

September 15, 2021

## **A message from OSSTF/FEESO President Karen Littlewood**

Welcome to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation/La Fédération des enseignantes enseignantes des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario (OSSTF/FEESO). Founded in 1919, your union represents more than 60,000 anglophone and francophone education workers and teachers in more than 150 Bargaining Units across Ontario in public and Catholic schools, including members who work in the university sector and in independent education programs.

Our motto is "Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another" and our slogan is "protecting and enhancing public education." Together these statements act as our guideposts, signalling our united commitment to bettering the lives of all the students we serve and, in turn, bettering the future of our province. We are a strong, diverse union with the knowledge and power to advocate for the professional concerns of our members while protecting the rights of members in their workplaces. Our expertise and resources are focused on helping our members achieve their goals; and helping students succeed in strong, well-funded public education institutions. We have established pensions, benefits, and advocated for improved working conditions for our members, and we play a leading role in defending equitable access to high quality education in Canada and around the world.

You are now part of a united team that includes your colleagues and co-workers, your local union representatives at the Bargaining Unit and District levels, and your Federation team at the Provincial Office. Together we set goals for our union, actively pursue workplace protections and enhancements, and strive to represent the very best in publicly-funded education.

I encourage you to become an active participant in your union. Whatever your skill or interest, we have an area where you can contribute. Becoming involved in your union means you can help shape who we are and where we go. OSSTF/FEESO can provide you with a variety of personal and professional opportunities. Likewise, you have access to a broad range of services and resources such as collective bargaining, political action, professional growth, equity advocacy, labour solidarity, mediation, benefits support, and pension information. These services are here for you to use. If you need assistance, do not hesitate to contact your local Bargaining Unit.

Your union is also committed to internal change and dismantling anti-Black racism, anti-Indigeneity, and other forms of racism in the organization. This work is ongoing and includes listening to and further centring the voices of our Indigenous, Black, and racialized members. The future of our union is only as strong as the membership's belief and trust in the organization, and to maintain that trust, we commit to doing this work together. Our diversity is our strength and it must be celebrated, centred, and valued.

Our united voices and strength not only reach across the province of Ontario. Our labour and equity work extends around the world with partnerships with labour unions from Bangladesh, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, the United States, and more. Our solidarity extends to equity and sustainability work we support through our [International Assistance program](#) and other partnerships, including membership in [Education International](#), the [Canadian Labour Congress](#), the [Canadian Teachers' Federation](#), the [Ontario Federation of Labour](#), and the [Ontario Teachers' Federation](#). Being a proud voice for provincial, national, and international workers' rights binds us together with workers everywhere. This brings with it the power of solidarity in the face of oppression, and to our fight for better working and living conditions for all. This is what collective strength does—it changes the world and enhances the lives of all.

Teachers and education workers in Ontario have faced many challenges, including the most recent attacks on publicly-funded education and the safe return to worksites as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic. OSSTF/FEESO members have always met those challenges and continue to do so. This has made OSSTF/FEESO one of the strongest and most respected education unions in Canada and beyond. That is a tribute to the strength and dedication of our membership at the grassroots level. With the spring 2022 provincial election and the fall 2022 municipal elections, we will work to elect a pro-education government that is committed to the same values as our membership—providing a world-class, robust, fully-funded, public education system that values the diversity of students and OSSTF/FEESO members.

OSSTF/FEESO continues to be the voice of education and you can access that voice quickly through our various social media channels:

[OSSTF/FEESO Facebook page](#) – @osstfnews  
[OSSTF/FEESO Twitter feed](#) – @osstf  
[OSSTF/FEESO Instagram page](#) – @osstf\_feeso

And via our other digital platforms:

[OSSTF/FEESO webpage](#)  
[Education Forum magazine](#)  
[Update Newsletter](#)  
[OSSTF/FEESO YouTube page](#)  
[Ask OSSTF](#)

In addition, we encourage you to sign up as a [Registered User](#) on the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Website so that you can access information, documents and surveys for members only. Once you have logged in, you can check your personal profile and update your non-employer email address so we can make sure you receive updates and important messages from your union. Our [Membership Database](#) team can assist you if you have any questions or have difficulties logging in.

I hope that you value your membership in OSSTF/FEESO and experience success in your career in education.

In solidarity,



Karen Littlewood, President