



OSBCU • CSCSO
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HOLIDAY MESSAGE

I wanted to share with you today a holiday message on behalf of the executive and staff of the OSBCU.

There is no doubt that 2020 has been a difficult and trying year. As we put convention and the new central agreement to rest, our world was disrupted by a global pandemic. This pandemic challenged all of us in so many ways. We faced months of social isolation, health concerns, and scrambled to find ways to do the work we love either virtually or under strict health and safety protocols. But OSBCU education workers responded as we know they would – they went to great lengths to engage with their students, they found new ways to ensure their work was completed and continued to be valued, they participated in webinars and learning sessions to ensure that they would be safe while at work. Locally, union leaders also faced challenges – many of our leaders successfully negotiated and ratified local agreements online and through electronic voting. General Membership meetings have taken place on Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet and we are hearing that attendance has never been so good.

At the OSBCU, we also recognized the challenges facing us and how we do the work. Concerned with the work of education workers being overshadowed by other issues, we successfully advocated for education worker specific classification groups. These three groups meet with members of the Ministry of Education monthly and have done so since March – these meetings have allowed OSBCU executive officers to speak truth to power and highlight the issues that face our members specifically. We have seen many initiatives and funding directions for education workers as a result of the great work happening here. There are also weekly meetings happening with the Deputy Minister and monthly meetings happening with the Provincial Working Group for Health and Safety.

2020 has also had some great success within the OSBCU. We have created an Equity Working Group with equity seeking members from across the province dedicated to addressing and supporting equity issues within the OSBCU and the locals. Health & Safety and Injured Workers have been very busy, they too have launched a working group to help support the work of the OSBCU and our locals. They also crafted and produced two webinars around COVID issues.

To address the growing needs of the OSBCU, we are fortunate to be able to hire our first full-time staff member. Mike Maguire joined us this Fall as the Council Support Coordinator. We are happy to welcome him aboard and are already seeing the impact of his presence on our social media platforms and within our organization.

As we wind down to the winter break, we have held 7 virtual area meetings with local executives as well as several virtual classification group meetings. These meetings have allowed us to interact with local leaders and activists in preparation for our convention. As many of you know



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our convention will be virtual. Work has begun on many levels to prepare for this convention. Committees members have been selected and their work will begin in the new year. We are excited to bring our convention to you wherever you may be and to be forging new ground in the areas of online debate and voting.

2021 is already shaping up to be a busy year. As a team we have begun the planning and prepping for our next round of bargaining. We expect the bargaining survey to be out to you in April. Our mobilization team will be meeting in the new year to develop plans to address mobilization needs not just for bargaining but also for the rumoured snap provincial election.

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to thank all of you – for your support, your dedication and your determination in the face of an unprecedented year. It has been my honour to serve all of you as president of the OSBCU – I often remark how fortunate I am to represent some of the hardest working people of Ontario. It is my hope that you each have an opportunity to relax over the holiday season. Each of you is a huge asset to our sector and I look forward to what the new year has in store for all of you.

On behalf of all of us at the OSBCU – happiest of holidays and here is to prosperous 2021.

In solidarity,

Laura Walton
President, OSBCU