

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Mike Thomas, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: November 28, 2025
Regarding: **November Newsletter**

Dear Members,

With December nearly upon us, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible work happening across our Local. First, thank you. Thank you to everyone who calls, texts, emails, attends school visits, meetings, or events - or simply takes a moment to read this newsletter. Every effort you make to stay connected strengthens our Union, and it does not go unnoticed.

Your dedication to students is equally remarkable. Every classroom we visit, every school we enter, we witness the extraordinary impact you have. It's easy to feel discouraged when supports are lacking, but never underestimate the difference you make each day. Your commitment to student growth, success, and the future of Ontario is invaluable - not just to your Union, but to students and families alike.

I wanted to take a moment to share some of the work that Local has been doing to support you.

Advocacy in Action

Recently, our Released team joined thousands of labour allies at the OFL Convention, marching to Queen's Park to protest the underfunding of public services, including education. Despite attempts by the Conservative government to restrict our access, we persisted - and were there in time to witness the vote on Bill 33.

We also met with Conservative MPPs Steve Pinsonneault and Rob Flack, presenting your voices through the Addressing Violence in Schools booklet. These conversations are just the beginning; we will continue advocating for meaningful solutions to ensure decision-makers hear directly from the educators facing these challenges every day.

These advocacy efforts are just the beginning. We will continue meeting with policymakers, bringing forward your stories, and advocate for meaningful solutions. Your Local remains committed to amplifying your voices so that the people making decisions about education hear directly from the educators most affected by these issues. Every conversation, every meeting, every voice strengthens our collective impact.



Local Updates

We're already halfway through our second round of school visits, connecting with nearly 60 schools by December. Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with us, offer ideas for improving our Local, and bring forward important concerns. Your insights guide our work and make the Local stronger. And congratulations to everyone who won the \$25 gift card draw!

Workplace Steward Training

From November 4 - 6, our Workplace Stewards balanced schedules, lessons, and multiple demands to attend training. Back in their schools, they remain the calm in the chaos, supporting members and keeping our Local connected. Their work often happens quietly, but it makes a real difference every day. Thank you to all the Workplace Stewards for your leadership, advocacy, and dedication.

Professional Learning & Wellness

Our November workshops were a huge success! It's always inspiring to see members leave feeling supported, with questions answered, and new strategies in hand to enhance their classroom and professional practice. We're committed to offering meaningful professional learning opportunities that truly meet your needs, so please continue to share your ideas - your input directly shapes what we offer.

Members are also making great use of the Personal Wellness Fund, Professional Opportunity Fund, and Self-Directed Opportunities. Whether it's attending conferences, pursuing additional certifications, or engaging in wellness initiatives, these resources help you grow, recharge, and bring new skills and perspectives into your schools. Your Executive is proud to support these initiatives because when you thrive, so do your students.

Red4Ed

"Why are we wearing red anyway? We aren't even in bargaining!" Participation in **Red4Ed** goes beyond showing up - it's a visible symbol of solidarity, a way to demonstrate that Ontario educators are united in demanding properly funded schools. Every time you wear **Red4Ed** on Mondays, you're contributing to a movement that strengthens our collective voice, keeps public attention on the importance of education, and ensures that student supports and resources remain a priority.

Your engagement - whether it's wearing the gear, sharing posts online, or discussing funding concerns with colleagues - sends a clear message: we are committed to safe, supported, and well-resourced schools. This is not just about advocacy; it's about creating momentum for negotiations, building community, and showing decision-makers that educators are passionate, united, and prepared to take action for students' well-being. Every action, big or small, matters - and together we amplify our impact. So please, continue wearing **Red4Ed**.



Celebrations & Connections

It was fantastic to see members at the Fall General Meeting, many bringing period products to support Operation Sharing in Woodstock. Thank you for your overwhelming support for this initiative. We know that every contribution helps promote respect, dignity, and care for women in crisis across our Local.

During November, our Non-Released Executive members did some incredible work and covered serious mileage during progress report time to meet and welcome our newest teachers, even visiting those on maternity leave, ensuring every one of our new members felt connected from day one. Thank you for these efforts!

To our newest members: welcome! Your participation in the new teacher workshop was inspiring. To our experienced members: consider checking in and sharing tips to help your newest colleagues thrive. Strong connections make a stronger Union.

In Closing

December is always a whirlwind, full of lessons, events, and meetings that demand your energy, creativity, and patience. Please remember to take care of yourself. Celebrate small victories, pause when needed, and honour the effort you put in each day. You deserve care and kindness just as much as the students and colleagues you support.

I also want to take a moment to recognize and thank you for the countless ways you make a difference every day - whether it's staying late to help a student, coach a team, or run an event, mentoring a colleague, advocating for resources, or simply showing up with dedication and heart. Your professionalism, resilience, and compassion do not go unnoticed. Every lesson planned, every student supported, every challenge met proves that your work matters, and it truly shapes lives.

Remember - you're not alone. The Local ETFO Office is always just a call or email away for guidance, questions, or even a friendly check-in. Keep showing up, supporting each other, and making a difference every single day. You are valued, appreciated, and essential to our collective success.

With deep gratitude,

Mike Thomas
President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

For any questions, concerns, or simply a friendly chat, the Local ETFO Office is only a phone call away at 519-474-3150 or an email to etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com - we're here to help.