

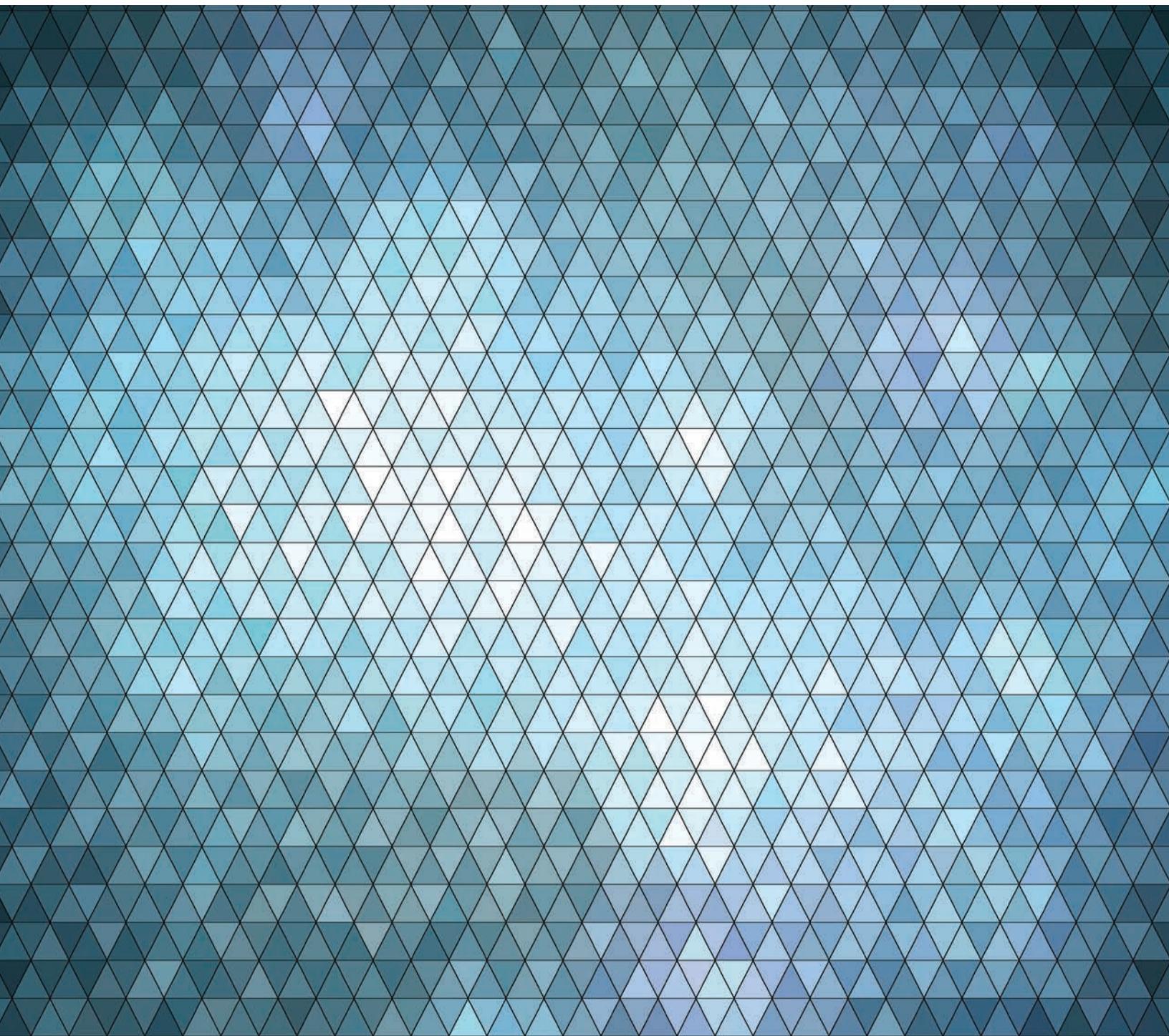
2012 / 2013

Annual Report



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates



Statement of Mission and Beliefs

THE MISSION OF THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION (OPSBA)

is to promote and enhance public education by: helping Member Boards to fulfil their mandates; developing effective partnerships with other groups interested in public education; and providing a strong and effective voice on behalf of public education in Ontario. OPSBA believes that the role of public education is to provide universally accessible education opportunities for all students regardless of their ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds, social or economic status, individual exceptionality, or religious preference.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION IS ACHIEVED BY :

Promoting high standards of individual achievement;

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

Cultivating a love of learning;

Employing highly qualified, highly motivated teachers, strongly committed to ongoing professional development;

Recognizing the value of diversity among learners and communities; and

Exploring creative educational alternatives.

To maintain excellence, the public school system must be accountable to the community it serves and must build effective partnerships throughout the community.

Local, elected school boards play a key role as part of a democratic process of checks and balances in decision-making by ensuring that schools remain responsive to both provincial program requirements and local needs and resources.

Message to Members

Challenging. Inspiring. Productive.
These are words that resonate in our
reflections on the 2012-2013 school year.

It has, by any measure, been a demanding year in public education. It has required an increased focus on labour relations and funding issues. It has called for sustained vigilance for the interests of students and the school boards who make decisions on their behalf. Through all the challenges, our trustees and staff have been successful in keeping student success and school board priorities at the forefront of our commitment to the future of public education.

The OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health has expanded in prominence and held a stellar Summit in October 2012, hosting 700 delegates from a range of professions and communities. Intensive discussions at the Summit have led to development of an in-depth report which provides recommendations to the government on key issues affecting outcomes for children and youth that will help drive implementation of the province's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Planning for the third Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health in April 2014 is already underway. Mental health will continue to be a vital priority as we work to create a sustained culture of improved supports and services for Ontario students and their families.

A challenging labour relations climate was created through a collective bargaining process conducted largely outside the Labour Relations Act and enforced through the enactment of Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act*.



Michael Barrett
President
Ontario Public School
Boards' Association



Gail Anderson
Executive Director
Ontario Public School
Boards' Association

In every venue, OPSBA's representatives sought to advance the best interests of students and the role of school boards. Student-centred positions were put forward in all talks that were held, through submissions to Legislative committees, and through intervention at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Draft Principles have been developed that are intended to help shape a more effective structure for future collective bargaining in the sector.

OPSBA's new 21st Century Learning document – *A Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age* – was launched in January 2013. The Vision represents the thoughtful and informed work of trustees and key staff from a broad range of Ontario public school boards and promotes the vital importance of a provincial vision for the role of learning and teaching in a highly connected world. OPSBA staff and member trustees have presented the document at a variety of workshops and shared it with the Minister of Education. It is now on the agenda of the Ministry's Student Achievement Division Working Table.

When we are challenged, as we have been this year, it's important that we recommit to our core priorities. It's important to celebrate what we have done to cement Ontario's status as one of the top educational jurisdictions in the world. Why are we at the top? Quite simply, it's due to the hard work and dedication of everyone from our trustees to board administration to the teachers who deliver curriculum in

unique and creative ways, each and every day.

OPSBA is committed to supporting every Ontario public school board trustee in the vital role they play on behalf of Ontario students and their families. As advocates for education, and as locally democratically elected trustees, our priority is our students and we live that commitment every day.

Thank you for your wisdom, your passion and your support.

Michael Barrett
President

Gail Anderson
Executive Director

2012– 2013 Highlights



OPSBA's membership has identified the main priorities that position us to engage with the key forces affecting high quality public education in Ontario today.

They drive how the Association uses its expertise, time and resources. Our priorities offer a framework for decision-making and help shape action on ongoing initiatives and emerging issues that are relevant to the Association's mission.

OPSBA's priorities and key activities are directly or indirectly related to improving academic achievement and well-being for all students and promoting opportunities that offer Ontario's children and youth success in school and in life. The Association advocates not only for first-rate programs, pedagogy and resources but for a social and educational environment that nurtures the values of universality, inclusiveness, human rights, respect and kindness. OPSBA's multi-year priorities reflect these values.

These are the priorities that position us as the credible voice of Ontario's public school system and underscore the expertise that is respected by the provincial government when they need advice on legislation and impact of government policy directions. We are, for example, consistently represented at the government, media and health sector tables when it comes to critical discussions on mental health impacts – and we're seeing results.

As we work to achieve progress we invest expertise and energy in ways that will have positive impact on the diversity of student needs across the province. We ensure we have an informed voice at the tables dealing with education initiatives such as Full-Day Kindergarten(FDK),



Special Education, 21st Century Learning, First Nation, Métis and Inuit education, Student Assessment, Equity and Inclusive Education and Children and Youth Mental Health. Our voices are equally strong in forums dealing with Collective Bargaining and Education Funding.

The 2012-2013 year was marked by a collective bargaining process that departed from the Labour Relations Act and, notably, included direct talks between the government and unions reinforced by the imposition of contracts through legislation. Based on bargaining

parameters approved by the Board of Directors, OPSBA's representatives were vocal in representing the interests of students and school boards in discussions with the government. With the enactment of Bill 115, OPSBA worked with school boards and Ministry staff to identify and recommend approaches to resolving the implementation of financial and human resources issues.

The OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health continued to embrace new members and widen its influence. The Coalition held a very successful Children and Youth Mental Health Summit in October 2012, attended by 700 delegates from multiple sectors. A key outcome is a document that will provide advice from the field to the Ministers responsible for implementing the province's comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In ongoing work OPSBA staff and Coalition partners met with the Toronto Star editorial board to discuss the primary focus of the Coalition's collective work and a need for clear guidelines in reporting on tragic events involving youth. The third Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health will take place on April 3 and 4, 2014.

OPSBA's First Nation trustees provide a strong voice in advocacy for First Nation, Métis and Inuit education. The First Nation Trustees Council met with then Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Kathleen Wynne in August 2012 to discuss issues affecting successful transition of First Nation students to and within provincial schools.

The Council also met with the Assistant Deputy Minister for Aboriginal Learning in January 2013 and provided input on implementation of Ontario's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework.

Through the Ontario Education Services Corporation(OESC), OPSBA is active in energy interventions at the Ontario Energy Board on behalf of Member Boards. As of May 2013, another \$12.2 million of energy savings was achieved for member school boards. Cumulative savings for school boards over the last ten years is now more than \$122 million.

Early in 2013, OPSBA submitted briefs during both Ontario's pre-budget consultations and in the process leading to development of the 2013-14 Grants for Student Needs(GSN). While recognizing the difficult fiscal challenges facing the government, OPSBA advocated for commitment to sustained funding for collective agreement obligations, FDK, Special Education, First Nations, Métis and Inuit education and Children's Mental Health. OPSBA renewed its recommendation for ongoing review of the funding model as a whole. At the national level, the Association, through the First Nation Trustees Council, also developed, on behalf of Canadian School Boards Association(CSBA), a submission to the federal government on their proposed process for First Nation education legislation. The submission focussed on the need for equitable funding for First Nation students and for a leadership role for Canada's First Nations in the development of any legislative framework.

The OESC Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Teachable Project was completed successfully in January 2013. This collaborative effort of OPSBA and OESC staff had the support of a province-wide advisory committee and school board staff writing teams. The project produced a rich inventory of professional development resources, videos and model lesson plans

for use by educators across Ontario. All resources are available at www.theteachableproject.org.

OPSBA released its paper *A Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age* on February 1, 2013 at the Public Education Symposium. It has been endorsed by the public Council of Directors of Education(CODE) and by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association and promoted through an online survey, workshops, and the OPSBA website. OPSBA is pleased that the Ministry's Student Achievement Division Working Table has now incorporated the Vision document into its deliberations.

The province's legislative agenda has engaged OPSBA in a range of advocacy work with a strong focus on labour relations and education funding, including response to the introduction of Bill 115 and key priorities related to full review of the funding model. OPSBA has provided input and held discussions on the government's proposed cost-saving measures identified in last year's Grants for Student Needs with regard to under-utilized schools, the 34-credit cap and school board amalgamations. The government has since indicated that, due to other identified savings, amalgamations are no longer being considered. OPSBA's advocacy has also called for sustainability for services for children and youth in the province's comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and for equitable funding for First Nation students.

Trustees who are skilled and knowledgeable in their complex governance and leadership roles make for strong and effective school boards. OPSBA has responded to trustees as they have identified the skills and knowledge that support them in their role and reinforced trustee professional development as an Association priority. Over the past year, OPSBA has supported school boards and offered expert facilitation customized to their needs and based on 14 professional learning modules available through our

Centre for Governance Excellence at www.ontarioschooltrustees.org. Additional modules will be available online in the 2013 calendar year. These will address: the role of Chair and Vice-Chair; First Nation trustees and First Nation, Métis and Inuit education; and Trustee Code of Conduct. These three modules are built on trustee input and experience and reflect the challenges of trustees in their day-to-day roles.

At the same time as OPSBA works to achieve concrete outcomes in our priority areas, we are proud to offer a full range of valued services. These include: rapid turnaround analyses of funding announcements, daily reports from the provincial legislature that focus on school board concerns, same-day response on labour relations matters, continuous updates on education in the news and support for local media relations, development of policy positions on critical educational issues, and highly topical professional development. In the past year, OPSBA has greatly increased its social media presence and has provided sessions on the use of social media at OPSBA conferences.

OPSBA's progress on our multi-year priorities over the past year has been steady and, as an Association, we take pride in the range of successful outcomes and the impact they have had. We have worked productively with our many partners in education and across health, children's services and communities. Our shared goal has been building a better environment and greater opportunities for Ontario students. We are confident that in the year ahead our influence as a force for the value of publicly funded education and for the well-being of the children and youth of Ontario will grow in strength.



2012–2013 Highlights

THE WHOLE CHILD

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

Areas of Emphasis

Advocacy for collaboration in relation to children and youth mental health, students in risk and poverty reduction

Advocacy for a strong, accessible, responsive and equitable level of children's mental health services in Ontario, with emphasis on implementation of the Ministry's Comprehensive Plan

Advocacy for sustained funding to support mental health leaders and the ASSIST program in years 4 to 10 of the Comprehensive Provincial Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions

Focus on increasing student achievement for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students

Advocacy and focus on strong resources and a wide range of services for children with special needs, especially linked to early learning, with recognition of levels of needs in boards experiencing declining enrolment

Continued advocacy for effective multi-year implementation of the FDK program and before-and after-school programs – both school board and third party operated

Advocacy for creating positive school climates for learning and working to ensure inclusive and equitable environments for all students and staff

Advocacy for the continuation of resources for in-risk students

Achievements

The OPSBA-led Coalition on Children and Youth Mental Health held a successful second Summit in October 2012, attended by 700 delegates from multiple sectors. The Summit produced a report which provides advice to the government on implementing the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and emphasizes the importance of sustainability for children and youth beyond Year 3 of the Strategy.

OPSBA's Policy Development and Education Program Work Teams provided advice to the Ministry on the content of policy memoranda to support implementation of the new anti-bullying provisions in the Education Act.

OPSBA First Nation Trustees met with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Kathleen Wynne) in August 2012 to provide input on issues affecting successful transition of First Nation students to and within provincial schools.

OPSBA First Nation Trustees met with Ministry staff in January 2013 and provided input on future directions for implementation of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework.

OPSBA has made submissions to the Healthy Kids Panel and on The Modernization of Child Care in Ontario.

OPSBA has ensured regular communications and consultation with school boards and Ministry to support implementation of FDK. OPSBA is an active participant on the Ministry's Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Group.

OPSBA's Policy Development (PDWT) and Education Program Work Teams engaged in dialogue with senior Ministry staff on the Ontario Concussion Strategy and on Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools.

OPSBA took the lead in an OESC project that produced a comprehensive website (The TeachAble Project) on accessibility awareness for educators in support of the province's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities legislation.

Runnymede JSPS
TDSB Cross Country Meet,
Fall 2012



21st CENTURY EDUCATION

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

Areas of Emphasis

Advocate for a provincial vision regarding effective and equitable use of technology in schools incorporating new models of learning and assessment to maximize student engagement and support students with special needs

Advocate for a renewed focus on teacher training to better meet the emerging needs of today's schools

Advocate for technological programs and skilled trades as viable student options

Expand and sustain alternative programs that provide diverse pathways for students

Advocate for conditions that ensure that all students get the support they need to successfully complete a graduation diploma or equivalent

Promote review of traditional school structures and calendars to explore alternatives that support improved student achievement

Continued focus on environmental sustainability in curriculum and capital planning

Ongoing consultation with school boards and third party providers to support expansion of the FDK before and after school programming

Achievements

OPSBA released its paper *A Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age* on February 1, 2013.

It has been endorsed by CODE and by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association. It is now on the agenda of the Ministry's Student Achievement Division Working Table. OPSBA is promoting the Vision through workshops and an online survey.

OPSBA provided input into the draft "Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, K-12" with a focus on Parents and Communities as Partners in

FSL and their role in encouraging functional fluency in a 21st century context.

OPSBA's First Nation trustees' advocacy with the Ministry has continued its focus on review of Ontario curriculum, encouragement of integration of local history, and culturally appropriate assessments.

OPSBA has provided input on the future of Ontario's Education Strategy and on the PC White Paper on Education.

Stirling Senior Public School
Courtesy: Hastings & Prince Edward DSB



Crolancia Public School
Courtesy: Keewatin-Patricia DSB



2012–2013 Highlights

TRUSTEES – BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

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

Areas of Emphasis

Multi-year plan for comprehensive trustee capacity-building and professional development

Promotion of public awareness of the role of trustee

Continued professional learning for trustees as to scope and legal implications of trustee duties

Support for trustees in their role as political advocates

Increased visibility and scope to expand capacity of First Nation trustees

and increase general understanding of issues affecting First Nations

Advocate for improvements in communication from Ministry to trustees

Capacity-building in the area of community involvement including trustee role in PICs

Achievements

OPSBA's leadership in a comprehensive trustee professional development program in partnership with the Ministry of Education, CODE and other trustee associations has ensured facilitated and co-funded PD services for boards through 2012-2013.

Boards were offered a richly enhanced program customized to their needs and based on the Trustee Development modules, the Strategic Planning Guide and supplementary materials and resources. An OISE research report on the impact of this program indicated that school boards

rated Multi-year Strategic Planning as one of the most effective training opportunities. Professional development sessions have been offered for OPSBA regional meetings.

Work is nearing completion on additional modules including: Role of Chair and Vice-Chair; Code of Conduct; First Nation, Métis and Inuit education.

OPSBA has steadily increased its media and social media presence and provided trustee professional development at the OPSBA conferences on the use of social media.

LABOUR RELATIONS

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

Areas of Emphasis

A legislated, fair structure and process in place for effective provincial bargaining, involving school board associations, and local bargaining in the sector

Advising on implications of contracts that have been

legislatively imposed on related implementation issues

Collaboration with member boards to identify common issues where OPSBA can take leadership on behalf of boards in the provincial context

Achievements

OPSBA's Bargaining Advisory Committee, a representative group of Board expert staff, provided input on bargaining parameters that were approved by OPSBA's Board of Directors.

Throughout an aberrant bargaining year involving direct government talks between government and unions, OPSBA has consistently voiced the interests of students and school boards.

LABOUR RELATIONS CONTINUED

Areas of Emphasis CONTINUED

Continued development of the Provincial Portal

Stronger partnerships with unions and federations

Providing advice and support to boards during local bargaining



EDUCATION FUNDING

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

Areas of Emphasis

Continued review of the funding model to ensure that it supports the current needs of school boards

Resolution of pressing problems in funding such as transportation, special education, the reduction of the administrative grant and FDK

Continued advocacy for full funding by the Ministry of any new initiative

Advocacy to promote understanding and impact on boards of ongoing funding formula changes

Promote full collaboration among the four school board systems and enhancement of partnership among boards

Advocate for action to address federal-provincial discrepancy in funding for First Nation students

Achievements CONTINUED

OPSBA worked with school boards and Ministry staff to identify and recommend approaches to resolve implementation issues in the financial and human resources implications of Bill 115.

OPSBA successfully intervened in the Jan. 10, 2013, Ontario Labour Relations Board hearing with regard to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario planned Day of Protest.

OPSBA compiled, and shared with the Ministry, member board communications related to Bill 115 and Regulation 274 (Hiring Practices). At

both the 2013 Public Education and Labour Relations Symposia OPSBA engaged close to 300 trustees and senior staff from all member boards in identifying issues and approaches for future collective bargaining in the province; a report with recommendations for a future process was presented to the OPSBA Board of Directors in April 2013.

The enhanced and redesigned provincial portal is being used extensively and is highly rated by users.

Achievements

OPSBA staff were involved in funding formula working groups and consultations dealing with Board Administration and Governance and School Operations costs.

OPSBA staff were involved in a Student Transportation Task Force which examined competitive procurement of transportation services. OPSBA has monitored legal challenges stemming from the transportation RFP process, particularly as it affects smaller rural communities, and has kept the government apprised of implications.

OPSBA's submission on the 2013-14 GSN emphasized continued review of the funding model and recommended creating working groups to review capital funding including renewal funding and funding for student transportation.

The OPSBA GSN submission also called for: monitoring the cost impact of changes in imposed collective agreements in relation to actual costs experienced by school boards; incorporating Years 4 & 5 FDK funding in the GSN based on actual enrolment at

the approved sites; ensuring that special education funding, including FDK special education funding, meets the needs of school boards; support for boards to update technology infrastructure.

OPSBA staff had discussions with government officials to identify pressures in education funding and call for timely consultation to ensure impacts for member boards are fully understood.

OPSBA supported the submission of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials on the review of Provincial Policy Planning Statement regarding Land Use.

OPSBA has worked with CSBA on a submission to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada on proposed First Nation education legislation, calling for recognition of First Nation leadership in building an education framework and for equitable funding for First Nation students.

Education Funding

“As of May 2013, another \$12.2 million of savings was achieved for member school boards. Rate decisions for 10 electricity distributors generated savings of \$4.0 million. Ontario Power Generation’s settlement produced \$5.6 million, and the conclusion of the Enbridge case brought an additional \$2.6 million. The SEC cumulative savings total since 2004 is now more than \$122 million.”

April 2013 Report to OPSBA Board

Finance Issues

OPSBA has been strongly proactive in addressing the education funding issues identified by Member Boards in successive dialogues with the Minister of Education and Ministry staff.

Early in 2013 OPSBA submitted briefs during both Ontario’s pre-budget consultations and in the process leading to development of the 2013-14 Grants for Student Needs (GSN). While recognizing the difficult challenges facing the government, OPSBA advocated for commitment to funding for collective agreement obligations, FDK, Special Education, First Nations, Métis and Inuit education and Children’s Mental Health. OPSBA renewed its recommendation for ongoing review of the funding model as a whole.

Funding constraints reflected announcements in the budget related to retirement gratuities, continued reductions in funding for instructional computers and capping secondary school credits at a total of 34.

Finance Database & Website (EdFinet)

A continuing focus in OPSBA’s advocacy work is increasing public awareness on education finance issues. OPSBA’s Education Finance Network – EdFinet – is a valuable resource in

supporting the Association’s lobbying strategies in this area. These resources provide a solid foundation for the Association’s positions and messages. EdFinet ensures that we have accurate, factual and current information that positions us to speak with authority on emerging funding issues. Our finance consultants respond to user needs through ongoing database enhancements and provide timely analysis of government finance announcements.

The site provides school board financial information from 1993 to 2012/13. Updates are added as they become available from the Ministry of Education. OPSBA staff continue to negotiate with the Ministry to allow access to its new financial database, enabling individual school boards to review provincial financial data on all school boards and to benchmark and compare their data for all aspects of their operation.

Energy Initiatives

Through the Ontario Education Services Corporation, OPSBA continues to be very involved in energy interventions at the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) on behalf of Member Boards. The cost of intervention is largely borne through cost awards by the OEB; approximately 10% of this is supplemented by contributions from all school boards in the province; OPSBA is supported by



Jay Shepherd Professional Corporation. Our collaboration involves the other three school board associations, the Council of Directors of Education, the Council of Senior Business Officials and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials. Our continued involvement in energy intervention will seek to:

- protect the interests of school boards with respect to energy costs
- work with other interveners where we have common interests
- address specific issues such as energy conservation, and make these accessible to boards as needed

Interventions on natural gas rates and electricity rates have created significant savings for all school boards.

Total 2013-14 GSN remains at \$21B

The Ministry has agreed to provide boards with additional funding in 2012–13 to address specific pressures identified in the labour framework discussions. Funding for the following will be allocated:

- A one-time payout, based on a formula set out in regulation, for non-vested sick days that do not qualify as retirement gratuities;
- Introduction of an upper limit – 10 years – for the number of years that must be worked to qualify for the payout of retirement gratuities; and
- Funding for a one-year rolling sick bank that can be used to top up salary from 90 to 100%.

In 2013–14, the teacher, principal, and vice-principal salary benchmarks have been reduced by 1.5% to recognize the three unpaid PA days.

The funding related to other staff who bargain collectively will not be adjusted.

In 2013–14, the Ministry will continue to implement a reduction in the benefits funding benchmarks as part of the phase out of retirement gratuities.

The Teacher Qualifications and Experience Allocation in the GSN will continue to recognize grid movement based on the 97th day provisions.

Consistent with the current labour framework, supply teacher benchmarks for 2013-14 have been increased to support changes to the sick leave plan.

Other Changes

A four-year secondary school strategy, including administrative and funding changes related to the 34-credit threshold, is being implemented starting in the 2013–14 school year.

The Student Transportation Grant will be increased by 2% in 2013–14 to recognize higher operating costs. The student transportation routing efficiency reduction of 1% has been suspended.

To assist school boards with the employers' share of OMERS contributions in the final year of the increase, the Ministry will allocate an additional \$9 million in funding.

The Ministry will provide a 2% cost benchmark update to the non-staff portion of the School Operations Allocation benchmark in 2013–14, to assist boards in managing the increases in commodity prices. The electricity component of the School Operations Allocation benchmark will increase by 7.9%.

2013–14 will be the fourth and final year of the phase-in of data from the 2006 Census.

School boards will also receive:

- \$150 million for School Condition Improvement to address school renewal needs. These funds must be used for expenditures that meet the requirement to be capitalized.
- \$40 million for temporary accommodations to be used for portable moves, leases, and purchases, as well as lease costs for permanent instruction space. First-time Equipping and Minor Renovations Funding in 2013–14 to support Year 5 of the FDK implementation.

Labour Relations Services

The 2012-2013 school year was marked by an unusual collective bargaining process, which notably included direct talks between the government and unions and the imposition of contracts through legislation.

Collective agreements in the education sector were up for renewal in August 2012, and OPSBA's Labour Relations Services (LRS) worked closely with boards to prepare for collective bargaining throughout the school year.

Provincial Bargaining

Over the past three years LRS has consulted extensively with the Public Labour Relations Network (PLRN), board staff responsible for labour relations, OPSBA's Executive Council and Board of Directors, and the Bargaining Advisory Group (BAG). This latter group comprises staff in boards that represent Directors of Education as well as Labour Relations and Business Officials, and OPSBA staff. Based on bargaining parameters approved by the Board of Directors, OPSBA staff have sought to represent the interests of students and school boards in discussion with the government.

Following the introduction of Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act*, in September 2012, which was based on deals reached outside the English public school sector, OPSBA made a submission to the Standing Committee of the Legislature, objecting to the abrogation of rights represented by the Bill and to provisions directly affecting students, such as hiring practices (Regulation 274) and diagnostic assessments (PPM 155).

With the enactment of Bill 115, OPSBA worked with school boards and Ministry staff to identify and recommend approaches to resolve financial and human resources implications as

implementation of the legislation was undertaken.

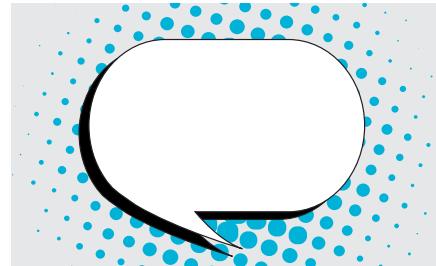
In January, OPSBA successfully intervened in the Ontario Labour Relations Board hearing with regard to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario planned Day of Protest.

New leadership in the minority Liberal government gave OPSBA the opportunity to reach out directly to the new Premier and Minister of Education to represent the interests of school boards and students.

At the 2013 Public Education Symposium, OPSBA engaged trustees and senior staff from all member boards in identifying issues and desired approaches for future collective bargaining in the province. A report including a backgrounder outlining recent collective bargaining in the sector, the consultation results and a set of Draft Principles was presented to the Board of Directors in April. OPSBA also reached out directly to trustees and school board staff following the Board of Directors meeting to receive direct feedback on the Draft Principles. At the time of writing, it is expected that OPSBA's recommended principles for collective bargaining will be shared with the government following the June 2013 AGM.

Building Knowledge and Expertise of School Board Trustees and Staff

Throughout 2012-13 the regular PLRN meetings have been focussed on the current collective bargaining process.



Collectively, provincial issues were identified, and positions developed to support them.

The annual Labour Relations Symposium took place in March 2013 at a time when the new Liberal minority leadership had begun renegotiating with the elementary and secondary teachers' federations. The agenda was structured to address the pressing issues in the sector and attracted a large number of participants from all four school systems.

Ongoing support continues to be provided through LRS for the implementation of the current collective agreements.

Provincial Activities

OPSBA plays an active role in regular consultations with the Minister of Education and senior Ministry staff. Discussions focus on matters related to all aspects of labour relations. This forum includes representatives of all four school systems and OPSBA takes a proactive role in representing the interests of Member Boards.

Provincial Portal

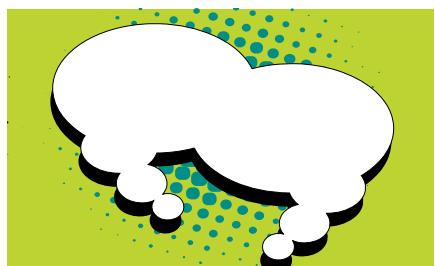
Labour Relations Services offers a recently redesigned web-based Provincial Portal to assist board staff with labour relations issues. A database of grievance/arbitrations is being developed and will be made available through an enhanced portal. The enhanced portal is being used extensively and is highly rated by users.

The OPSBA-managed Portal is offered through the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC), with the active involvement of all Public, Catholic, and French Language Boards.

National and International Partnerships

LRS belongs to the North American Association of Educational Negotiators (NAEN). This organization is an excellent source of pertinent labour relations information and advice.

In addition LRS is an active participant in the Canadian Education Negotiators (CEN) group, which provides advice and support to its Canadian members. As there are striking similarities in the issues that are important to individual provinces across the country, this is a very valuable network of labour relations specialists.



Ontario Education Services Corporation

OESC, a partnership of Ontario's four School Board Associations and the Council of Directors of Education (CODE), is now in its twelfth year of operation. This not-for-profit corporation provides a wide range of cost-effective services to all member boards. The Corporation's emphasis on providing low-cost, high quality services that demonstrably add value and save money for all Boards inspires expansion of services to meet significant needs for all Ontario school boards.

As the official intervener representing all boards at the Ontario Energy Board,

OESC, through the School Energy Coalition, works to protect the interests of all school boards in reducing and stabilizing energy costs. The March 2013 Status Report indicated that Boards in the province have saved at least \$122 million (more than \$60 per student) over the past eight years as a result of this work. All Boards pay a nominal fee (approximately 10 cents per student per year) which partially finances this service.

The provision of Police Record Checks is an important confidential service offered by OESC to Boards. The service was expanded this year, which will result in savings of significant costs in administrative time in all Boards and remove risk and liability from Boards. The consistent and reasonably priced service is available for all new staff, service providers, volunteers and students in faculty/college programs.

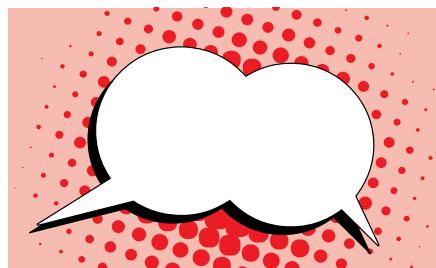
The OESC Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) project was completed successfully in January 2013. This collaborative effort of OPSBA and OESC staff, with support from a province-wide advisory committee and school board staff writing teams, resulted in the production of professional development resources, videos and model lesson plans for use by educators across Ontario. All resources are available at www.theteachableproject.org.

An ongoing OESC program, Behavioural Management Systems (BMS), was implemented in a majority of Ontario Boards, with very positive feedback. This much-needed non-violent crisis prevention and intervention training program has resulted in more than 400 certified Board trainees. The services provided are consistent with the requirements of Bills 157 and 168. The BMS service is substantially less expensive than other similar programs and is the only one tailored specifically to the needs of school boards.

OESC, the four School Board Associations and CODE have partnered with the Ministry of Education in The Centre for Governance Excellence. The 14 modules have been well-received by all four school systems. More than half of the 72 Boards have engaged with one of OESC's 13 Trainer/Facilitators who have offered boards professional development based on the modules and customized to their local needs. Funding remains available for Boards that have not previously contracted with OESC/OPSBA for this service. Professional Learning modules are online at www.ontarioschooltrustees.org. Additional modules are in development and will be available in 2013.

The Equity and Inclusive Education Initiative has been expanded recently with the addition of two new projects initiated by the Ministry of Education. The first project will result in the creation of a resource website on the OESC portal. The second project aims to develop a common framework for implementing Equity and Inclusive Education as it applies to LGBTQ students.

Ownership of the Compass on Success service was transferred from the NOEL/York Region DSB Collaboration to OESC in January 2013. The service provides a data warehouse and sophisticated analytical tools that Boards, principals and teachers can use to gather data on student achievement and well-being over time. Compass on Success is a very cost-effective option and is currently used by 40 Ontario school boards.



Lobbying

OPSBA has a proud track record in effective lobbying. The Association is a respected voice in the province on every issue that affects the education agenda and has been fully engaged this year in creating and influencing positive change.

Effective lobbying entails sharp analysis of the emerging issues and trends in our sector, confidence that we are representing the thoughtful consensus of our Member Boards, choosing strategic opportunities for presenting our positions in ways that engage audiences, and, where appropriate, draw media attention.

OPSBA's political leadership and staff are active participants in consultations that cover a broad range of topics and involve the Ministry of Education and other Ministries. OPSBA senior staff are contributing members on a number of Ministry technical advisory groups including:

- Ministry of Education Partnership Table
- Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education
- Early Learning and Childcare Advisory Group
- GSN Funding Formula Consultation on Special Education
- Student Achievement Division Working Table
- EQAO Assessment Advisory Committee
- French as a Second Language (FSL) Working Group
- Healthy Foods Working Table
- Curriculum Advisory Committee
- Trillium List Advisory Committee
- Support Worker Advisory Group
- Teacher Advisory Group
- Labour Relations Advisory Groups

Events of the 2012-13 school year have required us to direct much of our lobbying and advocacy work towards labour relations and education funding.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario resumed on August 27 to introduce Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act, 2012*. On September 5, OPSBA presented to the Standing Committee on Social Policy regarding the bill, objecting to the abrogation of rights the Bill represented and to provisions directly affecting the best interests of students. With the passage of the Bill, OPSBA focussed on issues for boards in implementing the legislation.

In October 2012, Premier McGuinty stepped down as the leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario and the Legislature was prorogued. A Liberal Leadership convention took place at the end of January 2013. OPSBA developed communications to gather the positions of the leadership candidates on OPSBA's key priorities. Kathleen Wynne was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Premier-Designate Wynne attended OPSBA's Public Education Symposium on Feb. 1, 2013, her first public speaking engagement in her new role. The event was widely covered in the media. New Minister of Education, and former OPSBA President, Liz Sandals attended OPSBA's February Board of Directors meeting to discuss the Association's priorities.

The Association's Whole Child priority includes an ongoing focus on engaging with the government on implementation

of comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health continues to deepen its influence and held a successful Summit in October 2012, attended by 700 delegates from multiple sectors. A key outcome is a document that will provide advice from the field to the Ministers responsible for implementing the province's comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The third Summit will take place on April 3 and 4, 2014.

OPSBA believes that teachers and support staff deeply influence a positive and productive environment for students and are supported in this role through the peace and stability engendered by successfully negotiated collective agreements. Throughout the challenges of the past year, marked by direct government talks with unions and the imposition of contracts through legislation, OPSBA chose to bargain for students and focused on elements in collective agreements that pose obstacles to student success. OPSBA developed a draft process for 2014 collective bargaining through consultations involving trustees, board staff, and OPSBA's Executive Council and Board of Directors.

OPSBA's First Nation trustees provide a strong voice in advocacy for equitable funding for First Nation students. OPSBA's First Nation Trustees Council met with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in August 2012 to provide input on issues affecting successful transition of First Nation students to and within provincial schools.



The Council also met with Ministry staff in January 2013 to provide input on implementation of Ontario's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework and followed up with a written submission.

OPSBA continues to advocate, through working groups and direct discussions with the Ministry, for a full review of the funding model to address gaps in funding and the need for prior consultation as GSNs are structured and implemented. OPSBA has been an active and successful voice of advocacy on the implications of government-identified cost-saving measures: the Under-utilized School Strategy, Four-Year High School Program and school board amalgamations. While the government moved ahead on a 34 credits cap strategy, amalgamation has been set aside and no action has been taken on the under-utilized school strategy.

OPSBA took the lead in an OESC project to provide a comprehensive website on accessibility awareness for educators to support implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

The Teachable Project, launched in January 2013 at theteachableproject.org, ensures boards have rich resources to offer educator training. To date there have been close to 14,000 individual users of the site.

In areas such as copyright, student well-being, and First Nations education, the Canadian School Boards Association gives its members a national voice and opportunities for influence beyond the provincial level. OPSBA has been involved with the newly created national organization C21 Canada: Canadians for 21st Century Learning and Innovation and participated in its February 2013 Summit.

Our strategic collaboration with many other education partners strengthens the impact of our influence on key education issues. We are pleased to acknowledge our fellow trustee associations, the Council of Directors of Education, the Ontario Principals' Council, the Council of School Business Officials, the Ontario Association of School Business Officials, Ontario

Student Trustees' Association, Teachers' Federations, the Ontario College of Teachers, EQAO, People for Education, other parent organizations and other supportive groups. OPSBA also acknowledges its many partners in the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health. Our partnership in OESC and with Curriculum Services Canada produces results and products that continue to benefit school boards in their vital work.

OPSBA maintains its advocacy on issues affecting the governance role of the trustee and seeks support and recognition for the leadership role of trustees at the local school board level. This will be a significant area for action as we head into municipal elections in October 2014.

The past year has demonstrated that our strong capacity for effective lobbying positions us to work successfully for children and for public education through challenging times. We will continue to invest our energies in building on this track record in the coming year.

Program and Student Achievement

OPSBA's priorities frame the Association's active role in provincial dialogues promoting student success and well-being.

Special Education

OPSBA has maintained its priority of advocating for a special education funding model that reflects the distribution of students with high needs and provides funding to support actual program and service delivery costs. Last year's Ministry review has not yet resulted in anticipated changes. Despite the challenges of the current economic climate the total funding for Special Education has remained at \$2.5 billion for the 2013-2014 year. Work is underway to review definitions of exceptionalities with a focus on flexibility and support for students as they move through their school career.

Student Achievement Division Working Table

OPSBA is an active member of the Student Achievement Division Working Table. In the past year, OPSBA has had the opportunity to provide input as the group has focussed on strategies to support students taking Applied courses with a view to addressing specific issues and barriers to their rates of achievement. The Working Table also examined evidence-based protocols and targeted programs that can be scaled up to address the challenges in educational attainment experienced by children and youth in care.

The EQAO Advisory Committee

OPSBA actively contributes to the work of this Committee. EQAO results continue to be strong in literacy but there has been a levelling, and in

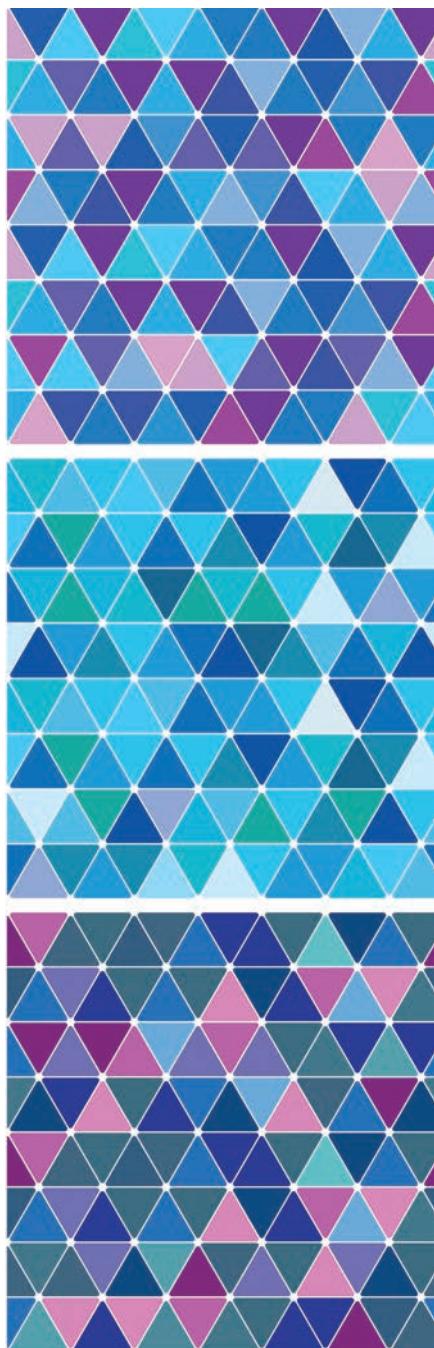
some cases, a decrease in mathematics achievement. OPSBA provided input on effective programs in use in school boards and on the need for dedicated professional development and pre-service education for teachers. Input was also provided on the document *Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Child's Results*, on a more user-friendly format for the EQAO website and on the need to have student input on the Advisory Committee. Most recently, the Committee has examined findings that highlight proportional reasoning as a fundamental skill that predicts how well students do in math assessments.

FSL Working Group

OPSBA has actively monitored the development of the recently launched Ministry resource *FSL For all: A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario*. The Association provided input with a particular focus on how parents and communities can support success for students in their acquisition of functional literacy in French. The FSL Framework calls for boards to develop plans with measurable goals for increasing participation in FSL in schools.

Canadian Education Association Research

The final reports in the research series on student engagement and its impact on successful academic outcomes have been published and are available on the Canadian Education Association's website: ow.ly/kC3P9



OPSBA Work Teams: Policy Development

These Work Teams focus on OPSBA's identified priorities and take on tasks that are aimed at action on the Association's priorities.

Policy Development Work Team

The members of the Policy Development Work Team concentrated their efforts for the year on legislative initiatives pertaining to education as well as policies that affect trustees directly. Topics aligned with ongoing work on OPSBA priorities for The Whole Child, particularly with regard to the FDK/Child Care Program, Building Leadership Capacity for Trustees and Education Finance.

Legislative Analysis:

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario resumed early on August 27 for the introduction of Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act, 2012*. This bill moved quickly and received Royal Assent on September 11. On October 15, Premier McGuinty decided to prorogue government and step down as the leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario. This meant that all bills that did not go through the full legislative process (i.e. receive Royal Assent) were dismissed and would have to be re-introduced in the next session. Bills that OPSBA had been following included: Bill 39, *Education Amendment Act (Concussions)*, Bill 30* *Family Caregiver Leave Act, 2012* and Bill 102, *Education Amendment Act (Blocker Pads), 2012*.

* On March 5th, the Minister of Labour introduced Bill 21 Employment Standards Amendment Act (Leaves to Help Families). This new bill creates three new protected leaves and includes the former Bill 30 Family Caregiver Leave. As of May 2013, the bill is at second reading debate.

The Policy Development Work Team monitored and provided input on the following matters:

- Submission to legislative standing committee regarding Bill 115, *Putting Students First Act, 2012*
- Submission to the Ministry of Education consultation document Modernization of Child Care in Ontario
- Submission to The Healthy Kids Panel consultation regarding childhood obesity
- Response to PC Party of Ontario's Education White Paper
- Submission to the regulatory proposal regarding mandatory Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Training Programs
- Review of current Municipal Conflict of Interest legislation
- Review of 2010 Municipal Election and preparation for the 2014 Municipal Election
- Preliminary discussion regarding MPAC's proposed changes to Land Transfer Tax Affidavits/Statements
- Submission to the Ministry of Labour regarding an Integrated Occupational Health and Safety Strategy for Ontario

Education Finance Consultation and Input :

The Work Team provided input on the following matters that have financial implications for Member Boards:

- Follow up and feedback regarding the three cost savings measures identified in the 2012-13 Grants for Student Needs (GSN)

- OPSBA's 2013-2014 GSN brief
- Letter of support for the Ontario Association of School Business Officials' submission regarding Provincial Policy Statement Five Year Review

In addition, the PDWT had comprehensive discussions about the current use of Education Development Charge Funds.

The Policy Development Work Team continues to support member boards with regular feedback and communications regarding the final implementation years for FDK and its impacts on local child care. In March 2013, OPSBA initiated an internal survey regarding these matters.

In addition, OPSBA continues to follow several initiatives and activities including:

- Implementation details for Bill 13, *Accepting Schools Act*
- Financial impacts as a result of PPM 150 School Food and Beverage Policy
- Student Injury and Prevention Initiative Funding/Sale Welcome Program (elementary locked door policy)
- Student Transportation and RFP legal matters
- School Year Calendar regulation changes

Areas for Ongoing Consideration

The Work Team has identified the following issues that will be included in its deliberations in the year ahead: the financial impacts of the 34+ credit policy, 2014 Municipal Elections and the final years of FDK implementation.

OPSBA Work Teams: Education Program

Education Program Work Team

OPSBA's multi-year priorities related to The Whole Child and 21st Century Learning continued to be a focus for the work of the Education Program Work Team throughout 2012-2013.

The Whole Child: Children's Mental Health

The Work Team has continued to monitor the progress of the implementation of the government's Comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions, providing input on the phasing in of mental health resources for boards and on the importance of community partnerships. Work Team members have been active in promoting and assisting in the success of the second Children and Youth Mental Health Summit in October 2012. Input from table discussions at the Summit has been compiled and provided to the government as advice in ongoing implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy.

The Whole Child: Special Education

At the request of the school board sector representative, the Work Team provided input to the Minister's Advisory Council for Special Education regarding the issue of competing rights posed by Bill 168, *Violence in the Workplace*, in terms of student's rights to uninterrupted education and staff rights to a safe workplace. The Work Team emphasized the need for supports for schools including alternatives to suspension.

The Whole Child: Healthy Kids Panel

The Education Program and Policy Development Work Teams collaborated on a response to the report of the Healthy Kids panel advocating for a specific school board sector voice in future work on the Panel's recommendations.

The Whole Child: Anti-Bullying Legislation

The Work Team provided advice to the Ministry on the content of policy memoranda intended to support implementation of anti-bullying provisions incorporated in the Education Act through Bill 13.

The Whole Child: Health and Physical Education

The Work Team has continued to advocate for release of the Human Development section of the Physical and Health Education curriculum for Grades 1-8 and for the release of the full Physical and Health Education curriculum for Grades 9-12. The issue has been raised in all relevant communications and meetings with the Ministry.

The Whole Child: First Nation, Métis and Inuit education

The Work Team supported OPSBA's First Nation Trustees Council input into the Ministry's draft report on implementation of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education and reinforced issues such as strategies to promote voluntary confidential self-identification and the importance of including local First Nation culture, language and history in the curriculum.

21st Century Learning: First Nation, Métis and Inuit education

The Work Team supported the work OPSBA undertook on behalf of CSBA in making a submission to the federal government on their proposed process for First Nation education legislation, noting that it does not reflect a respectful role for Canada's First Nations.

21st Century Learning: Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age

The Work Team provided impetus for the development of a provincial vision for teaching and learning in a Digital Age. The Vision document was launched in January 2013 and the Work Team provided advice on promoting it widely. Input has been sought through a survey and the Ministry's Student Achievement Division has included the OPSBA Vision in its Working Table agenda.

21st Century Learning: Response to Dr. Fullan's Paper on Ontario's Education Strategy

The Work Team analyzed Dr. Michael Fullan's paper *From Great to Excellent* and identified a number of issues for education that align with OPSBA's *Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age* as well as issues that were omitted from the Fullan document. This analysis was provided to the Ministry.

21st Century Learning: French as a Second Language

The Work Team provided input for the draft Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario. The focus was on how parents and communities can support FSL, encourage functional literacy in the language and support students to continue in French throughout their education.

21st Century Learning: Response to PC White Paper on Education

Both Education Program and Policy Development Work Teams collaborated on a response to the PC White Paper *Paths to Prosperity*. Input from Education Program identified recommendations that were impractical for students and school boards and supported approaches that had a focus on flexibility.

Members of the Work Teams

Policy Development Work Team

Wanda McQueen	Algoma DSB	NORTH-EAST
George Saarinen*	Lakehead DSB	NORTH-WEST
John McAllister	Upper Canada DSB	EASTERN
Elaine Crawford	Limestone DSB	EASTERN
Cheryl Lovell	Greater Essex County DSB	WESTERN
Jenny Versteeg	Avon Maitland DSB	WESTERN
Donna Edwards	Durham DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Shelley Laskin**	Toronto DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Alex Johnstone	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Don Vrooman	Halton DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Howard Archibald	DSB Ontario NE	FIRST NATIONS

Education Program Work Team

Julia Burgess	Greater Essex County DSB	WESTERN
Caroll Carkner	Upper Canada DSB	EASTERN
Marty Fairbairn	Upper Grand DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Ann Goodfellow	Limestone DSB	EASTERN
Tom Henderson	DSB Ontario NE	NORTHERN (E)
Jan Johnstone*	Bluewater DSB	WESTERN
Angela Lloyd	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Michele Locke	Simcoe County DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Marion Macdonald	Grand Erie DSB	FIRST NATIONS
Cecile Marcino	Keewatin-Patricia DSB	NORTHERN(W)
Kathi Smith**	Waterloo Region DSB	CENTRAL WEST

*Vice-Chair ** Chair



Executive Council Liason

Mark Bailey	Upper Grand DSB	OPSBA 2ND VP
ALTERNATES		
Jennifer Sarlo	Algoma DSB	NORTH-EAST
Margaret Arnone	Lakehead DSB	NORTH-WEST
Mary Hall	Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	EASTERN
Connie Howe-Buckler	Greater Essex County DSB	WESTERN
Nancy Elgie	York Region DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Cheryl Keddy-Scott	DSB Niagara	CENTRAL WEST
Michael Brant	Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	FIRST NATIONS

Executive Council Liason

Lori Lukinuk	Lakehead DSB	OPSBA 1ST VP
ALTERNATES		
Anika Altiman	Lambton Kent DSB	FIRST NATIONS
Judith Bishop	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Thelma Goodfellow	Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	EASTERN
Tracy Grant	Thames Valley DSB	WESTERN
Pat Johansen	Lakehead DSB	NORTHERN (W)
Rosemary Pochopsky	DSB Ontario NE	NORTHERN (E)
Karen Round	Trillium Lakelands DSB	CENTRAL EAST (W)

Communications and Media Relations

OPSBA's communications and media relations strategies are designed to increase public confidence in the effectiveness of our public school system. OPSBA continues to stand out as a credible and primary voice of public education in Ontario

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

The 2012-2013 year was an intensely active and particularly productive year for OPSBA in achieving sustained media coverage on a variety of issues. OPSBA president Michael Barrett was a "go to" commentator in the education sector throughout the year, speaking frequently on labour negotiations, delivery of extracurricular activities, and FDK.

OPSBA successfully fosters productive relations with education reporters and major media. OPSBA made significant headway in the field of children and youth mental health, meeting with the Toronto Star's editorial board in April to discuss the successes of the coalition and review safe reporting guidelines on youth suicide.

Our ongoing commitment to keeping the membership of OPSBA informed on critical issues meant frequent development of up-to-date analyses of breaking news and reports. A new OPSBA "Media Reports" service was launched this year to cover high profile education issues and respond to a pressing need to issue breaking labour negotiations news to trustees and Board staff on a daily basis. The service will be extended for the foreseeable future following positive feedback.

Media releases, templates and other communication vehicles were regularly distributed to all trustees, directors of education, senior human resources and

finance officials, and communication officers. Some of the communication resources initiated by the Association include:

UNREALISTIC DEADLINES ARE NOT GOOD FOR LABOUR PEACE

"After five months of negotiations, the government has reached two deals without the agreement of the employers. The government is now asking school boards to reach 400 collective agreements inside of four weeks."

OPSBA media release, August 15, 2012

"L" IS FOR LOCAL

"...the current conflict between teachers and the provincial government has reached this stage precisely because the expertise and local perspective of school boards, which set the tone and foster a positive climate in our schools, were disregarded."

**Letter to the editor of
The Globe and Mail, December 08, 2012
from Michael Barrett**

LET'S PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER

"Mental health is the number one issue today in our schools and in our communities. Families, schools and organizations that serve children and youth know they must work and act together to change the world as it is experienced by young people struggling with mental health."

OPSBA media release, October 17, 2012

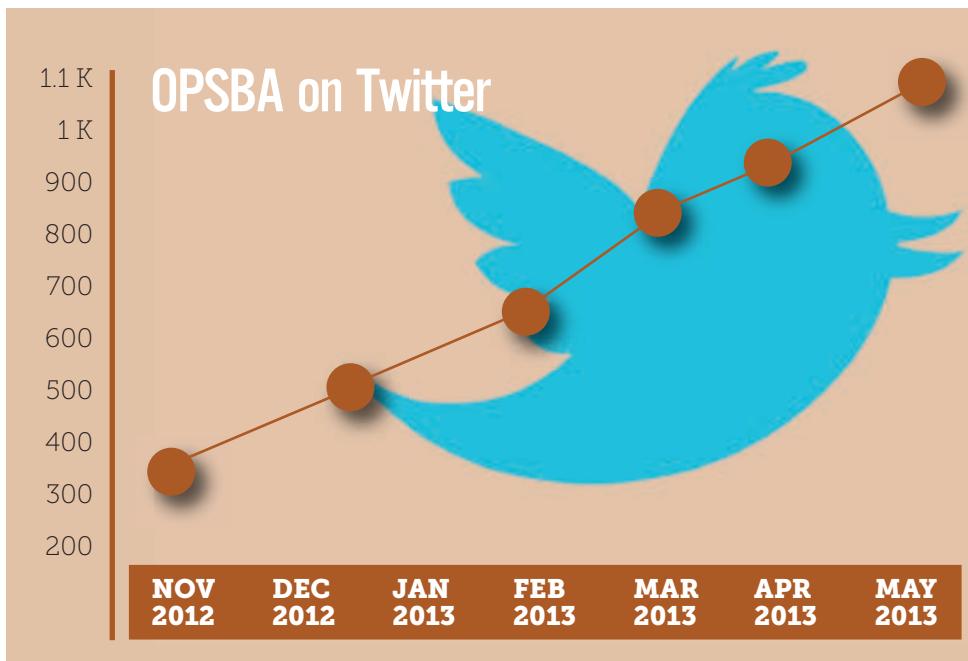
EDUCATION TODAY

An extensive range of feature stories in OPSBA's flagship magazine *Education Today* included: David Bouchard encouraging youth to become readers; helping to fight homophobia through Gay-Straight Alliance clubs; mental health issues move to the front of the class; Aboriginal Alternative Education program; and Right to Play.

The Communications Networking group, which brings together school board communications officers, continues to be a valuable gathering for developing and sharing approaches to positive communications with the public around student achievement and well-being. This network also includes communications staff from other education partner organizations such as the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ontario Principals' Council. OPSBA works proactively with the Ministry of Education and other branches of the provincial government, seeking to cooperate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest. This approach has strengthened relations between the government and school boards and has contributed to gains in advancing our shared commitment to improved student achievement and local democracy.

OPSBA on Twitter

OPSBA registered its Twitter account, @OPSBA_Official, in September 2011, but the social medium was not used frequently until October 2012, when a social media strategy was crafted to promote the 2012 Children and Youth Mental Health Summit. Following the Summit, OPSBA staff drafted a comprehensive organizational social media strategy and usage guidelines to guide the future application of Twitter and other new communications tools. Twitter has been an important tool for the organization throughout the provincial bargaining process, OPSBA has been able to communicate directly with key online audiences as part of continued efforts to be accountable and transparent to member boards.



Twitter was used extensively during the Public Education and Labour Relations Symposiums.

Attendees at PES were asked to actively tweet using a hashtag - #PESym13. A review of the use of #PESym13 conducted following PES revealed nearly 150 uses, primarily from a group of trustees, media and communications officers. Commentary was overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees live-tweeting keynote speeches, workshop sessions and regional meetings.

OPSBA's Twitter follower base grew quickly throughout the school year, reaching 1,100 followers in May 2013, a seven-fold increase since the start of September 2012. In addition, the account garnered close to 1,400 retweets, more than 700 mentions and more than 1.8 million potential impressions from November 2012 to May 2013. Followers include a wide variety of education partners – Member Boards, trustees, members of the media, school administration, union leaders, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

OPSBA in the Media: Voice of Public Education

OPSBA is the first and most consistent point of contact for reporters and columnists when they are looking for a provincial perspective on education issues. This past year, there were hundreds of major stories featuring OPSBA commentary and quotes from OPSBA's President Michael Barrett.

School boards group tries to clarify the role of teachers

As reported by Patty Winsa,
Toronto Star SEPTEMBER 24

"Boards faced with job action are certainly trying to understand and seek clarity on what is voluntary and what is required," said Michael Barrett, the newly elected head of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, which represents 31 boards. "It's not clearly defined within the Education Act what is voluntary and what is required."

Bill 115 a 'dangerous precedent' for public sector, union says

As reported by Kate Hammer,
Globe & Mail OCTOBER 10

Union leaders threatened to challenge the legislation back in August, before it had passed. School boards are also unhappy with its terms, and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) will be seeking intervenor status in the court case. "Our bargaining rights as an employer have been taken away as well," said Michael Barrett, president of OPSBA. "They've circumvented both of us."

Ontario school boards group wants to join talks with government, teachers' union

As reported by Louise Brown,
Toronto Star NOVEMBER 7

"It's a very positive sign that the ministry is having discussions with the teachers — it may be a crack in the armour — but we want to make it very clear that as the employers, we have to be at the table or it won't be conducive to a solution," association president Michael Barrett said Wednesday night.

High schools next to lose after-school activities

As reported by Moira MacDonald,
Toronto Sun NOVEMBER 6

If, "it is determined that the necessary conditions for student safety cannot be maintained, our boards will face the possibility that it is not reasonable for students to continue to come to school," wrote OPSBA president Michael Barrett in an emailed statement.

Ontario improving diversity of teaching staff tough under new provincial rule, boards say

As reported by Kristin Rushowy,
Toronto Star FEBRUARY 20

"The desire for school boards to be able to ensure teaching staff reflect their respective communities can be trumped by Regulation 274," said Michael Barrett, who is also an Oshawa trustee for the Durham District School Board. "Seniority trumps the best teacher for the job, and also if that teacher reflects the community," he added.

Ontario reaches agreement in principle with teachers

As reported by Caroline Alphonso,
Globe & Mail MARCH 31

Michael Barrett, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, said all the labour unrest and uncertainty for parents and students could have been avoided this school year if both sides had a proper dialogue from the outset. "I look forward to a permanent process by which we can negotiate with trust and transparency," Mr. Barrett said.

2013 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.

Award of Merit and Awards of Recognition in Memory of Jack A. MacDonald

The winner of these student awards is selected on the basis of a sound academic record throughout their career, accompanied by outstanding community service and leadership. This year's Award of Merit is presented to Brian Grant, St. Clair Secondary School, Lambton Kent DSB.

Bernardine Yackman Memorial Award

This is an award given to an active or retired Trustee of a Member Board of the Association for dedication, commitment and an outstanding contribution to education with special recognition for Northern Ontario service. This year's recipients are: William (Bill) Hall, retired trustee, Algoma DSB and Trudy Tuchenhagen, former trustee, Lakehead DSB.

OPSBA Award of Excellence and Achievement Award

The OPSBA Award of Excellence is 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, extracurricular and/or volunteer activity. This year's Award of Excellence was presented to Catherine Soplet, Parent Volunteer & Champion, Peel DSB. OPSBA's Achievement Awards were

presented to Laura Sylvestre, Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Lakehead DSB; and Carlos Santander Maturana, Educational Assistant, Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Lakehead DSB.

The President's Award

This award recognizes trustees who have given 25 years of service to public education. This year's recipients are:

Lora Campbell, DSB of Niagara

Randy Sheppard, Near North DSB

Rosemary Pochopsky, DSB Ontario North East



Dr. Harry Paikin Memorial Award

This award is given to an active or retired public school trustee for outstanding service as a trustee. This year's winner of the Dr. Harry Paikin Memorial Award was Peter Adams-Luchowski, Trustee, York Region 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 may consist of constructive participation in education affairs over a number of years or for work on some recent and specific project which has had provincial impact. The winner this year was Leigh Cassell, Founder of the Digital Human Library, Avon Maitland DSB.

Professional Development

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

OPSBA's professional development services support trustees in their role of keeping Ontario's education system in the first tier of regions with consistently excellent results in student achievement and in inspiring public confidence in public schools that offer equitable, positive and safe learning environments.

Trustee Professional Development – Building Leadership Capacity

OPSBA believes that trustees make a significant and direct contribution to the achievement of all students through their leadership in setting priorities, shaping policy and directing the resources of the local school board to build a culture of continuous improvement. One of OPSBA's leading priorities is trustee professional development that enhances skills, builds capacity and provides the kind of information and analysis that supports informed decision-making. This is accomplished through single-day events, symposia and conferences, regional meetings and other learning and networking opportunities.

Our multi-year priority on building trustee leadership capacity began with the development of the resource *Good Governance: A Guide for Trustees, School Boards, Directors of Education and Communities*. This is both an orientation for new trustees and a refresher for experienced trustees. It incorporates the most up-to-date legislative changes affecting the education environment.

The next phase saw the development of 14 professional learning modules for trustees and school boards. These modules reflect the needs articulated by Ontario trustees for greater clarity on their roles as governors of school boards and have been inspired by the thoughtfulness and commitment that trustees bring to their governance work. The modules are:

- Authentic Governance Through Ethical Leadership
- Raising the Bar: Governance and Student Achievement
- Roles and Responsibilities (board, director, chair and individual trustees)
- Relationships
- Performance Review (director of education and board)
- Multi-year Strategic Planning
- School Board's Role as Policymaker
- Conflict Management
- Family and Community Engagement
- Advocacy Role
- Conflict of Interest, quasi-judicial hearings – some legal aspects of governance
- Running Effective Meetings
- Finance
- Human Resources (school board as employer)

An engaging website, housing the Good Governance Guide and all professional learning modules, is available at www.ontarioschooltrustees.org and is



managed by the Centre for Governance Excellence. The website provides easy access, search, read and print functions in English and in French.

Additional modules have been under development and will be available online in the 2013 calendar year. These will address: the role of Chair and Vice-Chair; First Nation trustees and First Nation, Métis and Inuit education; and Trustee Code of Conduct. These three modules are built on interactive workshops and meetings involving trustees and reflect the experiences and challenges of trustees in their day-to-day roles.

Over the past year OPSBA has offered individual school boards a professional development program based on the modules and customized to their needs. This training has included a focus on Multi-Year Strategic Planning and has been led by facilitators with expertise in the modules. OPSBA has been successful in securing Ministry funding support to subsidize the cost of individual board sessions.

Conferences and Seminars

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



2012 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.

In 2012, the 24th AGM was hosted in Thunder Bay by OPSBA's Northern Region. This presented an opportunity for trustees to experience the uniqueness of the North and the programs that contribute to success in Northern schools, such as: a strengths-based approach to building an equitable and inclusive school culture; engaging students and families in supporting pro-social behavior and academic excellence; successful integration of First Nations culture, heritage and language; a student-leader approach to creating safe and caring school communities; and combating bullying through Restorative Practice.

Keynote speaker David Bouchard, an acclaimed author and a champion of literacy, presented on the power of reading and engaging children and young people through the popular books that appeal to them. David's books combine poetry, prose and visual arts, and explore topics such as the environment, history and the traditions and cultures of Canada's Aboriginal communities.

2013 Public Education Symposium (PES)

This premier professional development symposium, specifically designed for school boards, offered dynamic sessions on topics directly affecting the role of trustee and the broader environment within which school boards operate. The Pre-Symposium provided an opportunity for trustees, directors of education and senior human resources staff from school boards to have discussions that will help shape a positive future for collective bargaining in the province.

OPSBA was privileged to welcome the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, now Premier of Ontario, in her first public speaking engagement as the province's Premier-Designate. She spoke of the vital importance of governance at the school board level and the expertise school boards bring to supporting students and their families through local decision-making.

Keynote speakers Dr. Ivan Joseph, Phil Boyte, Jim Grieve and Dr. Mark Tremblay covered an inspiring and diverse range of topics that highlighted the many facets of student success and well-being.

Workshops and panels offered trustees opportunities to gain insights into how education is reported in the media, developing expertise in social media, building effective teams, increasing expertise in strategic planning and implementing effective strategies to embed First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories and teachings in the curriculum.

Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health

OPSBA has continued to be a leader in the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health, which held its second Summit in Toronto on Oct. 25 and 26, 2012, featuring keynote speaker Olympian Clara Hughes. Full-day training sessions were offered for educators and other practitioners in the field of children and youth mental health on topics such as mental health literacy, stigma, bullying and the impact of acquired brain injury on children and youth mental health and well-being. Throughout the Summit experts including Stuart Shankar, Kwame McKenzie, Christopher Lalonde, Tracy Vaillancourt, Bruce Ferguson and Ian Manion provided inspiring insights and research results that are helping to transform approaches to children's mental health. A highlight of the Summit was a discussion session in which the Summit's 700 participants – from education, health, community agencies, student and parent groups – developed advice for the Ontario government on its implementation of Ontario's Comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions. The third Summit will take place on April 3 and 4, 2014.



Summary

OPSBA has earned respect as the voice of public education and is positioned to advance the interests of Member Boards in the critical area of influencing public policy and education investment in the province.

On the provincial stage we work successfully to advance clear, cohesive and authoritative messages that get to the heart of the pressing issues and needs of school boards today. OPSBA will, with your support, continue to strengthen a remarkable school system where all students achieve and where children come first.

The active focus on priorities determined by Member Boards drives the work of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Our significant successes are described throughout this report. This important domain of the Association's work is managed alongside a range of day-to-day services designed to offer timely, knowledgeable and responsive support to Member Boards. The Association's range of high-quality services to Member Boards include:

- government relations and lobbying
- financial database which permits timely analysis
- education program and policy development
- labour relations research and collective bargaining co-ordination and sharing of information
- communications and media relations
- legal defence for public education
- legislative advice and monitoring, and policy development
- professional development and conferences
- regional services

In today's Ontario, the strong, unified voice that flows from membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association is critical to successful advocacy. Provincial governments are not structured to respond readily to the concerns of individual boards. Standing together in common purpose, we have the strength, expertise and broad spectrum of practical experience to take on the challenges that come with promoting the highest standards of student achievement. And together we can address ways to remove the barriers to achievement faced by many students. The daily work and commitment of OPSBA are grounded in a belief in the value of a strong public education system that is accessible to all students and is governed by democratically elected local school boards. This is what OPSBA stands for.

Ten Good Reasons Why School Boards Belong in OPSBA

Effective coordination of collective bargaining strategies

Access to energy savings, management of police records checks, and other education services through OPSBA's partnership with the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC)

Effective lobbying on issues that make a difference for students: education funding, full-day kindergarten, children and youth mental health, special education, 21st Century Learning

High quality professional development for school trustees

Media relations and information services support on all key issues

United and credible voice in advocacy and action in legislative and policy changes

Democratic environment and responsiveness to Member needs

Practical support for complying with legislative change: Safe Schools, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Strategic relations with education partners across Ontario and Canada

Respected source of consultation by the Provincial Government for all education initiatives

Board of Directors 2012-13

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York Region District School Board

Tony Armstrong
CENTRAL EAST
Trillium Lakelands District School Board

Chris Braney
CENTRAL EAST
Durham District School Board

Bonnie Bremner
TSA DIRECTOR
KidsAbility School Authority

Linda Busuttil
CENTRAL WEST
Upper Grand District School Board

Tyler Campbell
NORTHERN (EAST)
Rainbow District School Board

Jerry Chadwick
CENTRAL EAST
Toronto District School Board

Donna Edwards
CENTRAL EAST
Durham District School Board

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Laurie French
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Peter Garrow
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Upper Canada District School Board

Lynette Geddes
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Avon Maitland District School Board

Thelma Goodfellow
EASTERN
Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board

Tracy Grant
WESTERN
Thames Valley District School Board

David Green
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Peel District School Board

Graham Hart
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Gerald Kleist
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Dianne McCormack
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David McDonald
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Upper Canada District School Board

Bob McEachren
NORTHERN (EAST)
Algoma District School Board

Carmen McGregor
WESTERN
Lambton Kent District School Board

Elizabeth Moyer
CENTRAL EAST
Toronto District School Board

Mike Ramsay
CENTRAL WEST
Waterloo Region District School Board

George Saarinen
NORTHERN (WEST)
Lakehead District School Board

Shirley Seward
EASTERN
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Randy Sheppard
NORTHERN (EAST)
Near North District School Board

Don Vrooman
CENTRAL WEST
Halton District School Board

Don Werden
CENTRAL WEST
Grand Erie District School Board

Rick Williams
CENTRAL WEST
Peel District School Board

Michael Barrett
PRESIDENT
Durham District School Board

Lori Lukinuk
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Lakehead District School Board

Mark Bailey
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT
Upper Grand District School Board

Donna Danielli
VICE-PRESIDENT
CENTRAL WEST
Halton District School Board

Graham Lidstone
VICE-PRESIDENT,NORTHERN
Algoma District School Board

Dave Shields
VICE-PRESIDENT,EASTERN
Renfrew County District School Board

Louise Clodd
VICE-PRESIDENT
CENTRAL EAST
Trillium Lakelands District School Board

Peggy Sattler
VICE-PRESIDENT,WESTERN
Thames Valley District School Board

Howard Goodman
VICE-PRESIDENT
ENROLMENT
Toronto District School Board

Member Boards

CENTRAL EAST

Bloorview School Authority
Campbell Children's School Authority
Durham District School Board
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB
Penetanguishene Protestant Separate School Board
Simcoe County District School Board
Toronto District School Board
Trillium Lakelands District School Board
York Region District School Board

CENTRAL WEST

District School Board of Niagara
Grand Erie District School Board
Halton District School Board
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
KidsAbility School Authority
Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre School Authority
Peel District School Board
Upper Grand District School Board
Waterloo Region District School Board

EASTERN

Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board
Limestone District School Board
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Ottawa's Children Treatment Centre School Authority
Renfrew County District School Board
Upper Canada District School Board

WESTERN

Avon Maitland District School Board
Bluewater District School Board
Greater Essex County District School Board
John McGivney Children's Centre School Authority
Lambton Kent District School Board
Thames Valley District School Board

NORTHERN SUB REGION EAST

Algoma District School Board
District School Board Ontario North East

James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board

Moose Factory Island District School Area Board
Moosonee District School Area Board
Near North District School Board
Rainbow District School Board

NORTHERN SUB REGION WEST

Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

Lakehead District School Board

Rainy River District School Board

Superior-Greenstone District School Board

Gallery



Olympian Clara Hughes (second from left) with members of Right to Play at the 2012 Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health.



Premier-designate Kathleen Wynne speaks at the 2013 Public Education Symposium.



Students at Open Roads PS in Keewatin-Patricia DSB demonstrate the board's 21st Century Technology for Teaching and Learning Plan.
Courtesy: Keewatin-Patricia DSB



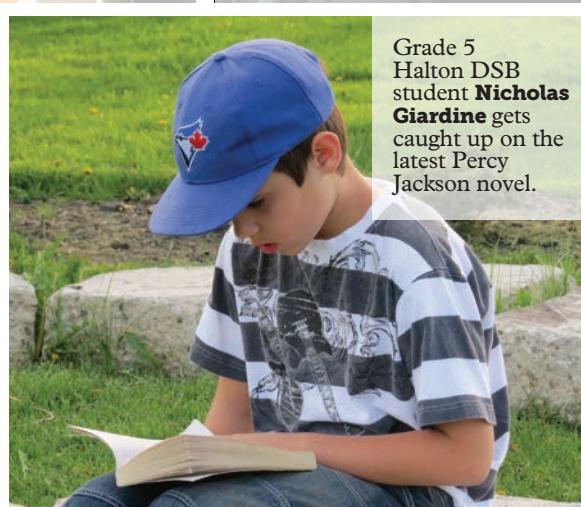
OPSBA President Michael Barrett speaks at the 2012 Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health.



OPSBA Executive Director Gail Anderson with Minister of Education and past OPSBA President **Liz Sandals**.



Marg Connor, Director, Learning Environment Branch, Ministry of Education and **Sean Twyford**, Manager, Strategic Policy Unit, Strategic Policy and Aboriginal Relationships Branch, speak at an OPSBA Board of Directors meeting.



Grade 5 Halton DSB student **Nicholas Giardine** gets caught up on the latest Percy Jackson novel.



Michael Barrett
President
Ontario Public School
Boards' Association



Gail Anderson
Executive Director
Ontario Public School
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