

Purpose

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

OPSBA is the official bargaining agent for every English-language public district school board and every board established under section 68 of the *Education Act*. This means that OPSBA exercises the rights and privileges and performs the duties of an employer bargaining agent under the Act with respect to central bargaining.

OPSBA promotes and enhances public education by helping Member Boards fulfill their mandates, developing effective partnerships with other groups interested in public education, and developing a strong and effective voice on behalf of public education in Ontario.

1. Member boards annually elect or appoint trustees as their representative(s) on OPSBA's Board of Directors in accordance with OPSBA's Constitution and By-Laws. Membership on OPSBA Councils, Caucuses, and Work Groups is determined by the OPSBA Constitution and By-Laws, and/or Terms of Reference. The responsibility these bodies carry is honoured through determining and enforcing norms of acceptable behaviour.
2. A code of conduct policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of the Association. It deals with acceptable and respectful behaviours.

Application

3. The OPSBA Code of Conduct Policy and associated Enforcement Procedures apply to all trustees who are elected or appointed to the OPSBA Board of Directors and Executive Council ("Representatives") when acting in their official capacity on behalf of the Association.
4. The OPSBA Code of Conduct and associated Enforcement Procedure also apply to members of other OPSBA Councils, Caucuses and Work Groups with defined membership ("Representative Body") when acting in their official capacity on behalf of the Association including but not limited to Core Issue Work Groups, Indigenous Trustees' Council, and Black Trustees' Caucus and others as appointed by OPSBA.

5. The OPSBA Code of Conduct policy and associated Enforcement Procedures do not apply to trustees who are attending OPSBA Conferences and Events, (E.g., Public Education Symposium, Annual General Meeting, Regional Meeting), unless they are acting in their official capacity as a Representative or member of a Representative Body
6. The OPSBA Code of Conduct policy and associated Enforcement Procedures do not apply to OPSBA staff.

Code of Conduct

Integrity and Dignity of Office

7. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of OPSBA.
8. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies **must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending OPSBA meetings, events, or while on OPSBA property and when participating in OPSBA sanctioned activities.**
9. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies **shall ensure that their comments are issue-based and not personal, demeaning or disparaging with regard to OPSBA staff, advisors or fellow Representatives and members of Representative Bodies.**
10. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall endeavour to participate in trustee development opportunities to enhance their ability to fulfill their obligations.

Avoidance of Personal Advantage and Conflict of Interest

11. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not accept a gift from any person or entity that has dealings with OPSBA if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the Representative or member of a Representative Body when performing their OPSBA duties.
12. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not use their office to advance the interests of the Representative or member of a Representative Bodies or the interests of any family member or person or organization with whom or with which the Representative or members of a Representative Body is related or associated.
13. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not use their position to obtain employment with OPSBA for the Representative or member of a Representative Body or a member of their family.

Compliance with Legislation, OPSBA's Constitution, By-laws, and Policies

14. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall discharge their duties in accordance with OPSBA's Constitution, By-Laws, Mission, Vision and Values, Committee Mandates and Policies, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Education Act* and any regulations, directives, or guidelines thereunder and comply with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or other privacy laws, and any other relevant legislation.
15. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall uphold the letter and spirit of this Code of Conduct.
16. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall respect and understand the roles and duties of an individual Representative and members of a Representative Body, the Board of Directors as a whole, the President, Executive Council, Officers of OPSBA, and Executive Director of OPSBA.

Civil Behaviour

17. Representatives or members of Representative Bodies shall not engage in conduct during meetings of OPSBA Board of Directors, Councils, Caucuses, and Work Groups and at all other times that would discredit or compromise the integrity of OPSBA.
18. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not advance allegations of misconduct and/or a breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith or vindictive in nature against another Representative or member of a Representative Body.
19. When expressing individual views, Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall respect the differing points of view of other Representatives and members of Representative Bodies.
20. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall at all times act with decorum and shall be respectful of other Representatives, members of Representative Bodies, and OPSBA staff.
21. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall endeavour to work with other Representatives, members of Representative Bodies, and OPSBA staff in a spirit of respect, openness, courtesy, and cooperation.

Respect for Confidentiality

22. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the OPSBA Board of Directors, Council, Caucuses, and/or Work Group or part of such meeting, that occurred in Camera (Private Session) unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized to do so by the OPSBA Board of Directors, Council, Caucus, or Work Group.
23. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not use confidential information for either personal gain or to the detriment of the OPSBA.
24. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall not divulge confidential information, including personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to solicitor-client privilege that a Representative or member of a Representative Body becomes aware of because of their position, except when required by law or authorized by OPSBA.

Upholding Decisions

25. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall accept that authority to make decisions on behalf of the Association rests with the OPSBA Board of Directors, and that a Representative or member of a Representative Body has no individual authority other than that delegated by OPSBA.
26. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall uphold the implementation of any OPSBA resolution after it is passed.
27. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies should be able to explain the rationale for a resolution passed by the OPSBA Board of Directors, Council, Caucus, or Work Group. A Representative or member of a Representative Body may respectfully state their position on a resolution provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution.
28. Representatives and members of Representative Bodies shall comply with OPSBA policies, procedures, By-Laws, and Rules of Order.
29. The President is the spokesperson of OPSBA. No other Representative or member of a Representative Body shall speak on behalf of OPSBA unless expressly authorized to do so. When individual Representatives or members of a Representative Body express their opinions in public, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of OPSBA.

History

Adopted: June 9, 2016

Revised September 28, 2024