

## Ministers Announce Action on Violence in the Education Workplace

To: Presidents and All Members

From: Paul Elliott, President

### For Information

Minister of Education Mitzie Hunter and Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn attended the June 2, 2017 meeting of Provincial Council and made a significant announcement regarding the issue of violence in the education workplace. The announcement has four key components:

- An enhanced enforcement initiative will begin this fall, **specifically targeting workplace violence** in schools. Every single school board in the province will be visited by a manager, regional program coordinator and by an inspector. In total, more than 70 district school boards across the province will receive a visit in 2017-2018 from ministry officials.
- With input from the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety, which was established through the central bargaining process, the Ministry of Labour will be creating education sector specific guidance documents which will have the same authority as those produced by a Section 21 Committee under the Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA). The guidance material will be completed and published during the 2017-2018 school year. **Ministry of Labour enforcement teams will be visiting every school board in the province to review the boards' obligations under the OHSA.**
- Keeping in mind that highly sensitive and privilege information may be contained in a student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), the government is committed to ensuring that all education workers have access to the information they need to protect themselves and maintain a safe and inclusive classroom for students and other staff. Next steps will be predicated on advice from the Working Group, whose experience and expertise will inform next steps **to expand access to information by the spring of 2018.**
- A full review of reporting requirements for violent incidents will be undertaken, with the goal of creating a simple, standardized reporting process that is accessible online, and will facilitate the collection of accurate data **with implementation in the spring of 2018.**

This announcement comes just two months after more than 120 OSSTF/FEESO members from across the province converged on Queen's Park to meet with MPPs, including cabinet ministers and opposition leaders, to lobby for precisely this kind of action.

In his remarks to Provincial Council, Minister Flynn said, “I want to let you to know that you have my personal commitment to this . . . Instead of having a long drawn-out process, we can do something very quickly, so I am going to attend as many of the Working Group meetings as possible, and personally work with you on this . . . Let us find out what it takes to move to the next level when it comes to addressing violence in our schools.”

OSSTF/FEESO will be holding Minister Flynn to his commitments. We will be closely monitoring the development of the resource guide and the review of the reporting process to ensure that, for OSSTF/FEESO members and all education workers in Ontario, violence in the workplace is finally being addressed.

Attached is a letter from Minister Hunter and Minister Flynn to the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety, outlining the government’s commitments.

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