



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

**Significant Events in the History of Catholic Education
In Ontario and the
Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

1841-2020

Updated January 23, 2020

Significant Events in the History of Catholic Education in Ontario and OCSTA

1841 First School Act for the Province of Upper Canada

- There was a need to obtain some financial support from the Crown to pay teachers' salaries
- Government responds – permitting the establishment of denominational schools and more permanent funding growth

Taché Act

- Extends right of Upper Canada's Catholic minority to create and manage their own schools

1863 Scott Act

- Sectarian bitterness was very strong and threatened minority rights in Upper Canada
- Archbishop Charbonel provides leadership
- Government responds
- Gave Catholic trustees all the rights and powers of their public school counterparts; Catholic schools were also allowed a share of **Common School Fund** by Canadian government

1867 British North America Act

- Need to constitutionally secure minority rights of Catholics re: education
- Government responds by including Section 93 and the educational rights of the Catholic minority were secured **constitutionally**

1925 Tiny Township Case

- Need for financial support for high schools
- Lay Catholic leadership emerges
- Government responds – Catholics have just claim to funds for Grades 9 and 10 – no constitutional rights beyond that **but** opens the door by stating that the provincial government **could** grant funds beyond grade 10

- 1930** **Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association is Founded**
- 1930's** **Catholic Taxpayers' Association**
- Efforts made to secure equitable distribution of corporate and business tax to Catholic boards
- 1950/60** **Hope Commission**
- Recommends that elementary level be cut back to K-6
- 1961** **OSSTA Publishes First *Catholic Trustee Magazine***
- Publication continues until 1997 with revised format introduced in 1986
 - Replaced by *Catholic Trustee Newsnotes* in 1997
- 1963** **Ontario Foundation Tax Plan**
- Many Catholic school boards benefit
- 1969** ***Equal Opportunity for Continuous Education in Separate Schools of Ontario – Brief to Premier and Minister of Education***
- This was a major step towards obtaining full funding for Catholic schools. The Brief enjoyed the support of all Catholic partners including the Bishops
 - One of the highlights of the Extension campaign was the Student Rally at Maple Leaf Gardens organized by the Ontario Catholic Students' Federation
 - In 1971, the Brief was rejected by the then Premier of Ontario, William Davis
- 1969** **County and District School Boards Created (known as Larger Units of Administration)**

- 1969** ***OECTA/OSSTA Religious Education Courses Launched***
- Courses in the teaching of catechetics offered in winter and summer
 - Certificates issued by joint associations to teachers who successfully complete the course
 - Courses would eventually expand to Course 1, 2 & 3 and be recognized by the Ministry for qualification purposes
- 1972** ***Focus on Faith for the Future Program Established by OSSTA***
- Major thrust of the program was to develop a total Catholic school community which would embrace all its component parts – trustees, teachers, administrators, priests and parents
- 1976** ***Blair Commission Tours Province to Assess Reaction to Taxing Catholic High School Property***
- Through the combined efforts of clergy, trustees, teachers, parents and students the Tax Plan was scrapped
- 1978** ***Government Approves Religious Education Credits for Grades 9 & 10***
- 1980** ***Bill 82 Grants Catholic Schools the Right to Provide “Special Education”***
- 1984** ***Grade 9 & 10 Students in Catholic Schools are Recognized as “Secondary” School Students***
- 1984** ***Premier Bill Davis Announces Intention to Extend Funding to Grades 11, 12 & 13 (OAC) in Catholic Schools***

- 1985** **Passage of Bill 30 (including s. 136 1.a.) – Extends Full Funding to Grades 11, 12 & 13 (OAC) in Catholic Schools**
- Would be challenged in the Court of Appeal of Ontario and in the Supreme Court of Canada
 - Section 136 1.a., a clause which restricted to a ten year period, the rights of Catholic school boards to prefer to hire Catholic teachers was inserted. It would later be challenged in court
- 1985** **Completion Office of the Separate Schools Founded**
- Provides a forum for Catholic partners, including OSSTA, to address political issues arising from “extension” – *Bill 30*
- 1986** **Bill 30 Declared Constitutional by the Ontario Court of Appeal**
- 1987** **Bill 30 Declared Constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada**
- 1991** **ICE Publishes “*Blishen Report*”**
- Provides a vision of the goals for Catholic students as they were articulated by parents, clergy, teachers and trustees
- 1992** **Ontario Fair Tax Commission**
- OSSTA participates in Work of Property Tax Working Group including presentation of Minority Report
- 1993** **Royal Commission on Learning Appointed**
- OSSTA attends hearings and presents submission, *The Hope That Lives Within Us*
- 1995** **Royal Commission on Learning Issues Report: *For the Love of Learning***
- OSSTA responds

1995

School Councils Established

- Purpose is to bring parents and teachers together for the local management of their schools
- OSSTA published two major documents, *Evolution of Catholic School Councils* and *Involving Other Parents*

1995/96

Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs re: Amendment to Term 17 of the Terms of Union Between Canada and Newfoundland

- OSSTA supports Newfoundland Catholics in their fight to protect Catholic education in their province

1997

Justice Sharpe Rules that Section 136 of the Education Act is Unconstitutional and of No Force or Effect

- This ruling would be appealed in the Appeal Court of Ontario
- The Appeal Court supports Justice Sharpe's ruling
- Application to appeal the Appeal Court's decision is dismissed
- Section 136 was struck out by the Court as it was unconstitutional. Catholic boards have the constitutional authority to take matters of faith into account in hiring, advancing, promoting and dismissing employees. Employees are entitled to challenge such preferential practices, however, where the qualification is not reasonable and bona fide

1997

OSSTA Adopts New Name – Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

- This name more accurately reflects our mission as the provincial representative of English Catholic school trustees

1997

Bill 104 – Fewer School Boards Act (1997)

- Roman Catholic Separate School Boards reduced from 53 to 29 *Catholic District School Boards* and 6 *School Authorities*. Catholic trustees reduced from 710 to 250

1997 **Education Improvement Commission**

- Commission mandated to oversee and direct the amalgamation and operation of schools and to oversee the transition of the new system of education governance in Ontario

1997 **Bill 160 – Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997**

- Introduces a fair and equitable funding formula for public and Catholic schools
- OCSTA supports direction taken by the government in the area of curriculum standards, accountability, reporting and funding
- OCSTA expresses reservation about some of the initiatives in the area of governance, in the matter of labour relations and negotiations and about the pace of the comprehensive educational reforms in certain areas

1997 **Ontario Regulation 461/97 Establishes Policy Guidelines for Representation of the Interests of Pupils on School Boards**

- OCSTA publishes *Embracing the Future Catholic Pupil Representatives on Catholic School Boards* to help school boards develop local policies
- OCSTA launches website for student representatives
- OCSTA assists in coordinating in-service opportunities for student representatives

1997 **Religious Education as Teaching Subject Introduced in Faculties of Education**

1998 **Bill 160 – Constitutional Challenges**

- Justice Peter Cumming (General Division Court of Ontario) finds that it is unconstitutional for the provincial government through Bill 160 to suspend the right of Catholic school boards to set a local mill rate
- All other aspects of the challenge are unsuccessful
- OCSTA reaffirms that it is unlikely that Catholic boards would see any benefit in exercising their right to tax, as raising money beyond equitable levels would be inconsistent with our long-standing goal of fair funding for all students

- The government appeals the lower court's decision re: taxation and OPSBA, OECTA, other teacher unions and individuals appeal other parts of the lower court's decision. OCSTA is an intervenor
- A panel of five Ontario Court of Appeal judges hear the appeals and eventually reverses the ruling of the lower court. OCSTA is an intervenor
- The decision of the Court of Appeal would be challenged in the Supreme Court of Canada

1998 Government Financial Support for Creation of Catholic Curriculum for Catholic Schools

- Coordinated through the Institute for Catholic Education

1999 OCSTA Adopts New Logo

- Considerations which guided the design included the need to symbolize in a contemporary style the traditional goals and mission of the Association

2000 OCSTA Launches Province-Wide Discussion on *Our Catholic Schools*

- Approximately 3000 participants engaged in conversation across the province
- Report on discussion issued November 2000

2000 Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities

- Heralds an era of accountability
- OCSTA publishes document *Visioning the Future: A Reflection on the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities from the Perspective of Catholic Schools*

2000 Bill 74 – *Education Accountability Act, 2000*

2001 Bill 160 Declared Constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada

2001 Bill 80 – *Stability & Excellence in Education Act*

- 2001** ***Task Force on Effective Schools Established***
- OCSTA responds with document entitled, *A Catholic Response to the Task Force on Effective Schools*
- 2003** **Report of the Education Equality Task Force is Released**
- Final recommendations reflect funding principles advocated by OCSTA boards
- 2004** **Report of the Provincial Legislative Review Committee**
- After considerable analysis, the Legislative Review Committee concluded that the legislation and regulations governing education funding appear to operate in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. OCSTA was part of the committee and generally concurred with the conclusion but reserved judgement on some special purpose grants
- 2004** ***OCSTA Publishes Catholic Trustees: Advocates, Guardians and Stewards of Catholic Education***
- This Association publication examines the distinctive roles and responsibilities of Catholic trustees as faith leaders giving witness to their faith through their decisions and actions and also as democratically elected public officials operating under the terms of the Education Act.
- 2009** **OCSTA partners with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario to form FACE**
- FACE stands for the Friends and Advocates of Catholic Education
 - The mandate: To strengthen and deepen support for publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.
 - Each year FACE hosts a Lobby Day at Queen's Park. The event creates a powerful public presentation – trustees, teachers and clergy, visibly advocating together in teams that meet with MPPs throughout the day and speak with unity on the value and priorities of publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

2013 **OCSTA Launches “Faith in Our Future” short video contest for students on YouTube to help leverage the power of social media for the promotion of Catholic education through the sharing of “Faith in Our Future” short-videos.**

- Initially archived on the OCSTA YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/OCSTAVideo1/videos> - these videos are now on the Together in Faith website: <https://www.togetherinfaith.ca/video-contest-voting/> S
- In 2018 – the adjudication process is altered to allow registered members of the public to vote on the leading student short-videos. This creates greater engagement and awareness of the distinctive aspects of Catholic education.

2014 **School Board Collective Bargaining Act, 2014 comes into law in 2014 and is amended in 2017. The Act centralizes bargaining in the education sector designating OCSTA the “Employer Bargaining Agent” for all Catholic District School Boards**

- The SBCBA serves to formalize a collective bargaining process that has evolved into a two-tier structure – a central tier and a local tier.
- The SBCBA designates each of the four school board/ trustees’ associations as the statutory employer bargaining agency for their respective school boards at the central tables. This school board representation at a central table is: ▪ Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association (OCSTA), representing English-language Catholic boards ▪ Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l’Ontario (ACÉPO), representing the French-language public boards ▪ Association francoontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC), representing the French-language Catholic boards ▪ Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA), representing English- language public boards.

2016 **OCSTA Launches “Together in Faith” promotion with support of FACE Partners**

- “Together in Faith” a promotional initiative led by OCSTA and focused on reaching parents, students and all Catholic School Ratepayers.
- Website: www.togetherinfaith
- OCSTA ties in annual video contest with Together In Faith Promotion
- FACE stands for the Friends and Advocates of Catholic Education