

REPORT FROM MEETING OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL NOVEMBER 2009

NEW LEGISLATION

Full Day Learning for 4 and 5 Year Olds

On October 27 the government announced that Ontario will start phasing in full day learning for four and five year olds next fall. Up to 35,000 new kindergarten students across Ontario will be enrolled in full-day learning in September 2010. The goal is to have the program fully implemented in all schools by 2015-2016. Four and five year olds will learn under the guidance of a teacher and an early childhood educator. Parents will also be able to enroll their child for extended hours for a fee, before and after regular school hours. OSSTF will make efforts to bring new educational workers into current bargaining units, to ensure benefits are acceptable.

Bill 157 – Keeping Kids Safe at School

Bill 157 received royal assent on June 5. OSSTF provided input to the related policy and program memorandums and several changes were made to reflect our early input and concerns. Boards will provide training to all employees. The legislation is set to take effect February 1, 2010.

Bill 168 – Violence & Harassment in the Workplace

OSSTF has lobbied the government and is monitoring this Bill. OSSTF is investigating the status of the Bill and if there is a change of position by the government, will implement the lobbying campaign prepared prior to its introduction.

College of Teachers Designation

In September, the Provincial Executive requested a legal opinion on the College of Teachers Professional Designation. In short, the opinion states, "it is highly questionable that any realistic legal action could be successful in forcing the College to conform to a member's request not to add the designation to the register."

NEW DIRECTIONS

Equity Survey Workgroup

The Equity Survey arose from motions at AMPA 2007 and 2008 that directed the Provincial Executive to determine the level of participation of members who are women, people of colour, Aboriginal/First Nation, disabled, transgendered, or Francophone. Last year, the workgroup surveyed provincial-level OSSTF functions. This year, OSSTF will survey bargaining units through a confidential and bilingual on-line survey. The Equity Survey Workgroup has also completed a draft version of the Equity Statement and Guiding Principles.

Partnerships with External Agencies

As a result of the Provincial Discussion Table Agreement, school boards are required to develop a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies. A Ministry of Education memorandum dated September 25, 2009 provides direction to school boards concerning the review and/or development of a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies for the provision of services in Ontario schools by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals. The boards must have their individual plans posted on their websites by January 1, 2010.

Provincial Discussion Review

The Provincial Executive is now reviewing the bargaining process. Information collected through the survey and plenary sessions will be used to guide the recommendations that will be included in the final report to January Provincial Council.

Student Achievement Agenda Workgroup

The Student Achievement Agenda Workgroup held its first meeting on November 5 and has taken steps to address their mandate. The goal of the committee is to provide a draft report to the January Provincial Council and a final report to AMPA 2010.

NEW INITIATIVES

Educators Financial Group Advisory Group

In June of 2009, Educators Financial Group (EFG) Advisory Group made a presentation to the Provincial Executive. At that meeting, a commitment was made by both parties to continue discussions on the coordination of efforts on the services offered by educators and to increase educators' understanding of our membership. In order to assess the needs of districts and bargaining units, educators developed a short survey for locals that was distributed at the November SCOPS.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

This year marks the 20th anniversary year of the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989, when 14 women were murdered at Ecole Polytechnique. Two years later, in 1991, the Canadian government declared December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. To mark this milestone, the Status of Women Committee initiated a new bilingual poster that was sent to every OSSTF member as an insert in the October issue of Update. OSSTF is also working with the Canadian Labour Council on a postcard campaign that ran until December 6.

District 34

Representatives of all four bargaining units of District 34, Independent Educational Programs, met on October 29 for the inaugural district meeting. They are presently finalising their District Constitution.

Ontario's Deficit

The media suggested that "Dalton Days" for the public sector might be implemented as a way of reducing Ontario's deficit. The government has now stated that this option is not being considered. OSSTF is meeting with members of all political parties to ensure that collective agreements will be honoured.

NEW RESOURCES

Hungry for Change: Common Threads IV

The fourth *Common Threads* resource is ready and distribution is well underway. The resource is entirely digital and includes 280 pages of resource material, lesson plans, Power Point presentations and SMART board activities. It can be downloaded by visiting www.commonthreads.ca.

Beyond Words Conference

The conference *Beyond Words: Exploring, Creating, Engaging* was held December 4, 2009 at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. This was jointly sponsored by OSSTF, Unicef, and Harbourfront Centre. Workshops included: Social Justice Education through the Arts, The World in your Classroom: Global Education and Children's Rights, Creating Agents of Change by Bringing Homelessness into the Classroom, Teaching to Challenge Class Bias and Hungry for Change: Common Threads IV.

New OSSTF Website

The OSSTF unveiled its new website (OSSTF.on.ca) in November. In addition to reorganizing the site, a calendar has been added to allow for quick access to important information. New information will be highlighted on the front page and then filtered to the correct areas over time. Members may now choose to receive publications (including Forum & Update) electronically, as part of the OSSTF "Go Green" initiative.

Children's Aid Society — New Pamphlet

Last Spring, OSSTF met with representatives from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. At the meeting, both parties agreed that a document offering accurate information for OSSTF members and for Children's Aid Societies staff conducting investigations in an educational setting was a shared goal. As a result of this joint effort, a pamphlet, endorsed by both organizations, is now ready for distribution. The pamphlet can be found on the OSSTF website.