



LAMBTON KENT ETFO



ETFO-MATION

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LKETFO PROVINCIAL AWARD WINNERS!

ETFO Humanitarian Award

Steve McGrail of Lambton Centennial P.S. was the recipient of this prestigious award.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has honoured Lambton Kent elementary teacher Steve McGrail with a Humanitarian Award for community work including his founding of Kylie's Kause, an annual fundraiser for London's St. Joseph's Hospital.

ETFO's Humanitarian Award for an ETFO Member is granted to an individual or group of individuals holding ETFO membership and who have given outstanding service to education and their community. Steve is a member of the Lambton Kent Teacher Local.

When Steve and Lisa McGrail's daughter Kylie Marie McGrail passed away two days after a premature birth in 2004, the couple put their grief into action and created Kylie's Kause. All the money was to be donated to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at London's St. Joseph's Hospital. At the time, state of the art Giraffe Omnibeds were on the hospital's wish list but they were expensive. The goal was to help fund a \$60,000 Giraffe Omnibed in Kylie's memory.

Kylie's Kause is an annual Walk/Run and Silent Auction held each July in the McGrail's home town



of Wyoming, Ontario. A family event with the slogan 'A Couple of Miles to See the Smiles', the project has generated \$235,375 for the hospital as of 2010.

Steve is also very involved with community activities. He has served as the local Terry Fox Run coordinator for 10 years, has been Lambton Kent Elementary Schools Athletic Association sports director since 2000, and has coached in numerous sports groups including the Wyoming Minor Baseball League, Special Olympics Soccer, and Lambton Centennial's cross country, volleyball, two pitch, and track and field teams.

"Not only has Steve given back ten-fold to his local community; he is an absolutely outstanding role model for the students he teaches," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "We are truly proud to honour his selfless dedication and significant volunteer contributions."



ETFO Health & Safety Award

Laurel Liddicoat-Newton of Lansdowne P.S. added to her list of H&S awards by being awarded the 2011 Provincial Award.

Laurel received the 2011 Health and Safety Activist Award which acknowledges the critical nature of health and safety issues in protecting the welfare of elementary public school teachers and education professionals in Ontario.

Health and safety is an evolving area for union activists and Laurel has been on the front lines of ensuring that the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) and the Ministry of Labour fulfill their obligations for the safety of both students and ETFO members. A teacher at Lansdowne Public School since 2004, Laurel watched her colleagues suffer from a variety of health issues for several years. As health and safety representative, she pushed for testing of the workplace. When

unsupervised tests showed no issues, Laurel repeatedly pushed the testers. They eventually found a massive amount of toxic mould growth in the school portables.

When health issues returned, Laurel again pressed for tests, this time going beyond the school board to the Ministry of Labour. After standing firm, ignoring discipline threats from her board, and taking the health issues of her teaching colleagues to the media, Laurel's concern was vindicated when all portables had to be removed completely due to a reoccurrence of massive mould problems.

Because of Laurel's efforts, all 55 sites of the Lambton Kent District School Board were thoroughly inspected by an independent tester for mould and water intrusion. Along with continuing to monitor the clean-up of each site, Laurel has served as co-chair of the Elementary Facilities Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee for the LKDSB since 2009.

"The fortitude that Laurel showed in standing up for, and protecting the health and safety of, students and fellow teachers against all odds is truly remarkable," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "Along with ETFO, thousands owe her their deep gratitude for placing their well-being before anything else."

THE PRESIDENT'S UPDATE: THE NEW FACE OF EDUCATION?

This school year in Lambton Kent is off to a smooth start in most areas, but not all. This September has brought some changes to Lambton Kent, and not necessarily for the better. For the first time in LKDSB history we have a three grade split and we have now seen a Senior Kindergarten/Grade 1 split. Needless to say the union position is most definitely against this change in our working conditions.

I understand many teachers are asking how this can be done or can this be done? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Many School Boards in the province have triple, or sometimes even more, grade splits. These usually happen in smaller schools where there is no other option. Northern Ontario will see this commonly, however the option is, if the school closes, students may find themselves travelling in excess of 50 KM to the next closest school.

In our particular situation it was not in a small school, but the school offers programs in both English and French Immersion instruction. In this situation, the French Immersion program is smaller and operates almost like a small school within a large school and as a result the triple split has happened. Regardless of the circumstances, Lambton Kent ETFO does not

support this kind of split. It makes for very difficult working conditions and it is certainly not what is best for kids. We are also aware that the Board does not support this type of split, but feel the Ministry of Education funding formula gives them no options.

While triple splits are recognized by all in education as not being the best educational situation, I want to assure you we will continue to voice our concerns both locally and provincially to ensure that this becomes a one time situation.

What is wrong with a split grade? I ask that question with a tone of sarcasm. All splits make a teaching assignment more difficult. Even in a straight grade we might only be delivering one curriculum, but through differentiated instruction we are teaching to many grade levels. Many teachers will recognize that any split grade is challenging, but some offer more challenges, in particular split divisions. The Grade 6/7 split is certainly a split that is avoided when classes are organized, however we also know that they are also common in the Board. The Grade 3/4 split is again that despised division split, but instead of being avoided, they are happening more frequently as a result of the Primary Class caps.

With the introduction of Full Day Kindergarten a new door has been opened the SK/Gr. 1 split, and it is happening in Lambton Kent.

How does a play based program, such as the Kindergarten program, blend with the instructional program of Grade 1? I don't know, but I don't see it being the best for students. ETFO has challenged the Ministry of Education on this split elsewhere in Ontario. In response, the Ministry sent out a memo that does allow the Board to do this, but only in extreme situations. Our Board is certainly following the Ministry guides and is trying to avoid this split, but feel due to numbers they have no option. While the Board can do this, **it is ETFO's position that these classes need to be avoided completely.**

While the LKDSB is trying to avoid this split, that is not the case across the province. The Thames Valley Board is making more than one SK/Gr. 1 split in the same school. Not because it is an extreme circumstance, but because it can avoid the hiring of an ECE and becomes a cost saving measure.

That is a real scary thought!

Thanks Eryn!!!

Eryn Smit has recently stepped down as an Executive Member. His hard work towards Federation over the last year has been greatly appreciated. Eryn has represented all teachers in Lambton Kent with a very fair and compassionate voice. We wish you the best in all your future endeavours. Thanks Eryn.

The Lambton Kent Executive

LTD NEEDED? –PLEASE LET US KNOW!



In the Local Office we try to get potential LTD claimants information as early as possible because applying for LTD can easily take 6 to 8 weeks. Unfortunately, we do not always get notified of a teacher's absence. The Board does provide the Local Office with an extended absence list, but it is not uncommon to get 3 months at a time, so by the time we are aware of

potential LTD claims, they are already quite delayed.

That is where we need your help!!!

If you are absent and may be in need of Long Term Disability, please call our office to start a claim. It is much easier to start a claim and cancel, than to expedite a new application.

If you have someone at your school that is off and may not have an anticipated return to work date please let us know in the office.

Remember the earlier the better. Some teachers may never go on LTD, but may be eligible for Early Intervention. This offers members support to get back to work before LTD starts.

JOHN NEVILLE: PROGRAM CALENDAR- THE PROS & CONS

Last year Nicole and I met monthly with the program department and brought forth many concerns regarding workload issues such as DRA, common assessments, the six writing forms, and due dates for all these items. We were able to bring a group of classroom teachers selected by us together as a focus group to try to deal with these issues from the grass roots. As you may recall last year in November teachers were expected to have DRA data complete, submit writing form data, and complete a brand new progress report in the same 7-10 days. We, along with the above mentioned focus group, lobbied hard to make sure this did not happen again and to reduce the number of writing forms to be delivered throughout the year. We were successful in our discussions to have the number of writing forms reduced from six to four and in spreading out the due dates for things such as DRA data entry and Common Assessment implementation. Primary DRA reporting was also reduced from 3 to 2 times per year.

There was some discussion last spring around October 7 for the DRA data entry date being too early but it was also decided at that time that it was better to get the DRA out of the way before on demand writ-

ing data and the Progress Reports were due. It has come to our attention that this date is too early. This feedback comes from the membership and through our stewards. It also seems that it would be better that this date be pushed back 10 days. If this date is too early we certainly will lobby for change. That being said, a discussion was held with the Superintendent in Charge of Student Achievement, Joy Badder, regarding this October 7 due date for DRA data submission. Joy was going to check for feedback within her department, but the date was very likely not going to change. It was also left that this was going to be discussed further in our continuing discussions with the Program department.

The majority of our membership believes this date is too early and our office will strive to seek an adjustment to the date. I can assure you that just as we took concerns regarding writing forms and other issues to the program department we will continue to lobby to achieve appropriate due dates for our members. I can assure you that we will take this particular DRA due date forward as a concern and investigate a better time frame.

Teachers must keep in mind that no one has been disciplined for having their DRA data submitted late. Teachers are a very conscientious and reliable group of professionals. If you are unable to meet this deadline because you are still establishing routines and getting to know your students then so be it, the Board will get the information in when you can reasonably and accurately submit it. It was shared by some members that it took seven days last year for the Board to remind teachers to submit late DRA data. I repeat, no one has been disciplined for submitting DRA data past the due date.

We have looked carefully at the program department calendar for the coming year and it is not perfect but it is certainly a far better one than last year. If Teachers are unhappy with any of the dates please have them express their concerns to our office directly. It is through your calls and emails that we were able to affect the changes made for this school year and there is no reason for anyone to believe that further changes and adjustments cannot be made. Please keep in mind that no ETFO group has any contractual say in what their Board's Program department lays out. It can only be achieved through ongoing discussion to which we have had some success.

FALL BY-ELECTION

COME OUT TO VOTE!

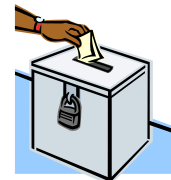
Due to the recent resignation of Eryn Smit from Tecumseh P.S. our Local Executive was not completely filled. As a result we have a vacancy for Executive Member – South. This vacancy is open to

any teacher from a Chatham Kent School.

A call for nominations went out last week and the deadline is September 30. If no nominations are received by the deadline, nominations will be opened to the floor of the General Meeting.

The meeting will be held on Thursday,

October 20, at Aristo's in Chatham. Social starts at 4:30 PM, so be sure to mark the date on your calendar.



DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR PAY STUB



Remember all pay stubs are only accessible online at <https://staffweb.lkdsb.net/>

You also want to remember the joy of the Fall pays. Not only do the leaves change colour and local fairs occupy the weekends, but larger pays are deposited in our bank

accounts too. This will be attributed to two factors. First, as a result of our Collective Agreement we will be receiving a 3% salary increase. Secondly, many members will have maximized their CPP, Employment Ins. contributions. That

means the larger take home pay will be with you until the end of December.

Unfortunately this joy is short lived. Once we enter January we will have all of those deductions coming off once again along with our College of Teachers dues.

PROGRESS REPORT UPDATE 2011 – JOHN NEVILLE

Ontario Ministry
of Education



We are all entering into year two of the progress report implementation. One would assume that with one year of experience under our belt we could proceed more smoothly through this process in the coming weeks. Unfortunately we all know what happens when we “assume.”

At the invitation of the Program Department I attended the Ministry of Education’s Regional Session dealing with the progress report and its implementation in year two. For the most part nothing has changed. There are still no set numbers or type of leaning skills that are required to be commented on. Teachers are to use their professional judgement to comment on individual student learning skills that will benefit that student. If a Principal is expecting a minimum of two learning skills per student or a particular learning skill or skills for every student, this is in di-

rect conflict with the Ministry’s philosophy and what was communicated in this session.

Through my many discussions with members there seems to be a great fear from School Administration that Teachers will simply check off the boxes and not make any comments in the Learning Skills section. This could be why we had such difficulty last year with Principals setting arbitrary minimums that were not supported by the Ministry or the Program department. This combined with our own lack of understanding of our own Professional Judgement made reporting on students a difficult task indeed.

To be clear, we are professional educators whose professional judgement is valued by parents and students. Teachers know their students better than anyone else and are the most qualified to make comments on each individual student. The minis-

try has recognized this and thus given teachers the latitude to use their professional judgement accompanied with evidence gathered through conversations, observations and products completed by students. It is ludicrous to think that a Professional Elementary Educator in Lambton Kent would leave the learning skill area of the progress report blank. Furthermore teachers must be allowed to make comments as they see fit on each individual student without artificial limits placed on them by Principals.

This office will continue to fiercely stand behind any and all members who have used their professional judgement based on a variety of evidence gathered from their students.

KEEPING THE BOARD, FEDERATION AND OTC UPDATED

Once again I would like to stress the importance of updating all your personal information with the Board, the College of Teachers and ETFO.

The Board is the first place to make any changes because it could have an impact on your pay and benefits. Let the Board know of any name changes, address changes, banking changes and family changes. By family changes I mean marriage or children. Especially if you are carrying the benefits and you need to enroll your spouse. There can be timelines, so make contact immedi-

ately after these changes.

It is also important to contact the Ontario College of Teachers to ensure they have your updated address or any name changes. This is particularly important if your completed your teacher training outside of Ontario. If trained out of the province The College may contact you and will need a response to keep your teacher qualifications valid. If they do not have your address and the letters get returned, you could receive notice that your Teaching Certificate is suspended. In that case the Board will

have no option but to suspended you without pay until the situation is resolved. This can often be corrected within a day or two, however there have been situations that have been 2 weeks. Any loss of pay can be painful. Please remember one day without pay can be a loss of up to \$475.

Any ETFO changes can be made by contacting the Provincial Office at 1-888-838-3836 and ask for Members Records.

HEALTH AND SAFETY BY LAUREL LIDDICOAT-NEWTON



health and safety



Back to School questions some teachers ask themselves.....

How cold can my classroom be? How Hot?

Why do I keep tripping over the same pothole in the parking lot? How do I get that fixed?

Why are my classroom ceiling tiles getting stained after every rainfall?

Can I hang art from the ceiling?

I'm new to my school and do not know where my fire exit is. Who will tell me?

Where do I go for answers? Who can help me if I am hurt at school?

Every Elementary school in the LKDSB has two representatives selected by their site union members prior to the beginning of the new school year. These representatives from ETFO and CUPE are given a basic knowledge base and training by Members of the Elementary Facilities Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the Health and Safety Officers. Worker Members of the JHSC have specific and comprehensive certification training in the

Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Elementary Facilities JHSC has been working hard to get all Health and Safety related Policies and Procedures and Regulations on a direct link under Health and Safety on the LKDSB site.

Teachers Have Rights

- The Right to Participate in the process of identifying and resolving workplace health and safety concerns. This right is expressed through worker membership on joint health and safety committees or through worker health and safety representatives.

- The Right to Know about any potential hazards to which they may be exposed. This means the right to be trained and to have information on machinery, equipment, working conditions, processes and hazardous materials.

- The Right to Refuse Work that they believe is dangerous to their own health and safety or that of another worker. The Act describes the exact process for refusing dangerous work and the responsibilities of the employer in responding to such a refusal.

Teachers have Responsibilities

1. *to work in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act;*
2. *to report to an employer/supervisor any defects in equipment, existence of a hazard, or contraventions of the Act or regulations (e.g. build up of ice on schoolyard pavement);*
3. *to report injuries/accidents to immediate supervisor and fill out documentation immediately when able;*
4. *not to use or operate equipment or work in any way that may endanger any worker;*
5. *shall not engage in any prank, contest or rough and boisterous conduct.*
6. *Contact Site representative, Committee Representative, Union Representatives and Released Union Officers if they need questions answered about their health and safety at school.*

Laurel Liddicoat-Newton
Certified Worker Rep and Co-Chair



Bus Trip to Birch Run

The Social Committee is excited to announce a shopping trip to Birch Run.

Saturday November 19, 2011

Departure Times - Wallaceburg 8:30 Sarnia 9:15



LAMBTON KENT ETFO

850 Wallace Street
Wallaceburg, ON
N8A 1M6

Phone: 519-628-5414
800-528-1936

Fax: 519-628-5416

E-mails:

Ron Rivait -president@lketfo.com
John Neville - vpKent@lketfo.com
Nicole Schultz -vplambton@lketfo.com

Kristy Toulouse - secretary@lketfo.com

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT

WWW.LKETFO.COM



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
*Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants
de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario*

Fall General Meeting



Thursday, Oct. 20th

4:30 - 7:30

Aristo's in Chatham

307 Grand Ave. West

**Remember the important By-
Election**

Come out for some fun, friendship,
goodies and refreshments!

Mark your calendar.

Knowing Our Collective Agreement

MEMBER FUNDED LEAVE PLAN Hi-lights (See your CA for the full Article)

Intent

The plan is intended to provide Members with the opportunity to develop personally and professionally and it is not meant to discourage a Member from applying for other types of leaves.

19.01 Description

The plan has been developed to afford Members the opportunity of taking a one (1) year leave of absence with pay by spreading:

- two years' salary over three years;
- three years' salary over four years;
- four years' salary over five years; or
- five years' salary over six years.

19.02 Qualifications

Any Member having five (5) years' seniority with the District School Board is eligible to participate in the plan.

Application

19.03.1 A Member must make written application to the Director of Education, on or before February 1 requesting permission to participate in the plan.

19.03.2 The application form shall set out the period in which the plan is to be effected and the school year in which the Member requests the leave.

19.03.3 Written acceptance or denial of the Member's request with an explanation will be forwarded to the Member by April 1 in the school year the application is made.

19.05.1 During the term of the plan, a participating Member will be paid grid salary and allowances as follows:

Salary and Allowances Paid During

Term Teaching Period Leave Period

Three years 66.7% 33.3% + interest*

Four Years 75.0% 25.0% + interest*

Five Years 80.0% 20.0% + interest*

Six Years 83.3% 16.7% + interest*

*Interest will be earned on the portion withheld and will be paid annually.

It is never too early to start to plan this leave, so if you have any questions please contact us directly at the Local Office.