

Dr. Jennifer Adams - Director of Education

September 18, 2012 Message

Director's Blog – Labour Relations Update

These are interesting times... The Ontario Legislature has passed Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act*. There has been considerable media attention on the impact of the legislation and the union reaction to the Bill. While our teachers continue to work hard in their classrooms, there are teachers across the province, including here and elsewhere in Ontario, who are expressing their concern around these issues by reducing their voluntary activities.

No doubt this situation will create some uncertainty for our students and families about the status of school-based activities. In that respect, I would like to update you on the following issues/activities:

Meet the Teacher Activities

Our meet the teacher activities will be proceeding. In some of our schools there may be some adjustments to the timing and format. There will be information provided about each individual school's School Improvement Plan, EQAO results and other related curriculum and program information.

Unfortunately, teacher participation may be limited in some locations. However, we know many teachers have already sent home an overview of their classroom routines, expectations and program details. Please remember that you can always communicate with your child's teacher by contacting the school or sending a note in the agenda or through their class website where available.

McGuinty Mondays

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has encouraged its members to participate in McGuinty Mondays; arriving and leaving school 30 minutes before and after classes begin and refraining from participating in school, system or regional meetings on Mondays.

It is important to remember the actions of the ETFO membership are in protest over provincial legislation, and directed at the provincial government. The OCDSB has a good relationship with its staff, and we encourage our administrators to continue their support to staff during this time.

McGuinty Mondays will not have an impact on the instructional day. Great learning will continue in our classrooms every day.

School Council Meetings

Our school council meetings will continue to be held on a regular basis. All parents are welcome to attend.

Student Voice

Many students in the City of Ottawa are expressing their views in response to the impacts of Bill 115. We appreciate that our students have done so in such a respectful manner. We think it is a testament to the district's focus on character education. As much as we support and encourage student participation in the democratic process, we expect students to be in class. We are concerned about instructional time being lost and student safety.

Extra-curricular Activities

Staff participations in extra-curricular activities is voluntary and has always been an excellent example of the passion and professionalism our staff brings to student learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a reduction in the number of teacher volunteers for extra-curricular activities in some schools.

At this time, I can confirm that over half of our secondary schools will have sports running for the fall season. There are 13 schools where teams have registered for fall sports which includes Junior and Senior Girls Basketball, Cross Country, Girls Field Hockey, Senior Football, Golf, Girls Tier 1 and Tier 2 Hockey, Boys Non-Contact Hockey, Junior and Senior Boys Soccer, Swimming, Tennis and Senior Boys Volleyball.

While the status of some extra-curricular clubs and activities could change, the deadline for registration of sports teams for the fall season at the secondary level has now passed. We are hopeful that we may see an increase in the number of sports teams in our secondary schools registering for the winter and spring sports seasons.

Volunteer Coaches/Leaders

In our school district, extra-curricular activities may be run with volunteers, subject to the terms of the volunteer procedure.

<http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/p-n-p/Policies%20and%20Procedures/PR%20555%20SCO%20Volunteers.pdf>

Volunteer coaches may coach a school team (all practices and games). Staff presence is required at championship games.

We are grateful that many parents and community members have expressed an interest in leading activities for students in our schools. We will be working with our principals to ensure consistency in the screening process for selecting volunteers. Time spent on the process will ensure the safety of our students, an increase in activities that engage our learners and enhanced parental and community involvement in our schools.

Finally please rest assured that our staff across the district is committed to its focus on classroom instruction and we will keep you informed of developments as quickly and regularly as we are able.

If you have any comments, concerns or questions do not hesitate to email me at director@ocdsb.ca.

Sincerely,

Jennifer