



# 22/23 Annual Report



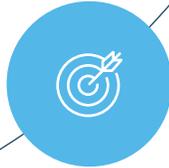
ONTARIO PUBLIC  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
ASSOCIATION

**Leading Education's Advocates**

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.



# Mission, Vision, and Values



## Mission

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association advocates for public education in Ontario.



## Vision

OPSBA will be public education's expert voice, promoting a high-quality system, focused on improving every student's success and well-being.

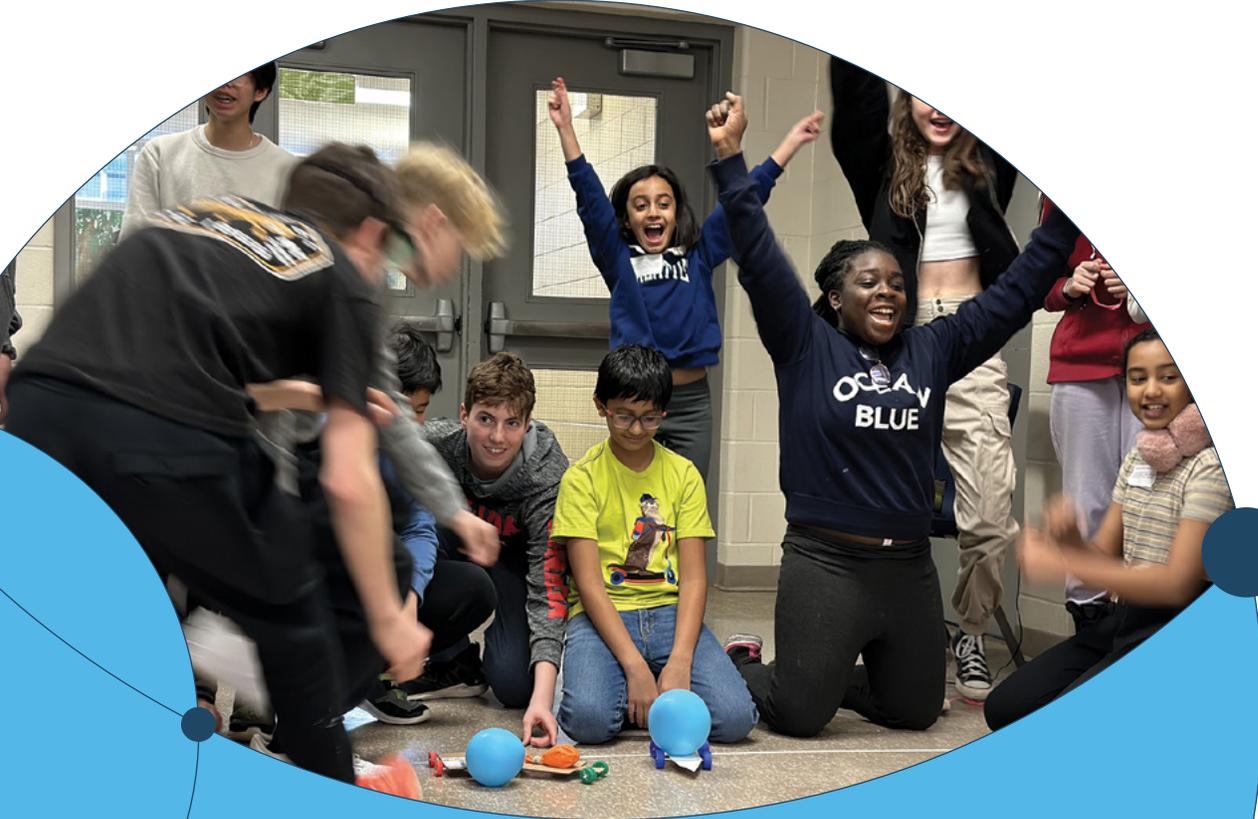


## Values

OPSBA operates by the following guiding principles:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Valuing Student Voice
- Quality and Innovation
- Environmental Stewardship, Good Governance, Accountability, Collaboration, and Integrity

# Message to Members



## MESSAGE TO MEMBERS

**The 2022–23 school year was one of immense change and transition throughout Ontario’s public education system.**

It was the first year since 2019–20 in which most students were not moving between in-person and remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This inspired commitment across the sector to ensure our students were well supported coming out of that traumatic global event.

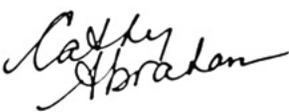
Following OPSBA’s months-long pre-election public service campaign to increase the diversity of trustee nominations and get out the vote, school boards experienced a nearly 50% turnover in trustees following the October 2022 elections.

We said goodbye to Executive Director W.R. (Rusty) Hick in December after an excellent five-and-a-half years and welcomed Stephanie Donaldson to lead our organization into the future. Our Executive Council, for the first time, welcomed the Chair of the Indigenous Trustees’ Council to the table as a member, and the new Black Trustees’ Caucus (BTC) was established by the full membership at the 2022 Annual General Meeting. The purpose of the BTC is to bring together publicly elected or appointed trustees who identify as Black, in a safe and supportive environment, so they can work together to influence change.

It was an extremely busy year, as we faced renewed challenges to the autonomy of local school boards. I continued to bring the OPSBA perspective to meetings of the Canadian School Boards Association, which is working to increase its advocacy work at the federal level.

This year, more than any other, OPSBA has been called upon by media to be an expert voice on all matters related to public education. I am always honoured to provide the important perspective of our Association and our member boards in the media and with stakeholders, since we have the most direct governance role in supporting students. Now, more than ever, our children and youth need strong advocates — like trustees — and OPSBA is more committed than ever to our collective vision.

Looking ahead, I know that as trustees, your expertise, dedication, and passion are the driving forces behind OPSBA’s success. We have no doubt that together, we will make a lasting impact on the lives of the students we serve. Thank you for all that you do.



**Cathy Abraham**  
President



As a former school board trustee, I am well aware of the remarkable resiliency and dedication of the public education sector, particularly in times of massive change and upheaval. Since my role commenced at OPSBA in December 2022, we have been shown yet again that as a sector we are incredibly innovative and collaborative. I am so impressed by our collective ability to quickly respond to new initiatives and issues as they arise, often without much warning or consultation. The truth that we are better together is borne out every day within OPSBA and our member boards. I could not be prouder to serve this Association, our members and our staff.

At OPSBA, as representatives of school board trustees, advocacy is who we are and what we do. Productively working with our education partners and the government to positively transform schools and school boards for the sake of our students is always our goal.

We strive, through our trustees and expert staff, to have a comprehensive understanding of the diverse educational landscapes in Ontario, as well as the unique challenges and opportunities that each community faces. We work to strengthen our collective voice and to advocate for provincial legislation and policy that prioritizes the needs of all students, regardless of their backgrounds. We believe in the power of collaboration and are eager to co-develop innovative solutions with our partners that promote excellence and equity in our public education system.

OPSBA has seen some fresh faces this year — as the Association has added six new staff members since June 2022, with each new member of the team bringing unique perspectives to the way we work. Our expert team brings together a special combination of skills and talent, with many years of deep school board experience as well.

This year, the Association was able to finely hone our multi-year strategic priorities through comprehensive consultation with our members, following the completion of Project Compass in 2022, which was a full review of OPSBA's governance framework and foundational policies. This initiative provided a path for us to focus on an exceedingly simple mission statement, one that speaks precisely to our reason for being: The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) advocates for public education in Ontario. At OPSBA, we are optimistic for the years ahead guided by our renewed strategic priorities.

This Annual Report describes the many ways in which OPSBA seeks to advocate for and advance our members' priorities. We hope you enjoy reading and learning about our advocacy and actions on the following pages, and as always, feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.



**Stephanie Donaldson**  
Executive Director



# OPPSBA'S Multi-Year Strategic Priorities



OPSBA's membership establishes multi-year strategic priorities that position the organization to engage with the key forces affecting high-quality public education in Ontario. They drive how the Association uses its expertise, time and resources. The priorities offer a framework for decision-making and help shape action for ongoing initiatives and emerging issues that are relevant to the Association's mission.

OPSBA's multi-year strategic priorities are:



### **Advocating for 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 to support the social, emotional, mental and physical well-being of all children and youth in our increasingly complex world.



### **Advancing Reconciliation: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education**

OPSBA believes that through education we will 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).



### **Supporting Trustees as Leaders in Public Education**

OPSBA believes that local democratically elected 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.



### **Advocating for Sustainable and Equitable Education Funding**

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



### **Strengthening Positive 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.

# The Year in Review



## Ontario's English Public Education System

31

District school boards



10

School authorities and treatment centres

317

Publicly elected trustees

19

Appointed Indigenous trustees

27

Appointed school authority and treatment centre trustees

## OPSBA



11

Executive Council members



49

Board of Directors members



24

Work Team members



5

Regions

## Our Work

12

Advocacy letters

5

Education Partner  
table meetings

2

Discussion Papers

172

Attendees at 2022  
Annual General Meeting  
and Program

325

Attendees at the Public  
Education Symposium



200

Attendees at the 2023 Education Labour  
Relations and Human Resources Symposium



17

Board of Directors  
and Executive Council  
Meetings

5

Indigenous Trustees'  
Council Meetings

15

Regional Meetings

4

Work Group meetings

# Multi-Year Strategic Planning

Guided by OPSBA's *Strategic Planning, Implementation and Monitoring* policy, the Association has engaged in a comprehensive review to collect input that will be used to refresh OPSBA's current multi-year strategic priorities. The process began in September 2022 and included environmental and jurisdictional scans of nearly 70 school boards and other educational and community partners, input and feedback from the five Regional Councils at their winter and spring meetings, and survey information from 14 outgoing Board of Directors members and just over 170 current trustees. The multi-year strategic priorities will guide the development of annual operational plans that will define specific goals and areas of focus for the organization.



# Professional Development



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

OPSBA’s professional development services support trustees in their role of ensuring the high-quality Ontario public education system consistently produces excellent results in student achievement and well-being.

As leaders in school board governance, trustees are committed to initiating important conversations that improve life chances for students and to engaging in vital professional and personal learning that hones leadership skills.

Our professional development offerings enhance skills, build capacity, and provide the kind of information and analysis that supports informed decision-making.

## Learning Modules

The 21 governance-related professional learning modules for trustees and school boards are available at [www.ontarioschooltrustees.org](http://www.ontarioschooltrustees.org). The modules reflect the needs articulated by Ontario trustees for greater clarity on their roles as governors of school boards. The website allows trustees to track their progress through the modules — each one contains the latest legislation, education policy and research. Trustees who complete the program are invited to apply for a Certificate of Completion in recognition of their commitment to leadership and the good governance of Ontario’s education system.

<b>Module 1</b> Effective Governance through Ethical Leadership	<b>Module 2</b> Effective Governance for Student Achievement and Well-Being: Boards Matter!	<b>Module 3</b> Roles and Responsibilities	<b>Module 4</b> Common Ground, Common Purpose: Key Relationships in School Boards
<b>Module 5</b> Performance Review: Director of Education	<b>Module 6</b> The Strategic Role and Multi-year Strategic Planning	<b>Module 7</b> Exercising Authentic Governance: The School Board’s Role as Policymaker	<b>Module 8</b> Conflict: Managing it Creatively
<b>Module 9</b> Family and Community Engagement	<b>Module 10</b> Advocacy: Engaging the Public	<b>Module 11</b> Legal Aspects of School Board Governance	<b>Module 12</b> Running Effective Meetings
<b>Module 13</b> School Board Finance	<b>Module 14</b> School Boards and Human Resources	<b>Module 15</b> What Makes a Great Board Chair?	<b>Module 16</b> First Nation Trustees: Unique Roles & Responsibilities
<b>Module 17</b> Trustee Code of Conduct	<b>Module 18</b> Social Media	<b>Module 19</b> Internal Audit and The Role of Audit Committees	<b>Module 20</b> A Journey Towards Truth and Reconciliation
	<b>Module 21</b> Board Self-Assessment: Governance Performance	<b>Certificate of Completion</b>	

# Conferences and Seminars



OPSBA conferences offer trustees and school board staff a dynamic opportunity for professional learning that is uniquely tailored to the needs of Ontario’s education leaders.

## 2022 OPSBA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

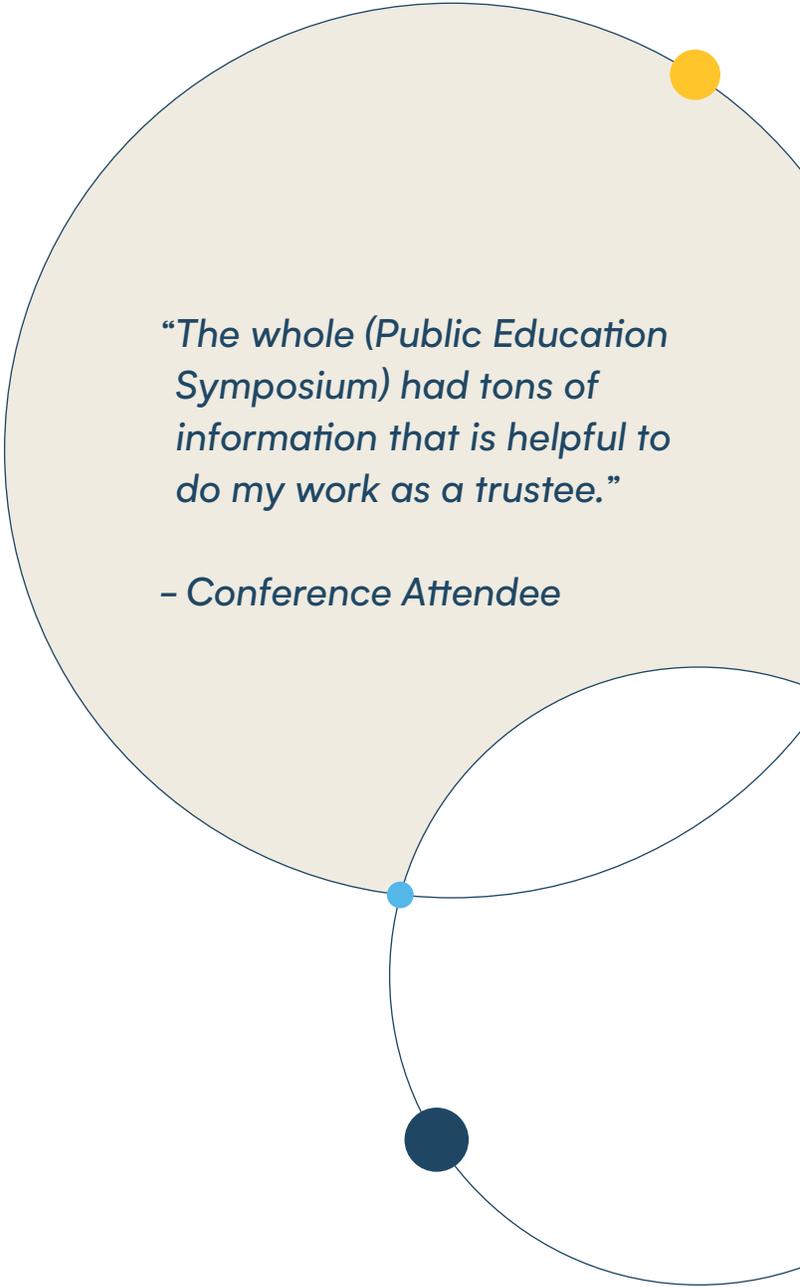
At OPSBA’s AGM, members determine priorities and directions for the coming year, elect officers and plan for the future. The event also offers a comprehensive professional development program for trustees.

The 2022 OPSBA AGM took place in Ottawa from June 9 to 11. The AGM marked OPSBA’s first in-person conference post-COVID 19 and we were pleased to welcome more than 170 attendees. Keynote speakers included pollster Nik Nanos and comedian Stewart “Brittlestar” Reynolds. The event also included a Government Relations Panel moderated by Toronto Star Queen’s Park journalist Kristin Rushowy featuring political strategists Shakir Chambers, Suzy Heath, and Tom Parkin.

Table officer elections took place with Cathy Abraham (Trustee, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB) re-elected as President for the 2022-2024 two-year term. Kathleen Woodcock (Trustee, Waterloo Region DSB) and Kathryn Pierroz (Trustee, Rainy River DSB), were also elected as 1st and 2nd Vice-Presidents for the 2022-2024 term.

## Regional Meetings

OPSBA’s five regional councils – Northern, Western, Eastern, Central East, and Central West — share information related to issues and matters affecting their school boards with the Executive Council and Board of Directors. In the 2022-23 school year, the member boards of each region held meetings via Zoom and in-person throughout the year, including in November, January, and April. The April meetings were the first to be held in-person since fall 2019. The Northern Region continued to meet virtually.



*“The whole (Public Education Symposium) had tons of information that is helpful to do my work as a trustee.”*

*– Conference Attendee*

## 2023 Public Education Symposium (PES)

More than 320 attendees participated in PES 2023 — our first in-person PES since January 2020. The event was jointly hosted with the Association des conseil scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO) from January 26 to 28. This leading professional development symposium, specifically designed for school board leaders, offered dynamic sessions on topics directly affecting the role of the trustee and the broader environment within which school boards operate.

This year's symposium theme was "*Optimism and Opportunity.*" Having braved the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, attendees looked to the future. OPSBA welcomed back keynote speaker Nicholas Christakis (Sterling Professor of Social and Natural Science at Yale University and author of *Apollo's Arrow*) who spoke about moving forward beyond the pandemic. OPSBA was also thrilled to welcome Chief Cadmus Delorme (Cowessess First Nation) who addressed the group with a keynote address entitled "*What We All Inherited — Understanding the Relationship with Indigenous People and Canada.*"

Minister of Education Stephen Lecce addressed the group and took questions from trustees. We also welcomed Parliamentary Assistant Patrice Barnes and Minister of Indigenous Affairs Greg Rickford to the PES meeting of the Indigenous Trustees' Council.

The conference continued with a variety of workshops and sessions on topics such as Parliamentary Procedures, Indigenous Education, School Board Governance, French as a Second Language, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Communications for trustees (both new and experienced).

PES 2023 also hosted the first in-person gathering of the Black Trustees' Caucus.



*“Lots of valuable insights were shared and a diverse set of perspectives were shared to create a broad array of rich information.”*

*– Conference Attendee*

## 2023 Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium

On April 27 and 28, 2023, about 200 guests joined OPSBA for the Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium in Toronto. This was the first in-person symposium since 2019.

Trustees, directors of education, supervisory officers and human resources and labour relations practitioners gathered to share, strategize and learn about next and best practices and explore practical solutions to the challenges faced by Ontario school boards.

The symposium featured a keynote address by Jason Lietaer (President, Enterprise Canada) who spoke about school board human resources issues in the media. This was followed up by a panel of school board representatives who discussed the management of public communication regarding these issues. The symposium also featured 15 workshops on topics such as Investigating Sexual Harassment Complaints, Labour Disruptions, Staff Wellness, Pay Equity, Social Media, Collective Bargaining and Updates to Statute and Case Law.



# Indigenous Trustees' Council



OPSBA's Indigenous Trustees' Council (ITC) is composed of First Nations trustees appointed to school boards and other Indigenous trustees elected through the municipal electoral process.

One of OPSBA's multi-year strategic priorities is *Advancing Reconciliation: First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education*. The Association believes that through education we will 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.

The ITC regularly engages in a range of initiatives to support the education of Indigenous students, and to ensure all students are educated about the history and culture of Indigenous peoples.

For the 2022–23 school year, Algoma DSB Indigenous Trustee Elaine Johnston continued to serve as the Chair of the ITC and sat as the Council's representative on the OPSBA Board of Directors. Grand Erie DSB's Claudine VanEvery-Albert served as Vice-Chair. For the first time in OPSBA's history, following a constitutional change at the 2022 Annual General Meeting, the ITC Chair now sits as a member of the Association's Executive Council.

The ITC endeavors to hold meetings every two months where possible to discuss and advance education issues facing First Nations children and their families. All meetings are attended by Indigenous and non-Indigenous trustees, as well as OPSBA staff representatives.

ITC representatives engaged with the Ministry of Education in August 2022. Topics of discussion included the recently revised science and technology curriculum, revitalization of Indigenous languages, and increasing Indigenous trustee representation across all school boards.

The ITC strategic priorities were reviewed and reaffirmed with a commitment to developing actionable objectives as a next step. The ITC strategic priorities are as follows:

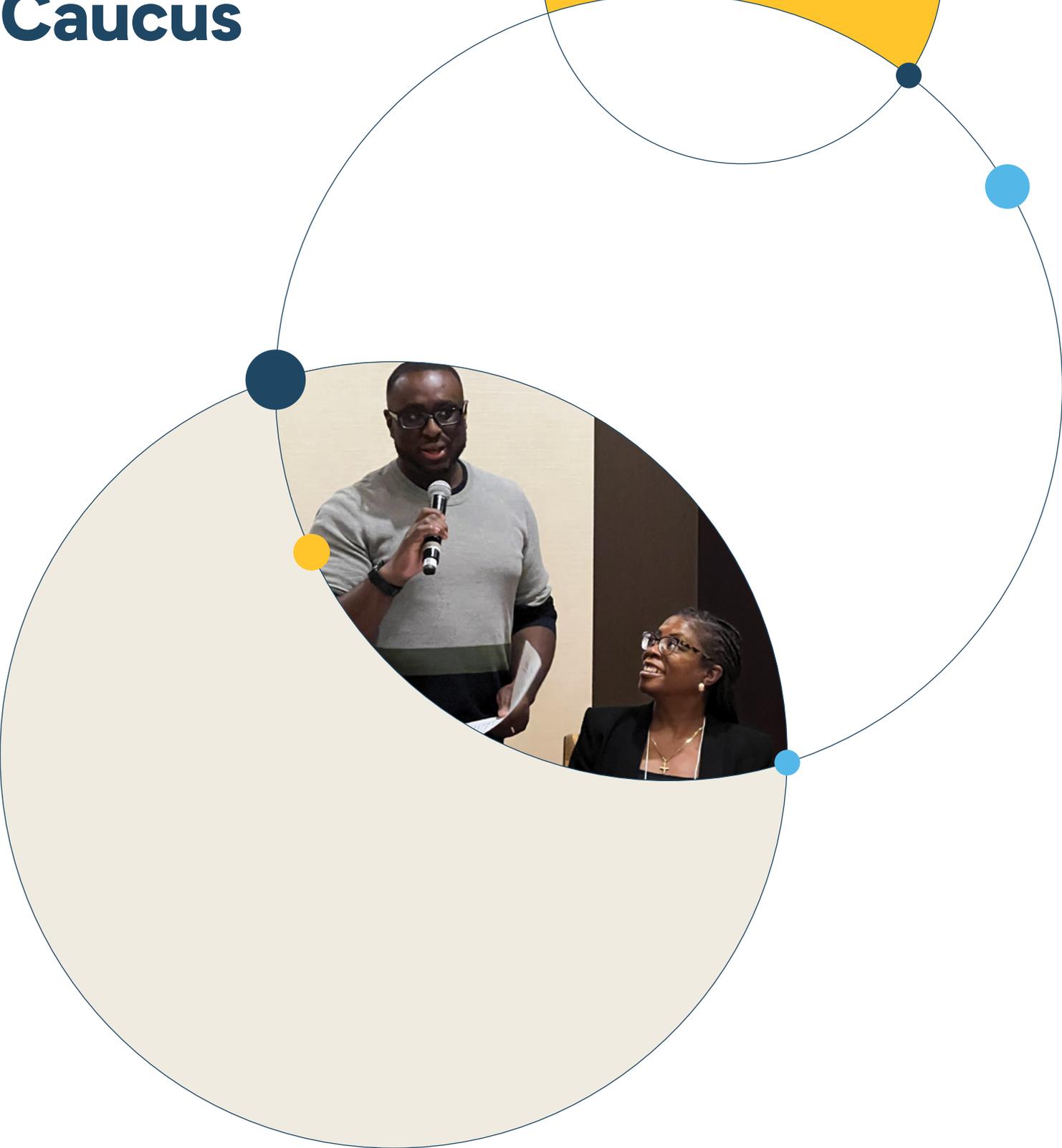
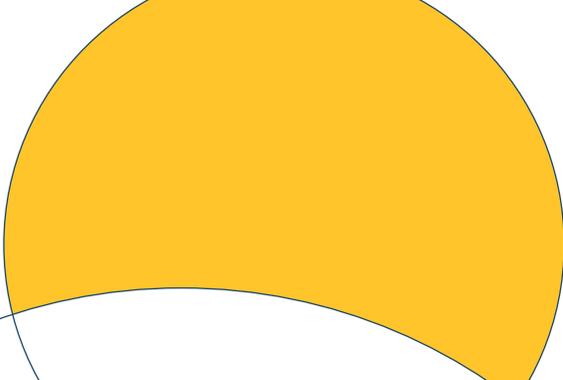
1. **Building Our Capacity**
2. **Indigenous Student Well-Being**
3. **Enabling Indigenous Education**
4. **Advancing Reconciliation**

In particular, the ITC strategic priorities have focused on advocating for language revitalization, inclusion of land-based learning, and increased Indigenous content in curriculum.

In September, to mark the second National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, OPSBA coordinated a video that featured reflections from ITC Chair Johnston and President Cathy Abraham. Additionally, a webpage that provided background information, resources, and highlights of school board activities and social media posts was developed.

ITC members also provided input during the consultations leading up to the 2023–2024 provincial budget — with Chair Johnston presenting to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in January in Sault Ste. Marie — as well as the development of the 2023–24 OPSBA strategic priorities and the 2023–24 Grants for Student Needs.

# Black Trustees' Caucus



During the 2022 Municipal Council and School Board Elections there was a record number of Black-identifying trustees elected to school boards, which reinvigorated the formation of OPSBA's first Black Trustees' Caucus (BTC). The establishment of a BTC was authorized by the full membership at the 2022 Annual General Meeting. The purpose of the BTC is to bring together publicly elected or appointed trustees who identify as Black, in a safe and supportive environment, so they can work together to influence change. While centering their discussions and recommendations on students who identify as Black, the BTC aims to support the needs of all children within the public education system.

The BTC is strengthened through the sharing of lived experiences and provides opportunities for trustees and student trustees who identify as Black to form a collective provincial voice and create opportunities to share and mobilize knowledge at their local, and all, school boards.

The BTC recently began to engage in a range of discussions focused on supporting the education of Black students as well as ways to address anti-Black racism throughout school boards. For the 2022-23 school year, Peel DSB Trustee Kathy McDonald and York Region DSB Trustee Dr. Elizabeth Sinclair served as the Co-Chairs of the BTC.

The BTC benefits from being a part of OPSBA and its existing relationships and partnerships in public education as well as being a respected and trusted voice for public education in Ontario. The BTC had its first meeting at the Public Education Symposium in January 2023 and since then has endeavoured to hold monthly meetings to discuss and advance education issues facing Black students and their families. Meetings are attended by Black-identifying trustee members and OPSBA staff representatives. All trustees from member boards who self-identify as Black are encouraged to attend.

BTC members are engaged in three priority areas:

1. **Communication and Advocacy**
2. **Governance**
3. **Strategic Planning**

Some key areas of discussion within the BTC are trustee surveys, expulsion and graduation data, EDI training for vendors associated with student excursions, policing in schools, student and family conferences, as well as the recommendations and response of the OPSBA-initiated Turner Consulting Equity Audit.

In addition, BTC members devoted much effort this year to developing strong Terms of Reference to set a foundational pathway for the future of the Caucus.



# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



Ontario’s public education system plays a critical role in providing educational leadership, instruction, support and pathways to ensure equitable learning access and opportunities for all students.

This means a system that ensures barrier and bias identification and removal, freedom from all forms of hate and discrimination, as well as equitable access and opportunities for all. This is done by identifying and challenging systemic oppression and fostering a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, anti-racism, and anti-oppression.

### Supporting Diverse Leadership Capacity

OPSBA hosted the Diverse Voices, Diverse Leadership and Equity in Public Office and Education — Moderated Panel Event as part of its increased focus and engagement efforts to encourage more diverse candidates in the October 2022 elections.

In November 2022, OPSBA’s Advocacy Day positioned Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) education priorities as one of three areas of focus for speaking with MPPs.

The Association welcomed more than 18 trustees, of whom two-thirds were newly elected, at the first meeting of the Black Trustees’ Caucus (BTC) in January 2023. Additionally, two new staff members were hired this year to support the trustee leadership of both BTC and the Indigenous Trustees’ Council (ITC).

### Professional Learning

OPSBA supports leadership in human rights and school safety efforts with our trustee members and is focused on providing sound EDI policy advice and capacity building as well as professional development opportunities. In 2022–23, this included:

- In-person EDI learning sessions at the Public Education Symposium
- Implementation of an OPSBA EDI staff capacity plan
- Dedicated professional learning sessions at Board of Directors meetings

### EDI Advocacy

During the past year, OPSBA has advocated for addressing poverty and increasing student wellness. Activities included contributing to the consultation about a National Food Policy, seeking dedicated funding and collaboration on government housing supply initiatives, and addressing homelessness.

OPSBA has also made accessibility in K-12 public education a key area of advocacy work over this past year. In August, a letter was sent to the ministry underscoring the capital funding gaps for AODA-compliant built environments and the need for a dedicated K-12 accessible education reform plan. This was followed by the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) submission and recommendations highlighting EDI and accessibility funding in the OPSBA Pre-Budget Consultation document.

In November 2022, OPSBA received a request to submit feedback for the fourth independent legislative review of the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). On December 5, 2022, a province-wide focus group of more than 20 accessibility staff leads from member boards came together to brainstorm information to include in OPSBA’s recommendations. Staff held a joint OPSBA Policy Development and Education Program Work Group meeting on April 11 for consultation and feedback on the final draft; resulting in an OPSBA submission to the fourth improvement review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

# Supporting Positive Labour Relations

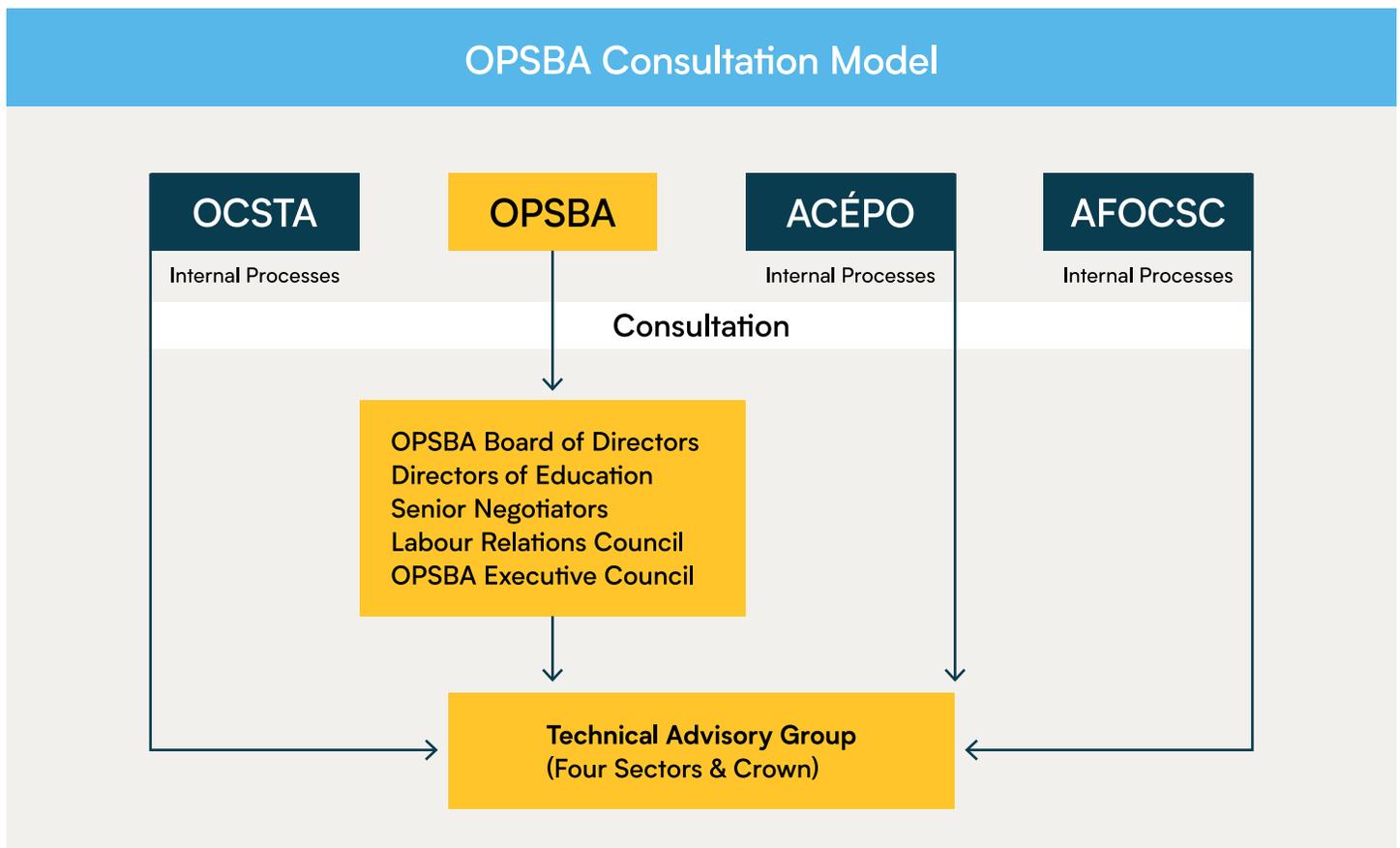


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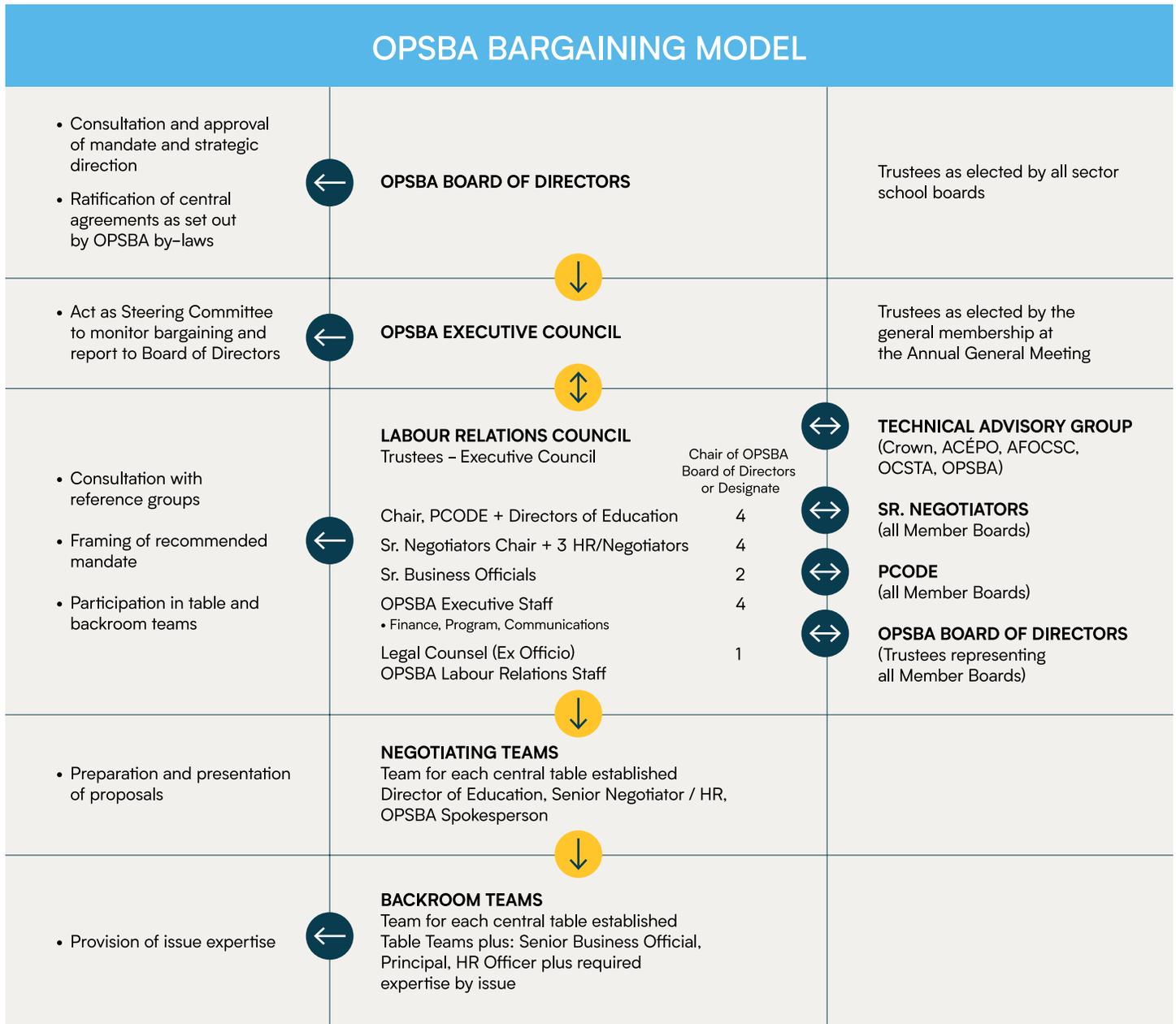
## Central Bargaining

Under the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act*, the OPSBA Board of Directors established the following collective bargaining and consultation models. These models were designed to create mandates and local mechanisms to ensure all voices are heard.

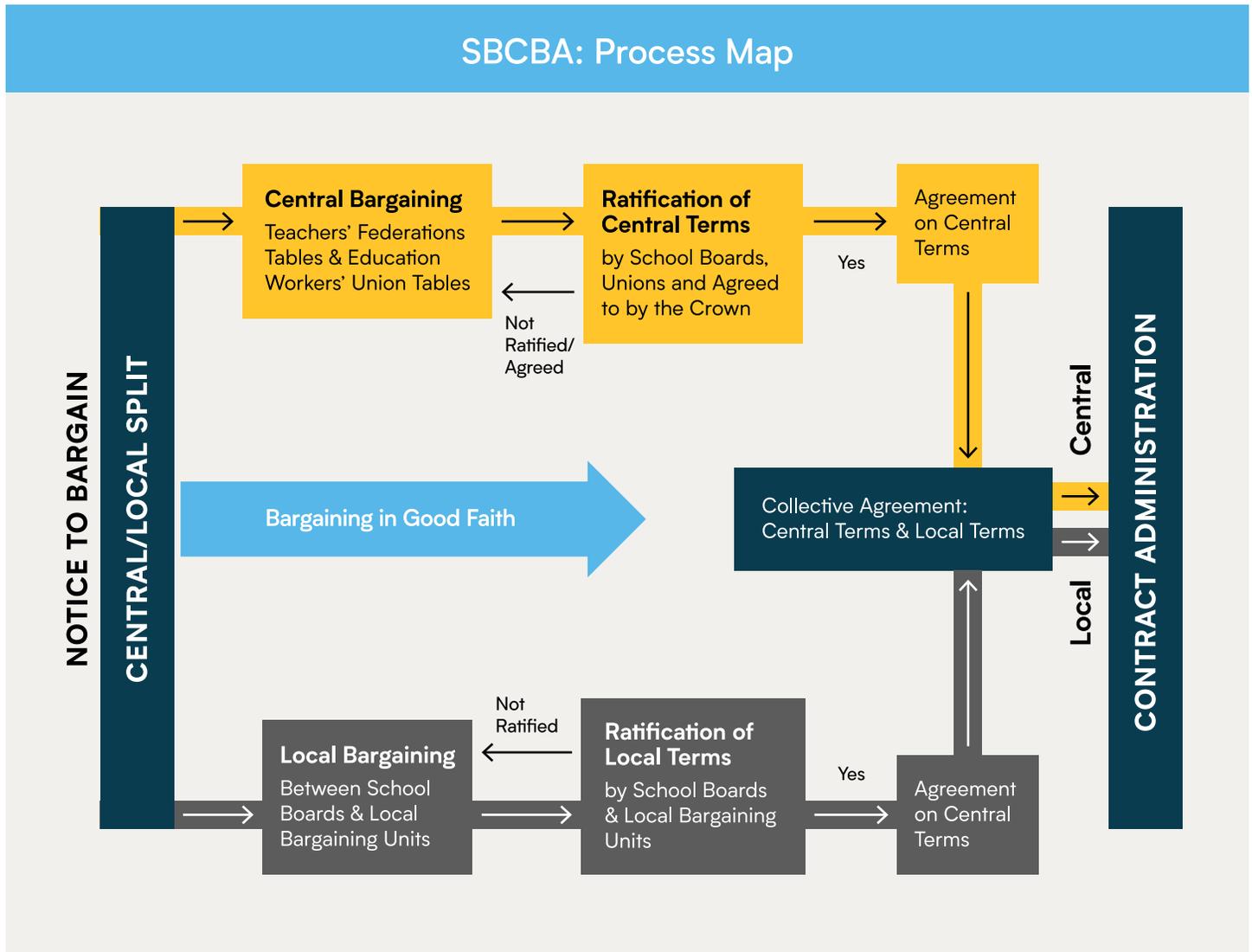
## Consultation Model



## OPSBA Bargaining Model



## School Boards Collective Bargaining Act: Process Map



**Under the SBCBA:**

**Local bargaining may occur at the same time as, or after, central bargaining.**

*Provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education, Education Labour Relations Office*

## Bargaining Model

OPSBA is the designated bargaining agent for 31 English public school boards and 10 public school authorities and negotiates with seven bargaining groups/federations. There are a total of 260 local bargaining units. These bargaining units join one of the following central tables: Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) Teachers and Education Workers, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

(ETFO) Teachers and Education Workers, Educational Workers Alliance of Ontario (EWAO) and Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW).

Of the seven tables, four-year agreements have been reached with CUPE (ratified December 19, 2022) and the Ontario Council of Educational Workers (ratified January 25, 2023).

### Actions Taken in 2022–23

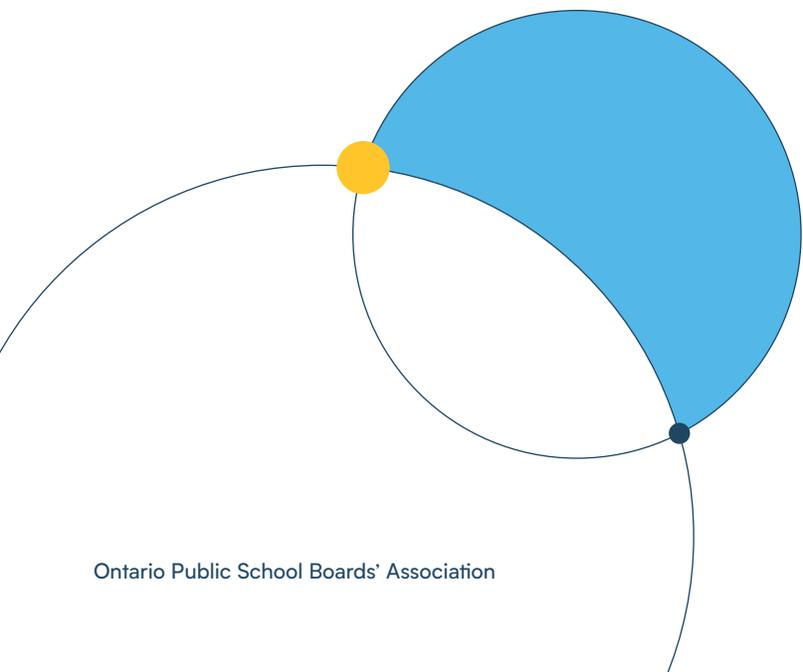
- Developed OPSBA's bargaining mandate, strategic direction and key bargaining positions; prepared initial briefs; completed the approval of the bargaining mandate and; reviewed/amended bargaining briefs based on the scope of central matters
- Established bargaining teams and reference groups
- Participated in central bargaining at seven tables
- Supported local collective bargaining for 2022–26 when requested
- Provided support for the implementation of the 2022–26 central terms
- Provided support for the implementation of the 2020–23 Principals/Vice Principals Provincial Terms and Conditions
- Heard grievances and disputes through the central grievance/arbitration process included in the central terms
- Maintained and improved the OESC/OPSBA Portal
- Tracked grievances, disputes and arbitrations through the Grievance Tracking System (GTS) in coordination with the Council of Trustees' Associations (CTA) and the Ministry of Education
- Established framework to compile, post, and update frequently asked questions from school boards regarding contract implementation
- Provided presentations regarding labour matters at Labour Relations Council (LRC), Senior Negotiators and the Public Council of Ontario Directors of Education
- Participated at: Technical Advisory Group (TAG), LRC, and CTA
- Co-chaired meetings of Central Labour Relations Committees (CLRC) to problem solve and build relationships
- Organized and delivered OPSBA's annual Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium on April 27 and 28, 2023

## Committees and Workgroups Arising from Collective Bargaining or Provincial Discussions (Principal and Vice-Principal)

Coming out of collective bargaining of the central terms for the English public school boards, the following committees were established among the Crown, the unions/federations and OPSBA/CTA. OPSBA is part of the CTA along with the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), the Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO) and the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC).

Committees:	Mandate:
<p><b>Provincial Working Group Health and Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA</li> <li>• Crown</li> <li>• OSSTF</li> <li>• ETFO</li> <li>• CUPE</li> <li>• EWAO</li> <li>• OCEW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider areas related to health and safety in order to continue to build and strengthen a culture of health and safety mindedness in the education sector.</li> <li>• Areas of discussion may include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Caring and Safe Schools</li> <li>◦ Workplace violence prevention training</li> <li>◦ Notification of potential risk of physical injury</li> <li>◦ Occupational health and safety training</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>One Benefit Plan Committee for each central table (OPSBA and the Crown attend all tables)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSSTF</li> <li>• ETFO</li> <li>• CUPE</li> <li>• EWAO</li> <li>• OCEW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELHT Agreements are undergoing the respective review processes.</li> </ul>

Committees:	Mandate:
<p><b>Education Worker Diverse and Inclusive Workforce Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA/school board representatives</li> <li>• Crown</li> <li>• Representatives from each of the education worker employee bargaining agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EWDIWC was established in the 2014–2017 CUPE central terms, which was subsequently extended to 2019 through the extension agreements, and the 2019–2022 central terms.</li> <li>• An invitation was extended to each of the education worker employee bargaining agents in 2020.</li> <li>• The mandate and deliverables of the committee were to gather data and jointly identify best practices that support diversity, equity and inclusion to build a workforce that is reflective of Ontario’s diverse communities. The committee engaged school boards in a survey to gather data regarding diversity and inclusion practices.</li> <li>• A report of the survey results was distributed to school boards in June 2022.</li> <li>• The Committee has been renewed for the 2022–26 term.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ministry/School Board Initiatives Committees (OPSBA and the Crown attend all tables)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSSTF</li> <li>• ETFO</li> <li>• CUPE</li> <li>• EWAO</li> <li>• OCEW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the 2022–23 school year, there were no meetings of the Ministry Initiatives committee.</li> </ul>



Committees:	Mandate:
<p><b>Learning and Services Continuity and Absenteeism Task Force</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACÉPO</li> <li>• AFOCSC</li> <li>• OCSTA</li> <li>• OPSBA</li> <li>• Crown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Provincial Task Force was established during the 2022–2026 round of bargaining.</li> <li>• The Task Force will review and explore leading practices related to learning and service continuity and absenteeism. In addition, the task force will gather data and review information regarding the utilization of sick leave and short-term disability plans (STDP), and a jurisdictional scan on sick leave and STDP from the Canadian Education sector and other broader public sector employers.</li> <li>• The Task Force is scheduled to meet four times per school year in the 2023–24 and 2024–25 school years, completing its work by August 31, 2025.</li> <li>• The Task Force will report its findings to school boards and local unions.</li> <li>• Membership from the employee bargaining agencies will be determined following the outcome of all central bargaining tables.</li> </ul>
<p><b>P/VP Provincial Liaison Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACÉPO</li> <li>• AFOCSC</li> <li>• OCSTA</li> <li>• OPSBA</li> <li>• Principals/Vice Principals Associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Committee has been established to discuss the implementation of the P/VP Provincial Agreement.</li> <li>• Three sub-committees have been established:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Benefits</li> <li>◦ Provincial Working Group —Compensation</li> <li>◦ Recruitment Retention Strategy Working Group.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Central Labour Relations Committees (CUPE, ETFO, EWAO, OCEW, OSSTF)**

The purpose of these committees is to facilitate communication between rounds of bargaining on issues of joint interest.

**Central Dispute Resolution Committees (CUPE, ETFO, EWAO, OCEW, OSSTF)**

All collective agreements established a process by which disputes over the interpretation of collective agreement language are addressed in an orderly fashion and removed from the workplace through either informal or formal resolution. Central parties may file disputes as a grievance and engage in settlement discussions. It is the responsibility of each party to inform their respective local parties of each step in the dispute resolution process, and to direct them accordingly.

## Provincial Labour Relations

In the role of designated employer bargaining agent, to systematize both the implementation of the current collective agreements and prepare for the next round of bargaining, OPSBA delivers professional learning throughout the year and at the annual Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Conference. This year, the conference was on April 27 and 28, 2023.

To facilitate consultation and communication, OPSBA has established or maintains participation in:

### Labour Relations Steering Committee

The Executive Council of the OPSBA Board of Directors serves as the steering committee to consider and vet Labour Relations strategies.

### Council of Trustees' Association (CTA)

The CTA involves Labour Relations Teams from ACÉPO, AFOCSC, OCSTA, and OPSBA. Consultation among the parties occurs regularly to ensure consistency of practice related to collective agreement implementation across all four publicly funded education systems.

### Labour Reference Groups

Expert groups have been gathered from across the teaching and bargaining portfolios to offer advice to labour relations. These teams meet on an ad hoc basis.

### Labour Relations Council (LRC)

The LRC is a cross section of OPSBA Executive Council, Directors of Education, HR Officials, Senior Business Officials and OPSBA staff. The LRC meets regularly to give advice and guidance to the bargaining process.

### Principal and Vice-Principal Associations

The Ontario Principals' Council is composed of Principals and Vice-Principals in public school boards across Ontario and information is obtained and shared as needed.

### Public Council of Ontario Directors of Education (PCODE)

PCODE comprises Directors of Education in public school boards across Ontario. Consultation occurs through the Labour Relations Council by Director members and updates are provided directly to PCODE by OPSBA staff.

### Senior Negotiators

The labour negotiators from the 31 OPSBA member boards and 10 school authorities meet to share issues, ideas and solutions from their respective education settings as well as through teleconferences to deal with specific issues.

### Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

TAG is composed of Labour Relations teams from the Crown, ACÉPO, AFOCSC, OCSTA, and OPSBA. The purpose is to ensure communication and understanding of implementation issues across provincial educational sectors.

## National and International Labour Relations

### Canadian Education Negotiators (CEN)

CEN is an organization with representation from the provinces and territories who are bargaining on behalf of the employer in education settings. Membership comes from the school board associations and/or governments as applicable. OPSBA participates in these meetings to understand issues facing provincial jurisdictions including collective bargaining issues, and changes in legislative frameworks. In-person meetings have resumed, and in July 2022 representatives from OPSBA's Labour Relations team attended CEN in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

### North American Association of Educational Negotiators (NAEN)

NAEN is an annual conference that brings together educational negotiators and Human Resources professionals from across Canada and the United States to share challenges and solutions from the sector.

# Education Funding



## EDUCATION FUNDING

OPSBA continues its consultative approach in its advocacy for sustainable and equitable education funding.

Following the government's Fall Economic Statement and supportive legislation, OPSBA [addressed education related items](#) that included:

- Investing more funding in the Skills Development Fund, including initiatives targeted at students in Grades 7 and 8;
- Expanding the Dual Credit program, which is meant to help more secondary school students enter a career in the skilled trades or early childhood education; and
- Increasing the monthly core allowances for the Ontario Disability Support Program and the maximum monthly amount for the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities program.

In November, OPSBA [submitted its response](#) to the Ministry of Education's request for input regarding the government's 2023–24 Education Funding and the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). The submission reflected feedback from students, trustees, the OPSBA work groups, the OPSBA Indigenous Trustees' Council, member board business officials, and senior OPSBA staff. We have also connected with the Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO) to share recommendations concerning capital funding, finding efficiencies, and reducing administrative burden.

The Association's submission included two Annual General Meeting–approved policy resolutions that have funding implications. These were in regards to:

1. Providing the funding to honour the commitments under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* including the request to publish, as clear final guidelines on the built environment for the K–12 sector; and
2. Using student population estimates and projected enrolment data for building new schools.

In addition, OPSBA's submission identified funding priorities in the following areas:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Mental Health Supports
- Special Education
- Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships
- Indigenous Education

- Trustee Professional Development
- Northern and Rural Challenges
- Student Transportation
- Technology and Broadband
- Labour Relations

OPSBA advocacy continues to include the following recommendations:

- Increase the Education Development Charge (EDC) rates to accurately match actual land purchase costs, and amend the EDC regulation to allow the flexibility for non-eligible boards to collect EDCs.
- Streamline the centralized procurement distribution of key school and school board items, and take into consideration the ability to service northern Ontario.
- Lift the moratorium on school closures and release the revised Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG).
- The Ministry of Education should develop a standard list of accessible features that must be included in projects and that the funding formula for school construction reflects those features.

These funding recommendations were also shared with the Members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs as part of their [2023 Pre-Budget Consultations](#).

## OPSBA's Finance Database

Our finance consultants respond to school board needs through ongoing database enhancements and providing timely analysis of government finance announcements. Access to these resources are available to OPSBA member boards on a by-request basis.

## 2023–24 GSN and PPF Highlights

The 2023–24 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and Priorities and Partnerships (PPF) funding were announced on April 17, 2023. Grant funding is projected to be \$27.6 billion, which represents an increase of 2.1% over the prior year. The average per-pupil funding amount is projected to be \$13,125.

OPSBA's submission to the ministry for consideration in the 2023–24 GSN included supports for:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Mental Health
- Special Education
- Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships
- Indigenous Education
- Trustee Professional Development
- Northern and Rural Challenges
- Student Transportation
- Technology and Broadband
- Labour Relations

Examples of funding support announced within the GSN and PPF grants in alignment with some of these areas:

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- **\$6.6 million** to provide transportation and stability supports for children and youth in care.
- **\$4.7 million** to fund the graduation coach program for Black students.
- **\$3.24 million** to fund Human Rights and Equity Advisors at select school boards.
- **\$103.7 million** to implement de-streaming and transition to secondary school.
- **\$0.3 million** to address antisemitism.
- **\$2.5 million** for Demographic Data Gathering Allocation to support school board capacity to collect, analyze, and use voluntary student and workforce demographic data.

### Mental Health

- **\$36.7 million** in supporting student mental health allocation, to foster the learning and well-being of students.
- **\$26.5 million** for mental health workers in secondary schools.
- **\$10.8 million** for mental health leaders in every school board to work with system leaders, educators, and community partners to support student mental health.
- **\$10.5 million** for student mental well-being allocation.
- **\$12 million** for mental health summer funding.

- **\$6.5 million** for School Mental Health Ontario.
- **\$3.2 million** in well-being and positive school climates allocation, to support school boards to meet local needs/priorities to promote wellness.

### Special Education

- **Early Math Intervention support funding** for Students with Special Education Needs is included in the overall Special Education Grant.
- **\$8.3 million** to help increase student engagement, close learning gaps, and ensure students are prepared for foundational Grade 9 math and early preparation for secondary school.
- **\$10 million** for school boards to deliver transition programs in the summer.
- **\$6 million** of application-based funding for school boards to implement projects that prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with special education needs / disabilities.
- **\$4.5 million** provided to the Geneva Centre for Autism for online training opportunities to build educator and education worker capacity to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other special education needs.
- **\$2.1 million** to select school boards for the first of three years of funding to provide targeted supports for students with disabilities in cooperative education placements to help them acquire the skills required for success after graduation.
- **\$1.4 million** to continue to subsidize educators and principals to complete Additional Qualifications (AQs) in special education.

### Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships

- **\$55.6 million** to school boards for Specialist High Skills Majors programs, including support for the expansion in the 13 sectors with the strongest focus on technological education and the skilled trades.
- **\$46.7 million** for the School College Work Initiative, including expansion of Dual Credits in key labour market sectors in healthcare, early childhood education, technological education, as well as for level 1 Apprenticeship training.
- **\$20 million** from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to school boards to support delivery of Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.
- **\$3 million** to provide experiential professional learning opportunities for all guidance teacher/counsellors.
- **\$1.8 million** to promote entrepreneurship education for students.
- **\$1 million** to select school boards to allow students to earn a credit towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

- **\$1 million** to school boards to provide \$1,000 bursaries to Grade 11 or 12 students.
- **\$0.5 million** to support school boards in the implementation of adult education programs.
- **\$0.3 million** to create better connections among schools and local employers to prepare students for in-demand jobs.

### Indigenous Education

- **\$4.8 million** to fund the graduation coach program for Indigenous students.
- Continued access to summer learning programming for First Nation students living on reserves is being provided in summer 2024 at no cost to the First Nation.
- Funding for Indigenous Education is being realigned for next year, reducing the overall grant amount for many school boards. Realignment includes reducing grant funding from Indigenous Education course credits, and moving grant funding into the Board Action Plan. There is some recognition that funding reductions will take place, and some transition money has been included in the GSN announcement. Board Action Plan grant funding is required to be held until ministry direction is received on how it may be spent.

### Student Transportation

- The Student Transportation review has now been released. The Grant is projected to be \$1,233.2 million in 2023–24 and is made up of the Transportation Services Allocation (\$1,225.8 million), the School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation (\$1.7 million), and the Transportation to Provincial or Demonstration Schools Allocation (\$5.7 million).

### Labour Relations

- A **\$1 per hour increase** in education worker salary benchmarks supporting the recently ratified Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW) central collective agreements, as well as a labour provision for other education worker unions.
- A **1.25 per cent increase** for teacher salary as a labour provision.
- Continuation of Supports for Students Fund (SSF) in the 2023–24 school year, also known as Investment in Systems Priorities in some former collective agreements.

### Other Highlights Include

- **\$19.9 million** for a new Safe and Clean Schools Supplement included in the Learning Opportunities Grant for additional services that support student well-being and maintain clean schools. Funding is allocated to support additional Professionals/Paraprofessional staff (\$11.9mil), Educational Assistants (\$4mil), and Custodians/Maintenance staff (\$4mil).
- The ministry is undertaking a review to modernize the SIP Allocation and temporarily adjusting the SIP funding approach by using a formula to calculate the amount for each school board.
- 2% cost update to the non-staff portion of the School Operations Allocation benchmark to assist in managing inflation. A 2% inflationary increase has been a fairly standard factor over the last several years, and does not offset the actual increase to the cost of goods and utilities schoolboards are experiencing. Also, this increase is of no help in offsetting the significant statutory benefit increases (EI and CPP) and the additional pension responsibilities schoolboards are obligated to cover.
- 0.167 per cent decrease in the benefits funding benchmark, as we enter the final year of a 12-year phase-out of the retirement gratuities.
- Increase in assumption from 15 to 22.5% of secondary students enrolled in online learning, leading to a reduction in the secondary pupil foundation allocation based on higher funded class size for online learning.
- Final year of phase in of supplementary area factor, decreasing the funded average class size moving from 22 to 23.
- Enhanced Accountability announced in relation to student enrolment audits, as well as staff audits to support reconciliations with benefit trusts.
- PPF grants are estimated to be approximately \$516.22 million, supporting school boards and other education partners. Approximately \$372.2 million have been allocated to school boards and isolate school authorities to support ministry priorities.
- School Renewal Allocation (school renewal and school condition index funding) will now expire within 2.5 years, whereas historically the amounts were allowed to rollover indefinitely. The funds will be recovered at the end of the province's year end (March 31), in the third year after the funding was in effect.

# OPSBA Work Groups



Members of OPSBA’s two Work Groups continue to play a meaningful role in advancing the Association’s identified priorities by proactively providing feedback and responding to relevant education issues and consultations.

## Policy Development Work Group

The Policy Development Work Group (PDWG) was regularly engaged and involved in several of the Association’s legislative and regulatory submissions. The focus of the work and discussions supported the Association’s priorities of Advocating for the Whole Child and Student Well-Being, Supporting Trustees as Leaders in Public Education, and Advocating for Sustainable and Equitable Education Funding. Meetings were a combination of in-person and virtual during the school year with work also conducted online in between meetings. The first meeting, however, did not take place until after the Municipal Council and School Board Elections in October 2022. New members were elected at regional meetings held at OPSBA’s Public Education Symposium in January 2023.

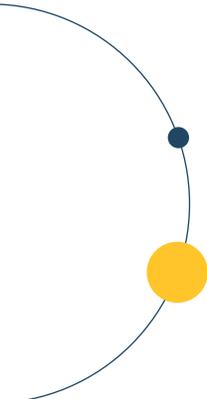
To support work group members in their role, staff created a template to be used for information and data collection from respective Board of Director members belonging to their region.

OPSBA continues to invite guest speakers present at meetings including student trustee representatives, Members of Provincial Parliament, Ministry of Education staff and longstanding legal counsel, Sheila MacKinnon of Shibley Righton LLP. David Wright, Associate Director — Corporate Services, Durham District School Board, also continues to provide support with regular education finance updates.

At the first joint work group meeting, the Association was fortunate to host the Minister of Education’s Parliamentary Assistants, Patrice Barnes and Matthew Rae. The MPPs were both newly elected and came to share the education portfolios they were each assigned. PA Barnes’ work involves: school boards and governance, child care, Indigenous Education, and Francophone affairs. PA Rae’s work included: curriculum review, school capital, and student transportation.

In addition to the items led by the guest speakers, the topics for work group consultations and discussion included:

- Accessibility in Public Education
- *The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*
- Beyond knowledge: Preparing students for an uncertain future (an OPSBA-led discussion paper)
- Core Issue Work Group Membership Structure
- Electronic Meetings — Attendance Requirements
- The Fall Economic Statement & Provincial Budget
- The Fourth Improvement Review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*
- Government of Ontario’s Housing Initiative and its Education implications
- The Grants for Students Needs (GSN) and Planning and Priorities Funding (PPF)
- The Ministry of Education’s Urban Schools/Growth Framework Working Group
- Municipal Governance
- A National School Food Policy and Program
- The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario’s (IPC) “Digital Privacy Pledge”
- An OPSBA local governance survey to capture trustee skills and experiences
- Student Trustees Moving and Seconding Motions  
Municipal Election Post-Mortem — Issues and Recommendations



## OPSBA WORK GROUPS

### Submissions

Throughout the year, Work Group members provided direct and indirect input on the following matters:

- [May 9, 2023](#) — OPSBA Submission regarding Bill 98, The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act
- April 19, 2023 — OPSBA Submission to Ontario's Fourth Improvement Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- [March 9, 2023](#) — Indigenous Trustees' Council Letter to Minister Stephen Lecce regarding language revitalization
- [February 24, 2023](#) — OPSBA Letter to the federal government regarding National School Food Policy
- [February 24, 2023](#) — OPSBA Letter to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario regarding a Digital Privacy Pledge
- [February 3, 2023](#) — OPSBA Submission to the 2023 Pre-Budget Consultation
- [December 1, 2022](#) — OPSBA Submission regarding Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act
- [November 25, 2022](#) — OPSBA Submission regarding Bill 36, Progress on the Plan to Build Act (Budget Measures), 2022 and the Fall Economic Statement
- [November 23, 2022](#) — OPSBA Submission regarding 2023-24 Education Funding and the Grants for Student Needs
- [September 29, 2022](#) — Letter to Minister Lecce regarding electronic meetings of school boards
- [September 23, 2022](#) — Letter to Ministers Lecce and Clark regarding housing supply and school infrastructure
- [August 3, 2022](#) — Letter to Ministers Lecce and Cho regarding accessibility in public education

### Areas for ongoing consideration

The work group will continue its work on a post-Municipal Council and School Board election review that involves discussions with the other school board/trustee associations, as well as other key stakeholders. Other areas of upcoming work and discussion will focus on local governance, the roles and responsibilities of school board trustees, and resources to support Local Government Week. In addition, advocacy will continue to support the National School Food Policy and Program.

### Work Group Members

Donna Edwards, Durham, Central East  
Shelley Laskin, Toronto, Central East (Chair)  
Amy Collard, Halton, Central West  
Karla Bailey, Peel, Central West  
Robin Hutcheon, Limestone, Eastern  
Rachael Prinzen, Hastings and Prince Edward, Eastern  
Julie Bertram, Near North, Northern (E)  
Jason Nesbitt, Superior-Greenstone, Northern (W)  
Julia Burgess, Greater Essex County, Western  
Robert Hunking, Avon Maitland, Western (Vice-Chair)  
Howard Archibald, Ontario North East,  
Indigenous Trustees' Council Representative

### Executive Council Liaison

Kathryn Pierroz, Second Vice-President, Rainy River

### Alternates

Nadeem Mahmood, York Region, Central East  
Kathy McDonald, Peel, Central West  
John McAllister, Upper Canada, Eastern  
Jennifer Sarlo, Algoma, Northern (E)  
Pat Johansen, Lakehead, Northern (W)  
Jane Bryce, Lambton Kent, Western  
Marilyn McLeod, Moose Factory Island DSAB,  
Indigenous Trustees' Council Representative



## Education Program Work Group

### Government Consultations

OPSBA, through the Education Program Work Group (EPWG), provided responses to provincial government consultations and advocated through letters to the Minister of Education. Jointly with the PDWG, the EPWG took positions on a number of program-related issues and made submissions to the provincial and federal governments, including consultations regarding The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, a National Food Policy, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's proposed Digital Privacy Pledge, accessibility in public education and the fourth AODA review of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as well as input into the OPSBA Grants for Student Needs (GSN) submission.

*Please see full list of 2022-23 OPSBA submissions on page 39.*

### Ontario's Education Partner Discussion Table

The group, which represents Ontario's K to post-secondary education partners, was brought together to share evidence, insights and hopes drawn out of the pandemic experience to collaboratively reframe and reimagine the future of learning and teaching in Ontario's publicly funded education systems. Conversations among education partners about possibilities for reimagined schools were grounded in a commitment to adapt systems to better meet the strengths, aspirations, interests and needs of future students. The Education Partner Discussion Table collaboratively created a discussion paper entitled *Beyond knowledge: Preparing students for an uncertain future* that was scheduled to be released in spring 2023.

### Indigenous Education

A report from the Indigenous Trustees' Council is a standing item on the EPWG agenda to assist in aligning advocacy efforts. The EPWG continues to advocate for the implementation of Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Final Report with regards to a need for a mandatory curriculum.

### Online Learning and the Ontario e-Learning Consortium

OPSBA has continued to engage in ongoing discussions with the Ontario e-Learning Consortium (OeLC) leadership to support their role in offering online courses to 55 member boards (28 Public and 27 Catholic) representing students who reside in both urban and rural areas throughout Ontario.

### French as a Second Language

French as a Second Language (FSL) continues to be identified, both in OPSBA's GSN submission and in discussion with the Ministry of Education, as a priority area that requires a provincial focus to address issues impacting school boards' ability to deliver high-quality and sustainable FSL programming and instruction. OPSBA, through the EPWG, has been successful in securing ongoing funding from the Ontario government to extend the FSL labour market partnership and to continue the work of mobilizing and communicating promising practices in the recruitment, hiring, professional support and retention of FSL teachers and education workers.

In addition, OPSBA led three pan-Canadian initiatives to support English language school boards to address the issues of the FSL teacher shortage as part of the FSL teacher recruitment and retention strategy funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Province of Ontario.

Year 3 of the three initiatives has been completed. The main deliverables for the three initiatives (see below) have been distributed and are available on the OPSBA microsite at [FSLResources.opsba.org](https://www.opsba.org/fslresources). Each document contains promising practices and when implemented by a school board in an integrated and coordinated way will have impact on the recruitment, hiring, professional support and retention of FSL teachers:

1. Recruitment Guide for English Language School Boards
2. French Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit and Resource Guide
3. Compendium of Strategies and Practices to Support School Administrators with FSL Programs in their Schools

### Specialist High Skill Major in Education

OPSBA led a writing team to establish two Specialist High Skill Majors (SHSM) in the Non-Profit Sector in education stream to promote careers in education. One stream was specifically designed for Grade 11 and 12 students in FSL programs (core, extended and immersion) and was launched in the 2022-23 school year. OPSBA created many supportive resources for school boards to assist in the implementation of the new SHSM, which can be found on the OPSBA microsite for FSL related resources.

### The Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health

OPSBA was the founding member of the Coalition, which is now in its 13th year of operation. Through the EPWG, the Coalition provides ongoing advice to the Ministry of Education. The [Coalition position paper](#) *Let's put our heads together* was released in November 2022 and summarizes the current research on children and youth mental health and addictions, identifying goals with rationale for action, along with evidence-informed recommendations. The recommendations are aligned with [Right time, right care: Strengthening Ontario's mental health and addictions system of care for children and young people](#) (School and Community System of Care Collaborative, 2022).

To date, representatives of the Coalition have met with the Ministry of Children and Social Services, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education to present the paper and engage in advocacy dialogue to advance the recommendations. The position paper has been very positively received and the Coalition looks forward to ongoing discussions and opportunities to consult on future policy, investments, and models of implementation.



### Committees

OPSBA staff sat on and contributed to the following provincial committees in 2022-23:

- EQAO Advisory Committee
- Teacher Supply and Demand Action Table Working Group

### Work Team Members

Michelle Aarts, Toronto, Central East  
Angela Lloyd, Kawartha Pine Ridge, Central East  
Kathy McDonald, Peel, Central West  
Carol Ann Sloat, Grand Erie, Central West (Vice-Chair)  
Lynn Scott, Ottawa-Carleton, Eastern  
Karen McGregor, Limestone, Eastern  
Marie Murphy-Foran, Algoma, Northern (E)  
Dave Cornish, Keewatin-Patricia, Northern (W)  
Patricia Smith, Avon Maitland, Western  
Jan Johnstone, Bluewater, Western (Chair)  
Paul Cormier, Superior-Greenstone,  
Indigenous Trustees' Council Representative

### Executive Council Liaison

Kathleen Woodcock, Second Vice-President,  
Waterloo Region DSB

### Alternates

Rachel Chernos Lin, Toronto, Central East  
Martha MacNeil, Upper Grand, Central West  
Judith Brown, Limestone, Eastern  
Lisa Corbiere-Addison, Rainbow, Northern (E)  
Trudy Tuchenhausen, Lakehead, Northern (W)  
Jane Thomson, Bluewater, Western  
Roberta Northmore, Lambton Kent,  
Indigenous Trustees' Council Representative

## OPSBA-OSTA Liaison Committee

The OPSBA-OSTA Liaison Committee continued its commitment to supporting student trustees and student voice. The Public Board Council's President Tiya Patel (DSB Niagara) and Vice President Antong Hou (Ottawa-Carleton DSB) were the lead contacts in joining OPSBA's work groups and participating in other Association advocacy initiatives. New OPSBA regional representatives were determined following the fall election.

### The Committee's work this year included:

- The revised 2023 Ontario Public Student Trustee Leadership Award application launch and selection – this was also made available in an online fillable format
- The continued promotion of the Student Trustee Handbook

Committee representation included trustees from across OPSBA's membership and governance levels.

### Members

- Cathy Abraham, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB, OPSBA President (Central East)
- Howard Archibald, DSB Ontario North East, (Indigenous Trustees' Council)
- Sarah Cipkar, Greater Essex County DSB (Western)
- Crystal Hewey, District School Board Ontario North East (North)
- Dr. Margo Shuttleworth, Halton DSB (Central West)
- Tiffany Lloyd, Limestone DSB (Eastern)



# Legislative Advocacy



As a non-partisan association, OPSBA advocates for public education regardless of which political party is in power at Queen’s Park. The Association is proud of its expertise and track record in the area of effective advocacy to support its priorities.

OPSBA monitors legislation, regulations, and policy directions that could affect our students and member boards. With the support of our Work Groups, Executive Council and Board of Directors, staff provide submissions and feedback to many government consultations.

Provincial Updates are shared with all member boards on a regular basis and our advocacy efforts can be seen at all levels of government.

### Municipal

Municipal and School Board Elections 2022 were held on October 24, 2022, with a new term start date of November 15, 2022. OPSBA engaged in a number of election-related advocacy and actions with the objectives to:

- promote and increase the awareness for the role of democratically, locally elected school board trustee (and their contribution to public education);
- encourage a more diverse group of individuals to consider becoming a trustee candidate; and
- increase overall voter turnout for municipal and school board elections.

The various pre-and post Election Resources and Initiatives included:

- *Making A Difference For Kids: Running for Election as a School Board Trustee*
- *Your Guide to Hosting a School Board Trustee All Candidates Meeting*
- *Posters*
- *Social media campaign*
- *Centralized School Board Elections Website*
- *October 6 Zoom Election Panel: Municipal and School Board Elections — Diverse Voices, Diverse Leadership and Equity in Public Office and Education*
- *2022-2026 Good Governance Guide*

Of the total 317 elected trustee positions in the 2022 election, approximately 48% are new individuals and 52% are returning.

### Provincial

OPSBA continued its strong working relationship with the Minister of Education, the Honourable Stephen Lecce (MPP King-Vaughan) and the two Parliamentary Assistants Patrice Barnes and Matthew Rae. OPSBA senior staff have regular and direct communications with their staff about education-related issues.

The Minister continued to conduct weekly teleconferences with school board chairs that provided updates and the opportunity to ask questions.

The Association maintained regular contact with the other political parties and their education critics. This included Chandra Pasma (New Democratic Party Education Critic), Mitzie Hunter (Liberal Party Education Critic), and Mike Schreiner (Green Party Leader and Education Critic).

OPSBA’s November 28, 2022, Advocacy Day was a tremendous success. Board of Directors members and student trustees spent the day at Queen’s Park attending Question Period, meeting with their local MPPs, and participating in the evening reception. In total, OPSBA representatives met with over 50 MPP offices either in meetings or at the reception. This includes meetings with the Minister of Education, the two Parliamentary Assistants, and the education critics from the New Democratic Party, the Ontario Liberal Party and the Green Party of Ontario. This year’s MPP package included handouts that focused on Capital and Facilities, Student Transportation, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.



## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

OPSBA engaged with Nanos Research to conduct polling to align with Advocacy Day. The new survey data included several public education issues ranging from education funding to curriculum, special education, equity, and governance. The associated report included comparisons to OPSBA and Nanos' 2019 survey. The results indicate that nine in ten Ontarians agree (61%) or somewhat agree (29%) that spending on public education is an investment in the future. This is consistent across all demographics. A strong majority of Ontarians say a variety of education funding priorities are important with about nine in ten saying more funding is important/somewhat important for the maintenance, repair and renewal of schools, special education programming, and mental health supports, among other opportunities and supports

Once again, OPSBA partnered with students in the Wilfrid Laurier University Applied Masters of Applied Politics Summer Practicum. For this year's project, students worked with OPSBA's Associate Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) regarding the Association's comprehensive equity, diversity and inclusion audit. The students' work included existing policy reviews, new EDI policy development, literature reviews, jurisdictional best practice scans, EDI impact assessment tool development, school board EDI environmental scan survey tool, and multiple new points of data collection, demographic data collection, implementation education and governance guides.

OPSBA trustees participated in the Association's first ever "Take Your MPP to School Day" in May during a constituency week. The objective of the initiative was to raise the awareness among MPPs of the role of trustees and build upon the relationships with MPPs following OPSBA's Advocacy Day. The visits were opportunities to showcase students, staff, and programs in local schools, as well as the local realities of education in communities.

## Federal

As a member of the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), OPSBA examines provincial and federal legislation that affects Ontario students and our member boards.

In areas such as copyright or Indigenous education, the CSBA gives its members a national voice and opportunities for influence beyond the provincial level. President Cathy Abraham, former Executive Director Rusty Hick and then new Executive Director, Stephanie Donaldson, represented OPSBA on the CSBA Board of Directors in 2022-2023.

CSBA conducted its own Advocacy Day in Ottawa to meet with key Members of Parliament and decision makers. OPSBA and CSBA were engaged and supported each other's work in the advocacy around a National School Food Policy and Program.

OPSBA's Federal Election Resource Guide for School Boards and Trustees was developed with input from Association senior staff and the Policy Development Work Group. This was distributed prior to the Federal Election and used in conjunction with the key messages developed by the CSBA.



# Communications and Media Relations



Since June 2022

<b>62</b> Media hits, plus many radio interviews	<b>9,397</b> Twitter Followers	<b>836,000</b> Total tweet impressions	
<b>12</b> News releases and statements	<b>83%</b> Instagram account fan growth	<b>4,870,000</b> Total Instagram post impressions	
	<b>114%</b> Facebook page fan growth	<b>9,900,000</b> Total Facebook post impressions	



## COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

The focus of OPSBA's communications and media relations is to ensure that the Association's identified priorities are presented in a strong light, positively showcasing public education and the achievements of school boards and trustees.

OPSBA's advocacy, communications, and media relations strategies are designed to increase public confidence in the quality and effectiveness of our public school system. OPSBA stands out as expert voice of public education in Ontario.

The Association saw sustained media coverage on a variety of issues, with media appearances in stories regarding transformative education legislation, skilled trades, collective bargaining, pupil accommodation reviews, the OPSBA Awards, OPSBA/Nanos polling data, school board elections, and more. OPSBA is consistently a primary point of contact for journalists when they are looking for a provincial perspective on education issues. Throughout the year, OPSBA President Cathy Abraham was a valued commentator, interviewed by the local, provincial and national media on hot button issues that impacted public education. The Association had more than 60 appearances in a variety of media sources (including print, television, and radio) throughout the year, including:



### ● Globe and Mail, April 17, 2023

Cathy Abraham, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, said the government's legislation "felt very pointed" at trustees, whose role is to advocate for students and their local communities. Trustees and senior school staff have been focused on improving student outcomes, she said, adding that their goal is not necessarily just to help pupils find a job. "This is about making sure kids and students can be successful in whatever walk of life they choose that to be. That means more than just reading, writing and arithmetic. That means we also have to keep focusing on equity work, on mental health supports or all of those skills that don't necessarily get noted in an EQAO test," she said, referring to the provincial standardized assessment run by the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

### ● CBC Ontario Morning (Radio), February 27, 2023

"We need to have a conversation about (school closures) so that we can make better choices for students. As long as there have been schools, school boards have been having conversations about how they can better accommodate their students, so we know, and our communities know, that we're providing the very best opportunities in those buildings."

### ● CityNews (Television), October 26, 2022

"(Trustee turnover does) happen. In some boards, you'll have a year like that and then in the next election, you'll have very little turnover. It just happens. It depends on where people are with their own goals and career aspirations...I don't think it's anything to be worried about...they are in good hands."

### ● Ottawa Citizen, September 6, 2022

"Families need someone to help them navigate the system. A trustee can make sure the problem is being handled by the right person, or that board policies are being followed," said (Cathy) Abraham, who has been a trustee with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board since 2003.



Our ongoing commitment to keeping the membership of OPSBA informed on critical issues means frequent development of up-to-date analysis of breaking news and reports.

In 2022–2023, OPSBA staff provided comprehensive communication support and leadership to member boards on key issues impacting education across the province to ensure positive and consistent messaging and positioning to highlight the strength of public education, including the work of school boards to address the ongoing impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on our students and staff, and the release of the 2022 Ontario Budget and 2022–23 Grants for Student Needs. OPSBA’s much-read daily “Media Report” service, launched in 2013 in response to a pressing need to issue breaking labour negotiations news to hundreds of trustees and board staff on a daily basis, continues to serve staff and trustees.

Since the last OPSBA Annual Report was published in June 2022, 12 media statements and news releases (as of May 2023), templates for local use, and other communication vehicles and supports were regularly developed and distributed to all trustees, directors of education, senior human resources and finance officials, and communication officers.

Communications officers from all 31 OPSBA member boards regularly participated in video conference calls with OPSBA staff to discuss items of mutual interest and share best practices and key messages on the pressing issues of the day.

## School Board Elections

### Phase II — Get out the Vote

Following a successful campaign that was targeted at increasing public awareness of the importance of the role of school board trustee, and seeking to increase the diversity of candidates, “Phase II” of the OPSBA school board elections campaign sought to raise awareness and encourage people to vote. Similar to Phase I, which took place during the previous school year, this phase of the campaign featured a variety of different ads including the trustee interview videos, simple text ads, and a dedicated microsite. The campaign material appeared across Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and also featured ads in multiple different languages. Some key metrics:

- **655,230** completed video views
- **23,962** clicks generated
- **1,525,265** people reached on Facebook and Instagram
- **9,218,155** Impression generated
- **2:37** average time spent on landing page (54 seconds is the benchmark average)

## First Day of School

OPSBA celebrated the return to in-person classes on September 6 and 7 by asking social media followers to share first-day-of-school photos of themselves or their children using the hashtag #OntEdFirstDay. As part of back-to-school media outreach, OPSBA President Cathy Abraham appeared in an Ottawa Citizen story on September 6 on the role of trustee as well. A President’s Message was sent to all trustees the first week of school.



## Public Education Symposium

As part of PES, OPSBA hosted a meeting of communications staff from our member boards. Despite the brutal winter weather, staff from the vast majority of our boards were able to attend. This year's meeting included:

- Presentations and updates from OPSBA Policy and Labour staff
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training
- Current issues case study presentations on Cyber Incidents and Equity Issues.

## OPSBA Brand Refresh

OPSBA has begun working with a Toronto-based design firm to undergo a full-scale strategic brand refresh of all design, information, and website properties. Throughout the coming year the Association will engage in a collaborative process that will modernize our existing brand identity and website, which have been consistent for well over a decade.

## Social Media

OPSBA uses social media frequently to disseminate items of urgent interest, media releases and statements, and policy statements and submissions, while also sharing relevant content from its member boards on days of significance, provincial advocacy opportunities and more. As of May 2023, @OPSBA has nearly 9,400 followers on Twitter, almost 1,000 followers on Instagram, and an additional 450-plus fans on Facebook.



Follow OPSBA on Twitter: [@OPSBA](https://twitter.com/OPSBA)



Follow OPSBA on Instagram: [@OPSBA\\_Official](https://www.instagram.com/OPSBA_Official)



Follow OPSBA on Facebook: [OPSBAOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/OPSBAOfficial)

# 2023 OPSBA Awards



Each year, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association honours individuals who have made significant contributions in the field of education. While it is impossible to honour all those special people who make a difference, the recipients of these awards represent the many who contribute to the creativity and hard work that make our schools and education system leaders in the world.

### Jack A. MacDonald Award of Merit and Certificate of Recognition

The winners of these student awards are selected on the basis of a sound academic record throughout their career, accompanied by outstanding community service and leadership. This year's Jack A. MacDonald Award of Merit was presented to **Braydon Anthony Bandurka**, Cobourg Collegiate Institute, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB.

Certificates of Recognition were presented to **Calvin Bell**, Beaver Valley Community School, Bluewater DSB, and **Gavin Hickey**, Sir Wilfred Laurier, Ottawa Carleton DSB.

### The President's Award

This award recognizes trustees who have given 25 or more years of service to public education. This year's recipients are **Dena Morrison** and **Judy Hunda**, Rainbow DSB.

### Dr. Harry Paikin Memorial Award

This award is given to an active or retired public school trustee for outstanding service. This year's recipient is **Doreen Dewar**, Rainbow DSB.

### Fred L. Bartlett Memorial Award

The Fred L. Bartlett Memorial Award is given to an active or retired member of the teaching profession for outstanding contribution to education in Ontario. This year's recipient is **Jon Swain**, Limestone DSB.

### OPSBA Award of Excellence and Achievement Award

The OPSBA Award of Excellence and the Achievement Award are presented by the local board to volunteers for outstanding, exemplary and/or unique contributions to the overall well-being of the school or community through in-school, board-wide, extra-curricular and/or volunteer activity.

The Achievement Award was presented to the following individuals:

- **Ranil Mendis** — Peel DSB
- **Susan Neal, Phillip Rennison, Sandra Pedersen, Andrew Jarabek** — Ottawa Carleton DSB
- **Natasha Klages** — Bluewater DSB
- **Marianne Stewart and the School & Family Health Team at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit** — Lakehead DSB
- **Nolan Steen** — Hastings and Prince Edward DSB
- **Frank Lew** — Durham DSB
- **Phouvieng Sackda** — Toronto DSB
- **Laurie Vonk** — Upper Grand DSB
- **Gary Adduono** — Superior Greenstone DSB
- **Romana Siddiqui**, Parent Involvement Committee — Peel DSB



## The OPSBA Public Property Assessment Network Scholarship

The Public Property Assessment Network Scholarship is being awarded in the amount of \$1,000 to one recipient in each of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's (OPSBA) five regions, for four school years – 2019–20, 2020–21, 2021–22 and 2022–23. Scholarship recipients are students of strong character, leadership skills and potential, who care deeply about their communities and furthering their own learning. Each of OPSBA's regions fine-tuned the eligibility and selection criteria that would be taken into consideration. The 2022 winners included:

### Central East Region

**Mya Simpson**, Cobourg CI, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB

### Central West Region

**Victoria Gotcheva**, Glenforest SS, Peel DSB

### Eastern Region

**Zaria Jackson**, Napanee DSS, Limestone DSB

### Northern Region

**Billie Montreuil**, Iroquois Falls SS, DSB Ontario North East

### Western Region

**Ewan Van Wagner**, Belle River DHS, Greater Essex County DSB

The 2023 winners will be announced after the publication of this Annual Report and will be included in the 2023–24 OPSBA Annual Report. More information is available at <https://www.opsba.org/what-we-do/ppanscholarship/>.

## The Ontario Public Student Trustee Scholarship

The Ontario Public Student Trustee Leadership Scholarship is an award jointly provided by OPSBA and the Public Board Council of OSTA–AECO. The intent is to recognize outstanding achievement in a leadership role and provide financial support to a graduating public board student trustee to assist with their post-secondary education plans (University, College, or Apprenticeship). The 2022 winners were:

- **Vandy Widyalankara**, Halton District School Board (HDSB)
- **Michael Yao**, Rainbow District School Board (RDSB)

The 2023 winners will be announced after the publication of this Annual Report and will be included in the 2023–24 OPSBA Annual Report. More information is available at <https://www.opsba.org/advocacy-and-action/student-trustees/>.



# 9 Reasons Why School Boards Belong in OPSBA

## Effective advocacy

on issues that make a difference for students, including: education funding, equity, diversity, and inclusion, child care, Indigenous education, children and youth mental health, French as a Second Language, Special Education, skilled trades, national food and nutrition policies, and Northern and remote challenges



## United and credible

voice in advocacy and action in legislative and policy changes

## Democratic environment

and responsiveness to member board needs

## Effective leadership

in collective bargaining

## Access

to financial savings stemming from interventions on copyright tariffs, and natural gas and electricity rates

## High quality

professional development opportunities for school trustees

## Communications

through media relations, social media and other communications support on key issues

## Practical support

for complying with legislative and regulatory change

## Strategic relations

with education partners across Ontario and Canada

# Board of Directors 2022-23

(as of May 2023)



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022–23

**Michelle Aarts**

Enrolment Representative  
Toronto District School Board

**Cathy Abraham**

President  
Kawartha Pine Ridge District  
School Board

**Kate Baggott**

Central West  
District School Board of Niagara

**Julia Burgess**

Western  
Greater Essex County District  
School Board

**Emma Cunningham**

Central East  
Durham District School Board

**Donna Danielli**

Regional Chair, Central West  
Halton District School Board

**Alexis Dawson**

Central East  
Toronto District School Board

**Kim Dougherty**

Eastern  
Renfrew County District School Board

**Jack Fletcher**

Western  
Lambton Kent District School Board

**Michael Graham**

Northern (West)  
Rainy River District School Board

**Jeanne Gray**

Central West  
Halton District School Board

**David Green**

Enrolment Representative  
Peel District School Board

**Susan Humphries**

Regional Chair, Eastern  
Renfrew County District School Board

**Jennifer Jennekens**

Eastern  
Ottawa–Carleton District School Board

**Elaine Johnston**

Indigenous Trustees' Council  
Algoma District School Board

**Jan Johnstone**

Western  
Bluewater District School Board

**Jaine Klassen Jeninga**

Regional Chair, Central East  
Kawartha Pine Ridge District  
School Board

**Gerald Kleist**

Northern (West)  
Keewatin–Patricia District School Board

**Judy Kosmerly**

Northern (East)  
Rainbow District School Board

**Benoit Laberge**

Treatment School Authorities  
CHEO School

**Angela Lloyd**

Central East  
Kawartha Pine Ridge District  
School Board

**Jodi Lloyd**

Central East  
Simcoe County District School Board

**Martha MacNeil**

Central West  
Upper Grand District School Board

**Nadeem Mahmood**

Central East  
York Region District School Board

**David McDonald**

Eastern  
Upper Canada District School Board

**Kathy McDonald**

Central West  
Peel District School Board

**Karen McGregor**

Eastern  
Limestone District School Board

**Sherri Moore**

Western  
Thames Valley District School Board

**Arlene Morell**

Regional Chair, Western  
Thames Valley District School Board

**Jason Nesbitt**

Northern (West)  
Superior–Greenstone District  
School Board

**Deb Oldfield**

Central East  
Durham District School Board

**Scott Piatkowski**

Central West  
Waterloo Region District School Board

**Kathryn Pierroz**

Second Vice–President  
Rainy River District School Board

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-23

**Rosemary Pochopsky**

Northern (East)  
District School Board Ontario North  
East

**Russell Reid**

Northern (East)  
Algoma District School Board

**Amanda Robertson**

Eastern  
Hastings and Prince Edward District  
School Board

**Meagan Ruddock**

Western  
Thames Valley District School Board

**George Saarinen**

Regional Chair, Northern  
Lakehead District School Board

**Lynn Scott**

Eastern  
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

**Dr. Elizabeth Sinclair**

Central East  
York Region District School Board

**Ryan Sitch**

Northern (West)  
Lakehead District School Board

**Bill Steer**

Northern (East)  
Near North District School Board

**Claudine VanEvery-Albert**

Central West  
Grand Erie District School Board

**Bruce Whitaker**

Western  
Avon Maitland District School Board

**Colleen Wilcox**

Central East  
Trillium Lakelands District School Board

**Deborah Williams**

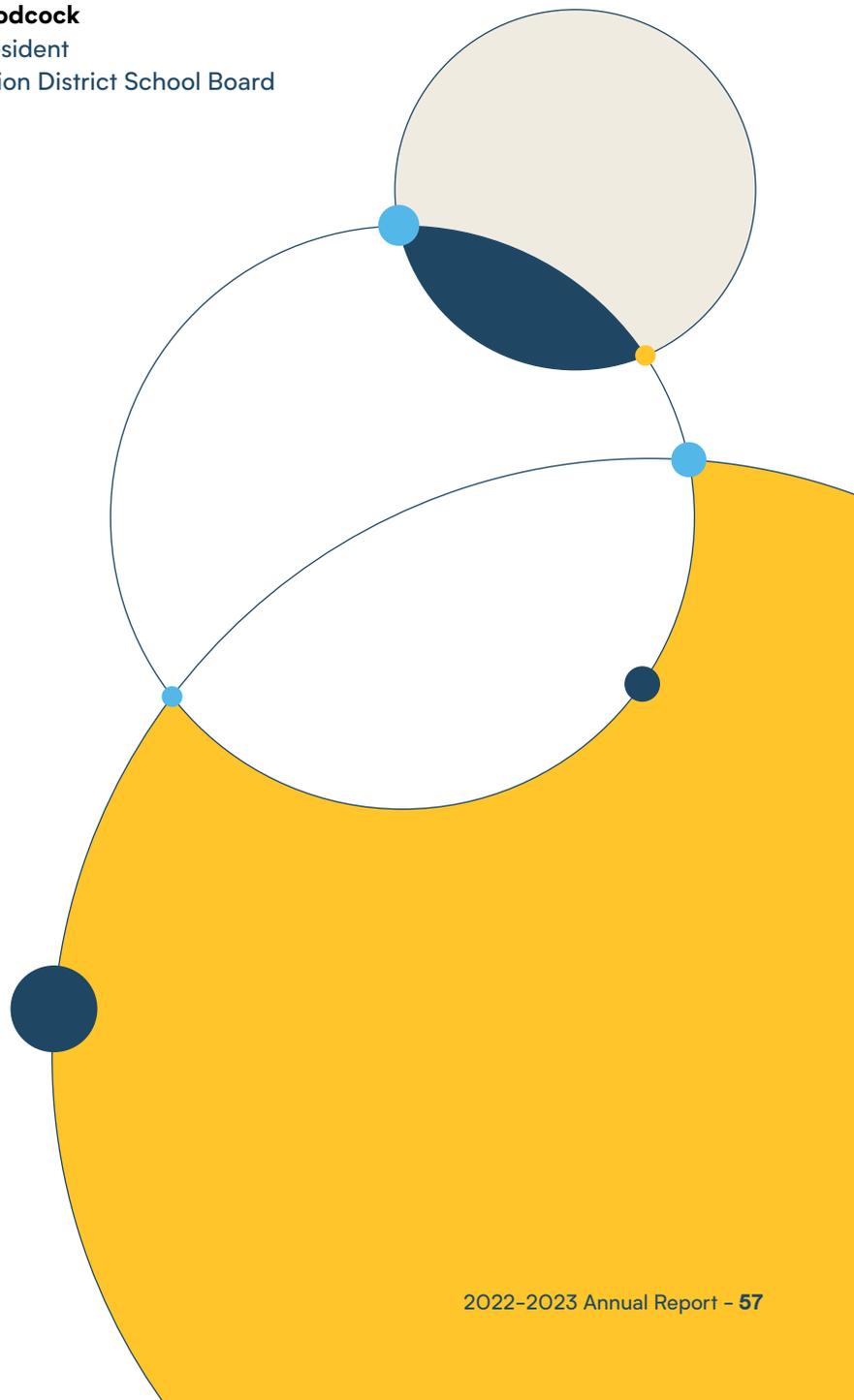
Central East  
Toronto District School Board

**Elizabeth Wong**

Central West  
Hamilton-Wentworth District  
School Board

**Kathleen Woodcock**

First Vice-President  
Waterloo Region District School Board





# ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates



# OPSBA Staff

## **Executive Director**

*Stephanie Donaldson*

## **Corporate and Office Services**

*Lisa Reinhardt*

Director of Corporate Affairs

*Vanessa Trinh*

Comptroller

*Mary Adams*

Receptionist

*Carla Garbas*

Administrative Assistant

*Diana Hong*

Financial Officer

*Debbie Lazaroff*

Computer Systems Administrator

*Kendra Tedford Devine*

PD and Events Consultant

## **Communications and Public Affairs**

*Shane Gonsalves*

Managing Director, Government and Public Affairs

*T.J. Goertz*

Senior Communications and Policy Officer

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

*Ken Jeffers*

Associate Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## **Black Trustees' Caucus**

*Michelle Rodney-Bartalos*

BTC Staff Liaison

## **Indigenous Education**

*Alicia Cameron*

ITC Staff Liaison

## **Education Funding**

*David Wright*

Associate Director, Durham DSB, and Special Advisor to OPSBA

## **Labour Relations**

*Andrew Gold*

Director of Labour Relations

*Janet Edwards*

Associate Director of Labour Relations

*Alison Warrian*

Manager of Labour Relations

*Tiffany Maia*

Coordinator of Labour Relations

## **Policy**

*Jennifer McIntyre*

Director of Policy

## **Program**

*Judith Nyman*

Director of Program Policy



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