

President's Message

December 18, 2023

Happy Holidays!

One week left until a much needed holiday break. We want to acknowledge the incredible work all of you have done over the past four months under very trying circumstances. While we continue to advocate for the government and boards to address the critical issues related to staff shortages, we know that you are the ones on the front lines, scrambling every day to fill positions, ensure students have access to teachers and support staff, revise schedules, monitor supervision and keep your school running as effectively as possible. We hope you have some time over the coming weeks to stop, breathe, sleep in, turn off your devices, go for a walk, spend time with family and friends or do whatever re-fills your cup. Thank you, again, for the professionalism, commitment and dedication you continue to give to our school communities.

Keeping You Informed – Our Annual Budget

Our department leads, senior team, Executive and Provincial Council all contribute to setting our annual budget. The planning starts a year in advance. The first draft is based on the previous year's actual results and the current year's budget, driven by the priorities and actions in our strategic plan. This year, an ad-hoc Finance Committee is providing preliminary input into the initial draft budget. It is presented to the Executive in January. They confirm whether we've captured all of our current plans and consider the possibility of new projects or events (bargaining, Ministry, advocacy) that should be taken into account. The Finance Committee will be seeking feedback on the draft budget at the February Provincial Council meeting. The consultation will include a "horizon gazing," anticipating opportunities and threats that need to be reflected. After final adjustments, the proposed budget is presented to Council at the May meeting for approval and implementation in the next fiscal year. [Learn more about the process](#) and information related to our budget.

Starling Minds Resources

We have partnered with [Starling Minds](#) to provide an online mental wellness program for our Members and their families, free of charge. It is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), an evidence-based practice that can help individuals overcome and manage anxiety, depression and stress. The program is anonymous and confidential. It is accessible 24/7 and personalized to the unique needs of each individual. As an online resource, you can access it on demand – when you can best fit it into your busy schedule. We hope that you find it a useful resource for your mental wellness.

Quote to Ponder

"Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers." – Kahlil Gibran

Media

- [Elementary teachers vote to accept new contract](#)
- [17 brain breaks for secondary students](#)
- [Province speeds up construction of new schools](#)
- [Probe launched into education pandemic payments to parents](#)
- [Federal Conservatives vote against school food bill](#)
- [Government wants tougher cell phone rules for schools](#)
- [Free toolkit addresses declining physical activity in classrooms](#)
- [Police could return to schools with a community mandate](#)

Queen's Park

The House is in recess until February 20, 2024.