

**Proudly
representing
Early Childhood
Educators
since 1990**

OSSTF/FEESO: Uniting Education Workers since 1919



I have been working for nine years as an Early Childhood Educator in Kindergarten classrooms. Our group of ECEs recently joined OSSTF/FEESO and are so pleased with our decision. OSSTF/FEESO has been very supportive to us. We have benefited greatly from their services, resources and professional development. OSSTF/FEESO believes in and supports Early Childhood Educators!

– Kerry O'Brien-MacDougall, RECE,
Lakehead DSB Public Schools



OSSTF/FEESO is a trade union that represents 60,000 members in Ontario. Our diverse membership includes secondary teachers, early childhood educators, social workers, speech and language pathologists, and educational assistants, to name only a few. Our members work in English and French public and separate elementary and secondary schools, board work sites and universities.

Our strength comes from this wonderful diversity. OSSTF/FEESO is in a unique position to understand and advocate for all employees in the education system.

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO JOIN OSSTF/FEESO?

We believe that the whole school is a classroom and we represent employees across the entire spectrum of Ontario's education system. We have been representing ECEs for 20 years and are proud to have over 60,000 school staff members across all job categories working in both elementary and secondary schools. We understand the important differences in each job and the specific needs of ECEs.



Because OSSTF/FEESO has represented ECEs since 1990, we understand your goals, your concerns and the unique skills you bring to the classroom. We have an excellent relationship with your professional college. We've negotiated on your behalf, stood by you in grievances and arbitrations, defended your pension and benefits, and helped you get training to advance your career. This experience is a key part of what makes OSSTF/FEESO the right choice for ECEs.

There is also a great advantage to belonging to a union that is exclusively focused on education and has a proven track record. We have demonstrated our ability to bargain fair salaries, benefits and working conditions for our members and have been successful in convincing the government to maintain strong funding for education. In addition, with OSSTF/FEESO, you will have access to significant financial resources, training opportunities, specialized expertise and support.





WE WORK EVERY DAY FOR OUR MEMBERS

OSSTF/FEESO is organized into three main departments that provide the many services we offer.

The Protective Services Department protects our members' rights, working conditions, wages, benefits and more. This includes negotiations, grievances/arbitrations, education finance, pay equity, pension advice, health and safety, benefits, long-term disability and training. This department also provides assistance in local grievances and resolving issues informally with employers. Specialists at the provincial office and our lawyers will represent you when required, at no cost to you or your local. Protective Services also manages our Benevolent Funds, which can provide up to \$2,500 a year for members in financial distress.

The Educational Services Department provides professional support for all members, works with the professional colleges including the College of Early Childhood Educators, and maintains open communication with the Ontario government and its agencies. This department also monitors Ministry



As an Early Childhood Educator working in a kindergarten classroom for eight years, I am very happy to be a new member of OSSTF/FEESO. In our time together, our members have been provided with many opportunities for professional development, attending conferences and meetings. OSSTF/FEESO truly respects ECEs as professionals, valuing our input and including our members during a most exciting time in the new beginning of the Early Learning Kindergarten Program.

- Sheila Dennis, RECE,
Lakehead DSB Public Schools





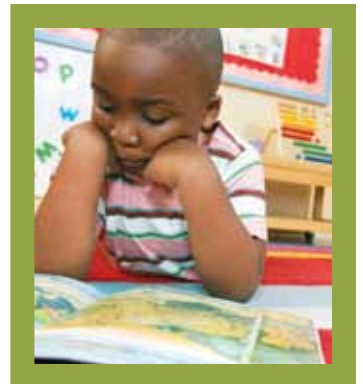
of Education initiatives and education trends in Canada, and organizes professional development and training on issues of importance to all members.

The Communications/Political Action Department employs a full-time legislative lobbyist to liaise with the government and other political parties and oversees a political action committee to provide advice on political strategy. It offers workshops, issues brochures and pamphlets, advertises in the media and makes submissions to the government. Members are kept informed through a regular newsletter, a periodical, a provincial website, a flyer on current issues and direct mailings when the need arises.



WE ARE A STRONG VOICE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Because we specialize in education, we are recognized by the government and other stakeholders as a credible and trustworthy voice in educational matters. OSSTF/FEESO does not affiliate with a particular political party. We lobby all parties on issues important to our members. Government funding is a key focus, but we





have also been very successful on issues such as pay equity, violence in the workplace and harassment. When our members have a concern, they can be sure that government ministers and MPPs will listen and act.

WE BARGAIN FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH

OSSTF/FEESO is a proven leader in bargaining for the education sector. While negotiations are always conducted by a local team, members will always have access to research, resources and a trained OSSTF/FEESO negotiator from the provincial office. Employers are well aware of our bargaining strength and know that we can successfully support our members.

With more than \$60 million in our strike fund, we have the resources to back up contract demands and ensure the collective agreement is followed. Even though more than 97 per cent of collective agreements are settled without strikes, it is good to know that if a settlement cannot be reached, OSSTF/FEESO has the resources to back its members when needed. If you should vote to go on strike, strike pay is a minimum of



The solidarity of OSSTF/FEESO will continue to be the leverage that helps each Local achieve the best improvements possible in future Collective Agreements. I have seen first-hand the expert way negotiations are handled by OSSTF/FEESO. If requested, an experienced provincial person is assigned to assist with negotiations. Since that day in 1998, I have known, time and time again, that we are being represented by a very professional organization.

– **Judy Ferriss, RECE District 9, Greater Essex**





\$50 a day plus benefits including Long Term Disability and pensions from day one. Other funds can also be available during a strike to complement strike pay.

HOW DOES OSSTF/FEESO SUPPORT MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

OSSTF/FEESO supports the professional development of members in two ways:

- 1.** Financial support - a dedicated budget in excess of \$500,000 allows Locals to access provincial funds to provide training to members. These funds are typically used for attendance at union training activities, but may be accessed for attendance at professional conferences and symposiums sponsored by OSSTF/FEESO, the Canadian Labour Congress or the Ontario Federation of Labour.
- 2.** OSSTF/FEESO develops workshops to meet members' needs on a variety of topics. These workshops can be requested by a Local to be delivered "on site" to interested members at no cost to the member. OSSTF/FEESO is developing a resource kit and workshops specifically for ECEs working in early learning. The resources and workshops will be developed by OSSTF/FEESO ECEs who have worked on school boards for several years.





HOW DO MEMBERS HAVE A SAY IN THE UNION?



Having a collective agreement, and the resources and expertise of OSSTF/FEESO to back it up, has allowed my members, as professional educational staff, to maintain our professional integrity and standards of practice. Our employer is now obliged to address our unique working conditions respectfully and equitably.

– Buddy McWhiter, Social Worker, Peel DSB



All members play a role in determining OSSTF/FEESO's actions and policies at the provincial level, and in making decisions for their local organizations. OSSTF/FEESO is a democratic union that provides members with opportunities both to serve the union and to grow personally and professionally.

There are many opportunities for you to get involved in OSSTF/FEESO and the important issues we fight for.

Registration, hotel, meals, travel and child care for these events are paid by the provincial office. These are just some of the annual events our members attend –

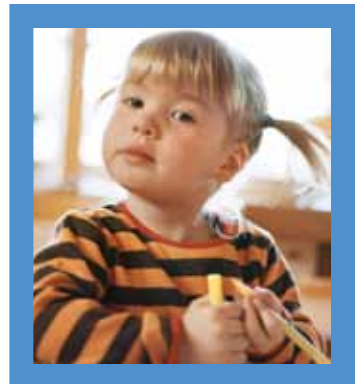
- The Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly
- Collective Bargaining Conference
- Collective Bargaining Regional Meetings
- Summer Leadership Conference
- Status of Women Conference
- Human Rights Conference
- Education Services Officers' Conference
- Communications/Political Action Conference



HOW WOULD THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS WORK ONCE WE JOINED OSSTF/FEESO?

Our Locals have autonomy and make their own decisions, elect their executives, develop and adopt their constitution and bylaws, and determine their own budget allocations. OSSTF/FEESO supports the Local through access to expertise and financial resources. Each Local is assigned an Executive Assistant who can be called on to assist with problems and issues. In addition, a member of the Provincial Executive is assigned to each Local. Financial support is provided provincially by funding legal counsel, negotiation assistance, strike pay, grievance/arbitration, WSIB appeals, benevolent grants, professional development, union training and more.

Provincially elected officers and union staff are a phone call away at **1-800-267-7867**. During regular business hours someone will always answer your call – OSSTF/FEESO does not resort to voice mail.





WHAT WILL IT COST TO JOIN OSSTF/FEESO?

OSSTF/FEESO dues are 1.3 per cent. Union dues are determined by a majority vote of the membership at our Annual General Meeting. At 1.3 per cent, our dues are one of the lowest of any of the large unions. All union dues are tax-deductible. Your dues provide for services such as: professional negotiators; services that include grievance and arbitration; pay equity negotiations and maintenance, pension and benefit services, access to legal counsel in specific cases; training at the local, regional and provincial levels; benevolent funds; member/student scholarships, grants and awards; political action campaigns; union newsletter and magazine and professional development.

HOW TO JOIN OSSTF/FEESO

People who work in public education in Ontario all have the benefit of union representation. If ECEs on your school board do not already have a union, the decision of which union you join is entirely up to you and your colleagues. With 20 years of experience representing ECEs, we believe that OSSTF/FEESO is your best choice and many of your colleagues agree.

The decision on which union will represent you follows a simple process that's defined by law.

Sign membership cards

Joining a union involves making a choice. Once you have gathered sufficient information you will need to sign a card to indicate your desire to join the union you chose. A signed card indicates your desire to have that union secure bargaining rights for you.

By law, your decision to join the union is strictly confidential. The employer is never told who signed a card and will never know how you voted as an individual. The union and the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) are the only parties that see the signed cards.

Apply for certification

When a clear majority of your co-workers agree to join OSSTF/FEESO by signing cards, an application is sent to the OLRB requesting certification.

Vote by secret ballot

The OLRB will order and conduct a secret ballot vote within five working days from the date of application by the union.

Get certified as an OSSTF/FEESO local

If a majority of voters (50 per cent plus one) choose OSSTF/FEESO, you all become members and we start working on your behalf.

Set your local constitution and bylaws

With the assistance of an OSSTF/FEESO representative, your Local will establish a local constitution and set of bylaws that will govern your Local. Your Local constitution and bylaws will be adopted by vote at a general meeting of your membership.

Elect your local executive officers and committees

At a general meeting where all new members are invited, the members will also elect a new executive committee, including a president, treasurer and chief negotiator to work on your behalf.

Give notice to bargain to your employer

OSSTF/FEESO, as the new Local, will notify your employer that we wish to meet and negotiate a new collective agreement. A professional negotiator from OSSTF/FEESO and your collective bargaining team will meet with the employer to negotiate your first OSSTF/FEESO contract. The employer is legally bound to bargain with your union in good faith.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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