

## February 2008 General Meeting

I would like to welcome everyone here tonight for our 2<sup>nd</sup> General Meeting of this school year. I would like to extend congratulations to each and every one of you for the outstanding job you do each day by providing the best possible learning experience for the children of Simcoe County. As well, congratulations on taking time for yourself to attend tonight's meeting where you are able to network with colleagues, to become involved in our Federation, and to hear a message from our guest speaker on how to reduce and to manage the stress in your life.

On the screen you see the home page of the ETFO CLOSE THE GAP website that can be reached by going to the ETFO website and following the link. This counter on the screen represents the additional hours and minutes so far this school year that you as a full-time elementary teacher in Ontario have been instructing your students compared to a secondary teacher. This gap needs to be closed!!

If you examine the ASSIGNED TIME of an elementary teacher which includes instructional and supervision time versus the assigned time of a secondary teacher which includes instructional, supervision, on-calls and

teacher/student mentoring time, the gap is even greater. The average elementary teacher in this province has almost 9 300 additional minutes of assigned time than their secondary counterparts. This works out to almost 31 days over the course of a school year. This means when we break for the Victoria Day Weekend in May, elementary teachers should be finished for the school year while our secondary colleagues would be required to teach until the end of June. Is this equitable? I say no.

The Gap in funding between the elementary panel and the secondary panel must be CLOSED. The inequities that you face on a daily basis need to be eliminated. This government needs to take action and address the funding gap between the elementary and secondary panel. Dorothy Ramsay, your 2<sup>nd</sup> VP and I made a presentation on your behalf to the Minister of Finance on January 16<sup>th</sup>. On that day, the Minister of Finance was in Barrie as part of his Pre-budget Consultations that occurred across the province. We clearly stated how the funding gap impacts teachers in Simcoe County. Here is part of the message we delivered:

The current difference in funding between an elementary student and secondary student is \$711. In Simcoe County, the funding gap results in an annual deficit of almost \$24 million for our 33 279 elementary students. This means each classroom of 24.5 students is being short-changed by over \$17

000 and each elementary school of 400 students is being short-changed by almost \$300 000. This translates into fewer resources for elementary classrooms, fewer specialist teachers for elementary students and less preparation time for elementary teachers.

Why are textbooks and learning materials funded at \$27 more per secondary student than elementary student? This gap means almost \$900 000 is not available in Simcoe County for elementary resources. Why are classroom supplies funded at \$105 more for each secondary student than each elementary student? This results in a \$3.5 million loss in Simcoe County for elementary classroom supplies. Why are classroom computers funded at \$14 less per elementary student than per secondary student – a loss of \$466 000 in Simcoe County?

These are a few of the questions we need the government to consider and to answer as we move forward with Collective Bargaining and our goal of obtaining the best possible Collective Agreement for the elementary teachers of Simcoe County. We must CLOSE THE GAP!!!

Recently, the Ministry of Education has extended an invitation to ETFO to discuss issues of importance to ETFO in relation to Collective Bargaining.

The first meeting has occurred and other meetings are planned. Once these meetings are completed we will be able to proceed with the presentation of the preliminary submission. At this point, no predictions are possible on potential outcomes of these discussions between the Ministry of Education and ETFO. Currently, the plan is to hold the ratification of the preliminary submission by the end of April.

At this time, I would like to extend a special thank you to those members who were part of the Collective Bargaining Committee who met on a weekly basis this fall and into the New Year. Their dedication and commitment to preparing the preliminary submission should be commended. For those in attendance, please stand up and be recognized.

I want to wish you all the best throughout the remainder of the school year. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Enjoy your upcoming March Break – you deserve it!! Be sure to follow the 3 R's – Rest, Relax and Rejuvenate!!