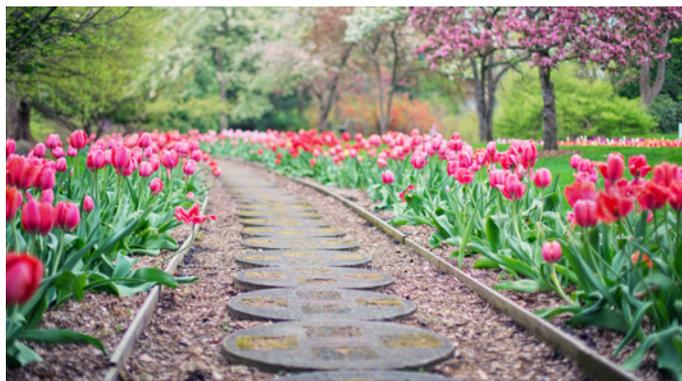




Association of Professional Student Services Personnel

Niagara Chapter  
Executive Update Report

Spring 2019



## Happy Spring!

We hope all of our members had a restful March Break. As we head into spring, we are excited to introduce our first newsletter! Our hope is to provide one in the fall and one in the spring.

## Your Niagara Chapter Executive Council Representatives

- PRESIDENT:** Lynn Orr
- VICE PRESIDENT NEGOTIATIONS:** Tracey Gegieckas
- CHIEF OF NEGOTIATIONS:** Dave Peirce
- TREASURER:** Leanne Hasenack
- PUBLIC REL:** Joanne Mastek
- GRIEVANCE:** Jen Drury
- SECRETARY:** Sarah James
- HEALTH AND SAFETY:** Jen Grundy
- GOVERNING COUNCIL:** Cheryl Bechard-Howe & Tara Colavecchia

## New Members

Welcome! We encourage all new members to take a quick moment and visit [www.apssp.org](http://www.apssp.org) to learn more about your union. Upon your initial visit to the site you are asked to register and create your APSSP e-mail, this allows Provincial to reach you with any important information for their members. **ANY CURRENT MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET REGISTERED ALREADY ARE ASKED TO DO SO!!** This is a crucial step to ensuring everyone is receiving all necessary emails coming from Provincial.

## Negotiations

APSSP and partners have begun preparations for negotiations as our current Collective Agreements are scheduled to expire at the end of August 2019. *Members should expect to receive an anonymous survey that will be used to collect any information that will assist with negotiation preparations.* The information collected from these surveys will help to prepare for as many negotiation scenarios as possible.

## Money Update

Everyone received a 1% increase in their pay in January 2019! Thank you to the Provincial Central Bargaining Team for negotiating this for us!

## Reminders

**Signing in when you arrive at schools may be a good thing after all!** Some Boards have moved towards a fob or key-card system for entry into every school. This is like 'clocking in' and specifically tracks workers' time. **It's in all of our best interests to comply reasonably with the sign-in expectation at schools.**

## Let's celebrate Our Niagara Chapter Retirements



Congratulations to Lynn Coles for her dedication to the DSBN. Lynn is enjoying retirement travelling, enjoying a glass of wine or 2 and spending time with family and friends. On behalf of APSSP, we wish Lynn happiness and health in her retirement.



Congratulations to Yiching and her family on the arrival of Javi Ming Kwan Barrios Chua! Born on June 10, 2018.



Congratulations to Naomi and her family on the arrival of Eli! Born on December 11, 2018.

## Volunteers Needed

Are you creative and/or artistic and have a few hours to spare?

We are looking for a few volunteers to help us with creating a video or posters of who APSSP is. Schools, Parents, Trustees, and Senior Administration will have an opportunity to see the support we provide to students to help them to be **the best they can be**.

We are also looking for any members that might be interested in joining the Bylaws Committee. The focus will be to review the current Bylaws and make any necessary updates and changes to them for presentation at the June General Membership Meeting and Elections.

If you are interested in joining either of these committees, please reach out to one of the Executive Members and more information will be shared with you.

## APSSP Gives Back

A donation of \$500.00 was donated to EFN on behalf of our Union in December. We arranged for a donation to Denim/Diamonds/ Diplomas silent auction table for their February Event. Scizzions Salon and Spa graciously donated a \$200.00 spa package (there was no cost to APSSP because we just set it up).

## Provincial Update - March 2019

Your **APSSP Provincial Executive** wishes to provide you with some updates and information.

### Negotiations

Many of you will be aware of talk of “proposed” education-sector changes discussed in both the media and your schools. With contracts across the sector set to expire this August, there will likely be more announcements and proposals released in the coming weeks and months. APSSP and its EWAO-ATEO colleagues are committed to providing accurate information, relevant to professional student support services staff, as it becomes available.

APSSP continues to prepare for negotiations and remains focused on job retention and benefits in what is likely to be a difficult climate. Advocating for the work of APSSP’s Members, work which is essential to student success, remains a priority of this organization. While decisions about financially preparing for potential Labour disruption, must be made by everyone, APSSP strongly encourages all of its members to reflect and make thoughtful decisions in the next few months in light of the continued Labour uncertainty in the sector.

### Benefits

The following information is being provided to all members of the EWAO-ATEO



Prior to March Break, you received a communication from OTIP regarding changes in coverage provided by the EWAO-ATEO Benefits Plan. The unions that are part of EWAO-ATEO have received questions from members regarding these changes and EWAO-ATEO is providing the following information.

### How was my benefits plan with EWAO-ATEO created and who manages the plan?

The creation of your benefit plan with EWAO-ATEO came about from the 2014 Central agreement between EWAO-ATEO, the School Boards and the government. The agreement provided that the different benefit plans for unions in EWAO-ATEO under each of the school Boards would be amalgamated into one plan and be managed by a Trust called ELHT. In the case of EWAO-ATEO, the plan was created as a division of the OECTA ELHT.

## Who is responsible for making decisions regarding the EWAO-ATEO Benefits Plan?

An EWAO-ATEO Benefits Committee is tasked with managing the plan under the guidance, direction and approval of the OECTA ELHT. The Benefits Committee is formed of four members of the EWAO-ATEO Council and three members of the Council of Trustees' Associations. The Committee oversees the affairs of the plan, but the final decisions regarding the EWAO-ATEO Benefits Plan is the responsibility of the OECTA ELHT.

## Why was it necessary to make changes to the benefits plan at this time?

When the plan was created in the spring of 2017, there was very little information on the cost utilization by members in the previous benefit plans of the unions comprised in EWAO-ATEO. EWAO-ATEO tried to create the best plan possible at that time based on the available information in order to ensure the best possible benefits for members going forward.

Since the transfer to the new EWAO-ATEO Benefits Plan on March 1, 2018, the Benefits Committee has been monitoring the performance of the plan closely with monthly reports from OTIP. In many respects, utilization of the benefits has been higher than expected and based on the trends established in the first ten months of the plan, the plan would be in a significant deficit situation at the end of the benefit year (August 31, 2019) if no action is taken. Thus, the Benefits Committee made recommendations for changes to come into effect on April 1, 2019 and these recommendations were approved by the OECTA ELHT. These changes are necessary to ensure that the plan remain financially sustainable, both in the short and long term, while continuing to meet the needs of the members for years to come.

## Why were these specific benefits reduced? Did the Committee consider other options?

The benefits that were reduced were identified as having a high risk of exposure to utilization and an important impact on the costs of the plan. A series of options were considered to deal with the projected deficit, but the decision was to reduce these benefits due to the reasons mentioned above.

## Why were the changes to the benefits plan not communicated earlier?

Before communicating the changes to members, the Committee needed to get approval from the OECTA ELHT. Once this was completed, OTIP was notified and tasked with preparing an English and French communication package for all plan members. Once final approval was given, OTIP sent out the message on February 27, 2019. We understand that the timeline for communicating these changes may have created issues for some members and we apologize if this is the case.

## Were the unions that are part of EWAO-ATEO involved in the decision-making process?

The unions that are part of EWAO-ATEO were informed by the Benefits Committee of the potential for changes to the benefits plan due to the projected deficit for 2018-2019. In terms of the decision making process, the agreement between EWAO-ATEO and the OECTA ELHT states that it is the responsibility of the Benefits Committee to make recommendations and the OECTA ELHT to make decisions, and not the unions of EWAO-ATEO.

## Why did my union not inform me before the changes were announced?

### Does my union support the changes?

As mentioned above, the agreement between EWAO-ATEO and OECTA ELHT states that the Benefits Committee is responsible for making recommendations and that the OECTA ELHT is responsible to make decisions regarding changes to your benefits plan. The Benefits Committee, through OTIP, is responsible to inform you of the changes, and not the respective unions. As an alliance of seven unions that form EWAO-ATEO, our collective objective is to ensure the financial viability of the plan, both in the short and long term while providing the benefits to members. We understand that the recommendations of the Benefits Committee and the decisions of the OECTA ELHT may not be popular, but these changes were made to ensure the financial viability of the plan.

## Meeting Update

Mark your calendar! APSSP will holding their Annual General Meeting in Mississauga on May 16. We hope you will join us for this event.