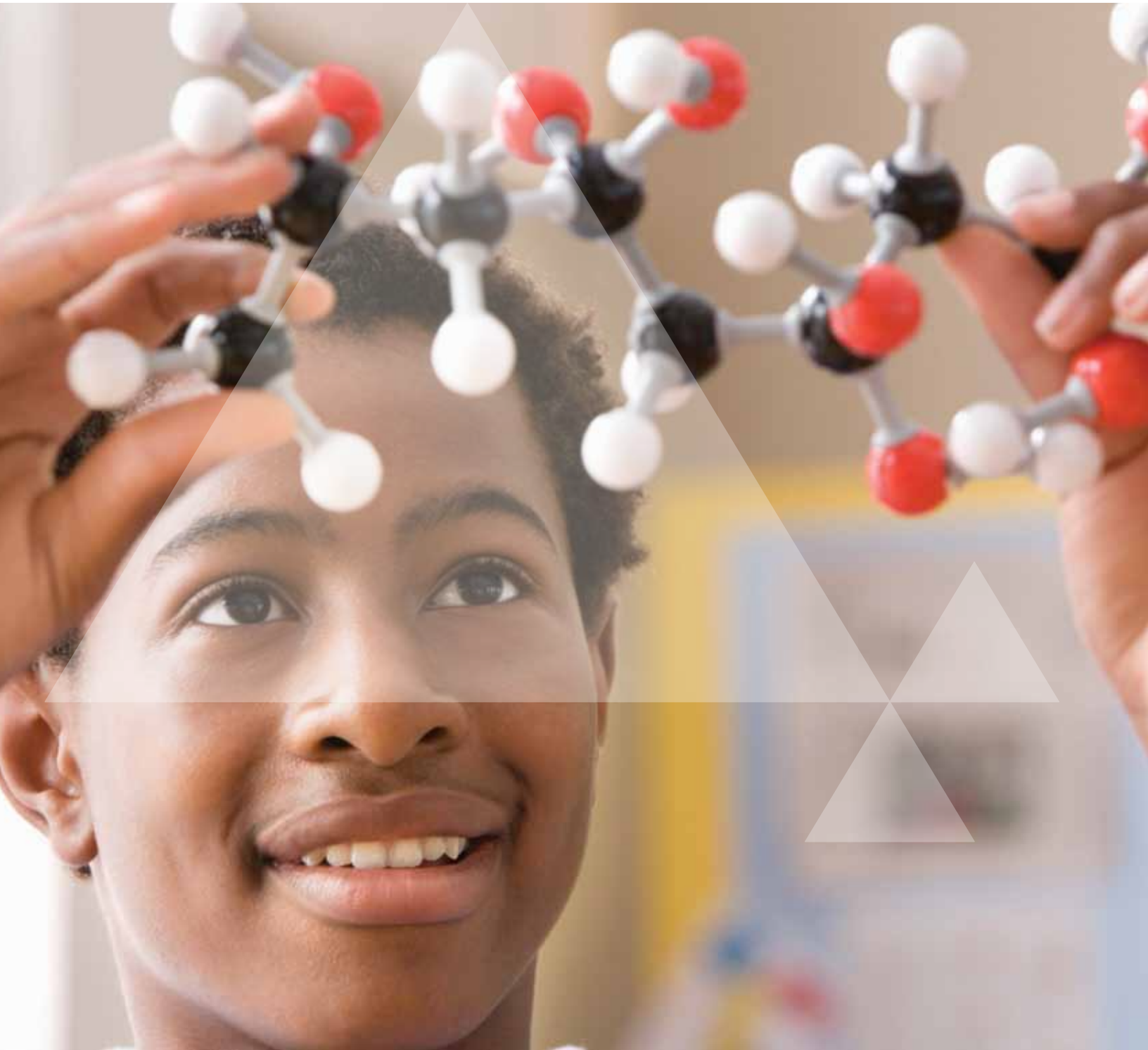
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

Leading Education's Advocates

2011 | 2012

Annual Report



Statement of Mission and Beliefs

The mission of 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



Catherine Fife
President
Ontario Public School Boards' Association



Gail Anderson
Executive Director
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

This has been a year for intensifying our action on OPSBA's key priorities and keeping a focus on maintaining Ontario's investments in public education. The outcome of the October provincial election has challenged us to be clearer than ever about our Association's priorities for Ontario's students. The very troubling outlook for the province's economy has implications that reach into many aspects of the work we value. We have, however, been extremely successful in our initiatives and this is due, in no small measure, to the conviction we bring to our roles as education leaders.

Our Association has been energetic in initiating action to support our Whole Child priority. The Coalition for Children and Youth which was an OPSBA-led initiative has had a very successful year, expanding the range of expertise represented by our partners and increasing our profile in the province. We have been actively engaged in discussions with Ministries on implementation issues associated with the government's Comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions which has a primary focus on children and youth. We are currently planning our second annual Summit for Children and Youth Mental Health for October, 2012 and this event is designed to deepen our expertise and levels of collaboration. This is essential to creating the kind of sustained improvement in supports and services we want to see for our young people and their families.

OPSBA has continued its advocacy on a national level for equity of educational opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. We participated in consultations with the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education headed up by National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo. We have continued to be active in the Shannen's Dream campaign which was recognized this year as the impetus for an all-party vote of support for equitable education funding for First Nation students.

Through CSBA we have participated in C21 Canadians for 21st Century Learning and Innovation and, here in Ontario, we have developed a draft paper to promote a provincial vision for Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age.

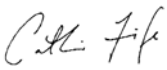
It has been challenging for OPSBA to steer a steady and positive course through the provincial discussion table talks given the current economic constraints. We will hold fast to our goal of supporting our member boards and maintaining respectful relationships with all our education partners.

OPSBA is committed to supporting every public school board trustee in the province in the vital role they undertake on behalf of Ontario's students and their families. We undertook several governance-related initiatives this year. We developed a Trustee Code of Conduct template to guide school boards in the development of their local code of conduct and provided this template at no cost. We have provided funding to boards to help with local professional learning activities related to modules developed by our Centre for Governance Excellence and plan to offer additional support for our member boards as they work on strategic planning. A particular highlight this year was the very lively and practical session for Chairs and Vice-Chairs held as a PES pre-symposium event. This session proved that we have education leaders rich in wisdom, integrity and a passion for learning.

In the midst of challenges, it will be important for us to remember that we are leaders in one of the most envied school systems in the world. We are at the top because we have worked hard for it and because we have developed our programs from a strong base of values that recognize the right of every child to succeed.

This is our moral compass in times of pressure and it must continue to guide us. Every trustee has taken up public office because they believe in the power of a strong publicly funded education to open doors for all students, to instill confidence in parents, and to be the heart of a community. We are in no doubt about our mission – we carry it with us every day. It makes us strong. It makes us one.

Thank you, everyone.



Catherine Fife
President



Gail Anderson
Executive Director



Left To Right
Trustee Howard Archibald and teacher Michelle Durant-Dudley promote the Taykwa Tagamou Alternative Adult Education Program



Below
Catherine Fife presents to the Standing Committee on Social Policy regarding Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act and Bill 14, Anti-Bullying Act

2011-2012 Year Highlights

OPSBA's priorities are a statement of what the Association stands for. They 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 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:

- THE WHOLE CHILD
- 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION
- TRUSTEES: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY
- LABOUR RELATIONS
- EDUCATION FINANCE



As we work to achieve progress in our priorities we invest expertise and energy in ways that will have positive impact on the diversity of student needs across the province. We make sure we have an informed voice at the tables that are dealing with Early Learning, Student Assessment, Special Education, 21st Century Education, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Curriculum and Program, Children and Youth Mental Health and Equity and Inclusive Education.

The OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health continues to grow in expertise and influence. It draws in not only our education partners but key representatives from the health, mental health, community agency sectors and from parent, youth and student groups. The Coalition is founded on principles that focus on accelerating the rate of change in programs and services for young people struggling with mental illness and put children and youth at the centre of positive intersectoral collaboration focussed on providing a full continuum of mental health services. In the past year the Ontario government announced a Comprehensive Strategy for Mental Health and Addictions. The focus for the first three-year phase of implementation is on children and youth. OPSBA, both individually and through its membership in the Coalition, has met with Ministry staff to discuss the strategies for improving programs and services in a school-based model. Progress on the government's Strategy will be a key topic for the Coalition's second annual Summit scheduled for October 25-26, 2012. This event will build on the resounding success of the inaugural summit held in June, 2011.

OPSBA has been highly active in every forum dealing with the implementation of the Full-Day Kindergarten program and has been successful in advocating for legislative changes that support the capacity of our Member Boards to effectively put this initiative in place. We have been particularly successful in achieving flexibility in the area of extended day programs to help boards meet the practical challenges, particularly in rural and northern schools. OPSBA has been assiduous in drawing attention to the challenges of the initiative's model of staffing and pursuing solutions where challenges are presented in existing collective agreement provisions. OPSBA has worked diligently to make sure that key developments are shared with boards on a daily basis and to promote the highest levels of collaboration on an initiative that is so patently supportive of early learners and so clearly meets the needs of Ontario's parents.

OPSBA has been an active partner at the Ministry's provincial working table, voicing the need for a provincial vision for 21st century learning and teaching. Through the Education Program Work Team we have convened a working group to develop a vision paper. This paper, which is in the final draft stages, is a follow-up to the Association's very successful *What If?* discussion paper. It is intended to stimulate the development of a provincial vision for teaching and learning in a digital age and will be presented to the Ministry for this purpose.



At Queen's Park
Student trustee Jenny Williams interviews Lieutenant Governor David Onley for the TeachAble Project

Coalition *for* Children AND Youth Mental Health
Let's put our heads together.

Another significant highlight of the year was the participation of OPSBA's President in the sessions held by the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education. The President has worked with OPSBA's First Nation Director on this initiative and on advocacy for equitable funding for First Nation students which is the focus of the Shannen's Dream movement. First Nation trustees were active as well in developing a submission on Ontario's Early Learning-Kindergarten curriculum to ensure it represents First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, traditions and perspectives.



At Work Provincial meeting of the Education Program Work Team

The province's legislative agenda has engaged OPSBA in a range of advocacy work related to Full-Day Kindergarten, Trustee Code of Conduct, Accessibility, Anti-Bullying, Caregiver Leave, and Concussion. In addition, the Association provided input to the Drummond Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services and participated in pre-Budget consultations.

OPSBA's strong focus on support for trustees in their complex governance and leadership roles has been a continuing priority. Over the past year OPSBA has supported school boards with expert facilitation related to the professional learning modules available through our Centre for Governance Excellence. With the help of Ministry funding OPSBA continues to provide facilitation support for specific work that boards wish to undertake in the area of strategic planning. We are proud, as well, of the success of the January pre-symposium on the responsibilities of being a Chair or Vice-Chair at a school board. This was a very practical session that benefited greatly from the experiences shared by current Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

As OPSBA actively engages in all these initiatives we are proud to offer at the same time 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.

OPSBA's progress on our multi-year priorities over the past year has been steady and marked by many successes. In advancing opportunities for the children and youth of this province, we have productively engaged partners from many sectors. Our members continue to support the values which drive these priorities and we are confident that in the year ahead our influence as a force for public education and for the well-being of the children and youth of Ontario will grow in strength.



Catherine Fife
and her son Aidan join former NHL stars Keith and Wayne Primeau at a media conference to release new guides on concussions

2011-2012 Year Highlights



THE WHOLE CHILD

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

OSPBA 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.

- Continued advocacy for authentic and transparent inter-ministerial collaboration as it relates to children and youth mental health, at-risk students and students living in poverty, special education services and supports - including delivery within the early learning program, as well as the implications of these issues for teacher education
- Advocacy for a strong, accessible, responsive and equitable level of children's mental health services in Ontario
- Continued focus on increasing student achievement for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Advocacy for resources and a continuum of services for children with special needs with recognition of levels of needs in boards experiencing declining enrolment
- Continued advocacy for a multi-year action plan for the effective implementation of the Full-day Early Learning-Kindergarten program
- Advocacy for using climate for learning and working as a framework to ensure inclusive and equitable environments for all students and staff
- Advocacy to support the wellness of students through increased teacher capacity and physical education opportunities for elementary students

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The advocacy work of the OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health has been promoted widely in Ontario. OPSBA's Education Program Work Team met with Ministry staff to discuss the government's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. OPSBA President was keynote speaker at Children's Mental Health Ontario annual conference and co-author of op-ed article with Parents for Children's Mental Health. Second Summit to be held on October 25-26, 2012.
- OPSBA prepared a response re Anti-Bullying legislation, strongly supporting a holistic approach to safe and caring schools and presented at the legislative Standing Committee.
- OPSBA sent a letter of support for a federal private member's bill dealing with a national suicide prevention strategy.
- OPSBA First Nation Trustees met with the Ministry and submitted a paper on the Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten (FDK) curriculum emphasizing inclusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives and cultures. General input on other aspects of the Early Learning curriculum was also submitted by OPSBA.
- 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 advocated for action on funding shortfalls caused by FDK class size caps. Regulation 399/00 on class size was filed to organize FDK classes to an average of 26.
- OPSBA's Work Teams hosted a panel of Deans of Faculties of Education and the Ontario College of Teachers to discuss teacher education programs including content related to First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives and mental health literacy.
- The Policy Development Work Team developed a communication to all Senators citing issues adversely affecting youth in the federal omnibus crime bill.



Meeting of Minds
First Nations Director Peter Garrow shares story with Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

21ST CENTURY EDUCATION

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

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.

- Advocate for a provincial vision regarding effective and equitable use of technology in schools that incorporates 21st century models of learning and assessment to maximize student engagement
- Advocate for a renewed focus on teacher training to better meet the emerging needs of 21st century schools
- Expand and sustain alternative programs that provide diverse pathways for students
- Ensure that all students have the ability to receive a graduation diploma or equivalent for successful program completion
- Promote review of traditional school structures and calendars with a view to proposing alternatives that support improved student achievement

ACHIEVEMENTS

- OPSBA's Education Program Work Team and board staff from across the province have developed a follow-up paper to the influential *What If?* document to advocate for a provincial vision for 21st Century Learning.
- The 21st Century Learning Vision paper recommends broader use. of the Ministry-approved pilot projects related to technology in teaching and learning currently being used in boards.
- OPSBA addressed a range of issues that impact on the preparation of teachers to be successful in 21st Century classrooms during the panel discussion with Faculties of Education and the Ontario College of Teachers.
- Issues raised with the panel also include proactive recruitment of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to the teaching profession.
- The OPSBA-initiated Critical Media Literacy Coalition continues to support teachers, parents and trustees in awareness of the need for a critical approach to media. A very successful Western Conference *When Violence Becomes Entertaining* was held in the fall of 2011. A similar conference in the province's Eastern Region is recommended for the coming year.
- Alternative school year structure was among the innovative initiatives featured in *Education Today*.



Education Day
TDSB trustee Shelley Laskin introduces provincial candidates at the Education Day debate at Northern Secondary School in Toronto.

2011-2012 Year Highlights



TRUSTEES: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

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.

- 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
- Increased visibility and scope for action to expand capacity of First Nation trustees and increase understanding of non-First Nation trustees re issues affecting First Nations
- Advocate improvements in communication from Ministry to Trustees
- Capacity-building in the area of community involvement including trustee role in PICs

ACHIEVEMENTS

- OPSBA continues to partner with the Ministry of Education, CODE and other trustee associations on a comprehensive trustee development program and has provided co-funded facilitated PD services for a significant number of boards in the fall and winter of 2011-12.
- A very successful full-day session on the role of Chair and Vice-Chair was held at the 2012 Public Education Symposium and will be developed into an online module.
- OPSBA has secured funding for facilitated services to boards to support them in developing Multi-Year Plans. This work will build on the Multi-Year planning resources developed by the Ministry and shared with Boards at a Ministry-convened meeting held in January, 2012.
- OPSBA's Policy Development Work Team took the lead in developing a template on Trustee Code of Conduct. This will support boards in meeting new requirements of the Education Act.
- OPSBA's First Nation Trustees Council is planning the development of a module for trustees on First Nation education.
- As part of ongoing measures to recognize the vital role of trustees, OPSBA sent letters of congratulations to new trustees elected in by-elections and welcomed them to the Association.

LABOUR RELATIONS

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

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.

- A legislated, fair structure and process in place for effective provincial bargaining, involving school board associations, and local bargaining in the sector
- Collaboration with member boards to identify common issues where OPSBA can take leadership on behalf of boards in the provincial context
- Continued use of the Provincial Portal
- A stronger partnership with unions and federations

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Extensive consultations have taken place with the Public Labour Relations Network, board staff responsible for labour relations, the OPSBA Executive and Board of Directors, and the Bargaining Advisory Group to prepare for 2012 negotiations.
- The Bargaining Advisory Committee of Board expert staff met to develop recommended parameters for 2012 bargaining.
- In February 2012, the OPSBA Board of Directors approved a broad range of issues to be addressed in bargaining in 2012.
- Discussions with the Ministry and education partners were held in the fall-winter of 2011-12 on a process leading to a framework to facilitate provincial discussions/bargaining as well as local bargaining for 2012.
- The Government called the parties to the table beginning the week of February 27th to commence Provincial Discussion Table agreements.
- Discussions with some union groups are ongoing. It is acknowledged that the government's financial parameters present significant challenges.
- Additional services for boards, e.g. database of grievance/arbitrations are being developed and made available through an enhanced provincial portal.



President's Award
Catherine Fife presents OPSBA President's Award in recognition of 25 years of service in public education to Peel trustee Beryl Ford.

EDUCATION FUNDING

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

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

- Continued review of the funding model to address the discrepancies in equitable distribution of funds among boards
- Resolution of pressing problems in funding such as transportation, special education, the reduction of the administrative grant and full-day early learning-kindergarten
- Continued advocacy for full funding by the Ministry of any new initiative
- Support for understanding the impact on boards of ongoing funding formula changes e.g. to special education and change in base of the demographic component of LOG (Learning Opportunities Grant) and ESL (English as a Second Language)
- Promote full collaboration among the four school board systems
- Advocate for action to address Federal-provincial discrepancy in funding for First Nation students

ACHIEVEMENTS

- OPSBA staff have participated in working groups and consultations related to reviewing funding formulae: Board Administration and Governance Advisory Working Group; School Operations Costs Working Group; GSN Funding Formula Consultation on Special Education. Staff were also involved in a Student Transportation Task Force examining competitive procurement of transportation services. The report of this group was released in Spring 2012.
- Submission on the 2012-13 GSN emphasized funding commitments related to the Provincial Framework Agreements. Highlighted issues included the current student transportation funding formula, children and youth mental health, First Nations, Métis and Inuit education, full funding for FDK, capital funding and continued review of the funding model.
- OPSBA's funding advocacy has included calling for support for boards facing additional funding pressures in FDK as a result of arbitrations on class size provisions in collective agreements
- OPSBA has advocated at the federal level for equitable education funding for students in First Nation communities and made a submission to the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education.
- In response to the February 15 release of the Drummond Commission OPSBA distributed key messages the same day to assist boards in responding to media requests for comment. The theme of these messages is continued investment in public education.



Policy Development
Presentation on Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten to the Policy Development and Education Program Work Teams.

Education Funding

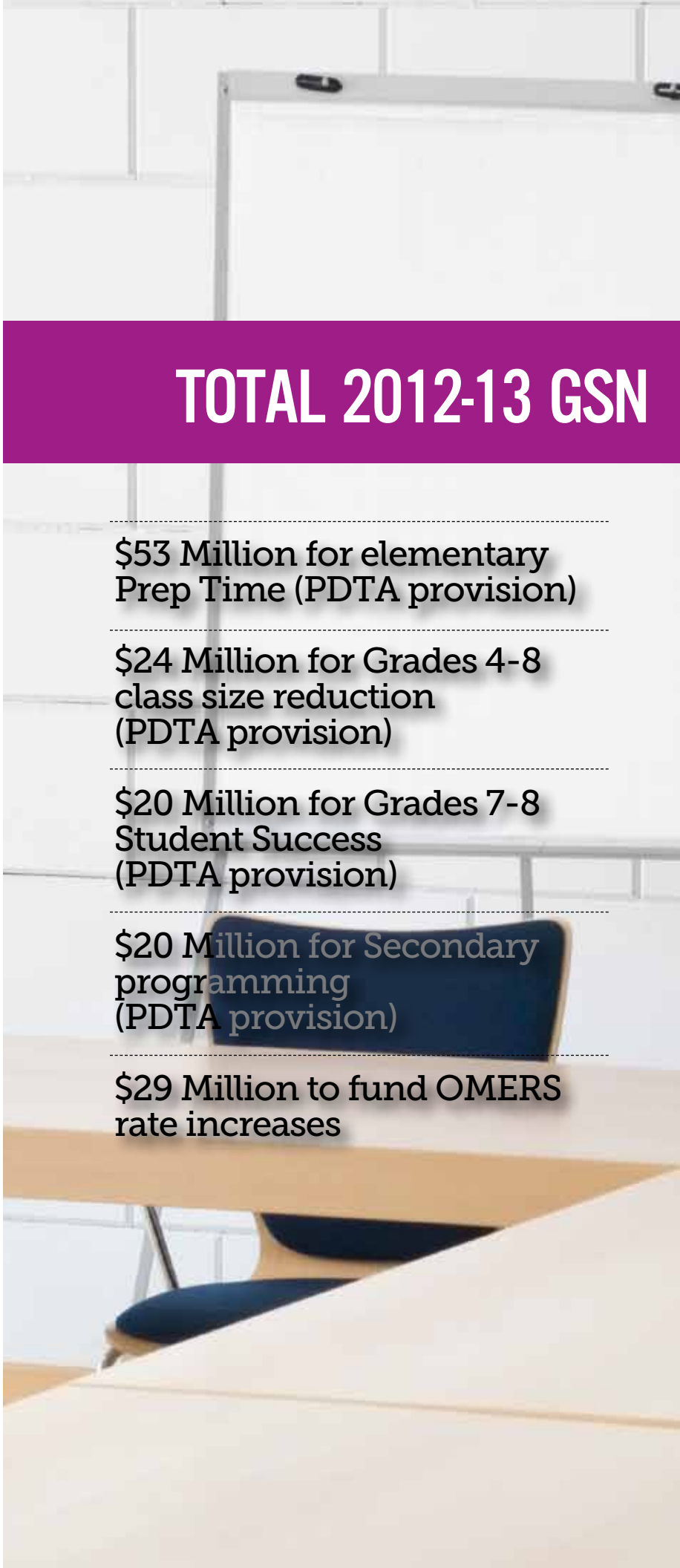
Finance Issues
OPSBA has been strongly proactive in addressing the education funding issues identified by Member Boards in successive dialogues with the Minister of Education and Ministry staff.

Early in 2012 OPSBA presented briefs during both Ontario's pre-budget consultations and in the process leading to development of the 2012-13 Grants for Student Needs (GSN). While recognizing the difficult challenges related to the global economic downturn, 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 and continued reductions in funding for instructional computers, PD and board administration. Other measures include anticipated efficiencies from student transportation routing, capping secondary school credits at a total of 34, potential board amalgamations and closing of under-utilized schools.

April 2012 Report to OPSBA Board

> **SEC interventions have generated savings for schools of $21.0 million in 2011. On a cumulative basis, schools have now saved just over $90 million by being actively involved in the energy regulatory process.**



TOTAL 2012-13 GSN

- $53 Million for elementary Prep Time (PDTA provision)
- $24 Million for Grades 4-8 class size reduction (PDTA provision)
- $20 Million for Grades 7-8 Student Success (PDTA provision)
- $20 Million for Secondary programming (PDTA provision)
- $29 Million to fund OMERS rate increases



REMAINS AT $21BILLION

- $350 Million for new schools
- $150 Million for school renewal
- $40 Million for portables
- $27 Million for school operations cost pressures (other than staff)
- $24 Million for first time equipping and minor renovations for FDK
- FDK on track for full implementation by 2014-15
- Stable funding for Special Education at $2.5 Billion
- Continued phase-in of 2006 census data for LOG and ESL
- Continued stability for new teacher induction

Finance Data Base & 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 position us to speak with authority on emerging funding issues. Our finance consultants respond to user needs through ongoing data base enhancements and provide timely analysis of government finance announcements.

The site provides school board financial information from 1993 to 2011/12. Updates are added as they become available from the Ministry of Education. OPSBA staff continues to work 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; we are supported in our initiatives by Jay Shepherd Professional Corporation. Our collaboration involves the other three Board Associations, the Council of Directors of Education (CODE), the Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO) and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO).

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, making these accessible to Boards as needed

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



Labour Relations Services

With collective agreements in the education sector up for renewal in August 2012, OPSBA Labour Relations Services (LRS) has worked closely with boards to prepare for collective bargaining.

PROVINCIAL BARGAINING

Over the past two 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 is comprised of staff in boards that represent Directors of Education as well as Labour Relations and Business Officials, and OPSBA staff, and met throughout the year to develop recommended parameters for 2012 bargaining at both the provincial and local levels.

LRS also developed, in collaboration with Program, a set of Guiding Principles for Collective Bargaining. These principles place bargaining in the context of student achievement, which is built on the pillars of: student engagement, parent engagement, staff engagement, and safe and nurturing school/learning environments. OPSBA's Board of Directors reviewed these Guiding Principles and also approved a broad range of issues to be addressed through the bargaining process.



In pursuit of OPSBA's priority that would see a fair legislated structure and process in place for bargaining in 2012, LRS met frequently with Ministry staff and education partners to discuss a possible framework to facilitate provincial discussions as well as bargaining at the local level. OPSBA continues to advocate for this priority.

Ontario's struggling economic climate has had a telling impact on the approach to collective bargaining for new collective agreements to start in September of 2012. The government called the board associations and the federation/union representatives to a set of provincial tables in February. At that point the government presented the financial parameters within which deals would have to be structured. Provincial discussions took place beginning in March, 2012. While ETFO has not taken part in these talks, issues have been raised that are of significance to School Boards, OSSTF – Teachers and OSSTF Support Staff, CUPE, and the other unions representing support workers (the Collaborative Education Support Staff group). As of the time of the writing of this report no deals had resulted from these talks. LRS also actively supported board staff in preparation for local bargaining.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE OF SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES AND STAFF

Throughout 2011-12 the regular Provincial Labour Relations Network (PLRN) meetings have been focussed on upcoming collective bargaining. Collectively, provincial issues were identified, and positions developed to support them. Senior Negotiators met to review language, and a session was held for Chairs, Directors of Education, and selected board staff in late May to review issues and prepare for local bargaining.

The annual Labour Relations Symposium took place in March, 2012 at a time when the provincial discussions convened by the Government had just begun. The agenda was structured to address the pressing issues in the sector and attracted a record number of participants from all four school systems.

Ongoing support continues to be provided through OPSBA's Labour Relations Services 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 Public Boards.

OPSBA also participates regularly in meetings of the Teacher Advisory and Support Workers Advisory Groups, meeting frequently with sector and Ministry leadership. The Association is also an active participant in the School Operations Working Group. This group reported to the Deputy Minister in March, and some recommendations were taken into account in the development of the GSNs for school boards for 2012-2013.

PROVINCIAL PORTAL

Labour Relations Services offers an internet-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 Portal is administered by the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC), with the active involvement of all Public, Catholic, and French Language Boards. The portal is a regularly updated source of data and has been under revision with the goal of improving its usability and content to ensure it is well used by Board practitioners in the labour relations and human resources fields.

NATIONAL & 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 the four School Boards' Associations and the Council of Directors of Education (CODE), is now in its eleventh year of operation. This not-for-profit corporation provides a wide range of cost-effective services to all member 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 "Energy Initiatives" section of this report contains details of achievements in this area.

An important confidential service offered by OESC to boards is the provision of Police Record Checks. Due to changes last year in RCMP policies the volume has been substantially reduced. OESC is currently processing checks for service providers, volunteers and other adults who have direct and regular contact with students. Steps are currently being taken to restore the previous comprehensive scope of service.

OESC has partnered with provincial Ministries to develop model policies and procedures as well as online training resources on a range of requirements flowing from provincial policy and legislation. These include professional development resources, model lesson plans, and an Accessibility website to support boards with implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The final stage of the Equity and Inclusive Education project involves video resources made in Ontario schools for Ontario schools and these were distributed in May, 2012.

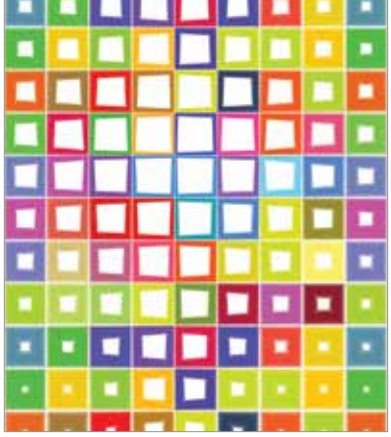


An ongoing OESC program, Behavioural Management Systems (BMS), continues to provide Board staff with a much needed training and certification program in non-violent crisis prevention and intervention. This program which supports Board staff to become trainers in their own boards continues to produce savings in training costs for school boards.

OESC's schoolBundle Enterprise Portal System has generated substantial interest among school boards. This joint venture with Concept Interactive provides a comprehensive and fully integrated School Board and School Internet Portal System to enhance communications options with regard to all staff, students, parents and the broader community at very reasonable cost.

OESC, the four School Board Associations and CODE have partnered with the Ministry of Education in The Centre for Governance Excellence. This initiative produced 14 professional learning modules for trustees and offers a team of Trainer/Facilitators to work with boards on governance matters. Boards have been able to access funding support from OPSBA to cover the cost. In the past year, half of Ontario's school boards have engaged the Centre's Facilitators to work with them. Funding has been secured for boards to contract with one of the Centre's Facilitators to work specifically on multi-year strategic planning. Professional Learning modules are online at www.ontarioschooltrustees.org





Lobbying

OPSBA is proud of its expertise and track record in the area of 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 continue to be active participants in many consultations that cover a broad range of topics and involve the Ministry of Education and other Ministries. OPSBA senior staff are also 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
- School Board Administration and Governance Advisory Group
- Early Learning and Childcare Advisory Group
- School Board Administration and Governance Advisory Group
- School Operations Working Group
- Student Transportation Task Force
- GSN Funding Formula Consultation on Special Education
- French as a Second Language (FSL) Working Group
- Diagnostic Assessment Working Group
- Healthy Foods Working Table
- Curriculum Advisory Committee
- Provincial Steering Committee for Urban Aboriginal Education Project
- EQAO Assessment Advisory Committee
- Student Achievement Division Working Table (formerly the Literacy and Numeracy/Learning to 18 Table)
- Trillium List Advisory Committee
- Support Worker Advisory Group
- Teacher Advisory Group

OPSBA continues to advocate on issues affecting the governance role of the trustee and to seek support and recognition for the leadership role of trustees at the local school board level. Another key focus has been legislation directed at the implementation of the Full-Day Kindergarten-Early Learning Program. OPSBA has been highly active in bringing forward the issues of Member Boards and seeking solutions that provide flexibility in setting up programs to address needs in a wide range of situations. The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program has drawn a great deal of attention from stakeholders in the education sector. It is, without a doubt, one of the most complex initiatives to affect schools boards in recent years. This program involves practically every aspect of the school board environment including students, staff, parents, curriculum changes, facilities and funding.

OPSBA communicated regularly with the Minister of Education regarding the funding shortfalls resulting from class size caps specified in collective agreements, noting the funding impact on those kindergarten classes that are part of the Full Day Kindergarten initiative. In March 2012, the government amended regulation 399/00 Full Day Kindergarten Class Size. The amendments, which come into force on September 1, 2012 will supersede any contract language and are intended to confirm the 26:2 ratio as originally outlined in the Ministry memorandum for all full-day kindergarten classes. This action brings a solution for the boards which have been adversely affected.

The Association has moved ahead on its priority for the Whole Child through engagement with Ministry staff responsible for the government's comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions. The OPSBA-initiated Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health continues to expand in both partners and influence. The collaboration of sectors that is enabled by the Coalition is helping to promote the work needed to implement the government's inter-ministerial Strategy. Mental health is a growing issue in schools today as identified by our students, teachers, principals, superintendents, directors of education and trustees. OPSBA's work in partnership with Coalition members is dedicated to highlighting evidence-informed practices, services and programs that will unite those who work for the mental health and well-being of children and youth. In October 2012, a second annual Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health will be held to build on the ground-breaking success of the inaugural Summit held in June, 2011.

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 provincial discussion table talks that started in February, 2012, OPSBA has advocated for a collaborative process that will result in agreement and understanding among our education partners during a time of unprecedented economic restraint.

OPSBA's First Nation trustees have provided a strong voice in advocacy for equitable funding for First Nation students and contributed to a submission to the National Panel on Elementary and Secondary Education.



The First Nation Trustees Council developed a submission that advocates for infusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and perspectives in the curriculum for Full-Day Early Learning and Kindergarten program. This was presented to the Ministry of Education in September, 2011.

OPSBA continues to advocate for a full review of the funding model to address the discrepancies in equitable distribution of funds among boards. Key issues included in all discussions about funding include: full funding by the Ministry of any new initiative; and the need for resolution of pressing funding challenges, in grant categories such as, transportation, special education and the reduction of the administrative grant.

This past year saw the release of the *Drummond Commission Report on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services*. OPSBA was proactive in meeting with the Commission to outline challenges and priorities in the education system while the report was being developed. Upon its release, OPSBA convened School Business Officials to review the recommendations and provide an analysis for school boards.

The Association is strongly involved in supporting boards in addressing the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. Working through OESC, and in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, we have initiated *The TeachAble Project* to ensure that boards will have resources to support them in complying with the educator training aspects of the recently issued *Integrated Accessibility Regulation*. The TeachAble Project will provide an accessibility awareness training module, model lesson plans that have been developed by Ontario teachers and a comprehensive website on accessibility.

During the period leading up to the October provincial election held on October 6, 2011, OPSBA declared September 20th Education Day in the province of Ontario. During that day and evening, candidates from the four major provincial parties were invited by trustees to share their views and answer questions on the issues affecting public education in local schools throughout the province. OPSBA supported trustees' efforts by developing questions, creating templates and flyers, providing backgrounders and analysis, issuing media releases and creating a presence on the OPSBA website. This was a highly successful strategy which garnered a great deal of media attention, response from political parties and interest from school board associations in other provinces.

Following the election which gave the Liberals a minority government, Laurel Broten, former Minister of Children and Youth Services was appointed as the new Minister of Education. OPSBA has met with Minister Broten to discuss the Association's priorities and liaison with political staff in the Minister's office is ongoing. OPSBA also met with the Education Critics Lisa MacLeod (PC) and Peter Tabuns (NDP). Minister Broten and Minister Wynne (Aboriginal Affairs) were invited to speak at the January 2012 Public Education Symposium.

There are many issues pertinent to education that either arise at the federal level or take on a national perspective when they become a matter of priority in every province. Over the course of this past year, OPSBA provided submissions regarding the federal Bill C-300 Suicide Prevention Framework and Bill C-10 Safe Streets and Communities Act.

In areas such as copyright, GST, or First Nations education, the Canadian School Boards Association gives its members a national voice and a place at the table and opportunities for influence beyond the provincial level. OPSBA's President, Catherine Fife, participated in the National Panel consultations on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education, and in events associated with the *Shannen's Dream* movement for equity in funding for First Nation education. She has also been involved with the newly created national organization, C21 Canadians for 21st Century Learning and Innovation, and participated in the first Summit held in February 2012.

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 the various government Ministries, as well as many other supportive groups. OPSBA acknowledges in particular the successful growth and collaborative efforts evidenced in the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health. Another important collaboration with Teacher Federations and other partners is in the area of Critical Literacy in the Media which continues to be successful and is making additional resources available for schools. Comparable collaboration within the OESC partnership and Curriculum Services Canada produces results and products that continue to benefit school boards in their vital work.

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 and we will invest our energies in building on this track record in the coming year.

Program and Student Achievement



Special Education

OPSBA has continued to lobby 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. In the March release of Grants for Student Needs, despite deep economic challenges the funding for Special Education has been maintained at $2.5 billion. OPSBA has participated over the past year in GSN Funding Formula Consultations on Special Education. The most recent phase of the Ministry's review involves an examination of variations among boards in reporting practices related to special education services. The outcome of this review is pending.

Student Achievement Divison Working Table

The former Learning to 18 Working Table is now known as the Student Achievement Division Working Table. As an active member of this group, OPSBA continues to advocate for the consolidation of initiatives that provide multiple and flexible education pathways for students. Such pathways strengthen student engagement in learning and offer options to meet the diversity of student needs across Ontario. In the past year the working table's efforts were very much focused on strengthening the work initiated in the previous few years. The Ministry has placed an emphasis on the school effectiveness framework for the elementary and secondary panels. This approach is designed to assist educators with precise and intentional school improvement planning focused on the achievement of all students.

The EQAO Advisory Committee

OPSBA actively contributes to the work of this Committee. OPSBA provided input into a review of EQAO's quality-assurance practices and procedures. These measures ensure integrity and consistency in the administration of EQAO assessments. The past year also saw revisions to the Grade 9 Individual Student Report (ISR). OPSBA and other education partners made recommendations with regard to appropriate contextual information to include with the report such as providing strategies to parents to support their child in mathematics. Resources have been developed to support teachers in the Junior Division in instructional practice and assessment in reading, writing and mathematics. Work is ongoing on the use of EQAO data for improving teaching and learning. OPSBA and our education partners have highlighted the importance of coordination with the Ministry of Education and its Student Achievement Division.

FSL Working Group

OPSBA has been an active participant in the Ministry's French as a Second Language (FSL) Working Group. A draft foundational document entitled *FSL For all: A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario* has been the subject of province-wide consultations ending in May 2012. The final version of the document will be released along with the Ministry revised FSL curriculum. Other activities include work on a draft document on the Common European Framework (CERF); this document is designed to support FSL educators in ensuring that the student's proficiency is assessed and evaluated within the Ministry's Growing Success framework. Ottawa-Carleton is a lead board in this initiative.

Expanded Teacher Education Program

Both OPSBA and the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health have contributed to the 2012 consultations regarding an expanded teacher education program. This is the first comprehensive review of Ontario's teacher education program in 40 years. OPSBA's submission highlighted the implications for pre-service programs of the changing environment as it relates to teaching and learning in a digital world, children and youth mental health, equity and inclusion, and safe and caring learning environments. Emphasis was placed on the value of experiential, contextual learning, on infusion of the history, traditions and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, on integration of mathematics and language throughout the curriculum, on the impact of Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten on subsequent grades, and on differentiated learning to accommodate the learning needs of all students. It was also suggested that the practicum experience for student teachers be enhanced.





OSPBA 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 focused their efforts for the year on the legislative initiatives that pertain 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 Full-Day Kindergarten-Early Learning Program, Building Leadership Capacity for Trustees and Education Finance.

LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS AND OPSBA SUBMISSIONS:

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario resumed on November 21, 2011. The Policy Development Work Team monitored and provided input on the following legislative matters:

- Bill C-10 Safe Streets and Communities Act. OPSBA sent a letter to all senators highlighting the negative impact on youth of proposed amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

- Bill 13 Accepting Schools Act, 2012 and Bill 14 Anti-Bullying Act, 2012; both bills propose detailed strategies for addressing bullying behaviours in schools.

- Bill 30 Family Caregiver Leave Act, 2012. This proposed legislation would allow an employee up to 8 weeks unpaid leave to provide care or support a family member with a serious medical condition.

- Bill 39, Education Amendment Act (Concussions), 2012. This proposed legislation would require boards to establish policies and guidelines respecting head injuries and concussions in pupils.

- Bill 55, Strong Action for Ontario Act, (Budget Measures), 2012. This is an omnibus bill that included amendments to over 60 acts. OPSBA sent a letter to Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan requesting that the benchmark for the public sector salary disclosure as addressed in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 be increased to reflect the inflation that has occurred since the Act first became law.

EDUCATION FINANCE CONSULTATION AND INPUT:

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

- OPSBA's brief on Grants for Student Needs (GSN)

- Ministry Consultation Document re: Fundraising Guidelines

OPSBA's Template for Code of Conduct and Enforcement of Code of Conduct: The template represents the combined work of OPSBA's Policy Development Work Team, Board of Directors, legal counsel and many trustees, including the First Nation Trustees' Council, over the past several months. This template is intended to provide guidance for school boards as they create new policies or modify their current policies. This resource was provided at no cost to member boards.

OPSBA MEMBERSHIP FEE REVIEW:

Over the past year OPSBA has been working with a subcommittee of the Policy Development Work Team to develop a revised fee formula for association membership fees. The proposed changes were contingent upon a recommendation of the Ministry's Board Administration & Governance (BAAG) Working Group to specifically identify, through the GSN, the amount of funding for association fees for each individual school board. Due to a number of competing priorities the BAAG Working Group did not complete its work in time for the 2012-13 GSN. When the BAAG meetings resume, the working group will have an opportunity to complete discussions on administration funding as they relate to Association fees. Subject to the Minister's approval the proposed new approach can be incorporated in the 2013-2014 GSNs.



AREAS FOR ONGOING CONSIDERATION:

The Work Team has identified the following issues that will be included in its deliberations in the year ahead: School Food and Beverage Policy (PPM 150), Trustee Honoraria, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Municipal Elections Overview and the provincial government's proposed saving measures due for implementation in 2013-14.

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 2011-2012.

THE WHOLE CHILD – CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH:

The Team met with Ministry Staff to discuss progress in implementation of the government's Comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions and were pleased to note the level of inter-ministerial collaboration involved in the Strategy which, in its first three years, will focus on the mental health of children and youth. Increasingly over the next three years, School Boards will be supported in hiring Mental Health Leaders and will see additional support through the engagement of mental health workers in community agencies and mental health nurses being hired to work specifically with schools. There will also be a focus on incorporating mental health awareness in Ontario's curriculum. The advice of the Education Program Work Team with regard to the Strategy will inform the operational planning and support the work of the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health of which OPSBA is a founding member. The Coalition will be holding its second annual Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health on October 25-26, 2012.

THE WHOLE CHILD – SUICIDE PREVENTION:

The Work Team developed a communication which was sent by OPSBA to federal members of parliament in support of Bill C-300 a Private Member's bill dealing with suicide prevention. This Bill has had Second Reading and has been reviewed by the Senate Committee on Health.

THE WHOLE CHILD – PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION:

The Work Team established a liaison with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and OPSBA now has a representative on the OPHEA Board. A key area of advocacy has been in support of 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. A large majority of Ontario school boards are members of OPHEA and can take advantage of the excellent resources produced by this organization.

THE WHOLE CHILD – ANTI-BULLYING LEGISLATION:

The Work Team developed an OPSBA submission on the government's proposed anti-bullying legislation, Bill 13. The Team also considered a private member's bill (Bill 14) on the same subject. The submission is supportive of legislation and emphasizes the need for a holistic approach and the embedding of positive school climate, equity and inclusion, and safe and caring schools throughout the curriculum.

THE WHOLE CHILD – FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION:

The Work Team's First Nation representative and members of OPSBA's First Nation Trustees Council provided input into the Ministry's Draft Curriculum for Early Learning-Kindergarten and emphasized the opportunity to infuse First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, traditions and perspectives into the curriculum. In a meeting with Ministry staff it was noted that there needs to be funding alignment at the federal level so that children will have access to a funded, culturally appropriate full-day program that gives them a solid start.

THE WHOLE CHILD – EARLY LEARNING-KINDERGARTEN DRAFT CURRICULUM:

In addition to the work accomplished by First Nation trustees, the Work Team responded to a Ministry survey on the FDELK draft curriculum, specifically addressing: Self-Regulation; Role of Play; Play-Based Learning Through Inquiry; Language Development and Literacy; Early Numeracy Development.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING – FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION:

The Work Team noted the release of the excellent Native Studies textbooks for Grades 10 and 11 which are available from Good Minds Publishers, a primary source of Aboriginal educational resources. OPSBA also made a submission to the National Panel on First Nation elementary and secondary education highlighting the need for equitable education funding for First Nation communities.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING – TEACHER EDUCATION:

The Work Team held a joint session with the Policy Development Work Team and hosted a panel presentation involving representatives from the Faculties of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ministry of Education and Training, Colleges and University. This was an opportunity to have a dialogue about key topics such as the content of teacher pre-service education, relevant additional qualification (AQ) courses, and attracting, developing and retaining teachers in the profession.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING – TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A DIGITAL AGE:

The Work Team has focussed on the task of providing impetus for the development of a provincial vision that could be shared with the Ministry's Roundtable on 21st Century Teaching and Learning. A working group was established comprising trustee advisors from the Education Program Work Team and key staff at member boards to develop a follow-up paper to OPSBA's *What If?* This document has been drafted and, once adopted by OPSBA, will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in 2012.



Members of the Work Teams

Policy Development Work Team

Michael Brant	Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	FIRST NATIONS
Jessica Brennan	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Elaine Crawford	Limestone DSB	EASTERN
Donna Edwards	Durham DSB	CENTRAL EAST
David Goldsmith	Lambton Kent DSB	WESTERN
Cheryl Keddy-Scott	DSB Niagara	CENTRAL WEST
Shelley Laskin	Toronto DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Cheryl Lovell	Greater Essex County DSB	WESTERN
John McAllister	Upper Canada DSB	EASTERN
Wanda McQueen	Algoma DSB	NORTHERN (E)
George Saarinen	Lakehead DSB	NORTHERN (W)

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LIAISON

Michael Barrett	Durham DSB	OPSBA 2nd VP

ALTERNATES

Howard Archibald	DSB Ontario North East	FIRST NATIONS
Margaret Arnone	Lakehead DSB	NORTHERN (W)
Connie Howe-Buckler	Greater Essex County DSB	WESTERN
David Jackson	Limestone DSB	EASTERN
Peter Osterberg	DSB Ontario North East	NORTHERN (E)
Karen Round	Trillium Lakelands DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Don Vrooman	Halton DSB	CENTRAL WEST

Education Program Work Team

Caroll Carkner	Upper Canada DSB	EASTERN
Loralea Carruthers	York Region DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Cathy Dandy	Toronto DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Marty Fairbairn	Upper Grand DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Tracy Grant	Thames Valley DSB	WESTERN
Tom Henderson	DSB Ontario North East	NORTHERN (E)
Ann Goodfellow	Limestone DSB	EASTERN
Jan Johnstone	Bluewater DSB	WESTERN (Chair)
Linda Williams	Near North DSB	FIRST NATIONS
Cecile Marcino	Keewatin-Patricia DSB	NORTHERN(W)
Kathi Smith	Waterloo Region DSB	CENTRAL WEST

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LIAISON

Lori Lukinuk	Lakehead DSB	OPSBA First Vice-President

ALTERNATES

Judith Bishop	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	CENTRAL WEST
Thelma Goodfellow	Hastings Prince Edward DSB	EASTERN
Judith Hayes	Trillium Lakelands DSB	CENTRAL EAST
Larry Killens	Rainbow DSB	NORTHERN (E)
Marion Macdonald	Grand Erie DSB	FIRST NATIONS
Colleen Schenk	Avon Maitland DSB	WESTERN
Diane Sidders	Keewatin-Patricia DSB	NORTHERN (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.

This was another particularly productive and successful year for OPSBA in achieving sustained media coverage.OPSBA president Catherine Fife continues to be the "go to"person in education whether it's meeting with the Toronto Star editorial board to discuss equity of opportunity for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students or shining a spotlight on the growing problem of concussions at a media conference held with former NHL stars at the Hockey Hall of Fame. 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. 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:

- *Find a Way to Move Forward.* An OPSBA media release urging the provincial government and our education partners to explore all available measures and find a way to move forward in collective bargaining.

- *Children's Mental Health – the Last Frontier,* an Op Ed article written by President Catherine Fife and Sarah Cannon, Executive Director of Parents for Children's Mental Health.

- OPSBA declared September 20th Education Day in the province of Ontario. On that evening, many candidates from the four major provincial parties shared their views and answered questions on the issues affecting public education in local schools throughout the province.

- *OPSBA supports the efforts of the Canadian Red Cross in Attawapiskat.* The plight of the students in Attawapiskat has been an ongoing cause for the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and stories were published about member boards supporting the Canadian Red Cross in its efforts to meet the immediate needs of families in Attawapiskat.

- An extensive range of feature stories in OPSBA's flagship magazine *Education Today*. We reported: teaching about tragedy; fundraising for global disasters; transition and supports for students; managing technology in the classroom; and children and youth mental health.

The Communications Networking group which brings together school board communications officers continues to be a valuable strategy for developing and sharing approaches to positive communications with the public around student achievement. 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 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 more than 75 major stories in print alone that featured OPSBA in the media. Here are just some of the quotable quotes of OPSBA's President Catherine Fife in 2011-12:

"Schools with low enrollment likely to close."
As reported by Antonella Artuso, *Toronto Sun*, March 29

Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), said she expects that these funding reductions will hit urban boards harder. "I'm sure it's going to be an issue for Toronto," she said. "Once you close a school in a neighbourhood, it's gone forever."

"In Peel schools, the policy is BYOD: 'bring your own device.'
As reported by Kristin Rushowy, Toronto Star, March 28

The Peel board plans to purchase tablets or the like, to "ensure equity of access to technology for all students through classroom computers and tablets in schools." Peel is among the first to pass such an ambitious plan, said Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. "You can't fight it," she said of technology being used in the classroom. "That's why this decision is pivotal; other school boards will be watching. "Fighting how this generation learns is not a good use of time of teachers or administrators. Instead of chasing after them, you just embed it into the learning experience of students."

OSPBA in the Media: Voice of Public Education



"Anti-concussion legislation coming to Ontario schools."
As reported by Tanya Talaga, Torstar News, *Hamilton Spectator*, March 7

"Schools have been trying to work on their own strategies to deal with concussions," said Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. "We have the legislative responsibility for well-being and it is safe to say our learning at school boards around head injuries and their negative impact is a work in progress," she said.

"Education cuts 'misguided' and 'shocking,' say experts."
As reported by Kristin Rushowy and Louise Brown, *Toronto Star*, February 15

"Our primary concern is that, on the education front, Drummond is looking for a quick fix for a financial situation that's been a long time in the making," said Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. She called it "misguided" to cut full-day kindergarten or end the so-called "victory lap."

"Drummond report: Sweeping education reforms recommended."
As reported by Robert Benzie, Rob Ferguson and Tanya Talaga, Queen's Park Bureau, *Toronto Star*, February 14

"Students often struggle financially to get into university and ... our university counterparts tell us students who transition too quickly into university are really struggling," said Ontario Public School Boards' Association president Catherine Fife. "More acceptable, said Fife, is getting rid of the cap on kindergarten to Grade 3 classes that McGuinty successfully campaigned on in the 2003 election. "What we've heard from school boards is that benefits are negligible ... if you go from a class cap of 20 to 23 students. The hard cap is so restrictive and so costly."

"Morally Reprehensible."
Catherine Fife, President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Letters to the Editor of *The Globe and Mail,* February 8, 2012

'We need to turn around a funding system that allows the education of First Nation students to be less valuable than the education of other students in Canada and that subjects teachers in First Nation communities to lower salaries, fewer supports and less security than teachers in the provincial education system." (Reserve School Can't Pay Teachers - Feb. 4).

"Children's mental health 'must be priority' for schools."
As reported by Kristin Rushowy, Education Reporter, *Toronto Star*, November 21

"Schools need to make children's mental health a priority," says the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. "I can't help feeling that if we are not working for a generation of young people who have strong concepts of positive mental health, if we are not working for a generation of young people who have access to caring people and good services when they are hurting, then we're missing something that is absolutely bedrock to what we are here for," said Catherine Fife in a speech to a conference on the issue on Monday. "If we are to build resiliency in our children and youth, education must be the starting place for health promotion, early intervention and prevention of mental health issues." Fife, who is also head of the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health - which is a year old and brings together school boards, staff, and mental health and other agencies - said schools "can and do play a critical role in promoting mental health."

"Creating positive space for students."
As reported by Paige Desmond, Special to the *Cambridge Times*, November 9

Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and a trustee for the Waterloo Region District School Board, said Hubley's death and the media attention to the issue has heightened the conversation about bullying and the need for more inclusive school environments. "It's every parent's worst nightmare, what happened to Jamie," Fife said. "In my view, the move to address sexual orientation is probably one of our biggest frontier issues."

Gay and transgender kids go 'through hell' in school; Conference hears suicides highlight need for schools to be more inclusive and welcoming to all students
As reported by Kristin Rushowy, Toronto Star, October 20
Catherine Fife, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, said the suicides "highlight the need for schools to be inclusive and welcoming for all students," adding that educators know queer youth are at higher risk. Both she and Ken Jeffers, the gender-based violence prevention coordinator at the Toronto District School Board, said the province has begun to address the issue by mandating school boards to have anti-harassment strategies as well as mandatory reporting.

The Missing Issue: Important questions about education ignored in election campaign
As reported by Moira MacDonald, Toronto Sun, September 13
Catherine Fife, OPSBA's president, says there's been no problem getting candidates confirmed for debates at her Kitchener-Waterloo school board but she has "no patience" for candidates elsewhere who say they're too busy. "We're helping the public and helping the political candidates trying to get their message out there," says Fife, adding OPSBA's objective is to raise the profile of education in a non-partisan way.

Ontario urged to spend more on child care
As reported by Laurie Monsebraaten, Toronto Star, June 22

"The old adage that we can't afford to invest early in the lives of children has just been proven completely wrong," said Catherine Fife, head of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. "We in education have known that for a long time. But now we have the economic argument to support it."

2011 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 the creativity and hard work that make our schools and education system leaders in the world.

AWARD OF MERIT IN MEMORY OF JACK 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 Chris Grouchy, (Left), East Northumberland Secondary School, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB. Awards of Recognition are presented to: Julie Chan, Agincourt Collegiate Institute, Toronto DSB; Chelsea Chen, A.N. Myer Secondary School, DSB Niagara; Jacques St. Pierre, Etobicoke School of the Arts, Toronto 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, (ABOVE Left) Algoma DSB and Trudy Tuchenhagen, former trustee, Lakehead DSB (ABOVE Right).

OPSBA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The OPSBA Award of Excellence and Achievement Award are presented by the local board to volunteers for outstanding, exemplary and/or unique contributions to the overall well-being of the school or community through in-school, board-wide, extra-curricular and/or volunteer activity. This year's Award of Excellence is presented to Sylvia Coral O'Meara, Parent/Guardian Member of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, Lakehead DSB. OPSBA's Achievement Awards are presented to Serena Essex, Aboriginal Family Support Worker, Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, Parent/Guardian Member of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and to Sylvia Coral O'Meara,Parent/Guardian Member of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, 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: Heather Bozzer, DSB Ontario North East; Beryl Ford, Peel DSB; Gerri Gershon, Toronto DSB; Dave Penny, Keewatin-Patricia DSB.

IN MEMORIAM

OPSBA honours two members of our Board of Directors who passed away this year.





On September 18, 2011 we mourned the passing of Brenda Keleher, a dedicated and highly respected trustee and Chair of the Bloorview School Authority. Brenda's compassionate leadership qualities were an asset to our Board.

On March 1, 2012 Terry Roberts a long time trustee and former Chair of the Thames Valley DSB passed away. `Terry had a 48-year career in education, was a passionate advocate for children, and was known for the value by which he lived: "I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care." OPSBA salutes two colleagues who gave so much to public education



Professional Development

Our education system in Ontario is strong and we have much to be proud of.

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. We have seen steady improvement in recent years and our standing in the world puts us in the first tier of countries with consistently excellent results in student achievement. We excel as well in delivering strong and equitable learning outcomes across widely varying cultural and economic contexts. Public confidence in publicly funded education is strong. As leaders in school board governance trustees are committed to initiating the important conversations that improve life chances for students and to engaging in the vital professional and personal learning that hones leadership skills.



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 directing the policies and priorities of the local school board that shape a culture of continuous improvement. One of OPSBA's leading priorities is trustee professional development to enhance skills, to build capacity and to provide 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 and incorporates the most up-to-date legislative changes affecting the education environment. The next phase saw the development of fourteen professional learning modules for trustees and school boards. These modules reflect the needs articulated by trustees in Ontario for greater clarity on their roles as governors of school boards



and have been inspired by the thoughtfulness and commitment that trustees have brought 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).



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.

2011 CSBA ANNUAL CONGRESS HOSTED BY OPSBA

Ontario had the opportunity to host the 2011 Congress of the Canadian School Boards' Association. The event took place in Ottawa in conjunction with OPSBA's 23rd Annual General Meeting and attracted more than 500 delegates from across Canada. The keynote speaker was the world-renowned



Sir Ken Robinson (ABOVE) who inspired participants with his insights into the role of the education system in supporting students in passion-based learning. The program included panels of First Nation educators and First Nation students speaking from a depth of experience about the future of First Nation, Métis and Inuit education in Canada. A dynamic roster of speakers addressed such topics as children and youth mental health, 21st century teaching and learning, ground-breaking advances in assistive technology, communication strategies and running effective board meetings.

It was also a time for OPSBA Members to participate in the Annual General Meeting to determine priorities and directions for the coming year, elect officers and plan for the future. Many thanks to OPSBA's Eastern Region for helping to host the event.

2012 PUBLIC EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM (PES)

The 2012 PES included a very successful and interactive pre-symposium on the role of chairs and vice-chairs. The main symposium which attracted close to 300 trustees, student trustees and Directors of Education featured CBC economic journalist Amanda Lang (BELOW Left) speaking on the impact of the turbulent economy on our lives and the role of public education in preparing young people as the innovators of the future. Participants had the opportunity to hear from Minister of Education Laurel Broten (BELOW Middle) and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Kathleen Wynne (BELOW Right). Popular sessions addressed topics such as social media inside and outside the classroom; personal work and leadership styles; and, bullying prevention.







UPCOMING! SUMMIT ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

OPSBA has continued to take leadership in the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health which will hold its second annual Summit in Toronto on October 25-26, 2012. Pre-Summit workshops will provide training for educators and other practitioners in the field of children and youth mental health. Topics include mental health literacy, stigma, bullying, and the impact of acquired brain injury on children and youth mental health and well-being. Throughout the Summit expert presenters including Stuart Shanker, Kwame McKenzie, Christopher E. Lalonde, Tracy Vaillancourt, Bruce Ferguson and Ian Manion will cover a broad range of issues that will inspire all those who work in the many sectors concerned with the mental health and well-being of children and youth. The Summit will also provide an opportunity for participants to discuss progress in the government's Comprehensive Strategy on Mental Health and Addictions. The structure of the Summit encourages participation of teams from school boards and communities.



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 2011-2012

Tony Armstrong
CENTRAL EAST
Trillum Lakelands District School Board

Chris Braney
CENTRAL EAST
Durham District School Board

Jessica Brennan
CENTRAL WEST
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Burt Borthwick
EDUCATION/ THERAPEUTIC BOARDS
Bloorview School Authority

Linda Busuttil
CENTRAL WEST
Upper Grand District School Board

Jerry Chadwick
CENTRAL EAST
Toronto District School Board

Donna Danielli
CENTRAL WEST
Halton District School Board

Donna Edwards
CENTRAL EAST
Durham District School Board

Nancy Elgie
CENTRAL EAST
York Region District School Board

Pam FitzGerald
EASTERN
Ottawa-Carelton District School Board

Laurie French
EASTERN
Limestone District School Board

Peter Garrow
FIRST NATIONS
Upper Canada District School Board

Lynette Geddes
WESTERN
Avon Maitland District School Board

David Goldsmith
WESTERN
Lambton Kent District School Board

Thelma Goodfellow
EASTERN
Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board

David Green
CENTRAL WEST
Peel District School Board

Graham Hart
WESTERN
Thames Valley District School Board

Tom Henderson
NORTHERN (EAST)
District School Board Ontario North East

Joel Hertz
CENTRAL EAST
York Region District School Board

Jan Johnstone
WESTERN
Bluewater District School Board

David Kaiser
EASTERN
Renfrew County District School Board

Cheryl Keddy-Scott
CENTRAL WEST
District School Board of Niagara

Darlene Keenan
NORTHERN (WEST)
Superior-Greenstone District School Board

Larry Killens
NORTHERN (EAST)
Rainbow District School Board

Gerald Kleist
NORTHERN (WEST)
Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

Angela Lloyd
CENTRAL EAST
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

Michele Locke
CENTRAL EAST
Simcoe County District School Board

Cheryl Lovell
WESTERN
Greater Essex County District School Board

Dianne McCormack
NORTHERN (WEST)
Rainy River District School Board

David McDonald
EASTERN
Upper Canada District School Board

Elizabeth Moyer
CENTRAL EAST
Toronto District School Board

Ron Oikonen
NORTHERN (WEST)
Lakehead District School Board

Mike Ramsay
CENTRAL WEST
Waterloo Region District School Board

Terry Roberts
WESTERN
Thames Valley District School Board

Shirley Seward
EASTERN
Ottawa-Carelton District School Board

Randy Sheppard
NORTHERN (EAST)
Near North District School Board

Susan Thayer
NORTHERN (EAST)
Algoma District School Board

Don Werden
CENTRAL WEST
Grand Erie District School Board

Rick Williams
CENTRAL WEST
Peel District School Board

Vacancy
NORTHERN
School Authorities Representative

Executive Council

Catherine Fife
PRESIDENT
Waterloo Region District School Board

Lori Lukinuk
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Lakehead District School Board

Michael Barrett
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT
Durham District School Board

Graham Lidstone
VICE-PRESIDENT, NORTHERN
Algoma District School Board

Dave Shields
VICE-PRESIDENT, EASTERN
Renfrew District School Board

Louise Clodd
VICE-PRESIDENT, CENTRAL EAST
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

Peggy Sattler
VICE-PRESIDENT, WESTERN
Greater Essex County District School Board

Mark Bailey
VICE-PRESIDENT, CENTRAL WEST
Upper Grand 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

Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario

Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board

Limestone District School Board

Ottawa-Carelton District School Board

Ottawa's Children Treatment Centre Authority

Renfrew County District School Board

Upper Canada District School Board

WESTERN

Avon Maitland District School Board

Bluewater District School Board

John McGivney Children's Centre School Authority

Greater Essex County District School Board

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



Catherine Fife
President
Ontario Public School
Boards' Association



Gail Anderson
Executive Director
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Ontario Public School Boards' Association

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