



President's Message

Can you believe we are halfway through this 2009-2010 school year? What a busy time in my office. Just as you must feel overwhelmed with all the changes in working with our students, I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed participating in all the committees, both at the Board and Provincial levels, that are developing policy, procedures and protocol with all the new Ministry initiatives. At this time I'm sitting on the School Calendar Committee, Behaviour Management Committee, Early Learning Committee and subcommittee, Privacy of Information Committee and subcommittee in addition to the regular duties of District work, Provincial work and Bargaining Unit work. I'm trying hard to take care of all our member's interests in addition to visiting you at your worksites and talking to you face to face. I really love seeing you working with our students! It's so rewarding for me to know that you unquestionably make a difference in the lives of each and every student you contact in your workday! Our kids truly love the UGDSB Educational Assistants and Special Program Assistants. Your warmth, kindness and dedication is reflected in the progress of our students and I'm so proud to be your representative. I am always happy to hear the positive messages coming from Administrators, teachers and other school staff regarding how their schools could not function without the amazing talents and support of EA's and SPA's. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

Warm regards,
Tracey Selkirk

Early Learning Program

As you might be aware, the Ministry of Education has legislated Early Learning in the form of Full day JK and SK programs across the Province of Ontario. Each school Board is required to implement these programs beginning September 2010. There are many unknowns at this point and the UGDSB has struck a committee, to oversee the implementation of the core and extended programs; establish sub committees who will research, develop and organize specific components of the implementation; and to communicate with respective departments, staff, unions and community partners during implementation. The program is supposed to look something like this:

Before regular school hours	During school hours	After school hours
ECE and "ECE helper"	ECE and Teacher	ECE and "ECE helper"



What does this mean to you? Well, as I said, there are many unknowns. The Ministry's direction with respect to 'providing core day programs and extended programs before and after school hours' is clear. What is also clear, from the Ministry, is that ECE's will work in conjunction with teachers to facilitate this program. The unknowns are mostly around how the logistics of staffing will unfold. There are also issues regarding financing and sustainability of this program. As of today, February 12, 2010, there have been 13 schools named in Upper Grand to start this program in Sept 2010. Our Board has decided that they will offer the program initially in 7 schools and then add additional schools if need and funding allows. For now though, I want to reassure you that there will be some ECE's hired for these programs because the Ministry has mandated that certified ECE's will be running these programs along with teachers. We believe, (meaning your President, Provincial OSSTF) that these ECE members fall under the jurisdiction of our Collective Agreement and should be in our Bargaining Unit. We also believe that the "ECE helpers", who will be assisting the ECE's, and who are not certified ECE's, before and after regular school hours fall under the jurisdiction of our Collective Agreement and should be in our Bargaining Unit. The Board has not ruled on this as yet. I also want to assure you that should there be a special needs student in the JK/SK population, and that student requires assistance, that assistance will still be provided by an Educational Assistant. Your President in on the committee representing your interests. Please keep an eye out for updates. If you have concerns and questions regarding ELP, send me an email!

Tracey Selkirk

Executive 2009-2010

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EA/SPA WEBSITE

We are in the process of converting our website to a new format based on the Provincial OSSTF template. Our District Communications Office, Blake Martin (John F. Ross) will be assisting us in updating our site and transferring our information from our old OSSTF D18 website (www.d18osstf.com) to our new site www.d18.osstf.ca. Please be patient with us while this occurs. We are updating some of our older information and adding some great new features to better serve our membership! Thanks to Blake for taking on this task! Some of the information currently on our new site includes fantastic information on leaves, Maternity leave, Employment Insurance information, Health and Safety info, cool resource websites for our students, and our Collective Agreement. Please keep checking back for new additions for our casual EA's and of course updates on Ministry initiatives such as the Early Learning Program.

Do's & Don'ts with an Angry Student

Do use the student's name

Do remove the audience (if possible)

Do use humour to de-escalate the situation

Do double your distance

Do attempt to distract the child

Do minimize the discussion (This is not a teachable moment)

Don't place your hands on the child (unless there is a safety concern)

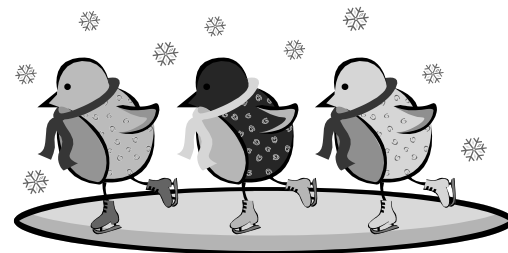
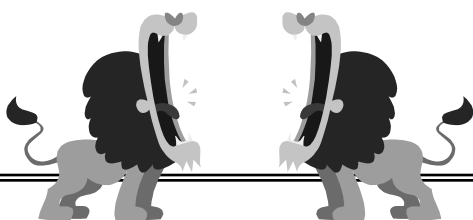
Don't raise your voice

Don't threaten consequences (talk about it when the student is more relaxed)

Don't point your finger

Don't crowd the student

Remember to remain calm and not to get pulled into a power struggle



AMPA

What the heck is that? The Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly is the governing body of our Union. Once a year, Delegates, who have been selected across the Province, assemble in Toronto for 4 days to change policies/procedures and the direction of our Union for the coming Federation year. This year your representatives are Tracey Selkirk, John Potocska, Nicole Penner, Cindy Whiteman and Darcel Bates. You can be rest assured that they will be standing strong for the interests of the EA/SPA group In District 18.

BMS Training

We want to remind you that BMS training is offered throughout the school year. While OSSTF doesn't advocate for training on your own time as part of your job, these BMS training courses are offered at Board PD days. The Union feels it is in your best interests to be trained, not only for the safety of our students, but also for your own health and safety.



Attention

All EA/SPAs must follow legal obligations and responsibilities as stated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and by Upper Grand School Board Policies. This means that if YOU are injured on the job, YOU are responsible for completing all required paperwork (i.e. Accident/Incident Report, Violent Incident Report, WSIB forms as necessary).

Workers are also required to inform their employer or supervisor of any violations of the OHSA including any workplace hazards.

Failure to comply with the law and Board policies can have serious consequences.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your Union Executive IMMEDIATELY. The Union and the Board need to know! If administrators, department heads, teachers or colleagues are blocking the completion of health and safety forms (i.e. Accident/Incident Report, Violent Incident Report), they are in VIOLATION OF Board Policy.



Bill 157 Update (P/PM 144 and 145)

The government introduced legislation on March 12, 2009 designed to

Permit Principals to delegate their disciplinary duties under Part XIII of the Education Act (safe schools provisions)

Require school staff to report serious student incidents to the Principals

Require Principals to contact parents of victims of such incidents

Require school staff to respond to address inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour.

This bill came into effect on February 1, 2010. School Board personnel received training on October 20-21, 2009. Each school board was then responsible for organizing and delivering the Safe Schools and Equity and Inclusive Education training through one day face-to-face training sessions for school teams according to the following:

The Ministry will provide boards with copies of the training manual for each school level team member along with an electronic copy of the materials.

There should be one team of three per school and the team should include: one Principal or VP, one teaching staff and one non-teaching staff.

Board's costs of training will be reimbursed per Ministry guidelines.

The basic parameters of Bill 157 are:

All employees are to report an incident that would be considered suspension worthy to the Principal. Each school should develop guidelines on what type of incidents are reported.

There is a standardized report form on which the incident is documented/reported.

Privacy legislation prohibits employees from copying the form. Employees should, however, keep a record of the report and the receipt that the Principal is required to give to the reporting employee.

All employees who witness the incident must file reports.

The Principal is required to act on the report. The Principal reports whether or not action was taken based on the report. If action is required it is documented in student's OSR.

There should be no liability on the employee when reporting. The employee reports what they witness. There is more of a risk if the incident is not reported.

If the employer does not provide proper training, employees are still required to report.

Each employer is required to provide employee training on a number of related topics. All schools must have an anti-bullying plan and a strategy to promote a

Did You Know...



-Laughing lowers levels of stress hormones and strengthens the immune system. Six-year-olds laugh an average of 300 times a day. Adults only laugh 15 to 100 times a day.

-The Titanic was the first ship to use the SOS signal.

-The average person who stops smoking requires one hour less sleep per night.

-The roar that we hear when we place a seashell next to our ear is not the ocean, but rather the sound of blood surging through the veins in the ear.

-The pupil of the eye expands as much as 45 percent when a person looks at something pleasing.

-If you keep your mouth closed when peeling onions, you won't cry.

-The reason honey is so easy to digest is that it's already been digested by a bee.

-When you blush, the lining of your stomach also turns red.

-Most soccer players run 7 miles in a game.

-It takes about 20 seconds for a red blood cell to circle the whole body.

-Women blink nearly twice as much as men.

Submitted by Tracey Crewson



Immunization-Are You Up to Date??

VACCINE	WHO NEEDS IT
Diphtheria and Tetanus	Everyone, every 10 years
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Everyone, once in adulthood
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	People who have not had the vaccine or the disease
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	People who have not had the vaccine or the disease
Influenza	Annually for people at high risk of complications from influenza
Pneumococcus	People 19-64 yrs with specific medical conditions, everyone over 65
Hepatitis A & B	People with medical, occupational or lifestyle risks
Meningococcus	People with specific medical conditions and people living in residential accommodations, including students and military recruits

Gluten-Free Diet & Autism

A gluten-free diet is an eating plan that eliminates gluten (protein found in some grains) from the diet. Foods and drinks which contain wheat, barley, rye, oats or anything made from these grains are avoided. A gluten-free diet is often combined with a casein-free diet (milk protein) for children with autism.

Advocates of the gluten-free diet claim that many children with autism have gastrointestinal problems that make it difficult to digest grains properly. There are different thoughts on how gluten can affect these children. The most studied theory is that gluten leads to high levels of protein by-products called gluteomorphones, in some children with autism.

Gluteomorphones could reduce their desire for social interaction, block pain messages and increase confusion. By eliminating gluten, it is hoped that the child's behaviour will improve.

Following a gluten-free diet can be difficult as gluten is present in many prepared foods. It is a very different way of food preparation and can be difficult to ensure that enough proper nutrition is given. Eating out can be very taxing!!

And the research says...

Elimination diets with children with autism is relatively new, and have almost always included a gluten and casein free diet together. One well controlled study focused on children who had abnormally high protein by-products in their urine and were therefore more likely to be sensitive to both proteins. One group was fed a strict casein/gluten-free diet for 12 months.

This group had significantly fewer autistic symptoms than the control group who were not fed the diet. Another study focused on children autism regardless of the level of protein by-products in their urine. Overall, the study found no significant differences in the behaviour of the children on the diet than the control group, but only lasted 6 weeks. Because both casein and gluten was eliminated, it isn't clear if one protein or both was responsible. In another study, a gluten-free only diet did show behaviour improvement but was not done with a control group.

Bottom line—there is some evidence showing that a gluten-free diet combined with a casein-free diet can help improve the behaviour of some children with autism but more testing is needed.



Amazing...!!

These facts are taken from "My Stroke of Insight", by Jill Bolte Taylor, PH.D. It is a fascinating read about her journey of recovery from a massive stroke at the age of 37. She shares the remarkable insight that she gains through her recovery. I would recommend it to everyone! LMc

"The typical adult human body is composed of approximately fifty *trillion cells*. That would be 8,333 times all of the six billion people on the planet! What's amazing is that this huge conglomeration of bone cells, muscle cells, connective tissue cells, sensory cells, etc. tend to get along and work together to generate perfect health."

"The superficial layers of the cortex, (of the brain) which we see when we look at the external surface of the brain, are filled with neurons that we believe to be uniquely human. These most recently "added on" neurons create circuits that manufacture our ability to think linearly—as in complex language and the ability to think in abstract, symbolic systems like mathematics. The deeper layers of the cerebral cortex make up the cells of the limbic system. These are the cortical cells we share with other mammals.

The limbic system functions by placing an affect, or emotion, on information streaming in through our senses. Because we share these structures with other creatures, the limbic system cells are often referred to as the "reptilian brain" or the "emotional brain." When we are newborns, these cells become wired together in response to sensory stimulation. It is interesting to note that although our limbic system functions throughout our lifetime, *it does not mature*. As a result, when our emotional "buttons" are pushed we retain the ability to react to incoming stimulation as though we were a *two-year-old*, even when we are adults."