

## ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

*Volume 12, Number 2, June 26, 2025*

Colleagues and Friends,

As the summer break approaches, it is safe to say that the 2024-2025 school year was both eventful and challenging.

Thank you for all that you have done this school year – on behalf of the Federation, the profession of teaching, and most importantly on behalf of the students in your care.

Your dedication and hard work add lustre to the teaching profession and are both acknowledged and appreciated.

On behalf of the ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Executive I wish you all a safe, peaceful, and joyous summer.

On a personal note, as I prepare to leave elected office, I want to thank you for the privilege of serving as your local president. It has been a truly great honour to work on your behalf.

I wish you well. I will miss you all.

Yours in Solidarity,



Craig Smith, President



Craig Smith, President

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## Lead Negotiator/Grievance Officer Report

From a Collective Bargaining perspective, it has been a long couple of years with many challenges, but finally the 2024-2025 school year has ended. During these most challenging times, you have risen to each and every challenge that we as teachers have faced. I am incredibly proud of the professionalism demonstrated by each and every ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Member and it is an honour and privilege to work on your behalf as the Lead Negotiator/Grievance Officer.

Locally, our focus during the 2022-2026 round of Local Bargaining was to work jointly with the Thames Valley District School Board to create a Positive and Healthy Work Environment and to Improve our Working and Learning Conditions. Those were the priorities of the Local as outlined by the membership for this round of bargaining.

As this was the first year of the newly ratified 2022-2026 Collective Agreement, much of the year was spent educating our Stewards and Members regarding the content and interpretations of the new language. Also, time was spent with the Board developing a common understanding to operationalize LOU #10, Staffing of Schools Guideline, which involved joint training with Principals and Workplace Stewards.

Where areas of concern and violations of the Collective Agreement occurred, grievances were filed to protect the integrity of the duly negotiated language that has been fought so hard for.

Throughout this current year, the Local has been conducting random surveys at events asking for input on issues that will be used to frame ETFO TVTL Preliminary Submission. As we head into the 2025-2026 school year, the Local will be activating the Collective Bargaining Committee to begin the process of developing Local Bargaining Surveys that will outline the goals and priorities that will be the framework for the 2026-2030 round of bargaining.

Your Collective Agreement outlines the terms of your employment with the Thames Valley District School Board.

Please contact the Local if you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the Collective Agreement.

From my family to yours, enjoy a well-deserved summer break.

*Mark MacLeod, Lead Negotiator / Grievance Officer*

## Professional Workshops

The Local has been busy this school year offering professional learning opportunities on a variety of topics. Our Language Curriculum workshop offered a dive into the new language curriculum for all divisions. Our Making a Difference workshop was geared to mid-career Teacher and offered strategies and insights for fostering classrooms where Teachers and students feel successful. A Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy Workshop offered an opportunity to reflect on how our identities affect our practice as educators. Our Visual Strategies Workshop shared strategies and a resource to support students with autism spectrum disorder in the classroom.

*Jennifer Hillner, Vice President*

## Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness

This is the third year we have been able to offer Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness funds with changes to delivery, registration and availability based on ongoing feedback.

Teachers were able to access self-directed days for individual professional learning opportunities. They also used these funds to assist with courses, workshops, resources, and other professional support.

The Personal Wellness funds were used by teachers for memberships, personal training, fitness equipment, and Wellness sessions.

We continue to receive feedback and revise the Professional Opportunities and Personal Wellness funds moving forward to the 2025-2026 school year. Thank you to all who provided feedback and suggestions for this program. Stay tuned in the fall for registration details.

*Jennifer Hillner, Vice President*

## Retirement

Congratulations to those Members who have retired this school year, are about to retire, or plan to retire during the summer, or next school year. This is a big step and with that step can come many questions. Know you can always reach out to our office so we can assist you with finding answers. You can also look on our ETFO Thames Valley website and click on "resources" and then "retirement" to find, what we hope will be useful information, including:

- a sample retirement letter,
- contact information for frequently contacted groups such as OTPP, or OTIP,
- a retirement checklist,
- an application form for the OT list,
- and an LTD premium termination form. Please note you may not need to fill out this form as these deductions will automatically stop upon your retirement, as you will no longer have a paycheque, from which they can be deducted.

However, there are two scenarios under which you may qualify to have these premium deductions cease prior to your retirement. The deductions can be terminated if;

1. you are eligible for a 60% unreduced pension (30 credit years of teaching experience with OTPP) along with your 85 factor or
2. you have reached the end of the month in which you turn 65 years old.

If you believe you qualify for either scenario above, prior to your retirement, an application for LTD termination can be completed. This application when completed, along with all required associated paperwork, can be emailed to [dnapier@etfothamesvalley.com](mailto:dnapier@etfothamesvalley.com). If you are retiring and do not fall into one of these two scenarios, your LTD premiums will cease automatically and therefore you need not complete any paperwork in this regard. Simply enjoy your upcoming well-deserved retirement.

*Dale Napier, Vice President*

## Reclaiming Our Professional Growth Teachers as Leaders in Learning

For years, Thames Valley educators have watched professional development opportunities shrink while expectations continue to grow. One-size-fits-all training and top-down initiatives have left many Teachers feeling disconnected from their own professional learning. Yet we know that meaningful growth happens when educators are empowered to choose learning that reflects their professional needs and classroom realities. It's time to restore professional autonomy and put Teachers back in charge of their learning paths.

Teachers are experts in their craft. When they are free to pursue professional development that is relevant, whether in trauma-informed practices, equity, literacy, the arts, assessment, or classroom management, they are better positioned to support student success. Professional development should not be something squeezed into lunch hours, staff meetings, or weekends. Like other professions, Teachers deserve dedicated time within the workday to reflect, collaborate, learn, and grow. Ongoing learning is not extra; it's essential.

On-going budgetary cuts to PD have stripped educators of time, resources, and voice. Our Local continues to advocate for a model that prioritizes Teacher-driven learning, recognizing that professional growth is not about compliance; it's about respect. Educators must be seen not as passive recipients of information, but as skilled professionals capable of leading their own growth based on the real needs of their students.

When Teachers lead their own learning, schools thrive. Engagement rises, instructional practices deepen, and students benefit from more thoughtful and responsive education. Let's trust in our expertise, pursue learning that fuels our passions, and remind decision-makers that Teachers must define what meaningful growth looks like. After all, no one knows our classrooms better than we do.

*Scott Hardie, Vice President*

## Wellness for the Summer and Beyond

The 2023-2024 school year saw Teachers face many challenges and work tirelessly to overcome them, all to the benefit of our education system. As a result, our Members deserve time for rest and relaxation throughout the upcoming summer. This rest and relaxation can come with a need to focus on our physical and/or mental health.

The Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP) offered through "Lifeworks" provides some excellent programs and resources to help Teachers and their families access proactive support for their well-being.

Many different types of assistance are available including but, not limited to: achieving well-being, managing relationships with family, dealing with workplace challenges, tackling addictions, finding child and elder care resources, getting legal advice, and receiving financial guidance

To access these opportunities for wellness you can call Lifeworks at 1-844-958-5105 or reach them via [tvdsb.lifeworks.com](http://tvdsb.lifeworks.com).

Please enjoy your summer.

Take care of yourself, your health, and your family.

*Dale Napier, Vice President*

## TPA and NTIP

The cycle of Teacher Performance Appraisals has caught up to the backlog experienced over the past few years. New Teacher Performance Appraisals as part of the NTIP program also happened and continue to support those newest to our profession.

The Local continues to support Members who experience an Unsatisfactory or Development Needed TPA. Support offered through this process can include access to professional learning, workshops, mentor days, TOSA support, and more.

Teachers requiring additional support have been able to attend workshops through ETFO Provincial on Classroom Management, Programming and Planning and Kindergarten. We hope to offer these workshops regionally in the upcoming school year for those who require additional support.

If you are due to have a TPA in the 2025-2026 school year, you will be notified by your Principal by October 10. If you are not sure if it is your cycle year, please reach out to ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local for clarification of your date. Workshops on the TPA process for experienced Teachers and NTIP Teachers will be offered in the fall.

*Jennifer Hillner, Vice President*

## Advice to ETFO Members

Members must always be vigilant to maintain their professionalism at all times, whether dealing with students or parents. Unfortunately, we can find ourselves in situations requiring Legal Assistance due to allegations made against us to either the Police or Children's Aid Society (CAS). If you have been notified that the Police or CAS is investigating an allegation against you, contact your Federation. In addition:

- Do not participate in or consent to an interview;
- Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation/charges;
- Say "I am willing to cooperate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel;"
- Call ETFO Professional Relations and ask to speak with the PRS Duty Officer (1-888-838-3836); state that your call is urgent.

The Local Released Office supports the parameters associated with the school board, however, it is important that you have legal representation at these meetings with outside agencies to ensure that your rights are upheld.

It is also important to note that if you are asked by your Administration to attend a meeting at school with Union Representation, that your representation at these meetings must be from the Local office and not your Workplace Steward. If you are asked to attend such a meeting, please contact the Local office to set up a mutually convenient time to meet (519-474-3150 – ask to speak with an Executive).

*Michael Thomas, First Vice President*

## Status of Women Committee

Our Status of Women Committee was busy this year. The first event attended was the Take Back the Night event organized by Domestic Abuse Resource Team in Oxford County. They also donated feminine hygiene products and distributed them to women's shelters in the region. They organized a beading workshop for Red Dress Day and shared two FNMI resources with those who attended: Going Beyond a Land Acknowledgment and Healing Conversations.

*Jennifer Hillner, Vice President*

## You've Earned this Summer Now Unplug and Enjoy It

As we reach the end of another demanding school year, it's important to take a moment and recognize just how much educators across Thames Valley have accomplished. You've managed complex student needs, shifting expectations, new initiatives, an employer in the media spotlight and increasing workloads - all while continuing to show up for your students with compassion, creativity, and professionalism. It's no small feat. You deserve to feel proud of everything you've poured into your classrooms and your school communities.

The reality is, the demands of teaching have never been greater. From increasing behavioural challenges to ever-growing Administrative asks, the job continues to expand. Teachers have taken on more, often with less, and still delivered incredible outcomes for their students. Now, as summer approaches, it's time to give back to yourself. Rest isn't just a reward; it's a necessity. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

We encourage you to disconnect. Fully. Close the laptop. Put the planning book in a drawer. Turn off the notifications. And if you need a little help with that, we'd like to give a sincere (and slightly cheeky) thank-you to the Thames Valley District School Board for automatically logging you out of your email every 14 days. Take the hint - don't log back in until September. Your well-being matters, and your time off is just that: *yours*.

You've earned this break. Take it without guilt. Enjoy the things that make you feel human again - sleep in, read for pleasure, travel, play sports, garden, camp, binge-watch something entirely uneducational. The work will be there in September. For now, let this summer be what you need it to be. From your Union: thank you, be proud, and most importantly - unplug.

*Scott Hardie, Vice President*

## Looking Ahead

As we move into the next school year, our Local remains deeply committed to supporting Members by prioritizing safe and supportive working conditions, timely and transparent communication, and access to meaningful professional learning. We will continue to advocate for health and safety supports, while working with the Board to ensure real progress on key issues affecting our members, such as school culture and climate, violence prevention, and Member well-being.

Member engagement will be a central focus. Through expanded training for Workplace Stewards, enhanced new Member outreach, and the continuation of our successful professional development series, we aim to empower members at every stage of their careers. We will also continue our political advocacy and organizing efforts to ensure the voices of educators are heard at both the Local and Provincial levels—especially as we prepare for the next round of bargaining.

Your involvement makes our Union stronger. Whether it's through committee work, Steward leadership, participation in events, or simply reaching out with a question or concern, every member plays a critical role in shaping the strength of our collective voice. Please don't hesitate to contact the Local if you need support—we are here to help, advocate, and stand with you every step of the way.

As the year comes to a close, we want to thank you for all you do and wish you a restful, safe, and well-deserved summer. Take time to recharge, reconnect, and return with strength for the year ahead.

*Michael Thomas, First Vice President*

# ***Congratulations!***

## **Honorary Life Award**

<i>Michael Drul</i>	<i>Jim Sercombe</i>
<i>Karyn Harris-Paschink</i>	<i>Anne Tudor-Roberts</i>
<i>Bill Lewis</i>	<i>Debbie Paulger</i>
<i>Joe Sanders</i>	<i>Monica Uffen</i>

## **Health and Safety Activist Award**

*Danica Daykin, Chippewa P.S.*

## **Workplace Stewards' Award**

*Mary-Kathryn Barbier, Emily Stowe P.S.*  
*Shauna Bondy, Mary Wright P.S.*  
*Deryck Kissoondath, Summerside P.S.*  
*Chris Mallette, J.S. Buchanan F.I. P.S.*  
*John Musvosvi, East Carling P.S.*  
*Heidi Richter, West Nissouri P.S.*  
*Hayley Van Alstine, Central P.S.*

## **Winners of the Educators Financial Group Bursary Draw**

*Markus Richter, Arthur Stringer P.S.*  
*Kelley Tucker, Clara Brenton P.S.*

## **ETFO Membership Profile**

- All Members are requested to log on to the Local's website ([www.etfothamesvalley.com](http://www.etfothamesvalley.com)), to update their profiles (name, mailing address, contact information and professional information).
- To access your profile, log in under ETFO Secure Login using your ETFO membership number and password.
- In your account, be sure to indicate your personal email address and to calculate your preparation time and supervision time accurately when completing the Professional Information section.
- The Local has to ensure that the articles of the Collective Agreement are being adhered to and ensure that any discrepancies are addressed as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Local office.

## **Reminder**

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local requires the names of the Workplace Stewards/Alternates for the 2025 - 2026 school year. Please submit the names and personal emails to [etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com](mailto:etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com)

## **Upcoming Events**

**The following events are scheduled. Advance registration will be required.**  
(these dates may be subject to change)

### **July 20, 2025**

- Pride Parade, London

### **July and August 2025**

- Summer Academy Courses  
(Register through the Provincial website)

### **August 11-14, 2025**

- Federation Annual Meeting

## **Summer Office Hours**

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local office will close at **4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 27, 2025** and will reopen at **8:15 a.m. on Tuesday, September 2, 2025.**

Emergency assistance will be available through the ETFO Provincial office (1-888-838-3836). They will only be responding to critical legal matters.

## **Regular Office Hours**

**Monday through Thursday, 8:15 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**



# 2023 – 2025 Executive



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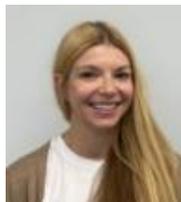


**ETFO Health and Safety Specialist**

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**Treasurer**

**Amy Kilty Schwandt**



**Recording Secretary**

**Marnie Meloche**



**Alia Awaysheh**



**Brent Kelders**



**Carla Musser**



**Kevin O'Neill**



**Jarod Parlee**



**Melissa Pearce**



**Lara Shanley**



**Amanda Short**



**Erica Stefina**



**Maria Vieira**



**Kate White**



**Amber Yerema**

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