



**ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION**

Leading Education's Advocates

Ontario Public School Boards' Association
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Cathy Abraham
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The Honourable Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education

Dear Minister Thompson,

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) would like to take the opportunity to highlight the significance of student voice and to demonstrate our supportive relationship with the student trustee association, Ontario Student Trustees' Association - l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO). We believe student trustees play an important role in the education governance process and we support our member boards in their efforts to engage student representatives and maximize the voice of all students in the system.

At OPSBA, we have undertaken a pilot project to build stronger connections between our two associations. A component of this pilot is the creation of the OPSBA-OSTA Liaison Committee, whose purpose is to regularly connect on advocacy issues and offer support and guidance. In addition, a student trustee representative is now a member of our internal consultation work groups, the Education Program and Policy Development Work Teams. These groups meet regularly throughout the year to discuss a wide range of current and upcoming education issues. The addition of a student trustee ensures we hear directly from the students we serve.

Students have always been invited to our Professional Development opportunities and we have a dedicated workshop led by student trustees at our Public Education Symposium in January 2019.

Student trustees represent the voice of students in decisions about education, and they help keep students informed about important decisions that affect them. OSTA representatives recently presented to the OPSBA Board of Directors in September and are scheduled to return at a Spring meeting. We strongly believe our members need to listen and learn from our student leaders. Student trustees in turn, gain a better understanding of the system that supports education and can share that understanding with their peers.

We are pleased that you and your staff have already taken the opportunity to meet with the student leaders of OSTA-AECO and learn of their advocacy efforts. We look forward to participating in a joint meeting with OSTA-AECO and you in the future.

Regards,

Cathy Abraham
President
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

CC:
Ryan Brown, Public Board Council President, OSTA-AECO
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education