



Association of Professional Student Services Personnel

Niagara Chapter

Executive Update Report

Winter 2020



Your Niagara Chapter Executive Council Representatives

PRESIDENT: Lynn Orr

VICE PRESIDENT: Tara Colavecchia

CHIEF NEGOTIATOR: Dave Peirce

TREASURER: Leanne Saxton

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Joanne Mastek

GRIEVANCE COORDINATOR: Jen Drury

SECRETARY: Sarah James

HEALTH AND SAFETY REP: Jen Grundy

GOVERNING COUNCIL: Cheryl Bechard-Howe

Presidents Message

Hello members! I am proud of APSSP Niagara's return to schools and the efforts we have all made to strive for accessibility of our services to students and their families in these challenging times. I recognize the extra energy and time that this has required of you. There are many unknowns and stressors, and I want to remind you that you are not alone. There has been a disconnect between planning and implementation across all Boards in Ontario. Just follow the tweets or turn on the news to see the challenges as they are unfolding. We are all experiencing daily changes to information and processes while trying to ensure continuity of services as Provincial and Local governments try to control the pandemic. Your patience and understanding are appreciated.

During the summer the Director's Leadership Committee meetings were extended, with the Director, Superintendent of Human Resources and Union Leaders from ETFO, OSSTF, CUPE and OCT. We had regular updates to the status of return to school, the processes and expectations and Public Health advisements. These Leadership meetings are an opportunity to hear first hand from the Director, the system and Ministry directions and is an opportunity for APSSP to have a voice and a presence with the Director. At the end of September, I attended the APSSP Presidents' Retreat and had the opportunity to discuss the impact to our services across Ontario School Boards. I learned that all Boards were in flux and the continuity for delivery of our services was unfolding in spits and spurts, understandably driven by the COVID numbers and statistics for each locality. My take-away was the Ministry of Education's message to Boards that our services are valued and priority, whether delivered remotely, in-person or a hybrid of both.

Our Provincial President, Nadia Kerr, is a member of the Instructional Support Covid-19 Working Group with the Ministry and she is actively advocating for the essential contributions of professional student support staff to support remote learning and provide support for students, family and staff via the virtual platforms. She is championing our services.

Your APSSP Provincial Executive continues to adapt to conducting union business virtually. I am so grateful for this attentive, knowledgeable group of people. I am also pleased to announce that Tara Colavecchia, Youth Counsellor, has stepped up to serve as Vice President for the remainder of the term and Dave Pierce has remained our Chief of Negotiator!

Presidents Message

All the Executive Members attended the Virtual Union Education Weekend October 24 and 25. The guest presenters were well-known employment and disability lawyers. Topics included were; understanding the processes for workplace accommodations and identifying strategies that can help us navigate these processes. All the Chapters from APSSP decided this was a timely topic given changes that have impacted how Boards are operating.

Stay tuned for your Provincial and Niagara updates in emails. Don't forget to look at your APSSP email and website at www.apssp.org. Please feel free to reach out to me, your Executive members and colleagues with any questions or concerns. Sarah James, our esteemed Secretary, can direct your concerns as well.

With solidarity,
Lynn Orr, President, APSSP Niagara Chapter,
VP Public Relations, APSSP Provincial

Welcome New Members!

Sarah Nepon - Social Worker
Tanja Steinbach - Aboriginal Social Worker
Tonia Lowry - Social Worker (LTO)
Rachel Sembaj - Youth Counsellor (LTO)
Brittany Heffernan - Youth Counsellor (LTO)

We encourage all new members to take a quick moment and visit 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 ENCOURAGED TO DO SO!!** This is a crucial step to ensuring everyone is receiving all necessary emails coming from Provincial. We would also like to ask that if your personal email address or even your phone number has changed that you let Sarah James know so she can keep the most up to date contact information for you.

Friendly Reminders...

Keep your eyes open for our AGM. Plans are in the works and you can expect to hear more details in the coming weeks.

Let's Celebrate!

Laurie Iannetti - Retired August 2020

Laurie's leadership, compassion and the incredible work she did for students, staff and classrooms will be greatly missed.

I begin my retirement with a grateful, loving, joyful and healthy heart.

Spending more than 3 decades as a Youth Counsellor has been quite a career. I am proud of the support I was able to provide countless students, staff and families. I am proud to have worked alongside dedicated colleagues as part of APSSP. It is a time in my life where I was able to foster incredible relationships and create lifelong friendships

I look forward to what the future holds. Spending time with my highschool sweetheart, my adult children, my extended family and my wonderful friends. I look forward to my regular runs, reading good books, antiquing, cooking for the people I love, and helping others; especially my in-laws. I look forward to a time when I can travel again to places in the world I have yet to see. I most look forward to slowing down just a little to really enjoy the things that matter: good health and meaningful time with the people I care about. Until our paths cross again take good care of yourself.



Do you have any good news you would like to share? Our membership likes to celebrate our members. So reach out to Joannemestek@gmail.com and we will include it in our next newsletter.

APSSP Gives Back

Back in April the DSBN reached out for help. Many families were in need of food during the early days of the pandemic. We are proud to say APSSP was one of the first to donate \$2000.00 to the cause. We care. We listen. We help.

Our APSSP budget is in good shape. Our spending matches what we bring in and we have maintained a strong, solid and healthy balance.

An annual budget has been formalized and shared with Provincial. That budget will be shared at our next AGM.

Has Your Mailing Address Changed?

APSSP likes to send thoughtful gifts from time to time. Please send Sarah James your current address so we have the most up to date information. You don't want to miss out when we send some joy your way!

Health and Safety

As you can imagine, Health and Safety has been in full swing this year. There were meetings prior to the start of the school year and the Board has put in all the Health and Safety measures as mandated by the province.

PPE has been provided to all staff and more has been ordered!

If you are in need of any information or have a concern, please remember to contact me or a member of the Executive.



We Care About You!

A reminder about EAP is here to help. Also from APSSP Provincial we have included helpful links to resources for you and your family. We know asking for help is a good thing.

[Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) available to support you at any time.

Check out CMHA's Mental Health Toolkit for more resources and information!

<https://mentalhealthweek.ca/>

