

OSSTF Limestone District 27

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Memorandum

To: All Teachers

From: Steve Newstead, District and Teachers' Bargaining Unit President
Andrea Loken, Teachers' Bargaining Unit Chief Negotiator

Date: February 25, 2011

Re: Bill 168 training grievance

Teachers of the Limestone District School Board are proud of their professionalism. This has been at the root of the good working relationship between the Board and the Federation.

In October, the Board decided to provide training for its staff regarding Bill 168, "*An Amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act*", at the regularly scheduled after-school staff meetings. Many of you called the OSSTF District Office with your concerns prior to and after the training took place. Given that the Federation was not consulted nor informed in advance by the Board of this change in use of staff meetings, we were forced into a reactionary position. We requested that the Board move the training to the October Professional Development Day, but this request was denied.

In recent years, Educational workers in Ontario have been subjected to a multitude of legislative changes that have had a direct impact on Teachers' workload. The OSSTF has been instrumental in insisting that our Members be properly trained and informed of their professional duties. We object, however, to training taking place outside the regular instructional day (class time). This is supported by Articles 15 and 39 of our Collective Agreement.

Based on these Articles, the Teachers' Bargaining Unit (TBU) of OSSTF filed a grievance on behalf of all Teachers. As a remedy, we asked only that the Board provide future training during the regular instructional day. Under the previous Progressive Conservative Government of Ontario, Teachers worked together for many years to successfully defend their working conditions. Providing training after the instructional day extends their workday and shows a lack of acknowledgement of their daily professional obligations such as marking, communicating with parents, and preparing classes.

OSSTF provided suggestions to the Board for ways to provide training during the regular day which would not create undue hardship to the Board. Ideas included:

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| Early Dismissal | Early dismissal is allowed for other school events and has been used effectively in the past to provide training and/or professional development. |
| School Assemblies | Training may be provided for Teachers when the students are at grade forums or assemblies if all Teachers are not required for supervision. |

The Board has recently provided a response to our arguments which denies the grievance. The Federation is very disappointed with this response and sees it as a serious and concerning change in the Board's relationship with our Teachers. On a positive note, the Board has stated that it will consider taking our suggestions on how to provide future training. While the Board has stated that there was no intention of disrespect, we expect the Board to demonstrate this by being more consultative and understanding in the future.

Teachers should be aware that OSSTF expects that all training, including WHMIS, anaphylaxis training, accessibility training, and first aid be available to Members during the instructional day (assigned class time). These expectations have been agreed to by the Board and the Federation during many negotiations and Board-Federation meetings. Please contact your Branch President and/or TBU President for more information or to report any specific concerns you may have at your worksite.