer a grassroots response that would ensure participation by citizens of each nation.

The summit participants issued a communiqué calling on the three governments to rethink how they negotiate any changes to the current agreement.

"The renegotiation process has to be transparent and participatory, and any NAFTA replacement must ensure respect for human rights, improve peoples' lives and livelihoods, and protect the environment of all three countries," said Ronald Cameron, coordinator of the Réseau Québécois sur l'intégration continentale.

The summit participants also highlighted the growing disparity between the rich and the poor that has grown in each country since NAFTA came into effect in 1994. "Since the implementation of NAFTA, we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in profits, and economic inequality in Canada," said Raul Burbano, Program Director for Common Frontiers. "It's time for alternatives to the current neoliberal free trade model."

One of the groups represented at this summit was the Tri-National Coalition for the De-

fense of Public Education, an organization that OSSTF/FEESO supports. The Coalition and other public education stakeholders in the Western Hemisphere have been outspoken about the encroachment of private sector interests into publicly funded education systems, which includes the contracting out of curriculum development and performance appraisals to multi-national corporations, such as Pearson International. Free trade agreements have the potential to open the door to private corporations that wish to encroach on public education by setting up private education systems that would compete for public dollars, such as charter schools. 



Student Achievement Awards—Are you planning for next year? Here's a big idea!

As an OSSTF/FEESO member you do a lot of work to enhance the lives of the students you work with. You spend time in June and over the summer planning lessons and creating countless learning opportunities for next year's students. One way to get a leg up on lesson planning and activities for your classroom for the next year is through OSSTF/FEESO's annual Student Achievement Awards. This year alone we had over 100 entries submitted for adjudication by our provincial Communications and Political Action Committee, but many schools missed out and were not represented.

Thirty years ago, Jack Hutton was the Director of Communications at Provincial Office. His concept was to celebrate the remarkable work of our students, and the contributions that teachers and education workers make in the lives of those students. He created the original Student Achievement Awards, in honour of Marion Drysdale, who was also a staff member at Provincial Office at the time. More than 150 winners have been celebrated over the past 30 years. Your students could be among those that win one of the nine prizes of \$1000 and are feted at a celebration honouring the



winners in Toronto during March break 2018.

We know that winning one of these awards is impactful for these students. Many of the past winners cite the Student Achievement Awards as a catalyst for pursuing their dreams, and more importantly for affirming in them a sense of confidence to take the risk.

Teachers and other education workers who work directly with a student in a secondary school can nominate, mentor and assist that student in creating either a piece of visual/digital art or a written piece based on the designated theme. The theme for the 2017–2018 school year is "What's YOUR Super Power?" Posters, with the theme and additional information, will be arriving in all secondary schools in September through each school representative or Branch President. Information regarding the rules, entry forms, guidelines and tips, and even school announcement ideas for promotion of this very worthwhile award are available at www.osstf.on.ca/saa. In addition, you can view the videos of the past year's winners, as well as a "Where are they now?" video compilation featuring some of the winners from the last 30 years and focusing on how the awards impacted their lives.

Whether you're a teacher of the arts, or you know a worthy student who might be saving for college or university, or you're a support staff member working with a student or group of students and want them to have an opportunity to create something remarkable, please consider using the Student Achievement Awards in your classroom. All ages and all levels of secondary students, including adult learners, are welcome to enter. 

Prix de réalisations des élèves – Se préparer à la prochaine année

Etant que membres d'OSSTF/FEESO, vous accomplissez beaucoup pour améliorer la vie des élèves avec lesquels vous œuvrez. Nous consacrons du temps en juin et au cours de l'été à la planification des leçons et à la création d'innombrables activités d'apprentissage pour les élèves de l'an prochain. Un moyen de prendre une longueur d'avance dans la planification des leçons et des activités pour votre salle de classe de l'année prochaine consiste à vous servir des Prix de réalisations des élèves d'OSSTF/FEESO décernés annuellement. Cette année

seulement, plus de 100 participations ont été soumises au jury de notre Comité des communications/action politique, mais plusieurs écoles sont passées à côté et n'étaient pas représentées.

Il y a trente ans, Jack Hutton était directeur des communications au Bureau provincial. Son idée était de célébrer le travail remarquable de nos élèves de même que la contribution du personnel enseignant et des travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation à l'enrichissement de la vie de ces élèves. Il a créé, à l'origine, les Prix de réalisations des élèves, en l'honneur de Marion Drysdale, qui était elle aussi membre du personnel du Bureau provincial. Plus de 150 lauréats ont été reconnus au cours des 30 dernières années. Vos élèves pourraient être parmi ceux qui remporteront un des neuf prix de 1 000 \$ lors d'une célébration en l'honneur des vainqueurs à Toronto, pendant la période de relâche de mars 2018.

Nous savons que remporter un de ces prix est important pour ces élèves. Plusieurs des anciens lauréats ont mentionné que les Prix de réalisations des élèves sont un déclencheur pour réaliser leurs aspirations et, surtout, pour leur inspirer la confiance de prendre des risques.

Le personnel enseignant et les autres travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation qui œuvrent directement auprès d'un élève d'une école secondaire peuvent poser la candidature de cet élève, servir de mentor et l'aider à créer une œuvre d'art visuel/numérique ou à rédiger un texte en fonction du thème retenu. Pour l'année scolaire 2017-2018, le thème est « Quel est VOTRE super pouvoir? » Les affiches, avec le thème et des renseignements additionnels, seront livrées dans toutes les écoles secondaires en septembre, à l'attention du représentant de chaque école ou de la présidence. Les renseignements contenant les règles, les formulaires de candidature, les directives, des conseils et même des idées d'annonces pour faire la promotion, à l'école, de ce prix très intéressant se trouvent à l'adresse suivante : www.osstf.on.ca/fr-CA/saa. De plus, vous pouvez visionner les vidéos des lauréats des années précédentes de même que la compilation vidéo « *Where are they now?* » qui met en vedette certains des gagnants des 30 dernières années et se concentre sur l'influence de ces prix dans leurs vies.

Que vous enseigniez les arts ou connaissiez un élève méritoire qui épargne en vue de ses études collégiales ou universitaires ou que vous soyez un membre du personnel de soutien qui travaille avec un élève ou un groupe et voulez qu'ils aient l'occasion de réaliser quelque chose de remarquable, envisagez d'avoir recours aux Prix de réalisations des élèves dans votre salle de classe. Les élèves des écoles secondaires de tous âges et de tous niveaux, y compris les apprenants adultes, sont invités à s'inscrire. 

Awards bestowed at June Provincial Council

Each year at June Provincial Council, OSSTF/FEESO takes the opportunity to recognize members for the outstanding work that they do on behalf of the federation with awards of recognition.

The Provincial Executive Award is given to “A Member, who in the opinion of the Provincial Executive, has rendered meritorious and outstanding services to the OSSTF/FEESO at both the provincial and local level.”

The following members received Provincial Executive Awards:

1 Mary Jane Karkheck—Mary Jane has worked tirelessly at the local and provincial level for many years on various committees, presented Summer Leadership workshops, and served as Bargaining Unit and District president in District 8, Avon Maitland. But most notably she has served as the longstanding chairperson of Provincial Council. Mary Jane has reminded countless presenters and politicians that support staff are an important part of OSSTF/FEESO’s membership and must be acknowledged. She will always be an active member of her community, as well as a very active grandmother to her beautiful grandchildren. OSSTF/FEESO appreciates her many years of exemplary service to members.

2 Julie Hutchins—Over the course of her 42 years as an employee of the University of Guelph, Julie served as president of her unit for an astonishing 29 consecutive years. OSSTF/FEESO is incredibly lucky to have been able to count Julie among our local leaders. We are extremely grateful for the years and years of hard work on behalf of her members, and we wish her nothing but the best as she moves into a new chapter of her life.

3 Bernard ‘Buzz’ Grebenc—As president in one of the largest geographic districts in the province, Buzz believed in meeting people face to face whenever possible, no matter the distance,

no matter the issue. Buzz could often be found on the road, driving his old white SUV from community to community to meet members in person. Buzz looks forward to retirement and to spending more time with his wife, and fellow OSSTF/FEESO member, Deb. All of the members of District 6B, Superior North and the entire Federation, thank Buzz for his years of great service.

4 Dan Maxwell—Dan was President of District 25, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Bargaining Unit, for six years, but that wasn’t the beginning of Dan’s experience with OSSTF/FEESO. Dan’s commitment to labour led him to be involved in our Federation for well over 15 years, and he is also heavily involved in his local labour council,

the employer. Provincially, Jo served on the Certification Council and the Collective Bargaining Committee, and of course, she’s been a member of the Provincial Executive since 2013. Throughout all her years of activism in OSSTF/FEESO, Jo has maintained a well-earned reputation as a committed unionist who simply does not stray from the principles that guide her. We are enormously grateful to Jo for almost 30 years of advocacy on behalf of her Bargaining Unit, her District and all the members of OSSTF/FEESO.

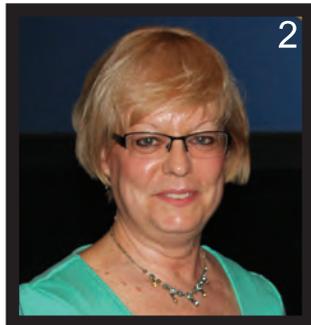
6 Sue Doughty-Smith—Anyone who has been involved in OSSTF/FEESO during the past 18 years knows Sue. She was hired in 1978 as a Student Support Professional with the Lakehead

Public School Board. In 2000, she became the local Bargaining Unit president for the District 6A, Thunder Bay Student Support Professionals for Lakehead Public Schools. She was re-elected in 2002, and she served in that position until 2013. That’s when Sue took the plunge and ran a successful campaign for the Provincial Executive. She was elected as an Executive Officer, and was re-elected in 2015. As a member of the Provincial Executive, Sue has been outspoken on behalf of all members of OSSTF/FEESO.

The Federation thanks Sue and sincerely wishes her all the best as she moves into retirement with her husband Gerard, and looks forward to spending time with her children and grandchildren while enjoying a hot cup of tea.

The Norm Snyder Award

The Provincial Executive established the Norm Snyder Award for a member or members, nominated locally, who have made an outstanding contribution to OSSTF/FEESO locally and/or provincially, mainly as a volunteer. This year’s recipient of the Norm Snyder Award is **7 Jeanette Parker**, nominated by District 17, Simcoe. Jeanette is always trying to think of ways to reach members and increase involvement. She does her regular job and then puts in almost as many hours in her various volunteer roles. She is also an active member on the District 17 executive and on the District Communications and Political Action Committee, and she has worked in the past with the provincial Human Rights Committee as well as local and provincial Status of Women committees. Jeanette is the epitome of a dedicated volunteer and always goes above and beyond her regular duties to meet the needs of the membership. 🐾



as treasurer and as liaison to the United Way. He is a regular server at the annual United Way breakfast, which gives him an opportunity to translate his beliefs into action. Dan will be enjoying cottage life and waiting for the fish to bite. OSSTF/FEESO is grateful to Dan for his many years of dedication to OSSTF/FEESO, and for giving so much of himself to the promotion of labour and education.

5 Jo Dean—Jo Dean has been active in OSSTF/FEESO through her entire career in education. She had been engaged in OSSTF/FEESO activities in her school and in her Bargaining Unit for a number of years and was Chief Negotiator through three rounds of bargaining before eventually becoming the TBU and District president. As District President she frequently assisted all of the D9 Bargaining Units in their dealings with

National Aboriginal Day: A Métis Perspective

I am Métis and often my thinking swings from First Peoples to first explorers. My ancestors are French and Lakota People. However, after speaking with a First Nations Elder and doing a little research, I realized this would be a small opportunity to talk about nationalizing events, ideas and people.

I grew up on the Prairies and June 21 was always considered a special day for me. My mother told me that because it was the longest day of the year, I could stay up to watch the sun go down, and we often had picnics and visited with family and friends. Later, I realized that this time of year was the Solstice, the longest day of the year when the sun in this part of the world reaches its northern-most point and gives us the longest period of daylight.

The summer solstice is a celebration of the cycle of the Earth through growth and regeneration, and of our relationship with the Earth, sky

and universe. Many First Peoples have dancing, singing, drumming, prayers, meditation, fasting, and feasting, often related to the Sun Dance ceremony which began thousands of years ago.

June 21 was recognized as National Aboriginal Day in 1996 by the Canadian government. What is disappointing, though, is that Aboriginal Day is not treated with the same respect as other annual celebrations. Unlike Canada Day or Family Day or Labour Day, National Aboriginal Day has not been declared a statutory holiday.

As a national holiday, it would provide a great opportunity for Canadians to listen to and learn from the First Peoples. It would be an opportunity to hear about our respective world views, histories and cultures. First Nations, Métis and Inuit are as diverse as the rest of the world. There is so much knowledge to share, knowledge that goes back since time immemorial, before Europeans immigrated to North America.

The First Peoples, as the name suggests, were here first. After a few thousand years, we have a great deal to say and to share with the rest of Canada. That would truly be a National Aboriginal Day.

/Marjorie Palessi is a member of District 24 Waterloo and is a member of the OSSTF/FEESO First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory Work Group.

Suite de la → page 3 Un système

Alberta, publié dans l'*Edmonton Journal*, mentionnait notre campagne en Ontario et donnait le lien vers notre site [Web onepublicsystem.ca](http://Web.onepublicsystem.ca). Cela a aussi donné lieu à des débats sur la question dans les médias de la province de la Saskatchewan, la seule autre province à accorder du financement gouvernemental aux écoles catholiques.

La campagne *Un système scolaire public unique* vise à provoquer le débat public quant à l'avenir de l'éducation financée à même les deniers publics dans la province et à motiver le gouvernement de l'Ontario à examiner de façon sérieuse et rigoureuse les avantages et les défis du passage à un système scolaire public unique dans chaque langue officielle. Entre-temps, OSSTF/FEESO reste partisan de sa politique de promotion d'un seul système, mais n'appuiera aucun changement qui se traduirait par d'importantes pertes d'emplois pour nos membres ou qui utiliserait les économies réalisées par l'intégration des systèmes à d'autres fins qu'un réinvestissement dans l'éducation publique.



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SUMMER READING: Tanya M. Cooper book releases: *The Revolutionary's Daughter*; *Beneath The Stone Cold Floor* (Diary of Spanish Nun 1741); *Waiting on Postcards*; *The Wayward Daughters*; *LOVE: Live a Life of Vibrant Energy*; *Teenage Toil and Trouble*. amazon.ca & tanyamcooper.com.

YOU ARE INVITED to join former OBE employees and friends for a fun-filled reunion, buffet supper, mix and mingle: Date: September 23, 2017. Time: 4:30 to 11:00 p.m. Location: Algonquin College 1385 Woodroffe Avenue Ottawa, Ontario. For ticket purchase and event details, visit the reunion web site: www.obereunion.ca or contact Ross Maxwell by phone at 613.271.8405 or by email at: rossmax@trytel.com.

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