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**Connecting . . . Occasionally**

### **Why This Provincial Election Matters More Than Ever**

As we approach the **upcoming provincial election**, I cannot stress enough how crucial this moment is for all of us as educators. The government we elect will shape the future of **our working conditions, our students' learning environments, and the very foundation of public education in Ontario.**

Under the current government, we've seen firsthand the impact of their decisions:

- **Cuts to Education Funding** – Per-student funding has decreased, leading to **larger class sizes, fewer resources, and job losses for educators**, including occasional teachers.
- **Unconstitutional Wage Restraints** – Bill 124 capped public sector wage increases at **1% per year**, despite the rising cost of living. While the courts struck it down, this government has continued to fight against fair compensation.
- **Directed Hiring Practices** – The province has interfered with hiring rules, limiting **fair and transparent staffing opportunities** for occasional teachers.
- **Erosion of Public Education** – Their policies have weakened the system, placing **greater strain on teachers and students alike.**

The reality is simple: **who we elect determines our salaries, sick leave policies, benefits, and job security.** It also determines whether we work in well-funded, supportive schools or ones that continue to be under-resourced.

The current government is actively standing in the way of fair staffing, making it **harder for occasional teachers to secure stable employment.** Their approach prioritizes cost-cutting over student success, and we are already feeling the consequences.

This election is about **our future, our rights, and our profession.** We need to support candidates who believe in investing in education, respecting educators, and ensuring fair working conditions for all.

**Mark your calendar: February 27 – Provincial Election Day. Make a plan to vote. Encourage your colleagues, friends, and family to do the same.** Our collective voice has power—let’s use it to protect public education.

In solidarity,

**Nathan Core**

President, Waterloo Region Occasional Teachers’ Local

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**Food4Kids – Help Make a Difference as a Volunteer Driver!**



Food4Kids Waterloo Region is urgently seeking **volunteer drivers** to deliver food packages to schools across our community. Your support can directly **remove children from the waitlist** and ensure they receive the food they need over the weekends.

Every **Friday**, weekend food bags are sent to schools so that children in need can return on **Monday with full bellies**, ready to learn and thrive.

By giving just a small amount of your time—**weekly or bi-weekly**—you can **change a child's life**.

Help spread the word by **sharing this opportunity** with co-workers, family, friends, and neighbors.

To volunteer or learn more, contact **Emily Loro** at:



519-576-3443, ext. 5



[emilyloro@food4kidswr.ca](mailto:emilyloro@food4kidswr.ca)

Together, we can ensure no child goes hungry!

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## ETFO Podcast: Talking Politics at Work



ETFO's **Elementary** podcast has a new episode: "**Talking Politics at Work.**" Learn about your **rights** when discussing **elections and politics** in the workplace and community.



[Listen Now:](#)

- Available on **podcast apps**
- In the [Publications](#) section at [etfo.ca](http://etfo.ca)



**Know a student who wants to be on the podcast?** Email [podcast@etfo.org](mailto:podcast@etfo.org) for details!



**Follow Elementary** on your podcast app for new episodes. **Share with your networks!** #ETFO #EducatorsEngage

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## Provincial Election Meet & Greet with Local Candidates

**Together in Education (TIE)**, a coalition of education worker unions in Waterloo Region, is hosting a **Meet & Greet** with local candidates for the upcoming **provincial election**. This is your chance to hear directly from candidates, ask questions, and discuss key education and public sector issues.



**Location:** Edelweiss Tavern

**Date & Time:** February 19, 6:00 – 8:00 PM



### Agenda:

- **6:00 – 6:30 PM:** Formal discussion
- **6:30 – 8:00 PM:** Q&A & networking

**Make your voice heard!** Join us to engage with those shaping Ontario's future. **All are welcome!**

[RVSP](#)

[FLYER](#)

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Here's how members of the education community can financially plan for their futures



Between preparing lesson plans to participating in extracurricular activities, it can be hard to find the time to learn about your personal finances.

But financial planning is essential to your long-term well-being, and with proper planning, you can reach your financial goals in the most efficient way possible.

Here are a few key things you should know about financial planning and taxes ahead of the RRSP and tax deadlines: <https://bit.ly/40U4XjM>.

#### **LIMITED TIME OFFER**

Maximize your investments this RRSP season.

**Open a new RRSP, TFSA, FHSA, or non-registered account and get \$100\*!**

Visit <https://bit.ly/4gAp8YF> or call 1.800.263.9541 (cite promocode **Invest100**) to get started today.

*Educators Financial Group has been offering financial planning and a wide selection of investing and lending products and services exclusively to education members and their families since 1975. It is this strong history that has enabled them to become the education community's financial specialist — empowering educators to achieve their financial goals. Book your complimentary consultation today: <https://bit.ly/4hfk3Ga>.*

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#### ETFO Scholarships & Bursaries – Apply Now!

Are you looking to further your education or support a future educator? The **ETFO Scholarships and Bursaries Program** is now accepting applications! This program provides financial support to:



Members upgrading their qualifications



Members pursuing graduate studies



Members of designated groups, including Black and Indigenous educators



Children of ETFO members entering education programs



**Application Deadline: April 30, 2025**



**Decisions Announced: After June 30**

For more details, contact **Carla Pereira** at [cpereira@etfo.org](mailto:cpereira@etfo.org).

[Flyer/Poster](#)

## **WROTL**

### **Winter General Meeting 2025**

All members are invited to attend the WROTL Winter General Meeting 2025!

Tuesday February 18, 2025  
ETFO-WR Meeting Room  
4:45pm - 7:00pm

*Dinner will be provided.*

*We will address the following business during the meeting:*

- Election of Delegates to the Federation Annual Meeting
- Vote on Proposed Amendments to the Constitution
- Receive a Local update and a Budget update
- Question & Answer Session



[Click to Register!](#)

## Collective Bargaining Corner!



*Did you know...*

### **LTO Notice of Termination**

Did you know that Long-Term Occasional (LTO) teachers must receive a minimum of two (2) weeks' written notice before their assignment is

### **Paid Quarantine Leave for LTOs**

Did you know that if a Long-Term Occasional (LTO) Teacher is quarantined due to exposure to a communicable disease and is prevented from attending work by

### **LTO Assignments and Paid Professional Development Days**

Did you know that Long-Term Occasional (LTO) teachers are entitled to **paid PD days** when they

### **OTs Can Temporarily Remove Their Name from the Roster**

Did you know that Occasional Teachers who have worked at least **25 full or half days** in a school year can request

terminated or  
changed?

Public Health  
Authorities, they  
are entitled  
to **paid**  
**leave** without loss  
of experience or  
seniority? If  
remote work is  
possible, they are  
expected to fulfill  
their duties from  
home.

fall within their  
assignment?

to **temporarily**  
**remove their**  
**name** from the OT  
roster for up to  
one school year?

*Please reach out to the local if you have any questions about the Collective Agreement!*

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## Upcoming Events

February 17: Family Day (no school)

February 18: Winter General Meeting

February 21: Pay Day

February 24: Think Pink Crafting Night

February 27: Provincial Election- GET OUT & VOTE!

March 3: Differentiated Instruction Workshop

March 7: Let's Celebrate Ramadan!

March 7: Pay Day

March 10-14: March Break (no school)

March 24: Equity & Social Justice Book Study



[View email in browser](#)

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