

Memorandum To: Directors of Education, English Catholic School Boards
Marshall Jarvis, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
Nick Milanetti, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)

From: Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

Date: October 24, 2016

Subject: 2016-17 Additional Professional Activity Day

I am writing to you with information pertaining to the third mandatory Professional Activity (PA) day in the 2016-17 school year.

As an outcome of the most recent central bargaining process for teachers, an additional mandatory PA day was added to Ontario Regulation 304, "School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days" in November 2015. The Ministry of Education, OCSTA and OECTA met last fall and agreed that the topics for the additional PA day for members of OECTA in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years would be:

- All teachers: ½ PA day on occupational health & safety training;
- FDK teachers/ECE teams: ½ PA day on inquiry-based learning and pedagogical assessment documentation strategies for FDK teacher/ECE teams;
- Grades 1 – 12 teachers: ½ PA day on a topic to be decided by board/federation PD committees that is aligned with ministry priorities, such as mathematics, inquiry-based/experiential learning, assessment documentation, or equity.

In addition, a commitment was made for the Ministry of Education to consult with OCSTA and OECTA on how the additional PA day could best be used to advance the goals in *Achieving Excellence*. To that end, representatives from OECTA, OCSTA and the ministry met recently to review the implementation of the third mandatory PA day in the 2015-16 school year. It was acknowledged that there was a strong collaborative effort from all parties to support the implementation and delivery of the additional PA day and that the day was a positive experience for participants. Some opportunities to enhance implementation of the PA day in 2016-17 were also identified. The following information aims to clarify direction previously provided in the December 18, 2015 memo from former Deputy Minister George Zegarac on the additional PA day.

For the 2016-17 school year, boards are asked to consider the following clarification on the content and structure of the PA day:

- The focus of the ½ day for health and safety should be on occupational health and safety training, which may include training on psychological health and safety and violent threat risks assessment (VTRA).
- The intent of the ½ day for FDK teacher/ECE teams is to provide these educator teams with the opportunity to work collaboratively on program implementation, inquiry-based learning and pedagogical assessment documentation strategies. FDK teachers who do not have an ECE partner should be given the opportunity to collaborate with another FDK/ECE team.
- The ½ day of occupational health and safety training and ½ day of professional learning for FDK educator teams could be scheduled on separate days to allow for this professional learning to be provided at the most appropriate time during the school year.

OECTA, OCSTA and the ministry will collaborate to develop resources to support administrators with the delivery of occupational health and safety training. We recognize that the 2016-17 school year calendars have been published and that some boards may have already implemented this PA day at the start of the school year, or have already set the agenda and committed to specific arrangements for the day. As a result, these resources will be shared with boards as soon as possible.

In some school boards, a committee of board and teacher federation representatives is responsible for school year calendar planning, including determining the timing and content of PA days. This is a good example of school boards and teachers' federations working together to ensure that PA days provide meaningful learning opportunities that meet the needs of educators. All boards are encouraged to engage with their teacher federation representatives at the onset of the school year calendar planning process to ensure that the federations' perspectives specific to professional learning on PA days is understood and considered.

If you have any questions, please contact your regional office. A list of regional offices is attached.



Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

- C. Demetra Saldaris, Director
Teaching Policy and Standards Branch
- Steven Reid, Director
Field Services Branch
- Brian Blakeley, Director
Labour Relations Operations Branch
- Regional Office Managers
- Teacher Federations
- English Public, French Public and Catholic District School Boards