

District & TBU Annual General Meeting 2019-2020

Reports

District President's Report

Shawn Lavender

This my first and last AGM report as District President. Rachelle Séguin will be taking over the role beginning in July.

The District runs smoothly due to the excellent release officers. Thank you to the TBU President Andrea Loken and the TBU Chief Negotiator John Vince, working at the District Office who do a tremendous job assisting Members and defending public education. Our Treasurer, Stewart Williams, does an excellent job of overseeing the finances of the District.

It has been a pleasure to work with Bargaining Unit Presidents Wendy Bonnell for the Instructors (IBU) and Cindi Scott for the Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP). Also, thank you to everyone on the Executives – Committee Chairs and other Officers – for their work and caring about all the Members. I am grateful to be surrounded by such passionate and committed unionists.

Protecting Public Education

This year was marked by extraordinary action, dedication and solidarity on behalf of the Members. On one hand, we took the rare action of striking against the Government's brutal cuts to education. In the midst of the fight which appeared destined to go on for some time, the global pandemic arrested that plan and education workers quickly adjusted to emergency remote learning with little to no time, training or infrastructure in place. The Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly, set to take place in March, was the first major cancellation of many events to come. Now, more than ever we have to work to safeguard public education from those that would capitalize and take advantage of an opportunity to drive people to a privatized model. We have to remain vigilant in our defense of publicly funded education.

AMPA

For the first time, OSSTF was unable to hold the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) in March to make decisions on behalf of the organization. A shortened, virtual AMPA was held in June in order to pass a budget for the following year.

Running the District Office

Though it may seem mundane in light of the exciting and tragic events of the year, the District Office installed an electric car charger in September. The car charger is available on a first-come first-serve basis and underlines our commitment to a greener union. Our office building is getting old and many major repairs have been needed in recent years. This year, our furnace/air conditioner broke down and needed replacement along with our dishwasher. The condominium corporation has informed us that our windows will no longer be maintained unless we replace them, so that will be a future expense that the District may want to take on next year.

Andrea Loken, President and Kyla Munro, Vice-President

The Strangest Year Ever

Not only was this an historical year for negotiations and job action, but surely this has been one of the strangest years in OSSTF's 101-year history. The OSSTF was founded during the Spanish Flu pandemic. It would have been a very risky thing to found a Teachers' Federation, but clearly the conviction of a few teachers – who thought public education deserved better – was very strong. OSSTF was prepared, it seemed, for the long game in fighting the cuts to education announced a year ago by the Conservative Government. By March Break, we had implemented three stages of a limited withdrawal of services and had already forfeited four days of pay by conducting full day walkouts.

Suddenly, with a coronavirus pandemic and lock-down announced in mid-March, and an OECTA deal signed, OSSTF felt it necessary to settle and accept cuts to education as an offer to do our part during the global lock-down. The provincial membership voted yes to a deal that imposes a classroom funding reduction of about 4%, resulting in a job loss of about 14 full-time teachers in Limestone and about 1600 teachers across the province. The new Central Agreement also requires students to take a minimum of 2 credits by e-Learning, despite the evidence that shows this is an inferior way to deliver education. However, this isn't about quality, it's about saving money on the backs of our students. We will continue to try to improve local collective agreement language through local bargaining.

On the positive side, the teachers were simply amazing, adapting to "emergency remote learning" without complaint and with almost zero direction about how to do it. You have worked very hard and we know many of you have had incredible challenges to try to work and care for others. Thank you for your uncompromising dedication to your students and communities.

Pandemic Ed Webinar Series

We are proud to have collaborated with OSSTF Upper Canada, District 26 on a three-part webinar series highlighting some of the issues that arose with distance learning, particularly around education technology. We interviewed occupational therapist and child development expert Cris Rowan, privacy expert Tommy Cooke, and e-learning expert Dr. Beyhan Farhadi. The videos are posted on YouTube.

School Closure

More delay has been announced with the building of the new school, Kingston Secondary School, and the closing of KCVI. This presents challenges for the staffing process for the new school. We will work collaboratively with the Board to make the process go as smoothly as possible. We know that the anticipated move to the new school creates much uncertainty and stress. Please continue to keep us informed of issues so that we may assist where possible.

Thank you

Thank you to our Branch Presidents and those who serve on Executives and Committees. You are the backbone of the union, volunteering time to support Members, uphold the Collective Agreement, protect worker rights and mobilize Members. I have enjoyed working with District President, Shawn

Lavender, this year who did a great job running our District Office and collaborating with all the Bargaining Units. Thanks to my bargaining unit counterparts, Cindi Scott (PSSP) and Wendy Bonnell (Instructors'), who have been excellent comrades to me and leaders for their members. Thanks also to John Vince, whose efficiency in serving members and the District never ceases to amaze me. And finally, thanks to Stewart Williams whose work keeping our financial affairs in order is truly appreciated.

Thank you for the sacrifices you all made this year by walking the picket line, doing information pickets, having discussions with neighbours, friends and family to try to raise awareness about what was and still is at stake for public education workers and students of Ontario.

The global pandemic has uncovered what may have been apparent to some in the last decade or so: Public Education is a target for private profit seekers. Bill Gates and his billionaire friends are openly talking about reconstructing education systems to employ fewer workers, reduce human contact and implement a lot more technology. Using fear propagana, through relentless sensationalist mainstream headlines, conditions are being set so that we will accept this sanitized, marketized future. Please read Naomi Klein's piece, first published in the Intercept, now re-printed in the Guardian, to understand what is being planned for the education sector: How big tech plans to profit from the pandemic.

I know we are tired and somewhat demoralized, but bigger fights are still ahead and I know that after our most recent show down with the Ford Government, we will have enough strength to keep fighting, even if new structures and movements have to be built outside of our unions to do it. I am hopeful. I hope you can be, too.

Community Education Instructors' (CEI) Report

Wendy Bonnell, President

Community Education Instructors provide ESL language instruction and Literacy and Basic Skills to a diverse population of adults ranging in age from 18-80. We are a small staff group, but provide a vital service to students and the community with 4 locations in Kingston, Sydenham and Napanee. Instructors assist students with many skills, including literacy, language acquisition, understanding civic rights and responsibilities, with a focus on employment or further education. Strong partnerships with various stakeholders such as the ministries that fund us (MCTU and MCCSS), community agencies, and LDSB credit programs are key to delivering effective programs to our learners.

What a Year!!

Aside from the usual issues including staffing, programming, and other board fed issues, central bargaining was a major factor determining how the year unfolded. The IBU Executive held a member engagement function which doubled as a sign making party and the completion of our first Information picket. It was held on the day that the first general strike day was announced. Talk about timing!

Central bargaining led to ongoing information pickets, selected withdrawal of services and full withdrawal of services (strike days) including one general strike day with OSSTF, ETFO, OECTA, and

AEFO making history. Local bargaining also commenced and a then a sudden stop to shut down schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Instructors rallied to provide online/distance learning, and to maintain and provide essential contact with our students.

Central Bargaining

Despite the pandemic, central bargaining ended with a ratified Central Agreement for both Ed Workers and teachers. It was a very contentious round of bargaining, much of which took place in the media with Stephen Lecce's inflammatory comments about teachers and ed workers. OSSTF bargained to retain seniority language, maintain our excellent health benefits, and sick leave plan as well as compensation of 1% each year. Unique to the agreement for permanent Ed workers is the \$1000.00 health care spending account.

Local Bargaining – Local bargaining began in January. During April and May, we renewed our efforts to come to a local agreement. The Memorandum of Settlement was signed in July. Virtual bargaining was not ideal; it is to the credit of the table team, (Tiffany Myers, Will Deanike, Sandy Shortt-Hawley and Shawn Lavender) that we persevered and came to an agreement. It was ratified by Instructors on August 11 with 100% voting in favour to accept the agreement,

Programming and Staffing

Programming continued in the 4 sites. In addition to providing vital and important programming to the students in all of our unique programs, both ESL and LBS programs achieved their contact numbers and ADE, due to the hard work of all.

Summer school was a contentious issue. After being told that summer ESL would not take place, it was eventually decided that virtual classes would run for 2 hours a week over the summer to maintain vital programming for those that were interested.

Board Fed

We worked hard this year to have the Admin in our programs recognize the Federation as the sole bargaining agent of our bargaining unit. It is my hope that since the Manager was present at most bargaining sessions, that he may have a more solid understanding of the helpful role of the Federation and the importance of working toward a collaborative model in solving problems.

We fought this year to come to a mutual understanding of the financial issues in our programs, and the areas that funding comes from for our various programs and benefits. This will be an ongoing issue, but some headway was made. I was able to demonstrate to the Board that some funding for the ELHT comes from the Ministry of Education. This was not the Board's understanding.

Ongoing issues include:

- Covid 19 Safety Protocols
- Health and Safety
- Planning time
- PA Days
- Job Descriptions

- Leaves of Absences
- Finding a way to bridge the gap between Instructors and Admin to provide effective well run programs with more support from Admin
- Coordination of Programs
- Working Conditions

Grievances – The IBU filed one grievance this year. It was settled over the summer resulting in a virtual evening class being held once per week, which started in September.

Moving Forward

It is so important for us to continue to stand strong together. We need to work together to raise the profile of the services we provide. Each Instructor does their part in providing a valuable program and service to our learners. We help the adults we serve in so many ways.

2022 Provincial Election: The next provincial election will be crucial. We need to work together to defeat the Ford government. OSSTF will be working to mobilize members to educate, engage and motivate all Educational Workers to stand up and take action. Stay tuned!

As Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the COURAGE TO CONTINUE that counts"

And finally - Thank you

Thank you for your confidence and providing me with the opportunity to serve the IBU. The last year was a real challenge. I am honoured to be in a position to advocate for our programs, the adults we serve, and to help whenever I can.

Thank you to the members of the Instructors' Bargaining Unit for their commitment and support. As well, I would like to recognize all Instructors for their hard work every day, despite many challenges.

Thank you to members of the Executive for their commitment to union work and attendance at Executive meetings both in person and virtually. Your work on various District committees such as Collective Bargaining, CPAC, Educational Services and Status of Women is valued. Your work and time is appreciated!

Also thanks to Shawn Lavender, District President, 2019-2020, for his work with us at Board Fed, with grievances, bargaining and Executive Meetings. We wish him well in his return to the classroom.

Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) Report

Cindy Scott, President

Last year, when members asked me, how things were going, I would jokingly remark that at the end of the year I would be wearing a T-shirt that said "I survived the 2019-20 school year." Now, I would like to add the word *barely*.

As a first-year president, I will tell you that last year was an incredible journey. It has tested us personally, professionally, and as an organization. Even as this report is written the challenge of working in our new world continues. In the years to come, I'm sure this year will be looked on by many as a year for the ages, we came together to tackle challenge after challenge. I have been inspired by the work of members and executives to organize and stand in solidarity.

News in the spring of 2019 that large cuts to education were coming had many of us feeling unsure about what the future of our workplace would look like. The government's strategy of saving money by undermining education was not going to occur without a fight from all educators. We stood for education, for our students, our families, our peers, and fought to maintain our ability to do our jobs at a high level.

We built solidarity in our bargaining unit, with educators from the other bargaining units, increased awareness of the important and essential work of PSSP members in elementary and secondary schools across our board, as well as connecting with the greater community. We stood against board initiatives that added to our workloads, we worked with senior admin to solve ongoing issues while maintaining the integrity of our Collective Agreement. The community clearly and consistently showed their support. I am proud to have stood beside each of you.

In February of this year we embarked in local negotiations, something that hadn't been done for 6 years. Our Chief Negotiator, Tiff Idems, District President Shawn Lavender, and myself worked tirelessly to bargain a new collective agreement. As a group we put in over 200 hours preparing the brief and bargaining on your behalf. Our approach to bargaining was simple, show respect for one another and engage in productive conversations. We are very proud of the hard work we did to introduce more inclusive language, ensure that members received lieu time for duties outside of the regular workday and allowances for professional regulatory fees. I would personally like to thank Tiff for all of her hard work and dedication to the process. She is a superstar and we are very fortunate to have her volunteer her time to our bargaining unit.

As we all know, a more important issue emerged. The Covid-19 pandemic challenged us in a way none of us expected. The response by PSSP however should not have been unexpected or a surprise to anyone. We stepped up by connecting with students and staff virtually from home, something we have never done before. We connected with families who needed food and other important supplies and we provided support to teachers who had lost contact with students all while juggling our own families and their needs. Our professionalism and compassion for our students, their families and our communities were once again on display.

It has been a tough year, we have carried ourselves well through it all. There are those that have come to believe the negative spin that successive governments have leveled against us. I believe that this year has shown our doubters that we are highly professional, caring people dedicated to students, education and the communities we serve.

I would like to thank the executive, Tiff Idems, Krista Mather, Leah Carey, and Lynne Cumming Clarke, and Shawn Lavender, our District President for 2019-2020, for their support and guidance

this past year. A big thanks to the membership for your energy and commitment to each other and to education. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve.

District Treasurer's Report

Stewart Williams

First, I hope this report finds each member of D27 Limestone doing well during this highly unusual time. This has truly been quite a year with job actions and the COVID-19 pandemic. Please take care of yourself and your loved ones as we get through our current situation.

I have been working hard on your behalf to keep the finances in order, paying expenses on time, and recouping all possible monies from Provincial Office to which the District is eligible. Also, the District has generated a small profit on its investments this year, which is something given the way the market has reacted to the COVID-19 outbreak.

A major expense for the district, beyond that which we normally incur, has been our expenses that were a result of job action during the current school year. These expenses included planning meetings, the purchase of supplies and equipment, and any other costs incurred while protesting or legally striking. As the district discovered, it costs much to plan and run these activities. I am happy to say we recouped all the money that was spent when D27 made its first submission to the OSSTF Provincial Office (almost \$15,500). A second submission was recently submitted (about \$6,900). Hopefully the district is able to recoup all of this as well in the near future.

It has been an honour working on your behalf as Treasurer for the past 13 years and I look forward to continuing in the position next year.

Stewart Williams

Collective Bargaining Committee Report of the TBU

Shawn Lavender, Chair and John Vince, Chief Negotiator

Thank you to our engaged Teachers' Bargaining Unit (TBU) Collective Bargaining Committee. Every month, representatives (often multiple per branch) participate in an interactive meeting. Concerns are shared and updates are provided. Most importantly, we look for ideas to make our working life better.

Central Strike

In the Spring of 2019, it became clear the Government was not backing down on their cuts to education. OSSTF tried to meet with the Government and OPSBA over the summer and into the fall. In an unprecedented move for our organization, OSSTF bargained transparently. Provincial Office created a website with rationale for our brief, and very reasonable 'asks'.

It didn't matter. The Government was gearing for a fight. The strategy that we followed tried to minimize effects on students and build public support. We were united with the other affiliates and even had a joint work-withdrawal in a show of solidarity.

The Government was feeling the pressure. They walked back their increases in class size to 28:1 to 25:1 and finally to 23:1. However, then Covid-19 shifted the ground beneath us. We were no longer top-of-mind for the public. Once OECTA settled, Provincial office felt great pressure to settle as well. Locally, we were not convinced that we should take the OECTA deal, given the awful strips it contained (mandatory e-learning, increased class size, strips to our locally-bargained class size maxima). However, as you know, the Central agreement passed.

Local Negotiations

We had a number of productive bargaining meetings with the Board last winter. Covid-19 put local bargaining on hold. We felt that the Spring was not the time to bargain, since we were unable to meet face-to-face.

There are many very important issues to discuss with the Board in our Brief. For example, language on school closure, health and safety and how personal leave is granted. We were planning to set dates in the Fall to bargain, but then received news that the Board's Chief Negotiator, Andre Labrie, is retiring in October of 2020.

We intend to meet with his replacement and start bargaining our Brief as soon as possible.

Thank you to all members for your dauntlessness during this past year. Although it seems a long time ago, the solidarity and comradeship we shared on those picket lines was important. And, although many members were not happy with the details of the Central Agreement, it could always be worse, because there are a lot of incompetent people at Provincial Office.

Communications and Political Action Committee (CPAC) Report

Candice Bovard, Chair

This year, the Communication and Political Action Committee of the District and TBU continued to focus on issues that affect District 27 members as well as the greater community.

Our actions to inform and educate members included:

- meeting with local trustees to lobby for education needs and ensure a more progressive Board

The Communication and Political Action Committee organized events to fight the Conservative provincial cuts to education, and continued to participate in other political and social justice activities. We had a busy year supporting strike action. Our successes include:

- attending and providing funding to the Kingston and District Labour Council's Labour Day Parade
- representing OSSTF Limestone District 27 at the Kingston and District Labour Council, the KDLC's Oliver Doyle Activist Awards Banquet, the Ontario Federation of Labour Conference, and the OSSTF CPAC Conference
- organizing opportunities to meet with local MPPs- NDP Ian Arthur, PC Daryl Kramp, and independent Randy Hiller

- participating in multiple strike days to combat the education cuts
- assisted in organizing local campaigns to fight the education cuts- information rallies, t-shirt campaigns, button campaigns, etc.

The achievements of the committee are due to the time, energy and enthusiasm of the members of the CPAC committee. Thanks to Andrea Loken, Dieter Brueckner, Andrea Loken,

David Mathers, Simon Baron, John Vince, Wendy Bonnell, Cindi Scott, Julia Perkins, Tiff Idems, Haley Rose, Melanie Ball, and Shawn Lavender. A special thanks to David Mathers for acting as Secretary.

If you are interested in political and social justice issues, I encourage you to consider becoming a part of this committee next year

Educational Services Committee Report

Stewart Williams, Chair

By Stewart Williams

First, on behalf of the Educational Services Committee, I hope this report finds each member of D27 Limestone doing well during this highly unusual time. This has truly been quite a year with job actions and the COVID-19 pandemic. Please take care of yourself and your loved ones as we get through our current situation.

The Educational Services Committee has been busy this year, planning workshops, providing funding and making members aware of PD opportunities. The Educational Services Committee is always looking for new members. If you would like to join next year's committee, please volunteer yourself at your particular branch or with your bargaining unit. Each branch or bargaining unit may have more than one representative on the committee.

If you are not sure who your committee representative is, please go the district website: www.osstf27.ca, and select the Committees link, then choose Educational Services. Your committee representative can be found on the page that appears.

The committee also provides reimbursement for those who wish to further their professional development by attending self-directed PD. Application forms and guidelines can be picked up from your committee representative, or from the Educational Services page on the district website (on the same page as above). The forms are at the bottom of the page. Completed applications and any questions should be given to, or directed towards, your representative. Please include documentation for all expenses you wish to claim, especially the registration receipt. Please note there are 2 pay periods for reimbursement – after the 1st semester and in June. If you attend a self-directed PD event in the fall, get your application in before the end of the 1st semester to be eligible for some funding reimbursement. See the guidelines on the District website or talk to your branch/BU representative for more details.

Next year, branch and bargaining unit representatives will continue to make you aware of any conferences that are run by or endorsed by OSSTF, and if any additional funds are available to attend.

The committee will be meeting on Wednesday, June 3rd to go over all the applications it received for the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, you need to get all your forms in quickly, with the necessary documentation, in order for your application to be processed this year. The deadline to get them in this year is May 29, 2020. Your submission should be emailed to Stewart Williams at tazman2909@gmail.com. With the uncertainty of job action during the year, plus the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent restrictions put in place, we have noted a marked decline in submissions to date.

Unfortunately, the committee was unable to organize a workshop day due the labour uncertainty with the provincial government and the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent restrictions put in place. However, the committee will continue to look at ways to offer workshops in the upcoming year.

This year, D27 Limestone had 2 of its members on the Provincial Educational Services Committee, TBU President Andrea Loken and myself. This District is having an impact when it comes to looking at educational issues and pedagogy, as well as planning provincial and regional events for Educational Services Officers, as there were only 23 OSSTF members at large on this committee. Recently, D27 member Brian Heaton was selected to the provincial committee for a 3 year term. Congratulations Brian!

Once again, thanks to all the people who have volunteered their time to help foster the professional development of the members of District 27.

Status of Women Committee Report

Meeting of the OSSTF D27 Status of Women Committee are scheduled approximately once a month throughout the year. Our focus is on current issues such as universal day care, pharma care and human trafficking and concerns relating to women in District 27.Our committee has members from all three of our bargaining units and contacts in all work sites. We encourage participation by any member interested in our goals.

This year's committee members participated in and supported the Take Back the Night Rally in Kingston, Kingston Youth Shelter fund raising, and in March, Tampon Tuesday, a United Way gathering of donations of products for Kingston women and youth.

We read and distributed the book Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men Book by Caroline Criado-Perez. Committee members discussed this book and encouraged to donate these to school libraries.

We learned about the Moose Hide Campaign and supported white ribbon events in schools.

We also financially supported work site activities for the December 6 Commemoration, such as Man

Up group at NAEC and NDSS events raising funds for women's shelters. We sent promotional materials to reps for the Equal Pay Day April Campaign.

Our ongoing mission: We locate and distribute diverse resources, including web links, teacher guides, and toolkits for action, websites, e-learning modules & other electronic sources of information to Status of Women Reps.

To support education and to increase member awareness about a broad range of issues and inequalities affecting the daily lives and future success of women and girls in our schools, community, work places and beyond;

To provide local opportunities and resources to empower, inspire and engage Status of Women members and school communities to create and sustain safe, caring, inclusive, school communities free from fear; and

To promote respect for human diversity.

Yearly Activities:

We plan activities around the following monthly events subject to the direction of the committee member's interests each year:

September: Take Back the Night Rally

October - Women's History Month; Canadian Heroines; International Day of the Girl Child, Persons Day

November – Aboriginal Education Month - Ending Violence against Aboriginal Women;

December 6 – National Day of Remembrance to End Violence against Girls and Women; OSSTF Support of the White Ribbon Campaign – It Starts with You. It Stays with Him

February 14 –Global End to Violence Against Women and Girls; OSSTF Toolkit – Still not Laughing: Challenging Sexual Harassment in Our Schools

May, Send delegates to the OSSTF Provincial Status of Women Conference (Bi-Annual)

Health and Safety Representatives' Report

Shawn Lavender, District Representative and Jamie Reid, Teachers' Representative

Our District and Teachers' Health and Safety (H & S) Officers are Shawn Lavender and Jamie Reid. This year was the first year with no central Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). Despite the desire of the worker representatives to continue with a central structure, the Board has succeeded in making our committees site-based. This presents some challenges but also some opportunities. Thank you to all of the OSSTF members at the various work-sites that have stepped up and have joined site-based JHSC.

Site-based Committees

Representatives for site-based JHSC are now selected using an application process. The three affiliate Unions (CUPE, ETFO and OSSTF) review the applications and select representatives by the end of September. Terms to serve as a worker representative are for two-years, with opportunity of extension as determined by the affiliates.

The duties of the worker representatives is to attend quarterly meetings with the site-based JHSC (usually two administrators and two workers with alternating worker/board members chairing the meeting). The workers also are to perform site-inspections according to a schedule agreed to by the committee.

The Board is to organize training for committee members. We are piloting an OSSTF Health and Safety Committee to share best practices and report on what is going on at our worksites. This committee will begin to meet by October 2020.

Dispute about inspections

We are currently in dispute with the Board over inspections. It is our position that time-release be provided to our workers to do this important work. The Board's position is that the workers are to do it on their 'free' time. This seems bizarre in a normal year, let alone in the time of Covid-19.

We are hopeful that with a change in leadership at the Board, we can convince them that this is neither reasonable nor within the parameters of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Central Agreement

The Central Agreement had a few provisions connected to Health and Safety. The first, was that the Board is required to consult with JHSC and OSSTF in planning for a half-day PD day focused on workplace violence. We provided the Board with suggestions and this day will occur on September 25, 2020. Any feedback to plan for future days would be appreciated.

The Central Agreement also states that the Board must provide the site-based JHSC and the District Office with data collected using the workplace violence reporting form. The Board has yet to fulfill this requirement, but have assured us they are working on it.

Thank-you to our H&S Site Reps