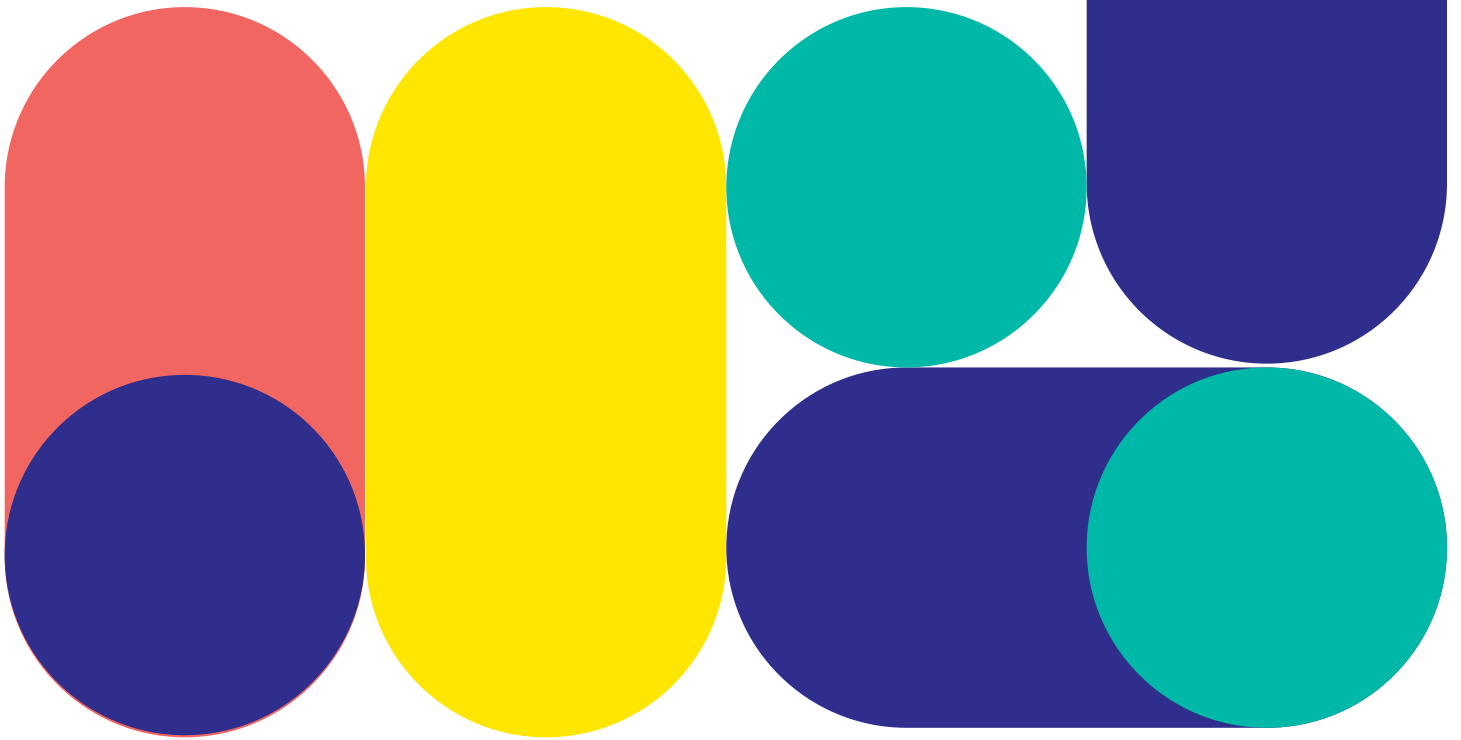


2024

Welcome to ETFFO

A guide for **new members** of the
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario



**Have you
experienced violence
at work?**

**ETFO's Action on
Violence Toolkit has
resources to help.**



You have health and safety rights in the workplace. Understanding and asserting those rights is crucial to addressing violence in schools. Visit etfohealthandsafety.ca for:

- details about ETFO's Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools
- an interactive flow chart on reporting violent incidents
- shareable resources (brochure, wallet card) explaining rights and responsibilities
- information about your health and safety rights and responsibilities, including the right to refuse unsafe work
- frequently asked questions about topics related to violence, such as work refusals, safety plans, risk assessments, and more
- ETFO's Violence Work Refusal Checklist to help you determine if enough is being done to keep you safe
- an ETFO Action on Violence poster to display in your workplace
- statistics from ETFO's all-member violence survey

**VIOLENCE AT
WORK IS
NOT OKAY.**

You are not alone.

Your workplace steward, health and safety representative, and ETFO local office are all sources of support and information. Visit etfohealthandsafety.ca for more information and helpful resources.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

With over 83,000 members, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) is the largest educator union in Canada. When you accepted your position with your school board, you became an ETFO member and part of our collective strength, enthusiasm, and commitment to each other and to our profession.

ETFO strives to serve our members in several ways. As a union, we defend our members and workplace rights through bargaining and advocacy. As a professional organization, we deliver a wide range of personal and professional development, as well as leadership and training opportunities.

For almost 30 years, ETFO has fought for – and won – many improvements to working conditions for our members through assertive collective bargaining and proactive political lobbying. These successes include 200 minutes of preparation time in 2004. ETFO's fierce advocacy also resulted in primary class size caps in the 2004 round of bargaining, reductions in class size averages in grades 4 to 8 during the 2008 round, and a staffing model for the new Full-Day Kindergarten program that included designated early childhood educators (DECEs) in 2009. As a result, we welcomed DECEs as members in 2010. The enshrining of teacher professional judgement through the 2015 Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Agreement continues to be a critical aspect for teacher members and the profession.

Over the last year, we have continued to accumulate wins through collective bargaining. I am grateful to our members for their strong solidarity and support throughout the 2023-24 school year, and to parents and communities across the province who know that educators are not only fighting for fair wages and benefits, but for high-quality, fully funded public education and the resources our students need to be successful.

With this support, we were able to remain focused on getting government cuts off the bargaining table and making improvements to members' working conditions, which are inherently tied to students' learning conditions. In the last round of bargaining, we defended professional judgement and preserved sick leave, negotiated funding for 401 new specialist teaching positions, and increased wages.

These are important wins, but the reality is there has been a significant decrease in education funding in real dollars since the Ford government came to power in 2018. Educators across the province have been feeling the impact of these cuts for years. Imagine what we could achieve for the future of public education if the provincial government decided to work with us, rather than against us.

There are many fulfilling opportunities you will experience as an educator, but there will also be challenges. Remember – you are never alone because your union is here to help. No matter where you work in the province, ETFO is just a call or email away. Please stay connected with your local and provincial union.

And get involved! From professional learning to curriculum writing, political action, social justice work, health and safety, and advocacy, there are so many ways you can be an active part of your union.

Welcome to ETFO. We're so glad you've joined us.



Karen Brown
President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario



**Elementary
Teachers'
Federation of
Ontario**

WELCOME TO THE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

Across Ontario, the union represents 83,000 teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators (DECEs), education support personnel (ESP), and professional support personnel (PSP) who work in 2,400 public elementary schools. As an ETFO member you are supported and defended by the union provincially and on a regional level by one of the 76 ETFO locals. The name of your local is associated with your district school board.

The formation of our union was a momentous event when the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF) merged in 1998 to form one strong, united Federation.

The dedicated members of the merger negotiation teams were driven to build a constitution that worked for all members. FWTAO members pushed to ensure the systemic oppression of women was addressed, and women's representation and dedicated funding for training programs were merger requirements. While discussions were challenging at times, they resulted in a Federation that has become Canada's strongest and most influential teacher union, continuing the work of the two federations that had promoted and protected the interests of public school educators for 80 years.

Playing a leadership role in Canada to advocate and train members to be agents of change, and to push for social justice and equity in schools, the union, and broader society is central to ETFO's work. Over the years, the union has been a robust unifying presence in Ontario, and its commitment to defend public education and create a better world is unwavering.

In your workplace and through your local, you and other ETFO members build power when you make your voice heard to ensure your rights are upheld and protected.

This booklet provides helpful information for your career in the public education system. It also outlines the work of your union, the services available to you, and a few ways that you can get involved.

For more information, be sure to visit etfo.ca and register for the dedicated members' site at members.etfo.ca.



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ETFO Equity Statement

It is the goal of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to work with others to create schools, communities, and a society free from all forms of individual and systemic discrimination. To further this goal, ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures, which results in equality, promotes diversity, and fosters respect and dignity for all.

ETFO Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario acknowledges that we are gathered today on the customary and traditional lands of the Indigenous Peoples of this territory.

ETFO's Equity Initiatives

ETFO is a union committed to social justice, equity, and inclusion. The Federation's commitment to these principles is reflected in the initiatives it has established as organizational priorities, such as: ETFO's multi-year strategy on anti-Black racism; two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning education; and addressing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues. ETFO establishes its understanding of these issues within an anti-oppressive framework. The Federation ensures its work incorporates the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, addresses individual and systemic inequities, and supports ETFO members as they strive for equity and social justice in their professional and personal lives. Using the anti-oppressive framework is one of the ways ETFO is operationalizing its Equity Statement.



**Elementary
Teachers'
Federation of
Ontario**

Definition of an Anti- Oppressive Framework

An anti-oppressive framework is the method and process in which we understand how systems of oppression such as colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, and ableism can result in individual discriminatory actions and structural/ systemic inequalities for certain groups in society. Anti-oppressive practices and goals seek to recognize and dismantle such discriminatory actions and power imbalances. Anti-oppressive practices and this framework should seek to guide the Federation's work with an aim to identify strategies and solutions to deconstruct power and privilege in order to mitigate and address the systemic inequalities that often operate simultaneously and unconsciously at the individual, group, and institutional or union level.

ETFO Human Rights Statement

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario is committed to:

- providing an environment for members that is free from harassment and discrimination at all provincial and local Federation sponsored activities;
- fostering the goodwill and trust necessary to protect the rights of all individuals within the organization;
- neither tolerating nor condoning behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of individuals or the integrity of relationships; and
- promoting mutual respect, understanding, and co-operation as the basis of interaction among all members.

Harassment and discrimination on the basis of a prohibited ground are violations of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and are illegal. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario will not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination, as defined by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, at provincial or local Federation sponsored activities.

01

WHAT IS ETFO?

Under the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014*, ETFO is the designated bargaining agency for all elementary teachers in the English-language public education system and all designated early childhood educators (DECEs), education support personnel (ESP), and professional support personnel (PSP) employed in every school board in Ontario for which ETFO holds bargaining rights.

As a provincial organization representing educators, our main objective is to advocate for members and their rights at work. Union representatives negotiate your collective agreements, which outline your rights at a central (provincial) and local school board level. The union also provides membership services including workplace representation, professional development and training, and offers advocacy, advice, and legal support for members dealing with workplace issues.

While ETFO's primary objective is to represent elementary educators in public schools, your union promotes the economic and labour rights of all workers, defends the importance of public services, and advocates for equity and social justice within our education system and the broader society.





ETFO'S PURPOSE

The objects, which define ETFO's purpose and guide our work, are contained in the Constitution and outlined below.

The objects of the Federation shall be:

- 3.1 to regulate relations between employees and employer including but not limited to securing and maintaining, through collective bargaining, the best possible terms and conditions of employment;
- 3.2 to advance the cause of education and the status of teachers and educational workers;
- 3.3 to promote a high standard of professional ethics and a high standard of professional competence;
- 3.4 to foster a climate of social justice in Ontario and continue a leadership role in such areas as anti-poverty, non-violence, and equity;
- 3.5 to promote and protect the interests of all members of the Federation and the students in their care;
- 3.6 to promote and defend the health and safety of members in the workplace; and
- 3.7 to co-operate with other organizations in Ontario, Canada, and elsewhere, having the same or like objects.

ETFO'S PRIORITIES

As part of the union's democratic process, members attending the Annual Meeting determine and approve the priorities that guide the activities and initiatives undertaken by ETFO.

The approved priorities for 2024-25 are:

- To protect the local and provincial collective bargaining rights of all members.
- To defend publicly funded public education.
- To serve the needs of the membership.
- To provide for the professional development of members.
- To advocate for social justice in the areas of peace, anti-poverty, non-violence, equity, and anti-racism.
- To fight against anti-Black racism.
- To advocate for the economic and labour rights of all workers.
- To support international assistance and co-operation.
- To advocate for the care and protection of the environment and actively engage in climate action.
- To actively engage members in the Federation and labour movement.
- To advocate for and protect the health and safety of members, both physically and psychologically.
- To advocate for the elimination of violence in publicly funded schools.

02

BUILDING A MORE JUST SOCIETY

ETFO is a leader in promoting dialogue and action on equity and social justice in classrooms, schools, and communities. Along with professional resources and training on human rights issues to assist members in building inclusive classrooms, ETFO publicly promotes social justice causes and supports coalitions and grassroots groups with similar aims to advance education interests and the rights of all people, especially those who have historically faced discrimination and barriers to success.

Visit the members' website at members.etfo.ca to access resources, conferences, and other professional development opportunities, and to learn how you can help build more inclusive workspaces and learning spaces in schools.

Every year, ETFO produces new equity resources and offers a diverse range of programs and conferences that are available to you as a union member. For a complete listing of upcoming events, please visit the dedicated ETFO events site at events.etfo.org. To ensure all members have equitable access to participate, release time, travel, accommodation, and child or dependant care are covered by the union for most programs (check event details to confirm).





WORKING TOWARDS A MORE JUST SOCIETY WITH CURRICULUM

As a leader in social justice, the union produces several resources for your classroom use. Here are a few of the recently released curriculum resources to consider incorporating into your classroom. To download a copy of the resources, log in to the members' site at members.etfo.ca.



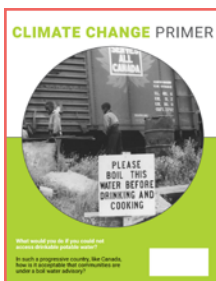
[Anti-Oppressive Framework: A Primer](#)



[Healing Conversations: A Collection of Activities for the Primary Classroom](#)



[Race Matters: Teaching Students to be Race-Conscious](#)



[Climate Change Primer](#)



[The Places We Meet: Embedding Intersectional Feminism in the Classroom, Kindergarten to Grade 8](#)



[Respond and Rebuild: The ETFO Guide to Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy resources](#)

Many of the resources can be accessed for free on the members' site at members.etfo.ca, while other resources can be purchased through the Shop ETFO site for a nominal cost. Shop ETFO also offers clothing, accessories, and gifts to show your union pride. You can find Shop ETFO online at shop.etfo.ca.



MEMBER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a teacher or occasional teacher working in a public elementary school, or as an education worker in a workplace where ETFO holds bargaining rights, you are automatically a member of the union. This happens because the collective agreement or contract for your workplace covers all the employees in certain positions outlined in the agreement.

As per the ETFO Constitution, every member has rights and privileges and is also accountable for upholding obligations and responsibilities and adhering to our code of professional conduct. More information is available on the Member Rights and Responsibilities page on our website.

Our union is stronger when we work together and uphold individual member rights and responsibilities with collective action. A strong union for teachers and education workers is vital to defend and advance quality public education in the province.

Occasional teacher members

As an occasional teacher (OT) you are part of this union and entitled to rights and services that are offered. Your working rights are outlined in the local collective agreement and in the central or provincial collective agreement.

Programs and conferences the provincial union organizes are available to you with release time, travel, accommodation, and dependant care, as per ETFO provincial policy.

Each school you work in has a designated steward who will be a member of the ETFO teacher local in that board. It is important for you to connect with the steward to ask about any specific workplace issues or concerns, but note they are limited in their capacity to advise OTs and members of other bargaining units.

For information about your specific rights and entitlements or workplace issues, please contact your ETFO local. Contact information for all bargaining unit locals can be found on the ETFO website at etfo.ca/locals.

You may find the PRS bulletin *Advice to ETFO Occasional Employees* useful in your role, as it provides tips, suggestions, and resources for your work in schools.

Designated early childhood educator members

Since 2010, ETFO has represented designated early childhood educators (DECEs) in workplaces where we hold bargaining rights. DECEs are covered under both a local collective agreement and a central education worker collective agreement, and hold similar rights and responsibilities to other ETFO members.

DECEs are an integral part of the education system in Ontario, primarily working in Kindergarten and early years classrooms in partnership with teachers.

The union offers programs and services for our DECE members, including workshops, professional development, and Kindergarten resources. Your dedicated website for early years learning is a great place to look, so visit etfopley.ca today!

You may find the PRS Bulletin *DECE Performance Appraisal Learning Plans and Continuous Professional Learning* helpful, as it is tailored to your unique DECE role.

For information about your specific rights and entitlements or workplace issues, please contact your ETFO local. Contact information for all bargaining unit locals can be found on the ETFO website at etfo.ca/locals.



ESP/PSP members

The number of children in Ontario's schools who require support is on the rise, and ETFO's education support personnel (ESP) and professional support personnel (PSP) members are a small but mighty force answering the call.

The provincial union offers programs and conferences to assist with your professional learning and development. For a list of upcoming events, be sure to check the members' site at members.etfo.ca.

As an ESP/PSP, you are covered by local and central collective agreements, which entitle you to rights and protections, including workplace safety provisions. For information about your specific rights and entitlements or workplace issues, please contact your ETFO local. Contact information for all bargaining unit locals can be found on the ETFO website at etfo.ca/locals.

To learn more about your employers' responsibilities to keep you safe in the workplace, and for tips on how to access support, visit etfohealthandsafety.ca or contact your ETFO local. If you are in need of advice or support, the provincial staff in Professional Relations Services are also a great resource.

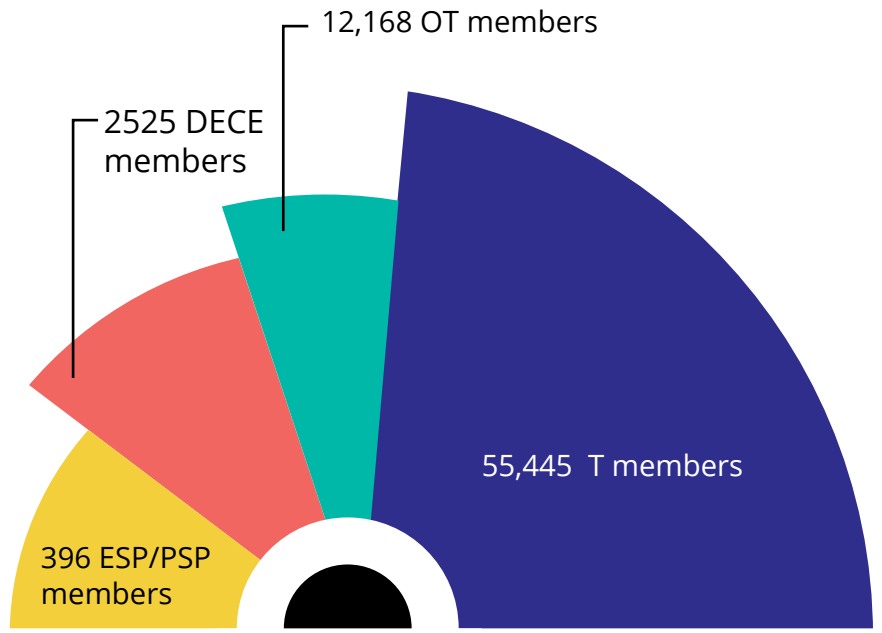
ETFO BY THE NUMBERS

The full-time equivalent (FTE) membership number is 70,534.

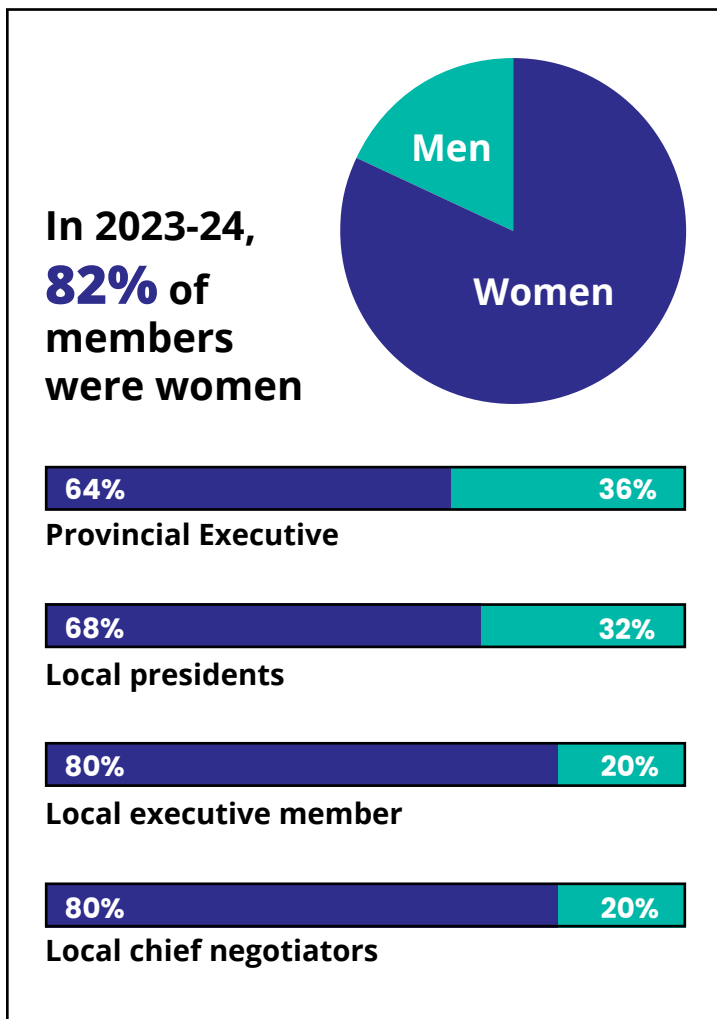
Numbers are based on the 2023-24 year and reflect FTE equivalents.

ETFO represents over **83,000 members.**

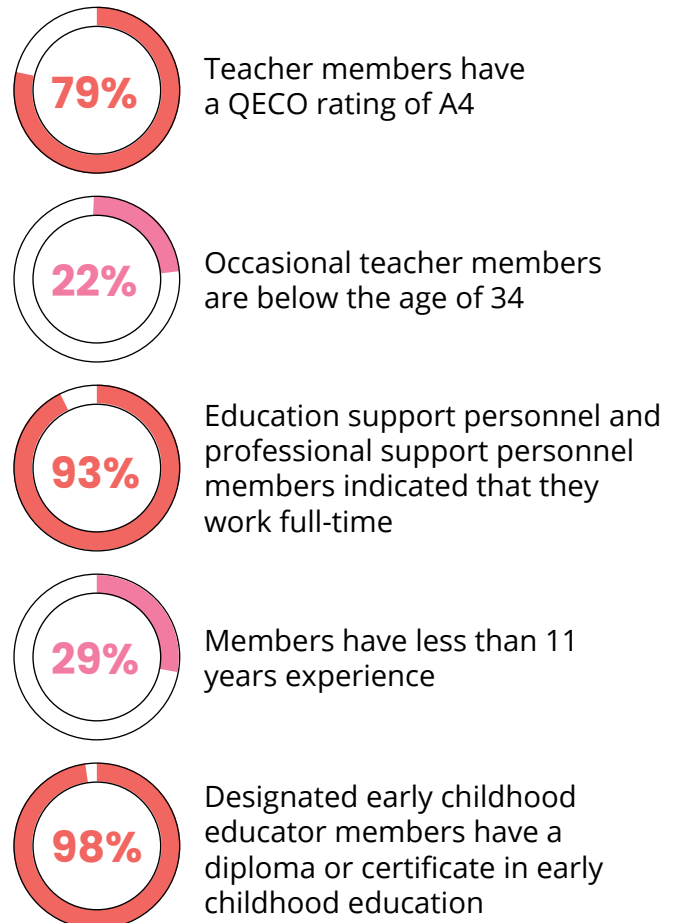
- T - permanent teacher
- OT - occasional teacher
- DECE - designated early childhood educator
- ESP - education support personnel
- PSP - professional support personnel



Number of members in each education group within ETFO



According to the 2023-24 annual member survey:



04

OUR STRUCTURE

LOCALS

There are 76 ETFO locals across Ontario, including locals for permanent teachers, occasional teachers, DECEs, and ESP/PSPs. Each local represents members in an area that corresponds with the school board; however, in some of the school authorities, there may be two or more bargaining units combined within a local.

Your local is your main point of contact and will assist you in addressing workplace and board-related issues. When you have a question or a concern, it is important to contact your local first.

Find your local on the ETFO website at etfo.ca/locals.

Each local has an elected executive body to represent their members. The executive includes a president, executive members, committees, and other positions to meet the needs of the local membership. As a member, you have the right to vote and run for a position with the local executive, attend local meetings and events, and volunteer – so get involved!

YOUR WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION

In each work site, there is typically an ETFO member who volunteers to take on the role of steward. Site stewards are often teacher members. If you are an occasional teacher, a DECE, ESP or PSP, please connect directly with your local should you have any questions about your duties, responsibilities, or collective agreement entitlements.

The role of the steward is to be your union representative in the workplace. Stewards are your direct contact and advocate for you and your rights at work. Every steward is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the collective agreement and making sure members are aware of services and programs offered by the union at both the local and provincial level. If you do not know who your steward is, please contact your local.

It is important for you to connect with the steward to ask about any specific workplace issues or concerns, but note they are limited in their capacity to advise OTs and members of other bargaining units. For information about your specific rights and entitlements or workplace issues, please contact your ETFO local. Contact information for all bargaining unit locals can be found at etfo.ca/locals.

In addition to a workplace steward, there is also a member designated as the health and safety workplace representative. This individual is there to help advise and assist you in knowing your health and safety rights. Speak with this representative about any concerns you have, and visit etfohealthandsafety.ca for information and advice on how to address workplace hazards or if you feel unsafe at work.



PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The Representative Council is composed of the president from each local and additional representatives from a local depending on its size or number of members. The council meets three times a year and is responsible for reviewing the proposed annual budget, recommending policy and actions to the provincial Executive or Annual Meeting, approving bargaining goals, and discussing other initiatives and work of the union.

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

The 14 members of the provincial Executive are elected to two-year terms by the delegates to the Annual Meeting. The Executive includes four full-time released officers – the president, the first vice-president, and two vice-presidents (one position designated for women). The Executive also includes the ETFO representative (table officer) to the Ontario Teachers' Federation, whose release time is covered by OTF every four years when the ETFO representative holds the position of OTF president. Nine additional elected members round out the Executive.

Three of these additional positions are open to women only, including one that is designated for a woman who also self-identifies as belonging to one of ETFO's designated groups: First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (FNMI); member with a disability; two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and plus (2SLGBTQ+); or racialized. One of the other positions is also designated for a member who self-identifies as belonging to one of the designated groups.

The Executive meets regularly and is responsible for conducting the business of the Federation, receiving reports and recommendations from committees, authorizing legal support for members in employment-related cases, and carrying out a variety of other responsibilities.



Released Executive officers 2023–25

President

Karen Brown
Elementary Teachers of Toronto

First Vice-President

David Mastin
Durham Teacher Local

Vice-President (Woman)

Gundi Barbour
Upper Grand Teacher Local

Vice-President

Shirley Bell
Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local

ETFO Table Officer

Nathan Core
Waterloo Occasional Teacher Local

Executive members 2023–25

Tamara DuFour

Hamilton-Wentworth Designated Early
Childcare Educators (DECE) Local

Mary Fowler

Durham Teacher Local

Juan-Yahya Gairey

Peel Teacher Local

Shideh Houshmandi

Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local

Carolyn Proulx-Wootton

Grand Erie Teacher Local

Mario Spagnuolo

Greater Essex County Teacher Local

Mike Thomas

Thames Valley Teacher Local

Sylvia van Campen

Upper Canada Occasional Teacher Local

Jenn Wallage

Waterloo Region DECE Local

ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

The administrative leaders and provincial staff of the Federation manage the day-to-day operations of the union. They implement the programs and services approved by the Executive and the Annual Meeting. The senior administrators are also part of the provincial Executive in an unelected capacity.

Senior administrative team

General Secretary

Sharon O'Halloran

Deputy General Secretary

Lorna Larmour

Deputy General Secretary

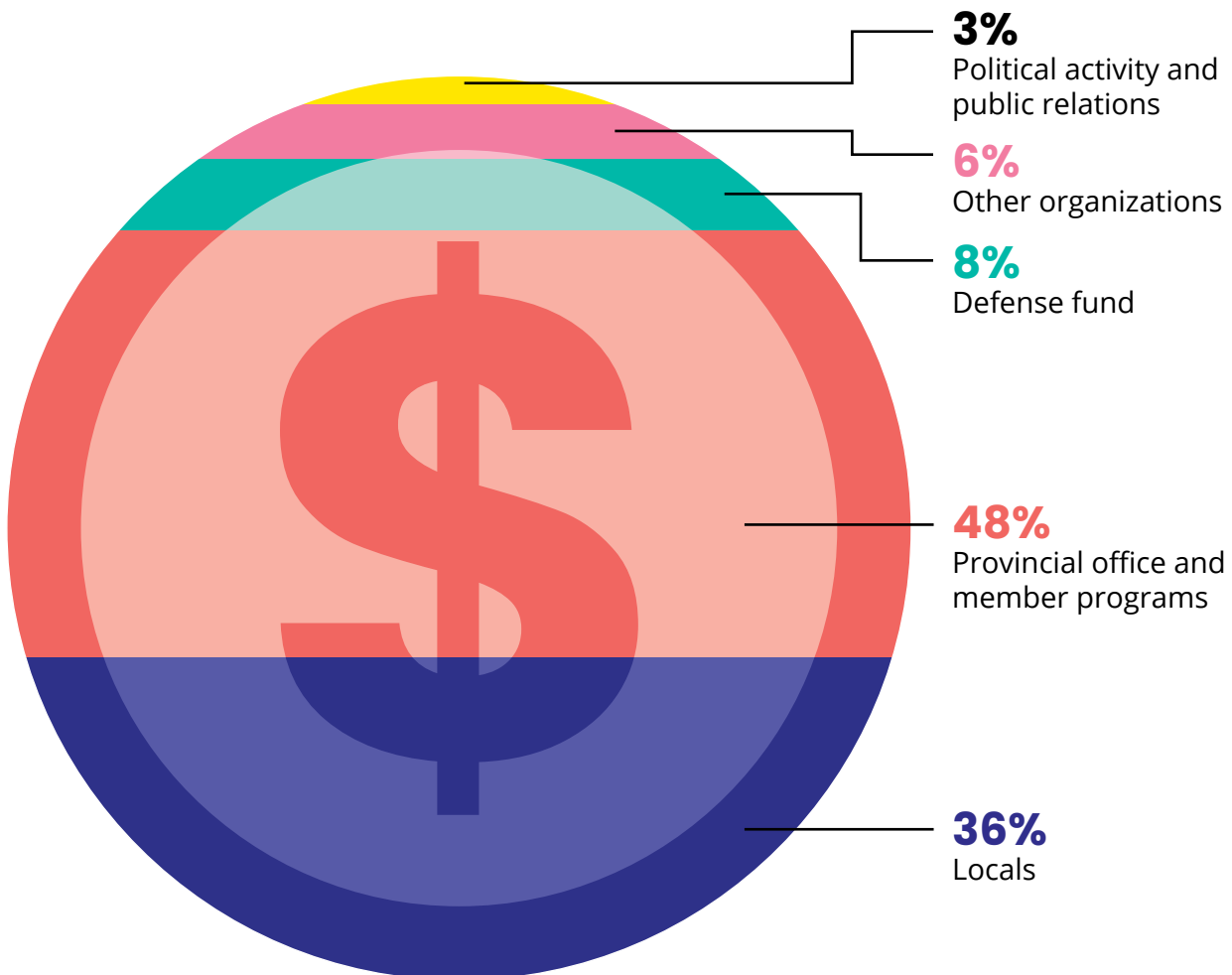
Sabrina Sawyer



UNION FEES

The school board directly deducts union fees from your pay cheque and submits them to the ETFO provincial office to confirm your membership. Fees are used to fund programs, operate membership services including professional development and training, provide advocacy and representation for all members, and undertake government relations including lobbying and political activity. Union fees are determined by member delegates at the ETFO Annual Meeting held each August.

ANNUAL PROVINCIAL BUDGET 2024-25



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



ETFO is a powerful union because our members are informed, active, and show solidarity. It's never too early in your career to make a difference in your school or your union.

Here are a few ways to activate your union membership:

STAY INFORMED



Read the ETFO bulletin board in your workplace and share updates/news with others



Subscribe to the union's biweekly e-newsletter - *ETFO News*



Visit the etfo.ca website and log in to the members' secure site at members.etfo.ca to learn about new classroom resources and important updates on the work of the union

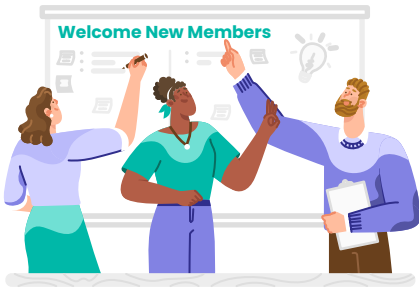


Connect with your workplace steward or, for occasional members, the steward at the school where you are working



Attend in-school meetings called by the steward

GET ACTIVE



Attend new member functions hosted by your local.



Participate in professional development events and workshops offered by your local.



Go to your local's general meetings and annual meetings (and bring a colleague along!).



Volunteer to join a school committee or assist with a project, event, or program in your local.



Get involved in social justice activities through the local.



Volunteer to be a health and safety representative or a steward.



Engage on social media to share ETFO's message to defend public education and advocate for better schools and student supports.



Wear your I am ETFO button and connect with other union members in your community.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Enhance your professional learning with a provincial conference or workshop. For many programs, the union pays for release time, travel, and accommodation to help you access these resources.



Take an ETFO Additional Qualification (AQ) course



Apply to be a member of one of the more than 30 provincial standing committees



Write an article or a book review for ETFO's member magazine, *Voice*



Apply to be a curriculum writer or blog writer for the Heart and Art of Teaching and Learning website

Whatever and however you decide to get involved with ETFO, remember the union is better when you are informed and active in it!

STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR UNION

It is critical that your local and provincial union have your up-to-date personal contact information in the ETFO membership database. Your contact details are only used to provide vital workplace updates on your collective agreement, professional learning, membership services, and government announcements.

If your information has changed or you are not receiving the biweekly e-newsletter (*ETFO News*) to your personal account, submit your contact details in one of the following ways:

1. Go online to etfo.ca and search for Update Member Information Form
2. Email Member Records at memberrecords@etfo.org with your ETFO ID number, if known, or your OCT number, as well as your current information including your personal email and mailing addresses and phone number, and your school board
3. Call Member Records at 1-888-838-3836, extension 3806

ACCESS THE MEMBERS' SITE

In addition to ETFO's public website, there is a dedicated site for members: members.etfo.ca. This is where you can access resources and information, including details about upcoming opportunities just for members, classroom resources, professional supports and curriculum guides, member advisories, and more.

Registration is the first step to getting access!

Go to members.etfo.ca, click the red "Register Today" button, and follow the steps. You will need your ETFO ID number to register.

If you have any questions during the process, email webadmin@etfo.org.



GET SOCIAL

The provincial union and many locals have individual accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and X to share important information and communicate with members. ETFO provincial also uses social platforms to demand action from the government to protect and enhance public education in Ontario and promote our priorities to the greater public.

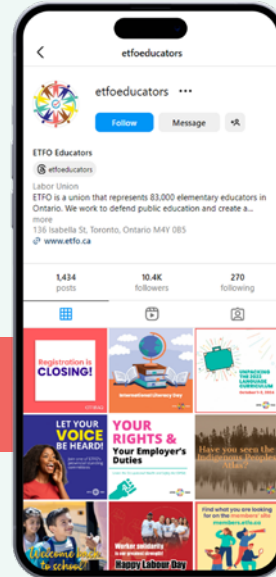
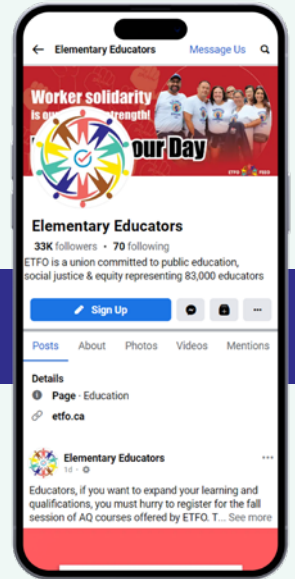
Use your voice as a member to amplify the union's key messages to your own followers. Share, repost, and encourage everyone viewing your content to check out [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://www.buildingbetterschools.ca), ETFO's online platform for public engagement and education about the real issues impacting Ontario's students.

When you are using social media, remember that your comments are public. You can find information on using social media responsibly in the PRS Matters bulletin *Electronic Communication and Social Media – Advice to Members*. As a worker in the public education system, please remember that no personal information, images of students, or school information should be shared online.

Find us and **FOLLOW**



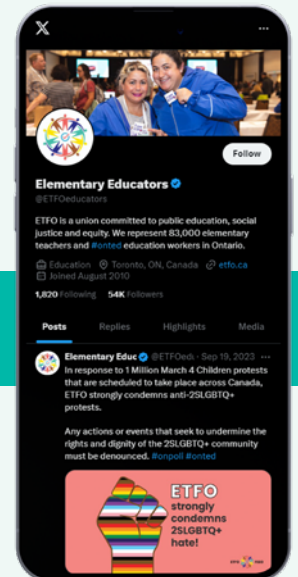
Facebook.com/etfoprovincial



[@ETFOeducators](https://www.instagram.com/ETFOeducators)



[@ETFOeducators](https://www.x.com/ETFOeducators)



HOW YOUR UNION WORKS FOR YOU

ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

A team of dedicated staff at the provincial office work in different service areas to represent the needs of members, offer advocacy and support, and provide high-quality programming and professional learning opportunities. Services offered provincially are in addition to the support your local provides.

While educators have unionized to protect workers' rights, unions in Ontario and Canada have also organized collectively into organizations to fight for better working and living conditions for everyone. ETFO as a union and all its members are also represented by different organizations on provincial, national, and international levels.

Provincial representation

ETFO is a member of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF/FEO), an umbrella organization of more than 160,000 teacher members who are represented by one of four affiliated education unions:



13,110
members

Association des enseignantes
et des enseignants Franco-
Ontariens (AEFO)



45,000
members

Ontario English Catholic
Teachers' Association (OECTA)



83,000
members

Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario (ETFO)



60,000
members

Ontario Secondary School
Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)

As an active part of the labour movement, ETFO and all members are directly part of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), a labour body that acts as a political and lobbying arm for all workers in Ontario, which delegates to the ETFO Annual Meeting voted to join many years ago.



The OFL represents over one million Ontario workers belonging to more than 1,500 locals from 53 affiliated unions in addition to ETFO. The OFL works to push the provincial government to strengthen public services and advance working rights and equity in the workplace.

Visit ofl.ca for more info.

National representation



The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) is a federation of member and associate organizations that represent educators across the country. The CTF supports high-quality, inclusive, publicly funded education and works to uphold teaching as a profession and advocate for adequate resourcing, labour rights, and social justice across Canada and around the world. Established in 1920 by five educator unions, today the federation represents approximately 365,000 members.

Learn more at ctf-fce.ca.



Through the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), ETFO is also affiliated to and an active member of the broader, national labour movement. The CLC is the largest labour organization in Canada, bringing together dozens of national and international unions, provincial and territorial federations of labour, and regional or community-based labour councils to represent more than three million workers across the country. Learn more about the work of the CLC and get involved with political action campaigns by visiting canadianlabour.ca.

International representation

The voices of educators working in Canada are represented by Education International (EI). On a global scale, EI represents more than 32 million teachers and education workers from 383 member organizations in 178 countries and territories. Visit ei-ie.org to learn more.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Programs and conferences

Throughout the year, ETFO offers programs, workshops, and leadership development opportunities to our members through the provincial office and in partnership with locals.

Some of the union's signature conferences include:



...and still we rise - An annual leadership conference for women focusing on social justice, equity, and union involvement.



Code Black: Leadership Program for Black Members - Intended for Black members to explore their leadership abilities, develop new skills, and increase their involvement within the Federation.



Conscious Classrooms - Responding to Gender-Based Violence - A two-day workshop examining how children are affected by gender-based violence against women, and what educators can do to help.



An Ounce of Prevention: Kindergarten - A two-day conference that supports members currently working in Kindergarten who are interested in strengthening their understanding of the Kindergarten program and the Kindergarten teaching partnership.



First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Symposium - This annual learning forum provides members with an opportunity to learn about FNMI pedagogies, resources, and teaching practices.



Occasional Teacher Conference - Includes a series of workshops and presentations with practical strategies, resources, and networking opportunities tailored to the needs and interests of daily and long-term occasional teachers.



Summer Academy - Offered throughout July and August across the province, with more than 40 three-day professional learning courses designed and presented by members for members. Many topics are offered including courses that specifically highlight equity and social justice.

Find more information about conferences and upcoming programs at members.etfo.ca.



Additional Qualification (AQ) courses

ETFO AQ is a leading provider of professional development courses in Canada. Content is developed by educators who understand effective and practical teaching strategies that work within the realities of today's classroom.

As an accredited AQ course provider, ETFO AQ follows the curriculum guidelines and hours of study as set by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and required by legislation.

Visit the ETFO AQ website, etfo-aq.ca, for more information and to view the full course catalogue.

Contact the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) to learn more about how it evaluates teacher academic credentials (including AQ and ABQ courses) for salary purposes. QECO is recognized by all boards for teacher salary grid placement.

YOUR ROLE IN THE PROFESSION

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

Professional judgement is such an important concept for teachers that ETFO fought to have it enshrined as a right through bargaining. It is defined in Section C 2.5 of the Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Agreement as follows:

Professional Judgement shall be defined as judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction.

Professional judgement is an important right, but it is a right that comes with responsibility.

While each teacher's professional judgement will be rooted in their individual experience, knowledge, and other subjective factors, teaching is a collaborative profession, and ETFO members are expected to work with other professionals to develop and deliver programs and services that meet the needs of the students in our care.

As a result of legislation and policy, teachers have varying degrees of autonomy in exercising professional judgement. ETFO's position is that a supervisor can direct members to fulfil the duties and responsibilities listed in the document *Understanding Your Professional Judgement*, available at members.etfo.ca, subject to the provisions of the collective agreement.

From time to time, your administrator or parents/guardians might challenge your professional judgement. You should be prepared to provide rationale for your decisions, if asked. The rationale may include references to your professional knowledge and training, the classroom context, your prior professional experiences, and existing policies and curriculum documents.

The Professional Judgement Matters series was created to support members in acting on and advocating for your professional judgement in specific contexts. These resources can be found at members.etfo.ca/resources.

If you have questions or concerns about professional judgement or think your ability to exercise your professional judgement is being challenged, reach out to your school steward or ETFO local. ETFO staff in Professional Relations Services (PRS) at the provincial office are also available to help. PRS can be reached at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.



DUTY TO REPORT

Under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, members are legally obligated to immediately report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to their local Children's Aid Society. The Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators have both issued professional advisories that contain helpful guidance and information.

PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS AND DEFENDING WORKING CONDITIONS

Your collective agreement is a contract negotiated on your behalf; it is the legal document describing your workplace rights, entitlements, and protections.

It is important to know that there are two aspects of your collective agreement: a central agreement negotiated by ETFO provincial that outlines specific rights for you and all members of the union, and a local agreement that details specific rights and procedures that are only for your board. There are often differences among school boards.

Once an entitlement is bargained into your collective agreement, it can be improved upon and strengthened in subsequent rounds of bargaining. Sometimes, however, these entitlements come under threat.

It is important to remember that the language in your collective agreement is legally binding upon your employer and your union. Inform your school steward or your local immediately if you have questions or concerns about how your collective agreement is being implemented at your workplace or by the school board.

Every member has a role to uphold the collective agreement. Be sure to read it, maintain it, and take action to defend it.

Updates on collective bargaining

Members can receive news and updates during rounds of collective bargaining in a variety of ways, including:



online at etfocb.ca



signing up to receive central bargaining updates from the provincial office through the CB e-newsletter



through central bargaining bulletins issued by ETFO and distributed by locals during negotiation periods



on social media by joining the ETFO CB Facebook group and following @ETFOcb on X



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Professional Relations Services (PRS) staff are available to provide information, advice, support, and intervention for members who are experiencing professional difficulties.

PRS Matters bulletins are designed to keep members informed about a variety of important legal and professional issues impacting education workers. Topics include:

- duty to report and obligations under the *Child and Family Services Act*
- performance appraisals and evaluations
- using social media
- maternity and parental leaves



You can contact
ETFO staff in PRS at
416-962-3836/
1-888-838-3836.

Be prepared

Keep all documents related to your career in a safe and accessible place:

- Certificate of Registration from the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and/or the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE)
- college/university transcripts
- contract from your district school board and other correspondence related to your hiring and placement
- certificates from professional development activities
- copy of criminal record check/offence declaration
- Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) evaluation
- documents related to your performance appraisals and evaluations
- information from your ETFO local
- Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP)
- Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS)

Legal assistance card

The legal assistance card provides advice and information should you face an allegation related to your professional duties or employment responsibilities. It includes a statement you can use if you are contacted by the police or a Children's Aid Society (CAS) about an allegation, and the phone number for PRS. Emergency after-hours assistance is available.

To access this card, please contact your ETFO local.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

ETFO plays an important role in ensuring workplaces are safe and healthy spaces for all members by offering support and information on everything from mental wellness to violence in schools. Visit etfohealthandsafety.ca for great tools and more information.

Making our schools and workplaces safe

ETFO's call to action and strategy to address violence in school board workplaces involves many stakeholders and starts with collaboration, training, and accountability.



Your right to a safe workplace under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*

Your principal has a duty to provide you with information about the risks of harm from a person with a history of violence. This duty happens if two factors are in place: you can be expected to encounter that person in the course of your work, and the risk of workplace violence from that person is likely to expose you to physical injury. The disclosure of this information is limited to what is “reasonably necessary” to protect you from physical injury.

You may refuse to work or do specific work where you have reason to believe that the work is likely to endanger you. Work refusal is sometimes necessary. If you are a teacher, the legislation limits your right to refuse work due to your responsibilities to the students. If you believe you are being endangered by workplace violence, report your concerns to the principal right away and get immediate assistance. Then contact your ETFO local for advice and support.

Everyone has a responsibility concerning workplace violence

ETFO has identified that a lack of compliance with policy and program requirements by some principals and school boards has put a “chill” on reporting, investigating, and dealing with workplace violence and serious student incidents. The union continues to work with the government, school board representatives, and other unions to improve reporting systems, increase compliance by boards and principals, and encourage a stronger health and safety culture with appropriate training within school boards.

While these efforts continue, it's important to remember how the reporting system should work. For great resources, please visit etfohealthandsafety.ca.

YOUR BENEFITS AND PENSION

Employee Life and Health Trust Benefits Plan

Eligible members are entitled to coverage under the ETFO Employee Life and Health Trust (ETFO ELHT) benefits plan, which was established in accordance with the provisions of the ETFO central agreements for teachers/occasional teachers and DECEs/ESPs/PSPs.

The ETFO ELHT benefit plan offers comprehensive group health and dental, emergency out of country, and basic life/accident insurance coverage, as well as member-paid optional life insurance.

The benefits plan is governed by the ELHT board of trustees, which includes representatives from ETFO, the government, and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association.

For more information, visit etfo-elhtbenefits.ca.

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) provides a lifetime pension to active and retired teachers and their survivors. It also provides benefits if members die, become disabled, or permanently leave teaching before retirement.

Teacher members can find a full description of the plan and information about your pension on the OTPP website, otpp.com.

Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System

The Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) is the pension plan for most members of DECE/ESP/PSP locals. OMERS offers great webinars for members to help them understand their benefits and plan for their future. Visit the OMERS website at omers.com to learn more.

Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan

The Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan (OTIP), a not-for-profit organization created and governed by ETFO and the other three education affiliates in Ontario, acts as a third-party administrator to the ETFO ELHT benefits plan and Manulife acts as the claims payer.

Newly hired eligible permanent teacher members and eligible LTO teachers will receive enrolment information and notifications from OTIP via their board email.

To learn more, visit otip.com.

Occasional and Casual Members (OCM) Benefits Plan

Eligibility for the Occasional and Casual Members Plan (OCM) is determined by school boards. The OCM benefits plan is administered by OTIP, and enrolment is voluntary for eligible members. If you are eligible, your board will send enrolment information to your board email address in August or September.

For more information, visit the OCM website at otip.com/group-benefits/occasional-casual.

Long-Term Disability

Participation in ETFO's long-term disability (LTD) plan is mandatory for all active full- or part-time teacher local members and requires payment of LTD contributions by all covered members. Some ESP, PSP, and DECE members have LTD coverage under school board-owned LTD plans, separate from the provincial ETFO LTD plan.

The provincial LTD governance board oversees the plan, with OTIP acting as the third-party administrator. For more information, please read ETFO's *Member's Guide to Long-Term Disability*.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS

In addition to our public-facing website, etfo.ca, the union operates a dedicated member site at members.etfo.ca, which provides announcements and access to information including member alerts, classroom resources, bargaining updates, upcoming events, and much more.

Register today at members.etfo.ca. You will need your ETFO ID number to register. If you do not know your number, please contact Member Records at memberrecords@etfo.org.

ETFO BLOGS AND WEBSITES

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education website (etfofnmi.ca) provides practical resources with a focus on topics related to Indigenous Peoples.

Members Sharing in Assessment (etfoassessment.ca) offers a selection of strategies and tools for educators.

The Professional Learning in the Early Years website (etfopley.ca) includes ETFO videos, resources, and insights to create a welcoming and engaging environment for the youngest learners.

The dedicated site for occasional teachers (etfo-ots.ca) includes resources, tips and tools, and best practices to support your teaching practice, as well as information on your local and provincial collective agreements.

Find collective bargaining information, updates and bulletins, and details about the bargaining process and central agreements at etfocb.ca.

Qualifying members can visit etfo-elhtbenefits.ca to learn about their Employee Life and Health Trust benefits plan coverage for health, dental, life, and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D).

Heart and Art of Teaching and Learning (heartandart.ca) is an interactive blog with practical ideas and topics of interest for teachers throughout their careers.

Subscribe to receive print copies of Voice, ETFO's quarterly member magazine, or read current and back issues digitally at etfovoice.ca.

OTHER RESOURCES

The union's online hub for parents and the general public is BuildingBetterSchools.ca, which encourages the broader community to become engaged in supporting and improving our publicly funded schools. Visit the site and participate in ETFO's online actions to defend, protect, and enhance public education in Ontario.

Survive and Thrive is a website from the Ontario Teachers' Federation designed for beginning teachers, occasional teachers, mentors, and teacher candidates, with many useful tips and resources.

Elementary is a podcast from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Find it on most podcast apps and at etfo.ca.



ETFO AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND BURSARIES

Every day, ETFO members make outstanding contributions to curriculum development, the arts, the environment, science and technology, children's literature, health and safety, equity and social justice, 2SLGBTQ+ realities, and humanitarian causes.

The ETFO Awards program recognizes distinguished academic achievements and outstanding contributions to education and the Federation by its members and others. The program offers a financial incentive for some awards and a certificate of recognition from the president.

Application deadline for all awards is February 1.

The ETFO Scholarships and Bursaries program offers financial incentives to members and non-members entering faculties of education, members studying at the graduate level, and members upgrading their qualifications at publicly funded universities/ institutions.

Application deadline for all scholarships and bursaries is April 30.

To apply for an award, scholarship, or bursary, or to submit a nomination, visit etfo.ca/awards.



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

My school steward (if applicable):

My school steward contact (if applicable):

My ETFO local president:

My local president contact info:

My ETFO local office phone:

My ETFO local office email:

My ETFO health and safety representative:

My ETFO health and safety representative contact:

PPRS MATTERS

Professional Relations Services is available to you and all ETFO members as a protective service. Often, we refer to this confidential membership service as PRS.

The PRS staff team at the provincial office operates on a daily on-call schedule to provide you with information, advice, support, and intervention tools if you are experiencing professional difficulties.

Support is available on a wide range of issues, including performance appraisal, conflict resolution, duty to report, harassment and discrimination, allegations and complaints from your professional College.



Call the provincial office at
416-962-3836 or
toll-free at 1-888-838-3836

I *am* ETFO 



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