

2017/2018

KEY WORK



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates



WHO WE ARE

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents 31 public district school boards and 10 public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.2 million public elementary and secondary students.

The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario and we are seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario.

We are routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.

MISSION STATEMENT AND BELIEFS

The mission of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) is to promote and enhance public education by: helping Member Boards to fulfil their mandates; developing effective partnerships with other groups interested in public education; and providing a strong and effective voice on behalf of public education in Ontario.

OPSBA believes that the role of public education is to provide universally accessible education opportunities for all students regardless of their ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds, social or economic status, individual exceptionality or religious preference.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION IS ACHIEVED BY:

Promoting high standards of individual achievement

Providing the understanding and basic skills required for active, compassionate participation in the life of the family, the community, the province, the nation and a global society

Cultivating a love of learning

Recognizing the value of diversity among learners and communities

Exploring creative educational alternatives

To maintain excellence, the public school system must be accountable to the communities it serves and work to fulfil its mandate through building strong community partnerships.

Local, democratically-elected school boards play a key role in ensuring that schools remain responsive to both provincial program requirements and local needs and resources.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For nearly three decades, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has stood as the province's leading collective voice for public education.

OPSBA continues to lead the way in creating a public school system that is seen as a model of excellence around the world. OPSBA's strategic priorities and key activities are directly related to improving academic achievement and promoting opportunities for well-being that offer Ontario's students success in school, and in life. We advocate not only for first-rate programs, teaching and resources, but for a social and educational environment that nurtures the values of equity, inclusion, human rights, respect and kindness.

Our expertise is underscored by the respect we receive from the provincial government when they seek advice on legislative and regulatory policy directions.

We are always seeking to strengthen the role and integrity of elected trustees, as their unique value makes education funding and policy relevant and meaningful for students, families and communities at the local level. Our full range of services and expertise – including in the areas of education program policy, legislative advocacy and labour relations – strengthens our publicly funded education system and champions the needs of students and parents in communities across Ontario.

We look forward to continuing to serve our member boards and trustees to ensure that Ontario continues to offer its students a world-class public education.

Laurie French
OPSBA President

OPSBA PRIORITIES FOR 2017-18

The Association's priorities are designed to advocate for conditions that support and improve student achievement and well-being. All students should feel valued, welcomed and respected. Education must be supported within a framework of values that ensures young people will become caring, responsible, and productive citizens. Curriculum and teaching must be reinforced by a culture that nurtures the values of universality, inclusiveness, human rights, respect and kindness.

OPSBA'S MULTI-YEAR PRIORITIES FOR 2017-2018 ARE:

The Whole Child and Student Well-Being

New Generation Education

Advocating for the Role of Trustees as Members of the Board and Building Leadership Capacity

Labour Relations

Education Funding

Advancing Reconciliation – First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

OPSBA's Board of Directors has assigned areas of emphasis to these priorities and endorsed supporting actions aimed at achieving successful outcomes.

THE WHOLE CHILD AND STUDENT WELL-BEING

OPSBA believes that improving student achievement and student engagement is directly linked to ensuring that we work collaboratively for the social, emotional, mental and physical well-being of all children and youth.

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Active participation in processes to implement Ontario's renewed vision for education
- Advocate for collaboration among relevant provincial ministries in relation to children and youth mental health, in-risk students, and poverty reduction
- Continue leadership and advocacy for social justice, equity and inclusion for all students in our member school boards
- Advocate for a strong, accessible, responsive and equitable level of children's mental health services in Ontario
- Advocate for sustained funding to support mental health leaders and the ASSIST program in years 4 to 10 of the Comprehensive Provincial Strategy on Mental Health and Addiction
- Continue provision of input and feedback to the Ministry of Education regarding the content, measurement and implementation of the Ministry's Well-Being Strategy
- Monitor the Service Transformation initiative of the Comprehensive Strategy to ensure effective expansion, integration and coordination of child and youth mental health and special needs supports and services through renewed school-community agency partnerships

- Monitor and advocate for increased opportunities, supports and coordinated services for students with developmental disabilities and special needs with a focus on early intervention to maximize learning outcomes for students
- Continue to advocate for effective Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) and before-and-after-school programs
- Advocate for creating positive school climates for learning and working
- Continue to advocate for equitable and diverse learning opportunities to support the varied needs of students
- Monitor issues related to technology/social media that pose risks and provide opportunities for students
- Advocate for increased and sustained collaboration among school boards, student trustees, community agencies and municipal governments to ensure effective approaches in supporting children and youth
- Ensure strong school board participation in and contribution to the next steps in implementing the recommendations of the provincial government's Community Hubs Strategic Framework and Action Plan
- Explore policy implications with other education stakeholders of the impact on students of pending federal legalization of marijuana in summer 2018

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Continue leadership and advocacy for social justice, equity and inclusion for all students in our member school boards.

NEW GENERATION EDUCATION

OPSBA believes that preparing students for success in the 21st century means that our educational programs and instructional practices must incorporate the skills, attitudes, values and knowledge that are needed for today's complex global context.

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Active participation in processes to implement Ontario's renewed vision for education, including identification and promotion of the teaching of 21st century competencies
- Continue to advocate for a provincial vision for technology in learning and teaching
- Promote the value of social justice, equity and inclusion to advocate for differentiated resourcing, programming and services to support students, especially in northern school boards, rural and remote areas
- Continue to advocate for teacher training and professional development that meets the needs of today's schools
- Advocate for technological programs and skilled trades as viable student options and for support for individuals working in the trades to become teachers
- Share effective and creative practices that will help promote the expansion and sustainability of alternative programs that provide diverse pathways for students
- Advocate for graduation diploma or equivalent that has value for students no matter what program pathway they choose, including directly into the world of work



- Promote review of traditional school structures and calendars to explore alternatives that support improved student achievement
- Continue to focus on environmental sustainability practices in curriculum and capital planning
- Advocate for a comprehensive government review of the current delivery of French Immersion

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Continue to advocate for a provincial vision for technology in learning and teaching.

ADVOCATING FOR THE ROLE OF TRUSTEES AS MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

OPSBA believes that trustees make a significant and direct contribution to the achievement of all students through their leadership in directing the policies and priorities of the local school board that shape a culture of continuous improvement.

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Continue promotion of the role of trustees as members of the board, including advocacy for clear government support for the role of trustees as a matter of public confidence in education
- Advocate for public education on the significant role and value of locally elected school board trustees
- Continue work on the multi-year plan for comprehensive trustee capacity-building and professional development
- Provide supports for first-term trustees and new chairs in the 2014-2018 term of office, including mentorship and active promotion of OPSBA resources developed specifically to support trustees in their multi-faceted role
- Continue professional learning for trustees as to scope and legal implications of trustee duties and building of deeper awareness of the day-to-day trustee requirements, including accountability and governance
- Commit to the creation of a module, communication materials and/or resources for trustees to use in their role to support social justice, equity and inclusion in their board and communities
- Build capacity in the area of community involvement including trustee role in board committees
- Continue focus on increased visibility and scope for action to expand capacity of First Nation trustees and increased general understanding of issues affecting First Nations
- Continue to emphasize the role of First Nation trustees with regard to effective implementation of Education Services Agreements
- Further strengthen the role of Regional Vice-Presidents and Board of Directors members as OPSBA ambassadors to boards in their region
- Advocate for improvements in communication from Ministry to Trustees, including meaningful consultation and partnership with trustees in strategies that affect school boards
- Pursue legal and regulatory protection of the role of trustees, e.g. with regard to broad impacts of conflict of interest litigation
- Advocate for the inclusion of local school board governance in the government/civics curriculum (Grade 5 and Grade 10)



LABOUR RELATIONS

OPSBA believes that teachers and education workers deeply influence a positive and productive learning environment for students and are supported in this role through the peace and stability engendered by successfully negotiated collective agreements.

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Continue leadership as a Designated Bargaining Agent in implementation of the central agreements bargained under the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act
- Provide leadership in the discussions of central terms and conditions that respects the contributions of principals and vice-principals and their role in improving student achievement and well-being
- Ensure government initiatives (legislation/policy) are assessed from the labour relations/collective bargaining perspective on behalf of OPSBA member boards
- Provide service and support to all OPSBA member boards in ongoing labour relations/collective bargaining services
- Facilitate information and learning exchange through the OPSBA Board of Directors, Labour Relations Symposium, Senior Negotiators Committee and the Public Council of Ontario Directors of Education
- Track board experience with contract implementation for forward planning
- Continue development of the Provincial Portal and strategies to enhance its use
- Maintain relationships with key education partners

- Ensure that OPSBA maintains its presence as an independent and separately distinct party during labour negotiations
- Monitor the work of the Provincial Health and Safety Working Group, which is addressing the issue of violence in classrooms as it affects the safety, health and well-being of all employees and ensure that the work is provided to the Education Program Work Team for consideration



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Continue leadership as a Designated Bargaining Agent in implementation of the central agreements bargained under the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.

EDUCATION FUNDING

OPSBA believes that strong and equitable education funding is a foundational factor in setting the conditions that promote and sustain student achievement.

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Advocate for a full and complete review of the funding model grant categories to ensure that they support the current local needs of all school boards
- Advocate for resolution of pressing problems in funding such as transportation, Special Education, Full-Day Kindergarten, and child poverty
- Advocate for expanded supports and services to support children and youth mental health and well-being
- Advocate for funding to provide core curriculum subjects to rural and remote schools with a lack of critical student population
- Advocate for adequate funding to support the operation of rural and remote schools and active participation in the rural education strategy consultation
- Advocate for the reintroduction of local priority spending
- Continue to advocate for full funding by the Ministry of any new initiative
- Support for the impact on boards of ongoing funding formula changes
- Promote full collaboration among the four school board systems and enhancement of partnership among boards
- Advocate for infrastructure funding including flexibility in funding approaches, transparency in the approval process for capital projects and alignment between government priorities and capital funding
- Advocate for the Ministry to review the current education development charges (EDC) regulation to allow boards more flexibility in terms of capital funding
- Ensure strong school board participation in and contribution to the next steps in implementing the recommendations of the provincial government's Community Hubs Strategic Framework and Action Plan
- Advocate for the importance of Community Schools to community sustainability
- Advocate for adequate funding to allow boards to meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliance deadlines and maintain ongoing compliance in future years



ADVANCING RECONCILIATION: FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION

OPSBA believes that through education we can move towards a Canada where the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is founded on mutual respect and OPSBA, therefore, supports the Calls to Action of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Areas of Emphasis for Action

- Continue focus on improving student achievement for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and advocacy for an Ontario curriculum that contains clear expectations that every Ontario student will acquire knowledge and understanding of Treaties and of the historical context that gave rise to residential schools, the impact for First Nation, Métis and Inuit children and their families, and the ongoing legacy that is the responsibility of all Canadians
- Advocate for provincial funding to cover curriculum resources and training to support the implementation of the revised Ontario curriculum
- Commit to ensuring that the needs and aspirations of First Nation, Métis and Inuit children and their families are a prominent focus of OPSBA's other five priority areas
- Respect the TRC Call to Action regarding retention and revitalization of Indigenous languages, advocacy for the teaching of Indigenous languages in Ontario schools by fluent Indigenous speakers
- Continue to focus on increased visibility and scope for action to expand capacity of First Nation trustees and increased general understanding by all trustees of First Nation, Métis and Inuit issues



Continue focus on improving student achievement for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students.

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- Advocate for action that supports eliminating inequity at the Federal level in education funding for First Nation students
- Explore the issues of representation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in urban environments

OPSBA'S SERVICE AREAS

OPSBA offers a full range of services to its Member Boards in the following areas:

- Education Program Policy
- Policy Development
- Legislation and Regulation Monitoring and Analysis
- Government Relations
- Communications and Media Relations
- Labour Relations and Human Resources
- Education Finance
- Networking and Facilitation
- Conference, Meeting and Event Coordination
- Professional Development and Issues Awareness
- Association Administration and Operations

For more information on any of the above services we provide, visit www.opsba.org or call 416-340-2540.

CONFERENCES, MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Rich professional development is critical to supporting trustees in their public education advocacy role and as informed decision makers. Symposia, provincial and regional meetings, workshops and seminars for trustees and board employees focus on key education issues.

OPSBA Scheduled Events – 2018

2018 Public Education Symposium (PES)

This annual symposium offers a unique and rich combination of information and resources: guest speakers who are recognized experts in their field, forums and plenary sessions that raise the most critical issues of the day, and access to experienced and dedicated professionals.

January 25 to 27, 2018, at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto

2018 Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium

OPSBA's annual Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium is held each spring and designed to provide professional development in the areas of labour relations and human resources to trustees, Directors of Education, senior human resources officials and labour relations staff.

April 26 and 27, 2018, at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto

2018 Annual General Meeting & Program

At the Annual General Meeting, OPSBA Members determine priorities and directions for the coming year, elect officers and plan for the future. This event also includes a comprehensive professional development program for trustees.

May 31 to June 3, 2018, at the Marriott on the Falls in Niagara Falls

Regional Council Meetings

Regional Council Meetings offer trustees and administrators opportunities to exchange information and keep current on relevant local and provincial issues. The workshop-style meetings encourage trustees to explore practical and political issues and develop positions and solutions that are locally sensitive. Each Region holds a meeting in conjunction with PES and the AGM, and additional meetings are held at a local board in the Region throughout the year.

The annual (except during election years) Northern Regional Meeting and Program offers trustees from our Northern Region a dynamic professional development and networking opportunity. 2017's Northern Regional Meeting took place on October 13 and 14, 2017, in Sault Ste. Marie.

Common meetings in all Regions are scheduled for **October 2017 and April 2018**.

For more information visit www.opsba.org/events-and-publications.

CONTACT US



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