

OPSBA Board of Directors

Timed Presentation Friday, September 25, 2015

Origin: Policy Development

Date: September 23, 2015

Issue: History and OPSBA Activities re Ontario Ombudsman Oversight of School Boards

Priority: Trustees Building Capacity

Below is a summary of the recent activities and history regarding the Ombudsman's oversight of school boards.

- March 24, 2014 Minister of Government Services John Milloy introduced Bill 179, *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. The bill included proposed amendments to 10 different acts each outlined in separate schedules. Of note for school boards were Schedule 1 -- Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and Schedule 8 -- Amendments to the Ombudsman Act and Related Amendments. OPSBA began preparing an overview of the bill for the May Board of Directors Meeting.
- May 2, 2014 Parliament dissolved and provincial election called for June 12, 2014. (When a general election is called, any bill that did not reach Royal Assent is deemed to have "died on the Order Paper," (i.e., did not become law). Bills cannot be carried over between Parliaments, but similar bills might be introduced by members in the new Parliament.)
- July 8, 2014 The Ontario government, under President of the Treasury Board Deborah Matthews, re-introduced broader public sector accountability and transparency legislation entitled Bill 8, the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. The revised bill included 11 schedules, including the two schedules of interest to school boards that were part of the original bill.
- November 26, 2014 OPBSA President Michael Barrett presented to the Standing Committee on General Government regarding Bill 8, *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. Our submission was a joint effort with the other 3 school board/trustee associations and focussed on the two schedules that directly affect our membership. The submission was based on input from OPSBA's PDWT, Executive Council, Board of Directors, legal counsel and discussions with other stakeholders including the other school board associations.
- December 11, 2014 Bill 8, *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* received Royal Assent. (Note: *On March 26, 2015, Schedule 1 -- Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014* was proclaimed which allows the Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet to issue directives to collect various pieces of compensation information. Each sector will receive a written request for information. There has been no movement on the next steps for this Act. OPSBA continues to monitor for next steps and possible timelines.)

May 21, 2015	Schedule 9 – Amendments to the Ombudsman Act and Related Amendments was proclaimed, meaning oversight will come into force for school boards on September 1, 2015.
May 30, 2015	Andre Marin's term was to end but he was given an extension until September 14, 2015 as the search committee continued its work. He was first appointed in 2005 and reappointed 2010.
August 12, 2015	OPSBA staff met with staff from the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario to discuss oversight and talk about process, communications and the education sector.
August 20, 2015	The Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario sent memos to school boards Directors of Education with a request to complete a school board contact survey.
September 1, 2015	OPSBA sent an email to all trustees regarding the beginning of Ombudsman's oversight and included links to materials produced by the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario.
September 8, 2015	The Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario issued a media release indicating that they had received 50 complaints about school boards in their first week of their mandate. OPSBA shared this with trustees and member board staff, including communications officers. OPSBA President Michael Barrett participated in a Toronto Star article.
September 14, 2015	The Legislative Assembly of Ontario resumed.
September 16, 2015	The Liberal government appointed Barbara Finlay, currently the deputy ombudsman, to a six-month term as acting ombudsman.
September 21, 2015	The Public Policy Forum and the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario hosted stakeholder roundtable for municipalities and universities.
September 22, 2015	The Public Policy Forum and the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario hosted stakeholder roundtable for school boards. OPSBA attended the meeting along with representatives from the other school board/trustee associations, CODE, Principal Councils and Supervisory Officers' Associations'. Stakeholders were asked to discuss their organizations concerns, ask questions and suggest materials for the sector. A larger conference will be held in the future to further discuss this new oversight role.
September 25, 2015	Acting Ombudsman, Barbara Finlay to attend the September OPSBA Board of Directors meeting to deliver a presentation and participate in a Q&A session.
January 1, 2016	Ombudsman oversight extension to municipalities and universities begins.