

AFTER SCHOOL

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SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

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After School is the official publication of Active Retired Members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Chapter 12 Toronto (ARM Chapter 12).

Opinions expressed in *After School* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM Chapter 12 or of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO).

Submissions are always welcome but will not be returned. All submissions are subject to editing for length and style while respecting the author's intentions.

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IN THIS ISSUE—CHRISTOS ASLANIDIS

Welcome to the **After School Special Election Issue**. June 2 is Election Day in Ontario. This entire issue of *After School* is dedicated to informing our readers on how they can participate in the election in a more robust way than just voting, perhaps even influencing the course of the election itself.

Manfred Netzel's President's Message below, outlines some of the key issues for members of the educa-

tion community, working and retired, as well as the health-care issues that should concern us all. Ed Preston's summary of the **OSSTF/FEESO Strategic Action plan** can be found on page 5 and outlines avenues for participation for our members; a **list of candidates vetted and endorsed by OSSTF/FEESO** is on page 4, and the **electoral map of the GTA** can be found on pages 6 and 7.

For the most up-to-date infor-

mation, check the ARM Chapter 12 website at www.armch12osstf.ca.

Please look for the **follow-up spring issue of After School out some time in June** where we'll feature the tributes to our late Associate Editor, Ed Preston, and to former OSSTF/FEESO Pension expert, Sally Pengelley, as well as our regular features.

Thank you for taking the time to read *After School*.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—MANFRED NETZEL

Dear ARM C.12 Members,

Welcome to the first of TWO hard copy and all-member issues of *After School*, the first since June 2021. Over that period of time we have experienced the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic (including two dominant variants and several improved vaccines), a somewhat 'superfluous' federal election, a month-long organized 'occupation' of downtown Ottawa, a regional war in Europe, and several sporting feats and accolades for Canadian athletes and teams...to name a few. Those of you who are also online have received several other virtual issues and email blasts over the past eight months, hopefully filling the gap of printed and mailed information.

Your Executive made the decision months ago to focus this hard copy issue with a pre-election theme and call to active engagement and activism leading up to the June 2nd election. As OSSTF/FEESO and much of the labour movement has had a singular political focus to help elect a more pro-worker and education-friendly provincial government than currently holds court at Queen's Park. Of course, our focus on public education issues and policies is not shared by everyone, so

we also plan to advocate and mobilize our members around health care, the environment and greater social justice with partners like the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and local social justice organizations. Certainly, our long-standing support and collaboration with the current leadership and colleagues in OSSTF Toronto (a.k.a. District 12) and the other education unions will be a clear goal in this pre-election period. This has already begun with ARM reps being invited to participate in provincial and local online conferences, workshops and committees such as the Communications and Political Action Committee (CPAC) events over the past six months.

However, our best laid plans for ONE comprehensive issue have been side-tracked for logistical reasons beyond our control. Firstly, the untimely death of our dear colleague and Newsletter Associate Editor, Ed Preston, required some quick reorganization of the communications team. Then, the inability of our long-standing printer to provide us with any service led us to quickly seek an alternative provider on



short notice...and with higher costs, of course. Add to that the global supply chain issues of adequate paper stock and delivery logistics forced us to make a bold (but necessary) decision. In order to provide you with a time-sensitive and useful pre-election issue, you are reading the first (of two) hard copy *After School* issues devoted exclusively to the upcoming election. This Special Election Issue will be smaller and quicker to produce and distribute within the next week or so. The remaining material, including tributes to both Ed and departed ARM Chapter 12 member and OSSTF/FEESO activist Sally Pengelley will then be fully shared with you and others in a follow-up hard copy and mailed issue in June. We hope that you are understanding and supportive of this situation.

The imperative need to defeat Doug Ford and his government stems from

the majority he won in the 2018 election, where his campaign platform and empty slogan “Ontario is open for business” lead to immediate cut-backs to public education and health-care funding. This was then further exacerbated when the pandemic first broke out in March 2020 and continued with historic deadly results in retirement and Long Term Care (LTC) facilities during the first and second waves of COVID-19 due to inadequate measures for staffing and sanitation protocols. Ultimately, the military had to be called in to deal with the conditions faced by overwhelmed caregiver staff and vulnerable patients/residents. Due to dithering by the Premier and his close connections to the management and share-holders of the private for-profit LTCs to act decisively, Ontario had the highest death rates in Canada and much of the industrialized world. This dithering continued in the Premier’s response (or lack thereof) to business lock-downs and masking/vaccine protocols, student modes of instruction, health concerns for teachers, education support staff, nurses and other health-care workers, the “Freedom Convoy” blockades in Ottawa and several border bridges and the proposals for new highways and development in the GTHA without local consultation and oversight by municipal councils and rate-payers.

Clearly, Doug Ford is a prime example of malicious politics going back to his aggressive and vindictive intervention in the 2018 Toronto municipal election (during the actual election campaign) which brought chaos to many of the campaigns of registered candidates and lead to a costly Supreme Court challenge the following year. For him, the end justified the means as the pared-down City Council lead to a more conservative, less progressive composition under John Tory. It is also telling, I believe, that 19 incumbent PC MPPs are not seeking re-election...including high-profile

Cabinet members like Deputy Premier and Health Minister Christine Elliott and Rod Phillips as a former Finance Minister and reasonably effective Long-Term Care Minister). Cabinet meetings run by a bully were likely not that enjoyable.

It is important to remember that the perceived fiscal discipline of Conservatives is NOT in evidence when one considers the many pre-election “goodies” announced by Ford and his various ministers. Remember the cancellation of license renewal stickers with prorated rebate cheques this spring (an annual \$1b cost), rebates for WSIB employer premiums (\$1.5b), and ongoing hydro rate subsidies (est. \$6.9b annual debt) to name a few. Meanwhile, as of February 2022, overall 3x vaccination rates in Ontario were stalled at 45 per cent compared to rates of 55–65 per cent in much of Europe and Australia/New Zealand. In fact, the OHC recently reported that people wanting to have a COVID-19 test were increasingly being directed to private for-profit labs rather than community sites. We continue to share online updates from the OHC and other public health advocates through email blasts and postings on our superb website armch12osstf.ca.

You will see throughout this Special Election issue, that we have provided tips, check-lists and well-explained information that will provide you with the hope that the importance of the upcoming election motivates you to do more than vote on June 2nd. The changes to the Ontario *Election Finances Act* greatly limit the legal ability for unions and other third parties to provide human and financial resources to preferred political parties and their endorsed candidates. This, the onus now reverts to interested individuals to do so.

Enjoy this issue and support its message,

Manfred

PROVINCIAL ELECTION ENDORSED CANDIDATES

The full list of candidates endorsed thus far by the Teacher, Occasional Teacher and Professional Student Services Personnel Bargaining Unit representatives of the OSSTF Toronto District Executive Committee are as follows:

- Farheen Alim (Etobicoke—Lakeshore)
- Jill Andrew (Toronto—St. Pauls)
- Doly Begum (Scarborough South-west)
- Jessica Bell (University—Rosedale)
- Stephanie Bowman (Don Valley West)
- Shelley Brown (York Centre)
- Chris Glover (Spadina—Fort York)
- Faisal Hassan (York South—Weston)
- Arlena Hebert (Eglinton—Lawrence)
- Mitzie Hunter (Scarborough—Guildwood)
- Bhutila Karpoche (Parkdale—High Park)
- Justin Kong (Scarborough North)
- Tom Rakocevic (Humber River—Black Creek)
- Paul Saguil (Willowdale)
- Felicia Samuel (Scarborough Rouge Park)
- Noel Semple (Etobicoke Centre)
- Mazhar Shafiq (Scarborough Centre)
- Adil Shamji (Don Valley East)
- Marit Stiles (Davenport)
- Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth)
- Jonathan Tsao (Don Valley North)
- Soo Wong (Scarborough—Agincourt)
- Kristyn Wong-Tam (Toronto Centre)

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2022–23: SUMMARY—ED PRESTON, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The following is a summary of the OSSTF/FEESO Strategic Action Plan 2022–2023, which will be presented at AMPA 2022 for discussion and approval.

The **Strategic Action Plan (SAP)** for 2022–2023 will set the Federation on a course that will, over time, transform how we interact and engage with our communities. It will change the way we present ourselves in our communities and broaden the understanding that the issues we defend at the bargaining table are core community issues. Over the past several rounds of bargaining, we have observed an increased emphasis on the benefits of developing relationships with community partners, parents, and stakeholder groups. Sharing information and working in the community's interests must be a priority of the Federation moving forward.

As Education Workers, union activists, and defenders of public education, our strategic approach must be centred on cultivating an environment that supports our effort to influence political dynamics in Ontario. The strategic vision of the plan is developed with one long-term goal in mind: to create a plan that will foster relationships between organizations, groups, communities, and OSSTF/FEESO to grow a more fair, just, and equitable society together.

If approved, the 2022–2023 Strategic Action plan will place organizational focus on the long-term value that community organizing brings to supporting our organizational priorities.

It is important to note that we are already doing incredible work in our communities and have been for many years. As we work towards enhancing and more effectively channeling this work to serve our larger organization-

al aspirations, we must consider how, when, and through what medium we can promote the work we are doing in and for our communities. We want our work to be recognized, visible, and attributed to OSSTF/FEESO and its members. The responsibility for this must be shared, locally driven, and supported to ensure it becomes part of our permanent culture.

Programs Continuing—Evaluation and Next Steps

Anti-Racism/Equity Training

Last year saw the beginning of several equity action items, including the provision of a time and space for equity-seeking and sovereignty-seeking members to caucus at all provincial conferences and regionals, the creation of a Black Persons and Persons of Colour Advisory Work Group, anti-racism training, and equity training as permanent components at Presidents' Symposium.

AMPA 2021 approved OSSTF/FEESO's Action Plan to Support Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression. The Strategic Action Plan provides a framework for our equity work and is a living document and subject to review and modification. Our equity work is supported by a provincial Equity Officer, a provincial In-House Equity Team, an Equity Advisory Work Group, and an In-House Equity Work Group.

Mental Health First Aid

The plan is to provide Mental Health First Aid Training to all Bargaining Unit Presidents and time-release members. There is recognition that this training is needed by local presidents and time-release officers now more than ever. While some plan components have been delayed, local

leaders can access the MHFA training using funding from the 2015 Account. The plans for 2021–2022 will be that the remaining approved candidates complete the instructor training. All provincial office secretariat will be trained in Mental Health First Aid, and three (3) in-person Mental Health First Aid regional training sessions will be offered. See Appendix A for further details.

Towards 2022—Building for an Education Friendly Government and Official Opposition.

Early in the school year of 2022–23, the election organizers will continue to work with local bargaining units and districts to promote our Education Platform and promote the best candidates for election as municipal councilors and school board trustees. On an as needed basis, time release will be made available to the Election Organizers, and training will be provided at the Presidents' Symposium 2022 to assist in planning for our involvement in the municipal and trustee elections.

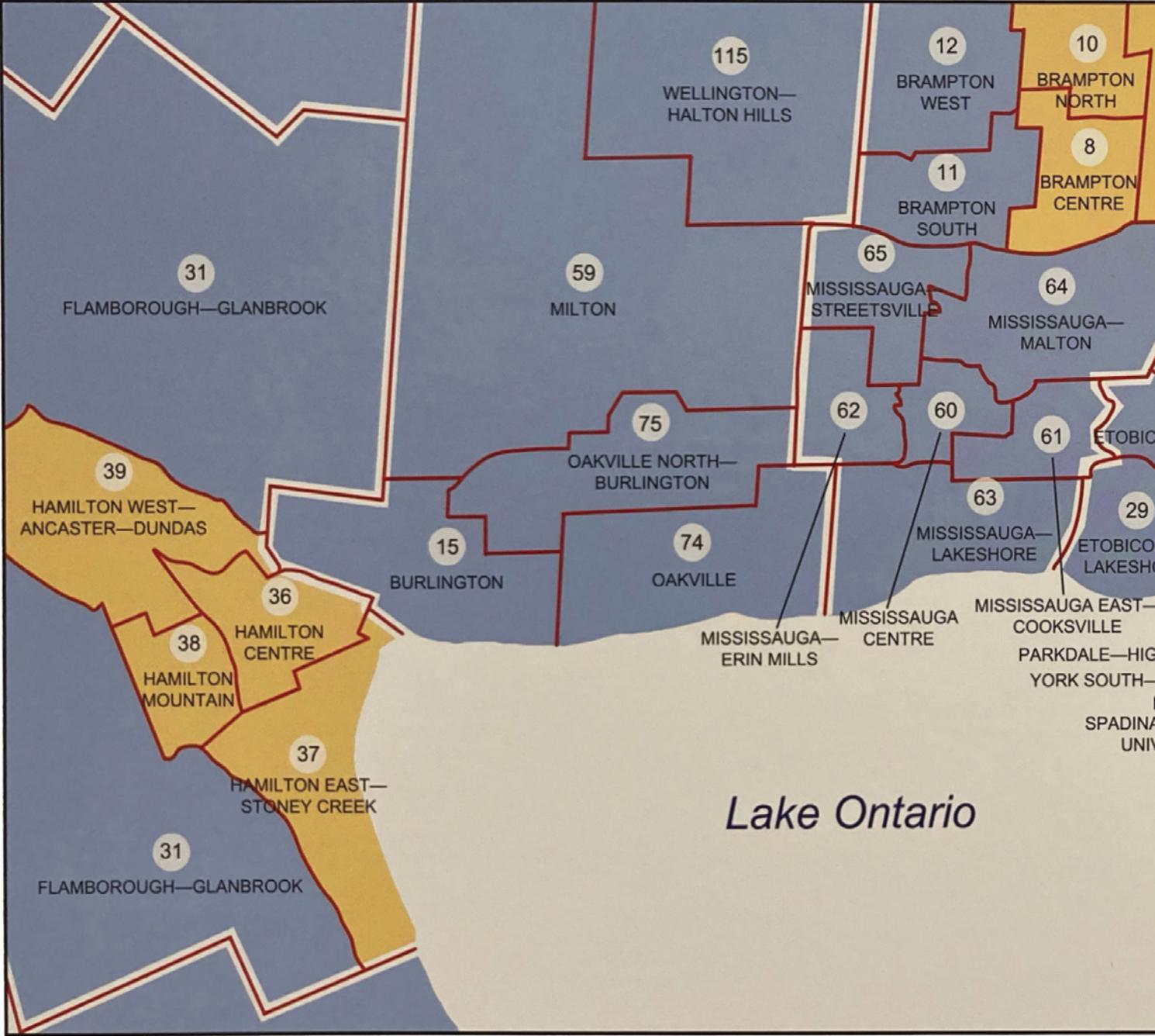
Other programs continuing:

- Bargaining Unit Executive Meetings and Record Keeping
- District/Bargaining Unit I.T. Environments
- Grievance Arbitration Model.

Conclusion

This Strategic Action Plan, Organizing for Better Schools, Stronger Communities, will move OSSTF/FEESO towards a long-term strategic direction that, when implemented, will have significant transformational value as we seek to partner with and garner support from our communities to defend public education.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT MAP



TORONTO AND SURROUNDING AREA



