

President's Year End Report

Glen Hodgson – TBU President

WOW!. What a year. I don't think I could possibly have envisioned in my wildest dreams the craziness of the 2019-20 school year. As I present this report, we are still immersed in the uncertainty of COVID-19 and you are reading this from the comfort of your own home as we have been forced to hold this year's AGM virtually. This is a first.

In the interest of preserving an account of this year for historical records, allow me to recap the past twelve months. We began in the fall with continuing massive job losses, but significant fall recalls as the board changed directions and engaged a new Chair and Superintendent in charge of Human Resources. This was followed by an investigation from the Ministry of Education that (unsurprisingly) found the board to be negligent in a number of areas including the ridiculous way they handled last years spring staffing. Through diligent perseverance, we managed to get most of our members back working and most back to their communities. Regardless it was stressful start to the school year.

This was soon followed by the beginning of our political actions to oppose the Ford government and their cuts to education. Of course, the end result was several days of political action including the first province wide all affiliate strike in over 20 years.

During this time we continued to work towards staffing and student transitions for the North Bay schools as the consolidation and closing of Widdified was finally finalized. This resulted in a ton of stress and extra work which would normally have been more than enough to absorb for one year.

And, just when you thought it couldn't get any crazier, COVID 19 came along and said "you ain't seen nothing yet!" As a result, we have seen AMPA postponed and moved to a virtual meeting, most other conferences and meetings cancelled or postponed and even summer leadership will no longer function in it's traditional form. We are forced to navigate a whole new world and it has been both challenging and sometimes exhausting.

Yet, we still had a contract to negotiate and we managed to remotely negotiate a new Provincial agreement that will be voted on in the next 2 days. While this is happening, our local team is already working on negotiations with our local board while not physically meeting. Again, in all my years, this is something I have never done.

It would be impossible to envision any more of a difficult year but, as usual, District 4 members handled it all with grace, dignity, professionalism, creativity, resolve and optimism that was unbelievable.

I am grateful to a number of people that deserve my thanks. To begin with, once again, this year's Executive was incredible and their service to the membership is priceless. As usual, I asked way too much of them and they always delivered. Our V.P's stepped up to the plate numerous times and kept me focused. Our Branch Representatives were unbelievable in their care and support of the individual schools and they deserve my thanks.

The Provincial office always had time to listen and provide advice and our Provincial Executive liaison, Karen Littlewood, ensured that District 4 was never far from the pulse of the organization.

Finally, I owe a big thanks to all of the members of District 4. I have always been treated with respect and thoughtfulness by the membership, even when we disagreed. I feel lucky to represent District 4.

We still face significant challenges in the future, but I am confident that with the right leadership and the continued dedication of our members towards strong public education, we will continue to prevail.

Glen Hodgson - TBU President