ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local

LOCAL MESSAGE

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Mike Thomas, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: October 9, 2026
Regarding: **Thanksgiving Newsletter**

Dear members,

Thanksgiving invites us to pause and reflect on the people and values that sustain us. In our schools, gratitude is woven into the everyday work of supporting students, building caring communities and defending public education. Your dedication, compassion and collective voice make a lasting difference for students, families and colleagues across our communities.

We are grateful for the friends, family members and loved ones who encourage us, stand beside us and help us meet life's challenges. We are also grateful for the members who came before us; those who organized, spoke up and stood together to secure the protections and rights that support educators and students today. Their solidarity reminds us that progress is built collectively, and that public education is strongest when we work together to defend it.

Some important examples from ETFO's bargaining history include:

- **Preparation Time:** In the 2004–05 bargaining round, ETFO's Campaign 200 secured 200 minutes of preparation time and caps on supervision time in teacher collective agreements.
- **Sick Leave:** In the 2022–26 round, members stood firm and ETFO preserved sick leave and short-term leave entitlements.
- **Human Rights:** Teacher federations fought through the 1980s bargaining era for protections against discrimination and sexual harassment—rights reflected in our collective agreement today.
- **Pregnancy/Parental Leave:** Our predecessors at FWTAO brought maternity leave and return-to-work protections to the bargaining table. After years of advocacy, Ontario legislated maternity leave in 1970. Much later, in the 2012 bargaining round, ETFO won eight weeks of pregnancy or parental leave benefits at 100% salary for qualifying members.
- **Class-Size Protections:** Following ETFO's advocacy, Ontario introduced a cap of 20 students in primary classes in 2004. In the 2017 round, ETFO negotiated a cap on Kindergarten class size and a 24.5-student average for Grades 4 to 8.

These gains came from members, like you, who stood together and insisted that educators deserve fair treatment and positive working conditions. This Thanksgiving, I'm grateful to them and to every one of you for the care you give your students and your continued defence of public education.

Thank you for all that you do. I hope you enjoy the long weekend with friends, family and loved ones, and have some time to step back from work, rest and recharge.

In solidarity,

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.

c. Released Executive, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local