



PROVINCIAL COUNCIL REPORT

November 14 - 15, 2008

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1. Declining Enrolment Work Group (DEWG)

- Declining Enrolment Work Group (DEWG) was announced by the Province on May 30th. The Work Group will advise and provide recommendations to the Minister by December 2008 on strategies to advance the province's goals for student achievement while addressing the impact of declining enrolment.
- The Declining Enrolment Work Group (DEWG) will review: the Funding Formula and other Grants for Student Needs (GSN) measures, School Board cost structures, education programs, partnerships between and among school boards, school consolidations and closures.
- On June 19th DEWG sent out requests for written submissions to education administrators, federations, bargaining agents, professional organizations, parent and advisory organizations, student organizations.

On October 28th OSSTF/FEESO President Ken Coran and Directors of Communication/Political Action and Protective Services participated in DEWG sectoral roundtable discussions.

At the OSSTF table were representatives from OECTA, ETFO and CUPE.

- Significantly, since peaking in 2002-2003, average daily enrolment (ADE) in Ontario has declined by 3.4% (68,000 students). This decline is projected to continue over the next five years through 2012-2013 by 3.8% (72,000 students). That would result in a loss of 140,000 students over a ten-year period.
Specifically, only the GTA (excluding Toronto) is expected to grow (2.9%) by 2013. All other regions are expected to have significant declines in enrolment: Northern Ontario (13.6%), Southwestern Ontario (7.4%), Eastern Ontario (6.3%), Central Ontario (5.8%), Toronto (4.5%).
- OSSTF's submission to the Declining Enrolment Task Force on October 21st had several recommendations. Some are the following:
 1. school boards must have the ability to create school configurations that can be responsive to enrolment and demographic shifts (7-12 schools)
 2. create an arms length agency which determines whether a school remains open or is closed, based on standard objective criteria
 3. the government must remove enrolment as the central funding criteria for education grants
 4. if a community school is deemed viable, the government must provide funding for the school at a level that ensures a quality education for all students

2. Workplace Violence Prevention

- On September 17, 2008 the Ministry of Labour and Labour Minister Peter Fonseca put out a Consultation Paper on Workplace Violence Prevention asking both labour and employer stakeholders to provide input on determining if current protection against workplace violence under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) should be enhanced or clarified.

- OSSTF/FEESO prepared a written submission to the Ministry with the several recommendations such as:
 1. passage of legislation and regulations that recognizes in the OHSA that violence is an occupational hazard
 2. adoption under the legislation of a definition of workplace violence that incorporates mental/psychological (threats, harassment, bullying) and that the definition of violence be focused on the worker irrespective of the assailant
 3. implementation of employer workplace violence prevention programs created in conjunction with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and employer training of supervisory personnel
 4. creation of employer policies, training and protections against all potential violence that may enter from the outside, including domestic and personal relationship violence
 5. workers' right to refuse work and leave the workplace because of a threat from a person or the working environment (after student safety has been satisfied); OHSA criteria for work refusal currently applies only to equipment, machinery, a device, or the physical condition of the worksite
 6. acknowledgement that cyber bullying is a form of workplace harassment and violence
 7. workers' right to know regarding the potential for violence and past history of violence and the recognition that providing such information is not a violation of privacy rights
- The President, Ken Coran, and the Directors of Communications/Political Action and Protective Services met with the Minister of Labour on November 12th to discuss violence in the workplace, pay equity, and on-going health and safety concerns.

3. Provincial Teachers' Vote

- Results of the provincial teachers vote directing P.E. to return to the Provincial Discussion Table to negotiate a provincial framework agreement:
 - 18,155 For
 - 2,871 Against
 - 14 Spoilt
 - 21,041 Total Votes

4. International Conferences and Forums

- OSSTF/FEESO was not able to attend, due to provincial negotiations, the Third Americas Social Forum, October 5-6, in Guatemala City or the contemporaneous three day education conference coordinated by the Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas (IDEA) Network. OSSTF is affiliated with many of IDEA's constituent organizations such as the Secondary Teachers' Union of Guatemala and the Federation of Central American Teachers. OSSTF/FEESO made a donation of \$2,000 to assist members of the Mexican Teachers' union, CNTE, with participation at the conference.
- OSSTF/FEESO will contribute \$5,000 to help bring Columbian labour leaders including someone from Columbia's Teachers' union FECODE to Canada. The Canadian Labour Congress is holding a Symposium regarding the Canada-Columbia Free Trade Act that is pending discussion in Parliament and signing by the government. This free trade act would be passed while workers and their rights are suppressed by the Columbian government.

5. Communications/Political Action

- The OSSTF/FEESO communications audit is currently in the research phase. Input from members is being gathered on a variety of topics: the website, perceptions of the union, OSSTF/FEESO publications, member involvement and forms of electronic communication.
- Input was gathered from focus groups in London, Toronto, Mississauga, Ottawa, and Sudbury between October 27 and November 5. Telephone surveys, 10-12 minutes in duration, of members began November 10; however, many calls were made at the dinner hour. Provincial Executive has asked agency conducting the telephone survey to change the time.

6. MAC 553 Workgroup Report

- AMPA 2008 created a workgroup to review Bylaw 20.1.4 outlining the duties of the Treasurer and to clarify/define the duties of OSSTF's Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
- Preliminary recommendations of the workgroup's discussions were presented to Provincial Council and received widespread approval. Results have been forwarded to Parliamentary and Constitution Council for phrase motions at AMPA 2009.

7. Audited Financial Statements (2007-2008)

- The budget estimate for 2007-2008 fee income was \$1.2 million lower (\$36,850,00) than the audited actual (\$38,035,020). The discrepancy can be attributed to additional teachers hired and fewer members retiring.
- The Internal Investment Fund had revenues of \$1,247,333 in 2008 significantly less than the \$10,117,292 in 2007. The 2007 revenues were a result of \$4.7 million in returns and \$5.4 million increase as a result of switching to the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) standard that assessed securities at fair market value and not at cost value as previously done.

8. Children's Human Rights Conference and Students from Attawapiskat

- The Provincial Executive has approved a donation on \$5,000 to help send the students of Attawapiskat to the November 26th Attawapiskat The Human Rights Youth Forum in Toronto. The event will bring together educators and students to discuss human rights and education and help fight for a school for the children of Attawapiskat. To send the students of Attawapiskat to the Forum it will cost a total of \$35,000.

9. Provincial Council Resolutions

- Provincial Council passed a resolution that sees the replacement of the prayer at the President's Annual Dinner at AMPA with a moment of silent reflection.
- Council approved the allocation of \$45,000 from the Member Protection Account for a Teacher/Occasional Teacher Sector Council of Presidents' meeting on pension changes and subsequent vote.
- Council made several changes to the Draft Election Campaign Manual recommending that the manual return to the original language with respect to candidate attendance at regional meetings and that the Election Manual be amended to ensure all candidates have the opportunity to make a speech and participate in a Question and Answer session.