



# TSU

## JOINT COMMITTEE NEWS

Professional Development

October 2010

PD CORNER FALL 2010

### IMPORTANT NEWS: NEW SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR PD

**Did you know that under our current contract, the government has provided a new source of professional development funds for all teachers in Ontario?**

- Did you know that these funds allow opportunities for teacher professional development to be **self-directed**?
- Did you know that your **ALP** is a great way of communicating your professional goals and thereby accessing professional development funding and opportunities for self-directed learning through the board?
- Did you know that the Joint PD Committee is working towards allocating **1 self-directed professional development day each year** for all secondary teachers?
- Did you know that this professional learning opportunity for teachers would not require a Principal's approval?

TSU is working to ensure that ALL teachers have the opportunity to participate in self-directed professional learning opportunities. Under the contractual requirements as mandated by the PDT (Provincial Discussion Table), the TCDSB is required to provide teachers with this new type of professional development. However, despite being granted the funding by the provincial government, our school board has yet to release these funds to our teachers. Last year, the TCDSB and TSU met with a mediator to attempt to resolve any differences of opinion on the role of professional development as defined under the PDT. If an agreement cannot be reached in the near future as to the proper allocation of these professional development funds, TSU will be bringing the matter to an arbitrator. In short, the agreement made between the TCDSB and OECTA at the provincial table over two years ago must be honoured.

At a recent Labour Conference, "*Public Sector Union Bargaining in the New Economy*", representatives from various school boards and the Ministry of Education, including Moe Jacobs, reiterated the need for school boards and unions to engage in creative problem solving rather than "positioning" or delaying of contractual agreements made in good faith. TSU, through the members of the Joint PD Committee, continues to work towards ensuring that teachers receive the professional development that the PDT demands of school boards. We hope to give you good news soon!

# TERESA AND THERESA'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE: CLC UNION SUMMER SCHOOL

While most teachers were enjoying the last week of summer in August, TSU sent us off for union summer school offered through the Canadian Labour Congress. How refreshing! This group of 347 representatives spanned across 40 different labour organizations, and included United Steel Workers, CUPE, OPSEU, IATSE, CAW, CUPW, CMG, as well as OSSTF, ETFO and OECTA.

The CAW Education Centre, located on Lake Huron waterfront, was purchased in 1956 for \$47,000.00. This vast property and facility located in Port Elgin is a revolving door of professional development related to union issues and is open for all members of the OFL, including OECTA.

## **Do Unions Only Care About Themselves?**

The evening of our arrival we attended a general assembly. Sid Ryan, President of the Canadian Auto Workers, spoke of the importance of solidarity, especially in light of the struggling economy and rising antipathy towards public sector unions who are sometimes portrayed as an over-protected and over-privileged group. Despite the myth that is continually spread by some columnists in the

media, that “*unions only care about themselves*”, it was quickly obvious to us that the CLC continues to work on improving the quality of life of all workers in Canada. Common issues of concern raised included past struggles fought for and won by unions, including public health care, public education and safe employment conditions. Current issues being addressed by the CLC include the campaign to save the national gun registry and the national campaign for pension reform (including a proposed increase in the CPP, which would NOT be a cost paid for by the public). The assembly ended with a request that we all go to our local units and thank the representatives who work so diligently on our behalf.

## **Learning Our ABCs: Union Fundamentals**

The evening continued with our first session in class. Both of us had preselected a specialization that would run for 5 days. Theresa Oakley enrolled in “*Facing Management*” a course that promised to teach participants strategies and techniques when faced with management in any type of negotiations. Teresa Placha enrolled in “*Conflict Resolution*” a course that taught participants how to effectively resolve conflict in a productive way, and included a

“tool box” of strategies for positive outcomes.

It is our intention to share the information learned from these workshops with the membership. Workshops will be offered to the membership through the Professional Development Committee at some point in the year. Information on dates will be made available through the teacher reps, TSU Notes and the TSU website.

## **The OFL/CLC & Us: What's OECTA Got To Do With It?**

In sharing our experiences with others, we realized that just as there are a surprising number of similarities between our unions, although some of the issues are significantly different.

Similarities include issues around workload and increasing responsibilities, abuse of authority, intimidation tactics used by management, health and safety issues, harassment, equity issues, and hiring practices. Not surprisingly, it was always stressed by our instructors how the collective agreement, whether teachers in a school or in a factory, must be honoured, monitored and challenged in order to ensure that our hard-fought gains in working conditions are enforced.

Differences were few but included the notion that many of the members from other unions don't

the members from other unions don't want be trained as "multi-taskers" because this then diminishes their "specialization" of skills and results in their movement by management and reduction in workers at a workplace. This issue is especially troublesome when you consider that many of these work sites are geographically remote in rural areas. Overwhelmingly, the major difference Theresa and I found was the increased anxiety and fear of job loss that we as teachers haven't experienced in many years. Sadly, this point was made terribly clear when two of our class mates received a call from their employer informing them that they would not be returning to work the following Monday because they were laid off work.

### **The "Brother / Sister" Culture: Our Welcome to the Club!**

One of the initially off-putting differences for both Theresa and I was the immersion into the "brother / sister" culture that characterizes many of the unions represented at this conference. What quickly won us over was how all participants consistently shared

their experiences in an open, non-judgmental, respectful and genuine manner. How incredibly welcoming and refreshing! We also noticed how appreciative they are of any professional development which, to many members, translates directly into what they call "job protection essentials". They all seemed genuinely appreciative of everything offered to them and opportunities it would bring to their job and financial security. We also noticed the committed balance that the CLC honoured between work and family; for example, children and spouses were present and activities offered for the family during the week.

The "graduation" on the final



meeting saw 100 % enthusiastic participation in celebration of this learning opportunity and friendships made. Emails were exchanged and future opportunities to network with colleagues from other unions set in place.

Overall, the place had a mixed feel of being both in residence and summer camp ... a home away from home, a real sense of community, a place that welcomed new comers like the both of us with open arms and a genuine concern for the welfare of everyone.

Teresa and Theresa would like to thank the membership for the opportunity to attend this most educational and rewarding professional learning experience.

And on behalf of TSU, we would also like to most sincerely thank every staff rep in every school for the work they do on behalf of the membership. We appreciate you!

By Teresa Placha & Theresa Oakley

***NOTE:** If you would like more information about professional development offered at the CLC*

## **PD CALL OUTS**

**If you would like to share your experiences at a recent professional development workshop or conference, please submit your article to the [TSU Communications Committee](#) to Sabina at [sabina@tsuoecta.org](mailto:sabina@tsuoecta.org) and direct it to [Bianca Hudec](#) (Executive Liaison).**



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **1. Professional Learning at the TCDSB & OECTA ... What is the difference?**

OECTA makes 3 distinctions in defining professional learning: **Personal Professional Development, Staff Development and Ministry Policy / Legislated In-Services:**

- **Personal Professional Development** is defined by the Association as "the **self-directed** and **voluntary process** that teachers use as independent professionals to establish personal goals of professional self-improvement and growth." This would include any activity which the teacher believes would enhance their teaching practice and/or student learning.
- **Staff Development** is **board-directed** and as such, would include training activities for teachers aimed at improving board objectives, including literacy and numeracy. Participation in these events is usually mandatory and subsequently, takes place during the school day.
- **In-Services** are usually **ministry-directed** and includes any training that teachers would receive to implement legislated government or Ministry of Education policy initiatives. Participation would usually be required and therefore would take place during the school day. Recent examples of such mandatory in-services include Bill 157, Bill 168, Early Kindergarten Programming, etc.

## **2. What does "Job-Embedded PD" mean?**

Any professional learning and specialized training which a teacher requires in order to perform their duties would be considered "job-embedded" and as such, should take place during the school day.

## **3. What is the difference between a training "refresher" versus an official "in-service"?**

A "refresher" at a staff meeting may include topics in which teachers have previously received thorough training, such as anaphylaxis training, WHMIS, safety procedures (i.e. "lock and hold"), special education (IEPs, modified marking), etc.

## **5. Does the board offer any PD funds for teachers?**

YES! The TCDSB allocates a limited number of PD funds to teachers each year. If interested, ask your area superintendent for more details. Additionally, TSU offers teachers up to \$150.00 annually.

## **6. Is participation in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) mandatory?**

Participation in a PLC is voluntary. As well, an effective PLC: respects your autonomy, works on a shared-decision making model, provides professional development within the school day, provides for individual and collective teacher professional development; provides available resources; defines clear responsibilities in the allotted time, does not increase your workload, and does not use participation as criteria in the teacher performance appraisal process.

### **JOINT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 2010—2011**

TSU MEMBERS: Rene' Jansen in de Wal, Teresa Placha (Co-Chair), David Chiarelli, Maureen Riggin

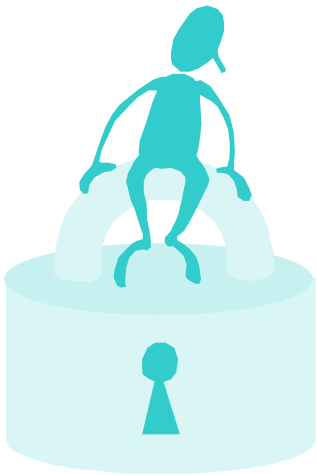
TCDSB MEMBERS: Josie Di Giovanni (Co-Chair), Patrick Keyes, Vince Burzotta, Gina Mareello, Cathy Connors

# TSU—OECTA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

## SCHOOL SAFETY vs PRIVACY:

Exploring the Primacy of a Community's Safety and a Teacher's Right to Know vs  
A Student's Right to Privacy

*(including issues on Fresh Starts, Harassment, Challenges of Progressive Discipline Reporting,  
Duty of a Principal to Investigate in a Timely Manner, Working in High Risk Environments, and  
Work Refusals ... as legislated under Bill 157)*



**Presented by *Mary Lachapelle and John Pecsénye***

(Member and Counselling Services, OECTA)

**TUESDAY, November 23, 2010**

TSU Office

4:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.

Call TSU to reserve your spot—maximum 30 participants

(416) 633—5502

Pizza and Refreshments will be provided!