

HEOT Hotline News

Winter 2021 Online Edition



Occasional Teachers Message from the editor...

We begin a new year with new promise for a better and brighter future with the vaccine finally here. I want to congratulate all occasional teachers, whether you chose to work virtually or in-person, for rising to the many challenges we faced and continue to face this school year with such professionalism and positivity. This edition of the newsletter brings useful information on virtual tools and tips, reports from executive members, and some bulletins from ETFO provincial. Take care of yourselves, and I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Annual Meeting in May.

Jacquie Tancoo, Newsletter Editor

Black History Month Poster



Click the Picture to get your own 2021 ETFO Black History Month Poster and many teaching resources.

Blast Emails

Our local has been actively collecting our members' non-board emails so that we can communicate quickly. So far we have about 1000 emails but we are still missing close to 700. It is important that you provide this information to us because we CANNOT put union information on the board's Google Gmail.

It's simple and its fast. Just go to our website (haltonot.ca) and click on **Secure Section**. A screen will pop up that asks you to **JOIN US**. Click on **Join Us** and fill in the information (it takes less than a minute) and then click **SUBMIT**. Within a day or 2 you will receive an email from this office to let you know that you are registered and what your access will be for the Secure Section.

For those who have provided your non-board email – thank you. If you have not been receiving our emails then check your SPAM or JUNK folder because often blast emails are sent there by your computer.

Are you interested in an Executive Position?

If you are then you should contact the HEOT office. All positions on the Executive will be up for election this spring – President, 1st Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, PL Chair, and 4 Members at Large who then cover a portfolio such as Status, Social, Communications, Goodwill & Awards, and Political Action.

We do provide some on-the-job training for all of our positions. Those interested should keep an eye on the website because nomination forms will be placed there by late March or early April.

To run for a position you must put in your nomination form one week before the Annual Meeting which will be held on May 26th – so your nomination will need to be in the office by **4:00 PM on May 18th**. Further details will be provided closer to the nomination timeframe. Some of the incumbents will be returning to run for the Executive, but a few of the current executive will be leaving us.

President's Message

Well, this year has been like no other so far. The COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted all of our lives including our means of earning an income. Many of our members have chosen not to go into schools this year because of COVID-19 and have either restricted themselves to virtual teaching or taken a leave of absence from our board to remain on our list. The fact that our board has enabled our members to work from home when doing a virtual assignment is magnificent. No other employee group has been provided with this privilege. If you have not taught this year as yet but would like to remain on our list then you need to act soon and apply for a Voluntary Leave of Absence (Collective Agreement Article 18.01). Send the request to Sara Harwood, HR Manager for OTs requesting the leave and providing your reason.

Our board has NOT committed to removing the 20-day rule as of yet. They believe that throughout this year there have been significant UNFILLED jobs that removing this requirement is not necessary. This may change depending on how long our current lockdown continues and students remain in virtual learning settings.

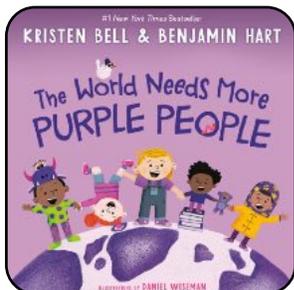
I know that work during this January has been light, but that is not an unusual trend. January work has always been light but this year it was lighter because of the pandemic and the lockdown. We can only hope that students are able to safely return to school soon and that work increases for our members.

I have been privileged to be your President for the majority of the past 19 years and I have enjoyed my role immensely. I have advocated for our members at all levels: board, ETFO, and with other OT presidents throughout the province. It feels strange to say that I will not be running this spring to continue as your president. I have decided that it is time to step aside, spend more time with family and friends and enjoy some leisure time. I won't be leaving completely, I will become the Past President for the next term and will still be involved, just not as much. I am looking forward to this time and wish those that follow at the Executive level every success possible. I know that our members will elect an effective and great executive come this May at our Annual Meeting.

Al Bero, President

Status

Our Status of Women work in the fall consisted mainly of two projects. The first was the donation of a children's picture book to each of our elementary school libraries titled *The World Needs More Purple People* by Kristen Bell and Benjamin Hart. It is a wonderful book encouraging readers to focus on what brings people together rather than our differences. A great message for young readers.



We also donated \$920 in gift cards to a family staying at the Halton Women's Shelter. The annual Holiday Hamper program is something our executive has been participating in for many years and we were thrilled that it could continue despite restrictions of the pandemic.

Currently, the Status of Women is preparing for our annual International Women's Day Celebrations. Though the annual Dinner Party will not be taking place, we will still be contributing by donating to cover the cost of five Afghan Women Teachers' Salaries. This is a program organized by CW4WA - Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.

Our executive has also invested in a number of beautiful IWD T-Shirts that we will once again be giving away as part of our annual Women's Day Quiz, this year focusing on Women Athletes, particularly Canadian Women Athletes. Stay tuned

and snag yourself a T-Shirt to brighten up your days!

Lastly, the Women of Halton Action Movement (WHAM) invites you to recognize IWD March 8th 2021 by joining them for their (un)Dinner Party 2021. Due to COVID-19, they will celebrate International Women's Day in a new way. They are asking us to support this (un) Dinner Party at the cost of a Dinner Party ticket. (\$65.00 with a tax receipt for the full amount). Donors may pay tribute to a significant woman in their lives by adding that person's name to the Hall of Honour on their website. Click on the link www.thedinnerpartyiwd.ca/event-to-donate.

On International Women's Day – March 8, 2021 – enjoy visiting their website at www.thedinnerpartyiwd.ca to view the Hall of Honour and to watch 2 short videos from guest speakers Dr. Janet Morrison, President and Vice Chancellor of Sheridan College, and Perdita Felicien, Olympic Gold Medal Hurdler, author, T.V. host and speaker.

The global theme for IWD 2021 is **#ChoosetoChallenge** Challenging gender bias and inequality.



Mary Kebalo-Plata, Status Chair

Did you know?



OTF has a wide array of practical programs and supports.

Edvantage is a program which offers significant discounts on purchases. Information on certification, teaching jobs, Curriculum Forum and several other programs group as they are posted. Click the OTF image above for all OTF Services.



Get the scoop! When you sign up to receive news about OTIP's latest contests, special offers & insurance news you'll also be entered into a monthly draw for a \$500 gift card! Subscribe and enter our contest today. <https://bit.ly/3f5MXcF> #OTIPUpdate

Social Events

Hello fellow occasional teachers! I miss seeing you all at our events in different physical locations, but I'm glad we can socialize virtually. I am working diligently at being creative with our social activities and yet make them fun and interactive too. I strive to provide a refreshing break from the hard work we are doing this year.

In October we had a fun, motivational speaker on Zoom. She entertained us with uplifting, humorous stories and suggestions for staying positive.

We had a wonderful yoga class on Zoom in the comfort of our own homes. Some had cameras on and others were off as we did a class at our own level. It left us feeling refreshed and relaxed.

Trivia night using the Kahoot app was a lot of fun...we played several trivia games on food, general trivia and Jeopardy.

Confundrum Escape Room ran a challenging virtual escape room called "Blackbeard's Brig". We were in two breakout rooms and had to try to work with our team to solve a bunch of puzzles to try to escape... it is much more difficult virtually than in the room with physical props.

We are looking forward to a chef-led cooking class on February 18th. She is sending a grocery list for us to purchase items and prepare along with her on Zoom. We are making "Dutch Babies" which are similar to a pancake or Yorkshire pudding. They are very versatile and can be savoury for a main course or sweet for a dessert. Spots are full, however there is a wait list.

The gardener we used last spring will be running an indoor planting session. She has listed suggested soil, seeds and materials to start your vegetable garden now. You can buy them soon and bring them on March 23rd to plant with her on Zoom.



Depending on the protocols of the COVID-19 pandemic, we may have a pub night on April 22nd. If we can't get together we may try a meeting on Zoom where we can discuss our favourite beverage and food pairings.

I have had an offer for another cooking class. I am happy to entertain other ideas/requests you may have.

Please continue to monitor our website and our Halton Elementary Occasional Teacher group for invites for these events with links to register. As a few of the events have limited enrolment, you need to commit to coming so you don't take up a spot unnecessarily. I am looking forward to seeing you soon!

Gay Ahmed,
Social Chair

Political Action



Colleagues, we hope this message finds you well. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to read this newsletter and stay informed about the business of your union.

Daily OTs know how difficult it is not having paid sick days, especially now, in these COVID-19 times. You are invited to visit this website and send a letter to your elected representatives in support of permanent paid sick days for all: <https://www.decentworkandhealth.org/>

Do you remember one year ago when we were picketing in the cold, proudly wearing Cuts Hurt Kids, Class Size Matters, and OTs Make #ETFOstrong buttons?

ETFO Provincial is already thinking ahead to the next Ontario election and has hired 4 full-time political organizers to help locals work towards defeating the Ford government in June 2022.

On January 28-29, Nicole D'Angelo, Brad Boehmer and Grant Davidson attended the ETFO Provincial Political Action Conference to learn strategies to reach our members and get out the vote. We'd love to have your help with this; if you would like to be part of our Political Action Committee, please contact AI at president@haltonot.ca

With the current political climate, it is always important to show our support for public education. Stay safe & healthy!

In solidarity,

Nicole D'Angelo,
Political Action Chair

Changes to the Annual Planner:

The planner was sent for printing in late August. The information in it was up-to-date at that time but we are always faced with changes from our board. Below are some of this year's changes:

1. Exec. Officer of Human Resources has changed to:
Superintendent of Human Resources
Sari Taha Ext. 3272
2. HR Manager for OTs has changed to:
Sara Harwood Ext. 3297
3. HR Administrator for OTs has changed to:
Caroline Ozimek Ext. 3235

4. Reg. 274/Seniority has changed to
Staffing and Recruiting Manager



1st Vice President Report

To take a headline from a recent newspaper, "What a year it has been". First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, as we continue to support each other in our role as occasional teachers. I have been a proud ETFO member for almost 30 years now, and believe strongly in the public education system and the collaboration and support that our ETFO provides, but I also know that a union is only as strong as its members. As the first half of this school year comes to a close, I have to say that it is an honour to represent you and to be a part of an exceptional Executive that works hard on your behalf.

Remember to continue to tell yourself that you are a teacher and that you are amazing and awesome. We don't hear that enough from each other. We are living and working in a world that continues to wear us down if we don't keep reminding ourselves and each other of how awesome and amazing we are. We are teachers and we need to give ourselves permission to be proud of that.

The pandemic has provided unique opportunities for occasional teachers this year. The number of available LTOs, in school itinerant LTO positions, the elimination of Reg. 274 and the virtual classroom are all new to us – on top of the new COVID-19 protocols and mandatory PPE.

As of January this year, we have double the usual number of LTOs in our schools – over 600. This is partially due to the in school LTOs that were hired to combat the high rate of unfilled jobs in the fall and the creation of new virtual positions as schools started up in September.

With the elimination of Reg. 274 and the depletion of the LTO list, all occasional teachers are able to and encouraged to apply for any LTO advertised. This is a new opportunity.

The virtual classroom can be an intimidating experience for many of our members. With the shutdown continuing, with no defined end at this point, we are encouraging everyone to try virtual teaching. There are a number of resources to be found on MyHDSB (schoogle "virtual classroom") or ask to shadow a classroom teacher you are familiar with. Take this unique opportunity to reach out and learn a new tool for your teacher toolkit. We do not know what the future will bring, but given the investment of time and resources, Boards are probably going to keep the virtual classroom around in some form into the future.

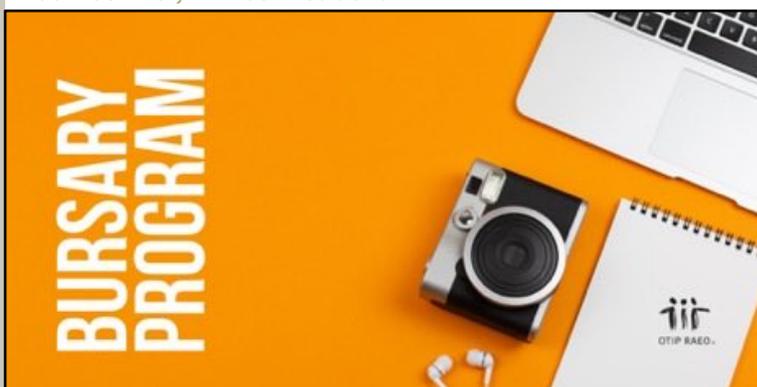
Be sure to stay safe. Teachers, as a profession, are limited in their ability to refuse to work under unsafe conditions as we have the responsibility of student supervision that trumps all. Given that, we do have rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to a safe workplace. If you ever have any concerns about your safety in a workplace call the office for direction. Along with the rights protected by our collective agreement come the responsibility of staying informed and being involved. Keep up to date with what is happening through our webpages (Provincially at etfo.ca and locally at haltonot.ca) and our Facebook page (HEOT). Be sure to take advantage of the Professional Learning opportunities, the resources in the Lending Library and the subsidies that your Local provides to help support Occasional Teachers in Halton. Social events, Professional Learning opportunities and the Communications through the website and newsletter are the most visible elements of HEOT service, but there are many other activities happening in the background working to improve the lives of Occasional Teachers here in Halton. Collective bargaining, Status, Health and Safety, Goodwill and Awards Committees are active in providing direct support in improving your working conditions. Be sure to check out the resources available to you through the Lending Library and the subsidies that are available to all Members to help with the cost of Professional Learning books or courses.

I encourage you to be involved in your Union. Stay informed, attend a virtual event, sign up for a workshop, join a committee, run for the Executive or become a delegate to the ETFO Annual Meeting. Whether you are at the beginning of your teaching career or nearing the end, it will be a great experience.

Thank you those who organized and prepared this newsletter, the executive for all they do for us all year long and, again, to you, for taking the time to be informed.

As always, if you have a questions or concerns, please contact the office.

Brad Boehmer, 1st Vice President



#onted community: you could WIN \$5,000 for your school's project or initiative! Contest closes March 31, 2021. Learn more and apply today: <https://bit.ly/3c3OJLW> #OTIPupdate



PRS Bulletin #111 provides ETFO members with information and advice about keeping well. It also provides links to supports that are available to protect and improve their overall wellness during the pandemic.

The Meaning of Wellness

Wellness is more than keeping physically and mentally fit. Many components help support a member's sense of wellness. These can include: economic stability; intellectual stimulation; meaningful work opportunities; social networks; spirituality; and a connection to nature and the environment.

Even at the best of times, the demands of working in a school environment make it challenging for educators to maintain an optimum level of wellness. During the pandemic, the challenge to stay well has become even more difficult.

The Challenge to Maintain Mental Health and Wellness During the Pandemic

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) released a report in November 2020 called Teacher Mental Health Check-In Survey. The report found that 46% of teachers across the country are reporting concerns about their own mental health and well-being as a result of the pandemic. More than 72% of teachers reported that meeting personal and professional expectations during the pandemic is "very draining" or "severely draining."

The CTF report confirms that many factors are affecting educators' mental health during the pandemic:

- social distancing and masking requirements make it more difficult to connect with students and collaborate with colleagues;
- physical workspaces, either at home or at work, are challenging to navigate;

[Click here to view the entire PRS bulletin #111 Mental Health and Wellness Tips for Members During the Pandemic](#)

Your Rights and Your Employer's Duties

Professional Learning

Well, we have had a very busy and unique fall! Flexibility was the word of the day! Collaboration was so evident and we have made it through the first term. The Christmas break was a welcome and needed break for everyone.

Business has not been the same as usual, but we have all adapted nicely and carried on! Our PL sessions have taken place using Zoom and have been well attended. We tried to respond to your needs and added 2 additional workshops on Virtual Learning, that were outstanding.

Information for upcoming events will continue to be advertised on our Google Group as well as our website. Events are advertised well before registration opens, so be sure to make note of the events that you wish to attend. We will continue to use Eventbrite for ticket processing and participants are limited to one ticket per registration and must be members of HEOT. Please remember that you will be blocked from the next event that you want to attend if you have signed up for an event and do not attend. You must provide notification of cancellation within 48 hours of that event.

Many of you have taken advantage of the Resource and the Professional Learning (PL) subsidies available through HEOT. Every member can apply for a Resource subsidy of up to \$50 to use for items such as books, CDs, and resources required to teach. Computers do not qualify for this subsidy. We also cannot reimburse you for orders done through your Scholastic book order if you are in fact still processing these. Please contact me if you have questions as to whether a particular resource qualifies for this subsidy. This year, we have decided to include headphones as a resource that you can use this subsidy for because many of you are involved in virtual teaching. Once we return to the classroom, these will no longer be required. The \$150 PL subsidy can be used to attend workshops and events. It can also be used towards an AQ or ABQ course after you have been a union member for 12 months. The paperwork and requirements are located on our website (haltonot.ca) under Member Resources and Subsidies, in drop down menus. For either subsidy you can

submit multiple receipts, but they must all be submitted at one time. Please note that these subsidies are available until the funding is depleted or until May 14th this year.

Since our first newsletter, we have had a number of amazing PL events: No Fear of French, Literacy, Interview Skills, Mental Health - Yours and Theirs, Psycho-educational Assessments: What Do They Mean?, Virtual Teaching- 2 sessions, ELL Learners, Anti-Racism - Part 1.

Upcoming Events in 2021

Feb. 9th – the second half of the Anti-Racism Workshop

Feb. 25th – Resume Writing with Shannon Clark

Mar. 4th – Numeracy with Melanie Goncalves

Mar. 25th – FDK with the Halton Resource Connection

April 8th – Executive Functioning with Sandra Lynch

Other PL Opportunities

1. Halton Board PL:

This is ongoing right now and for the most part is advertised in the various Google groups. I try to vet the emails that come out and forward them to our Google group when I feel they are relevant. The Program Department has also created a number of sessions that are in response to the needs of the system.

2. ETFO PL:

Go to the ETFO website and find the Event Portal. You must create an account to see the member events. Once you have an account, new and exciting PL events are available to you! Keep an eye and ear out for ETFO summer academy workshops. Currently all PL is virtual. You might also want to check out ETFO's website that is specifically designed for Occasional Teachers - <http://etfo-ots.ca/> There are resources, classroom support, tips and ideas to help you succeed every day.

Hope to see you soon! Stay safe everyone!

Teri Caldwell-McCann, PL Chair



Awards & Goodwill

This Christmas as a special tribute we sent a one-time seasonal flower arrangement to our Lifetime HEOT members. They were very much appreciated as it cheered our Lifetime members greatly to be remembered at the end of such a difficult year.

In lieu of Christmas cards we made a \$200.00 donation to Books to Bars, a program which provides books to incarcerated women to read to their children.

We made an extra donation in January to each of our four local food banks: Burlington, Oakville, Milton, and Georgetown. An additional donation will be made later in the spring. We will continue to support Chai Life which provides help to children suffering from cancer and also The Hospital Activity Book. The donation to the Rock was doubled to help further fund an outreach program for teenagers as they have been overwhelmed with calls concerning mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will also continue to send cards to members to recognize significant milestones in their lives.

Awards will not be presented this year in the spring as it is difficult to determine all the great work teachers are doing in the two types of teaching environments this year.

Please keep yourself healthy and safe and hopefully we will meet again soon.

Donna Bethune, Awards & Goodwill Chair

OTF Learning!



Need to find some added training in your teaching area? Then OTF is your source. OTF offers professional learning programs, which provide training, resources, and support in numerous areas.

These excellent, ready-to-use, professional learning opportunities provide ongoing support throughout the year, in ways that work for you. Don't hesitate to discover both of these fabulous new tools!

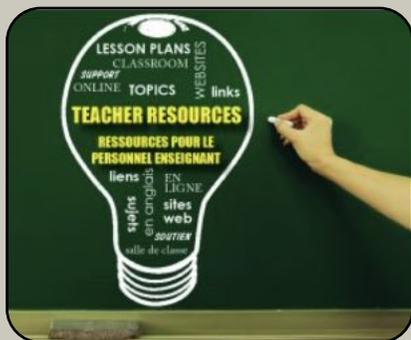
OTF Resources for OTs, Mentors, Teacher Candidates, & New Teachers



Just click on [Survive & Thrive](#) to see this new and improved resource for beginning teachers, occasional teachers, mentors, and teacher candidates.

You'll find hands-on information that will be of value in the classroom, in dealing with colleagues, parents and others, and in managing your work-life balance. The website contains hundreds of practical, hands-on resources on useful topics such as classroom management, special needs students, working with parents, occasional teaching, assessment and reporting.

OTF Teacher Resources



This page is designed to assist and support educators in the classroom.

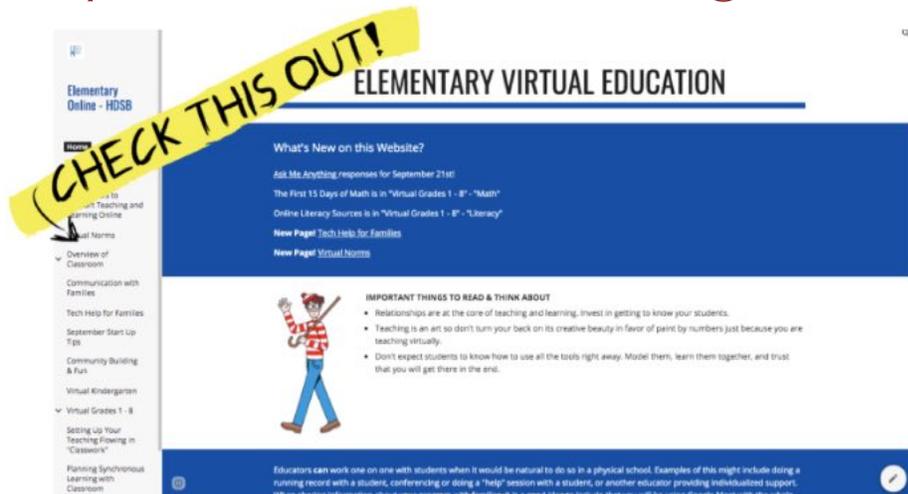
OTF Connects archived webinars: check them out for great ideas, helpful hints and resources.

Useful Links: hundreds of links to websites of value to educators. The websites are categorized into topics to help you focus on your interests.

Lesson Plans: lesson plans developed by teachers in several of OTF's professional development projects.

Click the resources image so see all OTF offers!

MyHDSB - School Programs



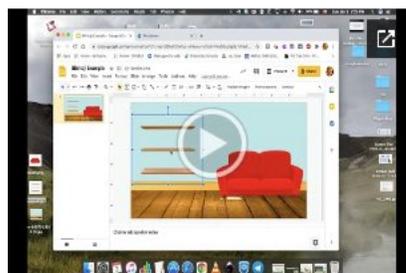
Click the [ELEMETARY VIRTUAL EDUCATION](#) area found in MyHDSB, under School Programs. Here you will find many useful digital tools, helpful chair chat videos, assessment and reporting assistance, and digital content for literacy, math, science, virtual kindergarten, and much more. Below I've highlighted areas of the Virtual Education Online area for Daily Occasional teachers as well as LTOs that may be teaching a virtual classroom. Please check out all the links as there is quite a lot of good and useful information, templates, tools, etc. for everyone's use.

Occasional Educators Getting Started in Google Classroom



Need some tips or to troubleshoot Google Meet and Classroom? Wondering what to do if you have time left over after everyone's finished the activity left by the teacher? [Check it out!](#)

Digital Tools to Support Learning and Teaching Online



Videos to teach you how to use:

- Bitmoji Classroom
- Screencastify, SC submit, estensions, dashboard, and locating the SC videos in your drive
- Google Jamboard
- Adding Audio to a Google Slide
- Creating a Google Form
- Google Doc features and how to provide feedback in a Doc
- How to organize Gmail and create a contact list
- Many more instructional videos

Templates to Personalize Area



In this area you will find many templates you can use for Math, Literacy and so much more.

Examples of the templates on Jamboard:

- Sight word tic-tac-toe, SNAP, word search
- Patterened sentence building, making words
- Word families, rhyming, blending, segmenting games
- For Math: concentration fractions, memory game, Mr. Potatohead