

President's Message

November 16, 2020

OTF Increases Re-employment Rules

Following our ongoing advocacy efforts, we are pleased with the recent announcement by the Ontario Teachers' Federation to [temporarily increase the current 50-day re-employment](#) rule to 95-days without penalty. This increase in days will help, in part, to address the shortage of teachers and administrators due to pandemic challenges. It will also provide greater consistency to our students, their families and staff as retirees continue in their temporary roles for a longer period of time. Retirees who hold Term Membership with the OPC will have access to legal coverage through to and including the month in which they reach the limits prescribed by the Teachers' Pension Plan in any school year.

Electronic Communications & Protocols

Principals and vice-principals are expected to interact with their school community regularly. Electronic communications and social media have become the preferred method for many school communities to find out what is happening at their neighbourhood school, the news within their school board and to check in with their child's teacher. As a result, our Members need to consider how to manage these communications effectively. Our Professional Services Team has [written a tip sheet](#) to help support you as you grapple with serious issues around negative social media posts, recording of conversations and privacy issues.

Managing Stress and Anxiety during COVID-19

It has been a tough year for everyone. On top of the very challenging professional responsibilities you have been carrying since March, you're also concerned about your own mental and physical health, and that of your family. As part of our resources offered to OPC Members and your families, [Starling Minds](#) has a short program related to COVID-19. It includes finding strategies for stress that work for you, maintaining healthy routines and managing worrisome thoughts. The program is free, confidential and anonymous. Your mental health matters and we want to help support you.

If you have already registered for Starling Minds, sign into your account to access these resources. If you have not yet signed up, you can do so at members.starlingminds.com and 'create your account.' Select the OPC from the dropdown list. Then complete the registration page and enter your OPC Member Number. Please email members@starlingminds.com if you have further questions or concerns.

People for Education Survey

[People for Education](#) has sent out its Annual Ontario School Survey, focusing on the effects of COVID-19 in Ontario's schools. We are pleased to support the survey. You can [view the survey online here](#) and it should only take 5 minutes to complete. Your participation helps ensure that policy-makers and the broader public have an accurate picture of what is happening in our schools. Individual results are always confidential, and only the overall results are reported in the [Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools](#).

Media

- [Quebec, Ontario weigh extending winter break at schools as COVID-19 cases surge](#)
- [TDSB to expunge 'discretionary' suspensions of students between kindergarten and Grade 3](#)
- [Peel board to ensure Black students have a route into elite academic programs](#)
- [Educators worry COVID era is 'irreparably harming' students' future](#)
- [Ministry says no plans for early December school closure](#)
- [Public health can let principals send students home in event of school Covid case](#)
- [Thousands of students haven't turned up at school this year](#)

Queen's Park

The House did not sit last week.