

President's Report

June 2nd 2020

What a Year!!!!

Well, we can say that this year has been a definite challenge. Between striking which began in December to a Pandemic in March, it has definitely been anything but normal. We have been on strike, walking hand in hand with our other colleagues, fighting for a better education for all students and staff. This may not have ended the way we wished, but no one can say that we didn't give a good fight, and I for one, am proud of what we did and what we accomplished. I also believe that if COVID 19 didn't happen, things would have ended very differently. It was amazing to watch the solidarity we had during our strike, not just with other unions but with principals, parents, the public, and the media. You could see things changing in our favor. Unfortunately, we had to endure one of the biggest scares our world has had to face in a long time. A scare that pushed everyone into insolation. Through this, we have once again had to face new challenges and navigate a new world. Again, we have risen to the challenge and overcome these obstacles. But where did this leave us for bargaining and our strike? As we watched all other unions make deals and settle with the government, we came to the conclusion that we too needed to get back to the table and find a middle ground that would hopefully find some balance during this difficult time. Is it the deal we wished for? Is it the deal we would have settled on, if we weren't in a pandemic? The answer is no. But we sometimes have to cut our losses and choose to fight another day. In a time where there are people losing jobs and stores are closing, this was the best decision we could have made. Locally, we had 23 members vote, 21 in favor and 2 opposed, equally a 91% in favor. Now we can move forward and begin to bargain locally. With the team in place, made up of Jen Sears - Chief Negotiator, Nancy Lortie - Grievance Officer and Myself, we will be reaching out to the board to set some dates. Upon reaching an agreement, we then will present it to all members.

Staffing

Staffing for the fall is underway. As of now we have 6 classroom reductions and 1 classroom opening. Lay-off slips have gone out and we will be doing fall staffing June 8. I know that this can be a difficult time, many individuals filled with uncertainties, but as I was told once by Jane Flaxey, "try to remember it is a picture in time." Things are always changing as we know: classrooms reopen as children who didn't enroll in the spring sign up in the fall, or children move schools. I'm hopeful that most of our layoffs will be reallocated to a school.

Redeployment

I have received a few questions regarding the redeployment to work at one of the care facilities in Sault Ste. Marie. I'm not here to make that decision for you; if you wish to do that, it's up to you. As this is not part of the OSSTF union group, we are unable to support you in your redeployment. You will be under whatever union group the care facility has. I will not be able to help. Any questions you have regarding what union group it is, or anything regarding the job itself, I would suggest you contact ADSB.

Thank you

With it being such a crazy year, I would like to send out some thank you's. First, I would like to thank the amazing council we have. During the strike, all the school reps stepped up to the plate. We had great support from them all and anything we asked they did!! A job well done. I have the best Executive team, we laugh plenty and work just as hard to ensure all the members are treated fairly. We have persevered through this very difficult year, and I know, I wouldn't have been able to do the job that I do without them. They have stepped up to the plate whenever asked. I would especially like to thank Jen Sears who has been my amazing right hand this year. Next, I would like to thank the other Presidents of D2: John Wells, Sharon Indrevold, Liz Tassone, and Terri Lyn Della Penta - you all have helped steer this ship through this difficult time in different ways. Thank you. Our office help Sari Gregorchuk who has helped through the strike thank you. Marine Devoni is the true captain of the ship. She keeps us all on task and helps 24/7. At Provincial Office, I would like to thank Malini Laahy and Lamia Sabbagh. Lastly, I would like to say welcome back to Jana Rizzo who was off on Maternity leave. She will be continuing her role as Health and Safety Officer.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy summer and look forward to what September will bring.

Stay Safe

Bobbi-Jo Sterling

RECE President

Algoma District 2

