

## President's Message

December 13, 2021

### Happy Holidays!

In addition to all your regular responsibilities, this past year has been particularly demanding for all of us with the pandemic, remote and online learning and the constant pivots and challenges we have been asked to make on an almost weekly basis. While we are not through it yet, it is time to slow down and catch our breath. As we head into the holiday break, I want to wish you all a peaceful time away with your loved ones. Thank you for all you do to support your school communities. Wishing you peace, love and joy this holiday season and throughout 2022!

### Staff Absences

Since September, we know that schools have been facing staff shortages that impact the ability of P/VPs to ensure supports and resources are in place to help students be successful and allow staff to fulfil their responsibilities as effectively as possible. Those shortages – across every employee group – have become more acute this year as a result of staff absenteeism due to pandemic-related screening and safety measures. Last month, 202 P/VPs from the OPC, CPCO and ADFO were polled about the staffing shortages in their schools. For the OPC, our Provincial Councillors were tasked with responding to the poll. The [results of that poll](#) are concerning but not unexpected. We have shared it with the Minister to ensure he understands the severity of the situation. The poll is part of our work to seek short- and long-term solutions to this crisis, including extending the number of days retired staff can work without pension penalty, temporary certificates for ECE students, considering how internationally trained educators may more seamlessly join our sector and addressing the challenges that may be reducing the number of people interested in pursuing careers in education.

### Subject of a Complaint? Call the PST

It is possible that you, in your capacity as a school or system P/VP, may be the subject of a formal complaint naming you as a respondent through a board procedure. Should this happen, it is strongly recommended that you contact the OPC prior to engaging with investigators or HR personnel to determine if a PST Consultant should be present during interviews or meetings. A board investigation seeks to determine if “on a balance of probabilities” a board policy or procedure has been violated, or if there has been another form of misconduct. As a respondent to any board level complaint process, the PST advises that you comply with the rules of the process; review any allegations, complaints or evidence given to you in advance of the interview; answer the questions as clearly, succinctly and truthfully as possible; consider what corroborating evidence may support your version of events; and stay calm. If the findings of fact are unsupported by the evidence and/or if the discipline is disproportionate to the misconduct,

then the OPC will assist you in considering your next steps, including employing the Dispute Resolution process prescribed in your T&C Agreement.

## Media

- [Dispute continues between Ottawa and Queen's Park over child care plan](#)
- [New legislation ensures certified teachers can use term OCT](#)
- [Auditor General raises concern about Colleges' reliance on international students](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission wants Trustees who are racist to be fired](#)
- [COVID-19 outbreaks in elementary schools hit record high](#)
- [Principal reflects his years in education with new novel](#)
- [Flipped classroom technique shows signs of success](#)

## Queen's Park

There were questions in the House last week about [\\$10 per day child care](#), [new school construction](#), [rapid test availability for school families](#), [virus outbreaks in schools](#), [COVID-19 safety measures in schools](#), [safety measures at postsecondary institutions](#) and [children's mental health services](#).