

President's Message

March 6, 2023

Defamation Information

Occasionally, principals and vice-principals become the subject of commentary and complaints from various education stakeholders, potentially at the expense of their reputation or even their employment status. Our Protective Services Team (PST) receives inquiries from Members regarding whether such negative exposure could warrant a defamation lawsuit. Whether or not the Member's concern has legal merit, defamation proceedings are difficult to win, are time consuming and can create an alternative vehicle through which the negative commentary can be spread more broadly. Since principals and vice-principals are widely considered to be public figures, the test for proving defamation can be very high and the risks from filing a defamation lawsuit often outweigh its merits. Furthermore, there are several legal defences a defendant can raise in a defamation claim. You can refer to the [Defamation](#) tip sheet for more information. If you believe you have been defamed in the course of your employment duties, contact the PST for professional and legal advice.

Staff Shortages Advocacy Paper

Thank you to everyone who took part in our survey about staff shortages. We had 1,868 responses — which is the largest response rate we have ever had on any of our surveys! Clearly this is an issue that you are concerned about and with which you are struggling. We received over 80 pages of comments, and are still working our way through those comments and through some cross-tabulation. We did pull out the data and some key comments and recommendations to put together [the paper we will be sharing with MPPs this week](#) during our Provincial Advocacy Week. The data you provided will allow us to clearly demonstrate the seriousness of this issue.

Extension of 95-day Re-Employment Rule

The OTF and the Government have agreed to [temporarily increase the 50-day re-employment rule to 95 days](#) for retired teachers, principals and vice-principals until June 30, 2023. This will help address some of the potential staff shortages that schools are experiencing. The parties acknowledge that this measure is only a temporary solution for what has become an ongoing systemic supply problem. OTF and the Minister have committed to a consultation process with education stakeholders, and to timely implementation of identified solutions during the 2023-2024 school year, to resolve the staffing challenges that the system continues to face. We will be advocating to have an OPC rep take part in this consultation.

Quote to Ponder

“Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of their deep and continuing needs, is good for them.” – Maya Angelou

Media

- [Schools need more support for youth mental health \(OPC quoted\)](#)
- [Call out for help for mental health resources \(OPC interviewed\)](#)
- [ETFO calls on government to invest in more mental health supports](#)
- [Mobile autism support services difficult to access](#)
- [5 ways to change how students are graded](#)
- [Government underspent on education](#)
- [Program encourages girls to join skilled trades](#)
- [Why some educators are inviting ChatGPT into the classroom](#)

And for a chuckle

- [Raccoon goes to school for a day in BC](#)

Queen's Park

There were questions in the House last week about [access to mental health supports in schools](#), [additional funding for schools in upcoming Budget](#), and [children's mental health services](#).