

President's Message

September 8, 2020

Traditionally, today would have been the official start of classes for you. While a few boards began classes last week, more today, many later this week and others next week, you have all been hard at work for many weeks. Your leadership and dedication to your students, staff and greater community is appreciated more than you realize as you have quickly and tirelessly adapted to protocols that have never before existed. Thank you for doing what simply needs to be done.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Committee began meeting in June 2020. It is made up of [12 OPC Members](#) from around the province, and is supported by 5 OPC staff. The Committee will provide advice and make recommendations to our Executive and Provincial Council on matters of policy, governance and operational matters. As set out in the [Terms of Reference](#), the committee will also implement and/or oversee projects and activities designed to advance equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression, with a focus on addressing systemic oppression, specifically anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, racism against people of colour, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia.

Starling Minds

Many people are under tremendous stress right now due primarily to the challenges that navigating a COVID environment has thrust upon us. We have partnered with [Starling Minds](#) to provide Members and your families free access to a unique online mental health platform. It uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to assess, diagnose and help support mental well-being. The programming is personalized to the unique needs of each individual. If you haven't joined yet, we encourage you to take advantage of this important and timely resource, available to you as part of your membership. If you have joined, you may want to consider reconnecting with the program if you've been away from it for some time. This year, in particular, we all need to prioritize self-care.

Survey Regarding Challenges in Retaining FSL Teachers

The OPC and CPCO are supporting an online survey being conducted through a project entitled [Supporting School Principals to Address Challenges in Retaining FSL Teachers](#). As an important voice, you are encouraged to participate and share the challenges and opportunities you have experienced in retaining FSL teachers. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the survey, which will take about 10 minutes. [Register today](#). The survey will be open from Sept 28 – Oct 13.

Media

- [Teacher unions file labour board complaint over reopening plan](#)
- [Premier will close schools if COVID outbreak hits](#)
- [Ontario Liberal Party asking businesses to treat education workers like front line workers](#)
- [Ottawa gives national historical significance to residential school system](#)
- [NDP says back-to-school plan “not good enough”](#)
- [Empty classrooms, surplus teachers](#)
- [How educators and parents are preparing for the unknown](#)
- [Keeping kids focused for 4 hours will require creativity](#)
- [Keeping international students amid COVID-19](#)

Queen’s Park

The House is in recess until September 14.