

Memorandum to: Directors of Education

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister of Education

Subject Voluntary Redeployment

As COVID-19 continues to impact all Ontarians, with the help of school boards, teachers and education workers, Ontario's education system has maintained its focus on supporting student learning. I want to thank you for your support, collaboration, and advice on our responses to the outbreak. However, there are others in our communities that are facing staffing shortages, and I know that there are many education sector employees that want to help while school closures remain in effect. I encourage everyone that is willing and able to come forward and volunteer for redeployment to help in our communities that are in dire need of our support.

Over the past two weeks, the ministry, along with trustees' associations and union representatives worked together on a plan to help address staffing shortages in other sectors, such as hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes and other residential congregate care settings (e.g. developmental services). This work resulted in a framework for temporary voluntary redeployments of school board employees to support the province's most vulnerable citizens, endorsed, in principle, by all four trustees' associations, and the following unions and councils of unions at the provincial/central level:

- Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)

This framework will give employees an opportunity to volunteer through an online provincial portal where they can self-identify their skills/abilities, geographic location and availability, among other things. There is a need in almost every skill set which are often transferable to other settings. This is not for clinical support, unless a person is registered with those skills, but rather non-clinical supports. They would then be matched with local employers that need their services. School boards are also encouraged to reach out to their third-party food service providers to discuss the potential where contracts are still in place, if they have staff that have not been laid-off by their school board that would be interested in volunteering for redeployment (food services is another area of staff shortages).

Those who are matched and agree to temporary redeployment will remain employed by the school board and shall continue to be covered by the terms of their collective

agreement, including compensation, with some exceptions as circumstances require (i.e. shift assignments). An employee can choose to end their redeployment at any time, but redeployment only lasts during the emergency order period. Redeployment can also cease should the school board require the employee back, or based on the decision of the receiving employer.

Temporarily redeployed employees will be eligible for the pandemic premium pay if matched to eligible institutions (e.g. long-term care homes) and working in an eligible role.

Emergency orders are in place that allow for volunteers who are matched to be eligible for emergency child care, should it be necessary, and clarify that although redeployed the employee remains an employee of the school board.

Whether to volunteer to be redeployed or not is a highly personal decision. Training and safety equipment will be provided to help ensure everyone's safety, but employees should know there is always a degree of risk. I wish to thank those in advance who are willing and able to be redeployed.

While it is important to attempt to address the critical staff resource needs in our communities, this initiative is not intended to interfere with employees who are required to support Continuity of Learning in the education sector. These employees are not eligible for temporary redeployments. This includes instructional and special education teachers, and certain IT employees. Most other employees are eligible, subject to the local school board's operational needs.

In addition, occasional teachers and casual education worker staff who are not currently working and potentially receiving federal supports are also eligible. If these occasional teachers and casual workers volunteer and are matched for temporary redeployment, they will be rehired by the school board, and become eligible for the pandemic premium pay and emergency child care.

School boards will be required to work with the temporarily redeployed employee, their union and the receiving employer to track redeployment hours worked, and overtime to compensate those redeployed. Salaries for those that were laid-off by their school board, overtime pay and the pandemic premium amounts will be funded by the Ministry of Education through emergency measures funding.

As the need for resources is immediate, we urge boards and their bargaining agents to consider these matters quickly to reach a local agreement. The attached documents have been endorsed by the trustees' associations and the unions listed above, and will help you support local discussions and communications with employees. These are suggested templates and can be customized based on local discussions.

- Appendix 1: A Community Supports Agreement – which is a statement of principles between the school board and the union

- Appendix 2: Redeployment Agreement between the employers (the school board and the receiving employer) and the applicable unions

These documents are intended as a guide and need not interfere with local arrangements that have been made or are underway.

The following are some suggested next steps to be able to redeploy those interested and match them to employers in critical need of their services:

- Meet with your local bargaining agents to come to an agreement on redeployment (Appendix 1 is intended to assist in these discussions). Even if the union or councils of unions did not endorse the central framework, you are encouraged to still have the discussion with the local union who can approve a local agreement.
- Once the matching portal is open, the ministry will notify boards and will provide resources on accessing and registering on the portal that can be shared in the correspondence to employees.
- Upon agreement, notification is provided to the ministry and a memo is sent from the school board to their employees with the details. It is recommended to notify employees as agreements are reached, and not wait for agreements with all school boards' bargaining units.
- Employees can then register through the online portal and complete their availability and skill set.
- If a match is made, ministry staff will confirm with the school board that the person can be released for redeployment (i.e. giving due consideration of Continuity of Learning and board operations).
- If approved, the receiving employer contacts the individual to confirm their interest, and
- Receiving employer enters into an agreement with the individual, which is shared with the school board and the union.

Thank you once again for your efforts, and for those of your board staff, teachers and education workers. Given the importance of this initiative, I encourage all school boards to expeditiously meet with your local unions to adopt agreements so those that are willing and able, can volunteer.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister