

last but not least...

With our current Collective Agreement set to expire on August 31, 2012, I have started to prepare for the upcoming round of negotiations. Your County Collective Bargaining Committee has already met once to go through last year's surveys and to do a Collective Agreement Comparison between SCETF, OECTA and OSSTF. Our next step will be to use that information and go through the current Collective Agreement clause by clause and prepare our Preliminary Submission. Once the Preliminary Submission has been completed it must then be approved by the SCETF Executive and then brought before the membership for approval. I will then notify the Board of our intent to negotiate and we will be prepared to begin negotiations in June.

Clearly the focus of my Chalk Talk articles this year will be on the upcoming round of negotiations. But in this first article, I wanted to switch gears a little and take the time to reinforce a very misunderstood issue, Staff Meetings. The following article reflects the current ETFO stance on Staff Meetings.

29.05 - Regular Staff Meetings - regular staff meetings shall be scheduled by the Principal in consultation with the teaching staff and upon consensus whenever possible. Regularly scheduled staff meetings shall be held no more than once per month on average. Each meeting shall be no more than 75 minutes in length. The dates of the regular staff meetings shall be set within the first month of the school year and communicated to all teachers. Regularly scheduled staff meetings may include administrative/organizational issues, professional development, training and other matters aligned with school and Board goals. Teachers are expected to attend regularly scheduled staff meetings. Teachers may

submit agenda items to the Principal for consideration.

So what does Article 29.05 mean to a Teacher in the classroom? It means that you have one regular staff meeting per month which you are **expected (not required)** to attend. Your principal may schedule division meetings and PLC meetings and other types of meetings if they wish but they are strictly voluntary. It means the dates for each monthly staff meeting (for the entire school year) must have been shared with all staff in September. There should have been some pre-planning into the times of these meetings and therefore, the dates should not be changing. It means that all staff meetings

must end 75 minutes after they start, no exceptions. It is also our expectation that all staff meetings should be scheduled to begin soon (very soon) after the end of the instructional day and as a result, all staff meetings would be over by 5:00 p.m. at the latest. It means Professional Development may occur at staff meetings. In fact, your administrator can schedule anything that he or she deems necessary, important, or relevant during the 75 minute monthly meeting. It means while you have the right to submit agenda items for consideration, it is our expectation that the Staff Meetings would not consist entirely of PD and that operational issues that affect the entire school should be dealt with. If your principal refuses to place items on the agenda, please contact the SCETF Office. It means you are **expected (not required)** to attend. The word "expected" is the key to the entire clause and the greatest area of misunderstanding between Federation and the Board.

It is our belief that if you as a professional have another obligation that you deem

cont'd on page 23



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- visit our website at www.scetf.org -

chalk talk

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more important, more relevant or more pressing then what will be discussed, shared, or presented at a staff meeting, then you have the right to not attend.

The bottom line is that we have polar opposite views as to what the word “expected” means and that this disagreement goes beyond our Local and the Board. This is a fundamental disagreement between OPSBA and ETFO and one



which will be solved through arbitration. ETFO firmly believes we are correct with our interpretation of the language and will provide all necessary support to our members.

If you as a professional, decide that you will not be attending a staff meeting. I would advise you to notify your administrator via email and in a very professional and polite manner inform them that you will not be attending the staff meeting and ask that you be provided with any information you may miss. While you do not need to explain your absence, as a professional, I believe it is your obligation to find out anything you may have missed.

If you have any questions, concerns or issues around your attendance at a staff meeting, please contact the SCETF Office at 705-728-2888.