



Prince Albert and Area Teachers' Association

NEWSLETTER

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November 2009

... from the President's desk

October and November continue to be busy months in the life of the PAATA President. Besides chairing the Representative meeting and the Executive meetings, I attend Fall Council along with our 12 councilors. The topic of the weekend was Provincial Collective Bargaining. We are just beginning the process for our next contract negotiation and there is a very different process in place. The Federation is making every attempt to engage all their membership in this process. November 4th the members of the STF were at Carlton leading a discussion re-bargaining with our local membership. They plan to hold similar meetings in every local during the month of November. Thank you to those who were able to come take part in the process. Also on the agenda for this General Membership Meeting was local nominations for a vacant councilor position and some amendments to our constitution.

Tuesday, November 3rd was our induction evening where we welcomed new teachers to the STF and teachers new to the PAATA. It was a very enjoyable evening as usual and many people headed home with a door prize in addition to the excellent entertainment.

Report cards, mid-term reports and parent/teacher interviews are the focus for most of us during November. It is a hectic, stressful time as we work overtime to get everything in place for these events.

Then, right away it seems, we spring into action for our annual Celebrations of the season. These celebrations take many different forms throughout our association. Despite the frustration of getting costumes prepared, lines learned, props in place, the children always seem to come through and provide a wonderful experience for their parents. Good luck with all that.

Please remember to wear your white ribbons the first weekend in December. The White Ribbon Day falls during the weekend so we are leaving it to you to remember to pin it on your coat. Don't forget to return those ribbons to your reps when you are done. Recycle! Reuse!

On November 11th, a wreath will be laid at the Remembrance Day service by the PAATA. Annually we participate in this service along with many other organizations and groups. If anyone is interested in assisting in the laying of our wreath, by all means contact me at the PAATA office.

The new web portal for STF was launched recently. I encourage everyone to become familiar with the new format.

There always seems to be tasks waiting for me - never a dull moment. We seem to be always polling our membership for one thing or another. I really appreciate the efforts of our school reps to comply with the deadlines. Please help them out by seeing that you give them the info they are asking for in a timely manner. A lot of communication can be done by email - but - your email needs to be checked regularly. With many of our members quite far from town it is important to get information "out there" as quickly as possible. We continue to work on being efficient communicators.

- Debbie McPherson

Induction Evening

Many thanks to Wade Mourot and his staff at Ecole Holy Cross for hosting our evening once again. We are very fortunate to have their facility available to us. Thank you also to the school committees involved in the preparation of the evening; Vincent Massey.

Also, thank you to the councilors in charge: Elaine Serfas and Laurie Regnier.

New STF Web Portal

In case you haven't visited the STF website recently, it has a new look. Along with the new look is a new way to access member only information. It is important to get logged on to the new site so that you can view updates of your provincial bargaining process. To access the members only section we all have new email addresses. Your new user ID is: `firstname.secondname@saskteacher.ca`. Make sure that the name you type in matches the name on your teaching certificate. If you do not remember your password there is help available. Just click on the **Problems signing in?** and help will come your way. Take the time and check out the new look. You'll be glad you did.



MATERNITY BENEFITS

Did you know??.....

As a teacher you are eligible for the following:

- Up to 18 weeks **maternity leave** beginning as early as 12 weeks prior to the expected date of birth.
- Up to 34 weeks parental leave.
- Up to 50 weeks of benefits under the **Supplemental Unemployment Benefits Plan (SUB)**.

The Supplemental Unemployment Benefits Plan is contained in Article Eight of the Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement.

To apply for SUB benefits you must fill out the forms attached to the provincial agreement. Only these official forms can be used. These are available on the STF website. Form 8-1 should be submitted with the notice of intention to take a maternity leave. Both 8-1 and 8-11 must be submitted no later than 120 days following the birth of the child. There is also Form 8-111 Extended Practitioner's Report.

In the Prince Albert Catholic School Division it is the individual teacher's responsibility to access the forms on the STF website. They are included in the provincial agreement.

In the Sask Rivers School Division when you submit your letter for maternity leave you will be given Form 1 & 2 for the SUB plan benefits and the information from the provincial agreement.

When all else fails, and you are not sure of the proper procedure, please contact the PAATA, the STF, your PAATA councilor, your PAATA rep or your central office. There is a timeline for accessing these benefits and you need to educate yourself about these processes.

Why apply for SUB benefits?

The SUB benefit will supplement your Employment Insurance benefit to 95% of your salary entitlement.

Why am I not paid the full 12 weeks of SUB plan benefits if I have my baby during the summer or near another school break?

SUB plan benefits are meant to supplement unemployment benefits for **regular working days**. In other words your SUB plan benefits top up your unemployment benefits to 95% of the wage you would have made **had you been available to work on those days**. All teachers are paid for just the 197 days in the school year.

Although many teachers get a pay cheque that is equalized over 12 months, the monies paid during the summer holiday is salary earned during the school year that is deferred for over the summer months. If SUB plan benefits were paid during unpaid holidays like during the summer break, a teacher on maternity leave would make more in a given year than a teacher on the same step of the salary grid working full time.

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN: Men Working to End Men's Violence Against Women



White Ribbon Campaign in Canada runs its campaign from November 25 (the international Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women) until December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Other countries support 16 days of action from November 25 until December 10 but campaigns can occur at any time of the year.

Please remember to wear your white ribbon on December 6th. School Reps will have them available.

Fall Council Report

On the evening of October 15th Councilors from across Saskatchewan attended a briefing of the activities planned for October 16th and 17th at the Fall Council. I attended these meetings, serving for my first time as a Councilor. Not only was this an opportunity to watch how our federation operates and guides the course for Saskatchewan teachers, it was a chance to participate in this process.

Friday started off with organizational updates, governance discussion, policy overview, resolution policy, and councilor advocacy. After the luncheon with the MLAs and MPs the focus of the afternoon changed to Councilor engagement. After speaking to experienced Councilors it became apparent that the structure of Fall Council was different this year. There were far more opportunities for Councilors to discuss and interact with others. This process was continued on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon was scheduled for the Special Meeting of Council that saw the discussion of resolutions followed by decision of resolutions.

I highly recommend the experience of attending Council to other teachers. The Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation has close to 12,000 members and being part of Council provides an insight into both the complexity and scope of the organization.

- Mark Eggleston

