



OFHSA YEAR-IN-REVIEW 2009-2010

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations is made up of volunteer parent members across the province, working on behalf of children and youth. The work of these members in their schools, their school boards and their communities must be added to the list that is presented here. The following is a list of some of those activities undertaken over the past 12 months by the executive and board of directors of OFHSA:

Meeting The Needs of Members:

One focus of Federation activity is to provide information, training, resources and support to members to help them with their work. In pursuit of this goal, the Federation undertook the following:

- The Bulletin printed newsletter
 - made available to every Home & School member, directors, education partners and Ontario school boards
- E-newsletter – *Virtually Yours*
 - reaches 1,000+ readers every issue
- Updated & revised OFHSA colour brochure
- New tip sheet for association executive members
- EQAO parent information flyer
- Upgrades to office computer system

Annual General Meeting and Conference:

Volunteer members of the Federation worked hard to organize a conference for all members in conjunction with the annual general meeting. Thanks go to Thames Valley Council for this year's annual conference, held April 16-18 in London. Members enjoyed workshops such as, *Kids – Laugh Until They Learn, Improving Self-Confidence, Keeping Kids Safe, Raising Sexually Healthy Children, and Out of Control Meetings*, among others.

Speaking Out:

The focus of OFHSA activities is to improve the education and environment of children and youth. The briefs, responses and letters that we send on behalf of members are an important part of our activities. These responses reflect our policies and member concerns, as well as addressing proposed legislative change, and issues that arise. In the past year, OFHSA has addressed the following issues:

- Members' position on School Information Finder (SIF) enhancement mock-ups
- Response to Min. of Ed. on new draft parent engagement policy
- Support for publicly-funded web-based hub to provide information, support and training for parents
- Coalition letter against SIF to Prem. Dalton McGuinty
- Support for VMC resolution against violence in hockey

OFHSA also continues to raise the profile of education issues and the concerns of parents through the work of members in their local schools and school boards, and through interviews with the press. Members across Ontario have continued to send letters to the editor and to the Ministry of Education.

Working With Partners:

OFHSA continues to maintain strong co-operative relationships with government and other education stakeholders. Through these links we are better able to understand each other's points of view and identify areas of common interest so that we can improve the results for students. This year, OFHSA members provided advice to the following:

- Breakfast for Learning, Ontario Chapter
- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment advisory committee
- Ministry of Education Committees
 - Education Partnership working table
 - SIF Coalition
 - Grants for Student Needs 2010-11 consultations
 - Curriculum advisory and review committees
 - Healthy Schools working table
 - Learning-to-18
 - Core French
- Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)
 - Teachers' Qualifications Consultation – Equality LGBT students
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
 - Violence in the Media coalition
 - H&S table display at 2010 public education symposium
 - Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) annual dinners
- H&S representation at HWOTL Teachers' "Get Stuff" forum

Canadian Home and School Federation:

As a member of the Canadian Home and School Federation, OFHSA is able to advocate for the health, safety and education of children and youth at the national level. This year as part of our commitment to Canadian, we undertook the following activities:

- represented Ontario members on the CHSF Board, attending the November mid-term meeting and the 2009/10 AGM.
- participated in provincial sharing time at these meetings with parent members from across Canada, including models for parent involvement and funding

Conclusion:

OFHSA members will continue to face challenges and changes in the year to come. Our long-standing history of constructive involvement with governments and educators, our wealth of experience, support and resources, and our dedication to improving the lives of children and youth, will carry us through. We are all proud members of Home and School, as we join together in seeking "The Best For Each Student".