

BUT, DID YOU
KNOW WE'RE HERE
TO HELP YOU DO IT?



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates



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WE KNOW TRUSTEES
HAVE A CRUCIAL JOB
TO DO.

Who We Are:

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association is a strong and effective advocate for the public school system in Ontario and works to promote the best interests and needs of Ontario's students. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and regularly provides input and advice to the provincial government on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.

The mission of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association is to

Excellence in education is achieved by:

- ▲ promoting high standards of individual achievement;
- ▲ providing the understanding and basic skills required for active, compassionate participation in the life of the family, the community, the province, the nation, and a global society;
- ▲ cultivating a love of learning;
- ▲ recognizing the value of diversity among learners and communities; and
- ▲ exploring creative educational alternatives.

The public school system must be accountable to the communities it serves and work to fulfill its mandate through building strong community partnerships. Local, democratically-

policy, governance and labour relations. When we speak, it is with a single voice and the government hears and is responsive to consistent messages that are streamlined, focussed and directly relevant to public school board issues.

Trustees and school boards find many avenues within OPSBA to participate in governance and influence decision-making. Through Regional Committees, Standing Committees, Ad Hoc and Special Purpose Work Groups, all trustees are able to contribute to the policy development and education positions taken by the Association's Executive Council and the Board of Directors where all member boards are represented. As our environment and the needs of boards change, our members ensure that the OPSBA Constitution is a living governance

- ▲ Response to most queries within 24 hours, including expert legal opinions when required, and the ability to survey all Boards on issues important to boards
- ▲ Board Criminal Background Checks, Adjudication and Ancillary Services
- ▲ Intervention at the Ontario Energy Board – this has resulted in over \$15 million in savings for boards to date
- ▲ Behaviour Management Systems Program - a recently implemented service provides board staff with high quality training at a much lower cost than any other option available to Boards
- ▲ Policy and Procedure Templates based on best practices – these save Board staff time and money

How OPSBA sets Priorities

Priority-setting and planning for the year ahead starts with a review of the significant concerns of member boards. It includes resolutions approved at the Annual General Meeting. It incorporates analysis of the critical issues on the public education front. As key priorities are identified they become the major areas of focus that will drive how OPSBA directs resources, manages issues and plans activities. This process is crucial to positioning the organization to meet the challenges of the education agenda in the current environment.

Student Achievement: The Many Paths to Realizing Potential

OPSBA will contribute to and advocate for a range of initiatives that recognize the multiple paths involved in high levels of student achievement. These include: secondary education – ensuring flexible pathways and options are made available to all students regardless of where they live in the province; literacy and numeracy – continuing improvement through focussed advocacy and trustee professional development offerings; *Critical Literacy Perspective on Media* – a project aimed at creating learning environments that support students in critical media awareness including media violence and enhance their capacity to achieve.

Special Education programs within their local board for all students with special education needs across Ontario. OPSBA will also work with boards to develop a resource of educational practices that can have the greatest positive outcomes for students with autism.

Governance

OPSBA will undertake a review of its own governance and examine how the Association is meeting the governance needs of all its members. A focus of OPSBA's 2007 Public Education Symposium (PES) will be building the governance expertise of trustees. PES will also encourage participation by First Nations education leaders to strengthen collaboration between the on-reserve school system and the publicly funded provincial school system.

programs (CSS), parenting centres (Ministry of Children and Youth). OPSBA will continue its campaign for a funding formula that responds to complexities, has greater transparency, recognizes the interconnectedness of funding lines and incorporates a regular review of Benchmarks. Particular emphasis will be placed on Student Transportation. Integral to the priority of reviewing the funding formula is the goal of releasing Grants for Student Needs within a timeline that supports optimum planning on the part of school boards.

Communications, Media Relations, Lobbying and Advocacy

OPSBA will work to increase the capacity of school boards to speak to emerging issues so that all trustees

We will engage in a joint project between the Ministry and provincial school board organizations to share sound operational practices.

Provincial Election

The coming school year will see the launch of provincial election campaigns and OPSBA will be pressing all three political parties on a full range of issues. We will develop messages and backgrounders to respond to or comment on issues affecting public education raised by the government and the other political parties.

Shared Visions, Strong Future

OPSBA is proud of the contribution we make to supporting the work of Ontario's democratically elected public

A REFRESHER COURSE ON OPSBA.

promote and enhance public education by:

- ▲ helping member boards to fulfill 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.

What We Believe:

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.

ected school boards play a key role in ensuring that schools remain responsive to both provincial program requirements and local needs and resources.

How OPSBA Works for School Boards

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association is the members' Association. It belongs to and is governed and controlled by its member Boards. Our successes as an Association and the gains we make for the students in all our schools are entirely due to the working relationship we have with our members. This relationship has allowed OPSBA to coordinate the efforts of public boards to seek changes in funding, education

mechanism open to annual democratic amendment.

OPSBA - Savings and Services for School Boards

- ▲ Legal opinions from top lawyers on significant policy issues affecting all boards
- ▲ Provincial Framework Negotiation and Implementation for 4-year Collective Agreements for Teachers;
- ▲ Participation on Provincial Stability Commission
- ▲ LabRnet – an internet-based, secure data-base includes a searchable library of current collective agreements, legal opinions and the results of over 40 current school board surveys

- ▲ Lobbying for public education in areas such as Special Education, Transportation, Capital Funding – this has resulted in millions of additional dollars directed to education funding in recent years
- ▲ Through Federal Lobbying, OPSBA works to save school boards money on Copyright and GST
- ▲ Superlative professional development opportunities geared to the needs of trustees through conferences and the on-line Board Learning Centre

What are OPSBA's Priorities for 2006-2007?

The year ahead will be critical in determining how recent positive developments in education will be strengthened and how the issues that currently challenge the school system will be addressed. OPSBA's priorities are aimed at supporting strong student-focussed initiatives and framing public debate around resolving issues that concern school boards as they work to strengthen Ontario's school system:

First Nations Education

OPSBA will undertake specific action to support successful outcomes for First Nation students and to strengthen the voice of First Nation trustees and communities in the area of education governance.

Labour Relations and Human Resources

OPSBA will continue to build a positive labour relations environment through provincial collaboration and pooling of data while promoting local flexibility in the implementation of collective agreement provisions. OPSBA will place priority on helping boards develop plans and strategies to successfully respond to labour relations trends in the interest of promoting program success in schools.

Special Education

Identification of special needs is an essential component of student-sensitive program delivery and equitable allocation of resources. OPSBA will focus on an outcome resulting in access to appropriate

A further area of focus will be OPSBA's contribution to regulations arising out of Bill 78 (amendments to the Education Act) which affect governance issues for school boards, in particular the link between authority and accountability.

Finance

OPSBA will work on the concerns of the large number of boards facing declining enrolment through a special committee, "*Financial Planning for Managing Declining Enrolment.*" There will be a parallel focus on addressing the different issues that growth boards must deal with in planning for expansion. An additional "*Who Does What?*" Work Group will identify services delivered by school boards that fall outside the envelope of education, e.g. social

across the province have resources to project the voice of public education in a coordinated way. This will strengthen the stand of individual school boards and OPSBA on any given issue. Building consensus on the vital importance of publicly funded schools is particularly critical in the year leading up to the next provincial election. OPSBA will concentrate on strategies that support a strong unified public education system and that promote the confidence of parents and the tax-payers of the province in the effectiveness of our public schools.

Successful School Board Operations

OPSBA is committed to being a centre for connecting school boards in their ongoing efforts to make optimum use of their resources.

school trustees. We share a passion for building a public school system that is world-class. Our common purpose is to offer the children and youth of Ontario full opportunity to reach their rich potential.



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