



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

2025-2026 Year In Review



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

Mission

Inspired by the Gospel, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association provides the provincial voice, leadership and service for elected Catholic School Trustees to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

Vision

Ontario is enriched by a publicly funded Catholic education system governed by locally elected Catholic School Trustees who serve with faith, commitment and compassion.

■ "It is not enough to love the young,
they must know they are loved."
— St. John Bosco

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- “Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Serving Ontario’s Catholic school trustees as President of OCSTA has offered exceptional opportunities to witness the faith-filled commitment, and service demonstrated by the members of this Association, especially during times of great change. Working closely with the OCSTA Board of Directors and staff, we have been able to use this provincial perspective and insight to advocate for our priorities in ways that are strategic, proactive and serve to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education.

A key focus of our advocacy has been on articulating the historic and integral role of locally elected Catholic School Trustees with respect to the success and vibrancy of Catholic education in this province. Across the province, Catholic School Trustees are demonstrating exceptional leadership in ensuring that students learn in Christ-centred learning environments that support their academic, social, physical and spiritual well-being. These are more than words. They are, in fact, outcomes reflected in Catholic District School Boards’ Annual Directors’ Reports, local and national media highlights, educational studies and the lived experience of communities throughout our province.

These defining aspects of Catholic School Trustees and the Catholic education system they lead informed the many meetings we have had with MPPs and senior government staff throughout this past year.



Michael Bellmore
President

Timing and Membership Engagement

OCSTA's membership and lobbying activities are designed to support effective dialogue with members and advance the Catholic education system agenda in Ontario.

Last fall as the province took initial steps to bring change to the provincial education system through Bill 33, OCSTA tailored the annual Fall Regional Meetings to listen to the concerns and respond to the questions of Catholic District School Boards across Ontario.

Over a period of three weeks, Executive Director Patrick Daly and I met with members in the Central, East, West, Northwest and Northeast regions of Ontario. We listened to members' questions, concerns and ideas with respect to the current landscape in education today. We also shared the Association's current lobbying strategy and reinforced our efforts with the insight gained through these encounters.

Partnerships

In November, our Association's partnership with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, called the Friends and Advocates for Catholic Education (FACE), hosted the annual Catholic Education Day at Queen's Park. This advocacy initiative was very successful, as it brought together individual MPPs in meetings with FACE teams consisting of a Catholic Trustee, an OECTA representative and Catholic Bishop. At each of those meetings, FACE teams articulated the achievements and contributions of publicly funded Catholic schools to the community and common good of our nation.

Support for Catholic Trustees

Building on the impact of our ongoing provincial lobbying efforts, we developed advocacy packages for Catholic School Boards that highlighted the distinctive role of democratically elected Catholic School Trustees in protecting and amplifying the local voice of Catholic parents/ratepayers and articulated the distinct contributions and value of publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario. These information resources support communications with parents, parishes, staff and clergy.

Media

At the provincial level, OCSTA was interviewed by a number of reporters on various topics and have used those opportunities to promote the important role of Catholic school trustees. These media stories were featured in the largest media outlets in the province and helped to inform more Ontarians about the province's Catholic education system.

Equity Module – Respect for the Dignity of the Human Person

Throughout this year we continued to meet with various Catholic Trustees and staff at boards across the province to deliver the OCSTA Professional Development Module — Respect for the Dignity of the Human Person. This learning module provides distinctly Catholic programming and is delivered in three segments: 1. Our Faith; 2. The Law, and; 3. Anti-Racism.

As we enter our third year of province-wide presentations of this module, we are encouraged by the feedback indicating that this learning resource is having a positive impact at Catholic Boards across the province.

Looking Ahead

While the landscape of education in Ontario will continue to evolve, the fundamental purpose of this Association and mission of Catholic education remains the same: to protect and promote Catholic education and to fulfill our shared mission to “make disciples.”

As a system, we remain anchored in our mandate, united in partnership with our Bishops, clergy, educators and families, and resolute in our duty to safeguard the distinctive character of publicly funded Catholic education. Guided by prudence, charity and courage, we will continue to advocate thoughtfully, engage meaningfully with government, and support one another in service to our local communities. In all that lies ahead, may we remain steadfast and immovable in our mission, trusting that our work—undertaken in fidelity to Christ and for the good of the students and families we serve—will bear lasting fruit.

- “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.” (*Romans 12:6-8*)



Patrick J. Daly
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“The Church celebrates a fruitful educational history but also faces the imperative to update its proposals in light of the signs of the times.” — Pope Leo XIV

I begin with the words of Pope Leo XIV to thank Catholic School Trustees throughout Ontario for your faith filled service and significant contribution to strengthening our province’s fruitful history of Christ centred publicly funded Catholic education. I do so as well to commend you for your recognition of the imperative of the need “to update Catholic education’s proposals in light of the signs” and complexities of our times.

Over the past year, the OCSTA has focussed its work on:

- **Protecting and promoting publicly funded Catholic education;**
- **Promoting the essential role of locally elected Catholic School Trustees as; Advocates, Stewards, Servant Leaders and Politicians;**
- **Enhancing services to Catholic School Trustees including additional resources and opportunities for faith formation and professional development; and**
- **Promoting the Catholic Identity of publicly funded Catholic education.**

Particularly throughout these increasingly complex times, we have been heartened by the resolve of Catholic School Trustees to do all they can to protect the precious gift of publicly funded Catholic education and for their laser like focus on the good of the students entrusted to their care.

Within this document you will see a number of examples and highlights of the services provided by the OCSTA. Whether through the provision of professional development and faith formation resources/opportunities, Catholic Virtual Ontario's creation of 130 plus distinctly Catholic on-line secondary school courses, facilitation of provincial collective bargaining and labour relations services or advocacy efforts, our priority has and **will continue** to remain on promoting Catholic education and supporting Catholic School Trustees in the fulfillment of their essential role.

I would like to thank:

- Our Executive and members of the OCSTA Board of Directors for their strong and faith filled leadership; and
- The OCSTA staff for their tireless work, goodness and valuable contribution to the realization of our association's mission.

Most especially, I express deep gratitude to each of Ontario's 237 Catholic School Trustees for their dedicated service, support and inspiring commitment to "place Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre" of all they do. God bless each of you and God bless publicly funded Catholic education.

■ "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out." — Václav Havel





A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND SERVICE

Grant me, O Lord my God,
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
conduct pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance in waiting for you,
and a hope of finally embracing you.
Amen.

— Saint Thomas Aquinas

OCSTA

POLITICAL ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION FINANCE

Director of Legislative and Political Affairs, Stephen Andrews



Strategic Priority

Enhance political advocacy for publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario by building positive new relationships and reinforcing existing ones with provincial and local politicians, government officials, education partners and the media.

As the provincial voice for Catholic education in Ontario, OCSTA advocates on behalf of all 29 Catholic school boards. A key part of this work involves informing senior government officials, MPPs from all political parties and the broader Catholic community about the contributions, value and priorities of Catholic school boards across Ontario.

Since the re-election of the Progressive Conservative government in February 2025, OCSTA developed and implemented a comprehensive government relations strategy to articulate and advance Catholic education in Ontario. A key aspect of this strategy is to continue to build trusting relationships with senior government officials, MPPs, Cabinet Ministers and leaders of all major political parties while providing policy insights into the needs of Catholic school boards. Throughout 2025 and into 2026, OCSTA staff and President Michael Bellmore met with political staff, MPPs and senior staff in the Ministry of Education, Finance, Labour and the Premier's Office.

Bill 33, the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025*

Bill 33 was first introduced in May 2025 and was passed into law at the end of November 2025. The legislation increases the Ministry of Education's oversight of school board finances, governance and program performance. Key changes include:

- Providing authority for Ministry of Education staff to conduct school board audits, define the role of internal auditors and their prescribed duties, and define the role of external auditors;
- Giving the Minister of Education the authority to initiate an investigation, issue binding direction or put a school board under supervision where there is concern about a matter of public interest, whether on financial or non-financial grounds (for example, board governance dysfunction that is preventing key decisions from being made and impacting delivery of services);
- Providing the Minister of Education power to direct school boards regarding expenses, which may include school boards posting on their public-facing website their updated expense policies, as well as disclosing expenses of school board trustees, the director of education, associate directors, supervisory officers and others with similar roles;
- Subject to the denominational rights of Catholic school boards gives the Minister of Education authority over school names when boards open a new school and/or change an existing school name;
- Requiring school boards to implement School Resource Officer (SRO) programs where they are offered by local police services starting in the 2025-2026 school year.

In response, we provided a detailed submission with recommendations in support of trustees and our Catholic School Boards. Key recommendations include:

- Amend the Bill to provide more precise and limited authority of the Minister to conduct investigations into a board's conduct;
- Amend the Bill to provide a more precise and operational definition of the "public interest" to ensure the integrity of a board's decision-making remains intact;
- Ensure school boards and Trustee Associations are consulted in the development of the regulations outlined in the Bill;
- Ensure all regulations flowing from Bill 33 respect the constitutionally protected rights of Catholic school boards.

Since the passing of the legislation, we have been actively engaged in consultations with the Ministry on regulations involving the naming of schools and SRO/police programs in schools. We anticipate additional consultations on further regulations involving discretionary spending by boards in the near future.

 "We are all really responsible for all."
— Pope John Paul II

Potential School Board Governance Reforms and the Role of Elected Trustees:

OCSTA has advocated that any potential governance reforms being contemplated by the Ministry of Education respect the constitutionally protected role of elected trustees. Key messages include:

- Locally elected Catholic school trustees' long history of effective representation of Catholic ratepayers, including parents and other members of the Catholic community;
- Catholic school boards' equally long history of commitment to good stewardship of resources, transparency and accountability;
- The suggestion that the current education governance model, including locally elected school trustees, is outdated **is not** supported by evidence as measured by national and international standards. Ontario's Catholic schools rank among the most effective in the world.

During these meetings, a number of MPPs expressed their understanding of the valuable role of elected Catholic School Trustees, and support for Catholic education.

In addition to this direct advocacy, we have provided to the OCSTA membership supportive information and encouraged Catholic school board representatives to contact their local MPPs to engage in conversations regarding the crucially important role of locally elected Catholic school trustees and to promote the significant contribution Catholic schools make to their ridings and the fabric of our society.

Beyond MPPs and other government officials, we have as well been in contact with a number of our provincial Catholic education partners, including His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo and representatives of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. We are most grateful to each of them for their immediate and strong expressions of support and solidarity for protecting the role of elected Catholic school board trustees.

Default/Property Tax Issue

OCSTA met with Ministry of Finance officials and Progressive Conservative, Liberal and NDP MPPs regarding the 'Default Public' education support mechanism that is currently part of the property tax assessment system in Ontario.

Student Mental Health and Special Education Funding:

In meetings with government officials and MPPs, OCSTA advocated strongly for additional funding for mental health supports and special

education for our Catholic boards. With almost all Catholic boards running funding deficits in these areas, OCSTA continues to advocate strongly

for additional funding to ensure our students receive the support they require.

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- “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (*Matthew 25:40*). The more we love God, the more we love our neighbour and the more we engage in the community.
— *Renewing the Promise*, pg. 10

Prebudget Submission to the Committee Conducting Pre-Budget Consultations:

On January 29, 2026, OCSTA tabled its pre-budget submission to the committee conducting consultations on the provincial budget. President Michael Bellmore and Executive Director Patrick Daly presented to the committee. In the presentation, they emphasized the need to support boards in respect of increased funding for student mental health/special education, sick leave costs and to address the long-standing issues of executive compensation for senior board staff.

The recommendations contained in the submission were positively received by the MPPs and government officials we met with to discuss the priorities of Catholic school boards in Ontario. OCSTA will continue to advocate for these priorities as we anticipate the adoption of some of the key recommendations in the 2025-2026 pre-budget submission.

The following is a list of some of the MPPs and government leaders who met with OCSTA during the past year as part of our advocacy on the key funding and policy priorities of Catholic education in Ontario:

- Lorne Coe, PC MPP (Whitby-Oshawa)
- Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
- Todd McCarthy, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement
- Rudy Cuzzetto, Parliamentary Assistant, Treasury Board
- David Smith, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour
- Ted Hsu, Liberal MPP
- Aislinn Clancy, Education Critic, Green Party
- John Fraser, Liberal Education Critic and Interim Leader
- Chandra Pasma, NDP Education Critic
- Steven Blais, Liberal MPP
- Karen McCrimmon, Liberal Education Critic
- Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario
- Madison Lee, Director of Stakeholder Relations, Ministry of Education
- Yael Ginsler, Ministry of Education
- Didem Proulx, Ministry of Education
- Claudine Monroe, Ministry of Education

Through these meetings, OCSTA continues to advance the policy and regulatory issues of concern to our Catholic school boards, which include:

- Student transportation funding
- Sick leave costs
- CPP and EI inflationary costs
- Anti-racism and Indigenous education funding
- Information technology, cybersecurity and broadband services
- Special education, student mental health funding and programs for students with autism
- School board autonomy and flexibility
- Capital funding and benchmark costs
- Executive Compensation
- Lifting of the moratorium on school consolidation

- “Dialogue is the path to building a culture of encounter.”
— Pope Francis

Legislative Advocacy

An important part of the mission of OCSTA is to positively influence legislation, policies and programs that impact Catholic education. This is achieved by presenting submissions on various government legislative and regulatory initiatives to standing committees of the legislature and consultation processes of government ministries. During 2025-2026, OCSTA submissions to the government of Ontario included:

1. Core Education Funding Submission 2025-2026
2. Pre-Budget Submission 2026-2027
3. Consultation on Growing Success Policy Framework
4. Finance Brief, 2025-2026
5. Regulations under Bill 33 — SRO and Police Programs, Naming of Schools
6. Artificial Intelligence White Paper
7. Submission on Bill 17 — Amendments to the Planning Act regarding temporary accommodations
8. Submission on regulation under Bill 98 Disposition of Surplus Property
9. Submission on Regulation 521/01 on police and vulnerable persons checks
10. Submission on Regulations 298 and 304 School Day Operations and Ontario Day

FACE Lobby Day for Catholic Education at Queen's Park



FACE brought Catholic trustees, teachers and bishops together at Queen's Park to advocate for Catholic education.

The Catholic education partnership initiative between OCSTA, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) called "FACE" (Friends and Advocates for Catholic Education) jointly hosted the 2025 Catholic Education Lobby Day at Queen's Park. The event involved multiple meetings of Catholic Trustees, Teachers and Bishops with Cabinet Ministers, MPPs and/or their staff throughout the day.



OCSTA Director and Halton Catholic DSB Trustee, Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota with OCSTA-AECO Catholic VP and Toronto CDSB Student Trustee Ruben Da Silveira and OCSTA-AECO President and PVNC CDSB Student Trustee, Carter Peios.



Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Hon. Donna Skelly (MPP for the riding of Flamborough-Glanbrook) with OCSTA Executive Director, Patrick Daly.

We are grateful for the participation of the following OCSTA Board members and staff who participated in the 2025 FACE Lobby Day meetings at Queen's Park and contributed to the success of this year's event:

- Michael Bellmore, OCSTA President
- Mark Mullan, OCSTA Director
- Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota, OCSTA Director
- Morgan Ste. Marie, OCSTA Director
- Jennifer Wigston, OCSTA Director
- Patrick J. Daly, Executive Director
- Anne O'Brien, Director of Catholic Education
- Sharon McMillan, Director of Communications

2025-2026 EDUCATION FINANCE — Core Education Funding Review

As in prior years, OCSTA conducts reviews of ministry funding of school boards, which includes detailed analysis and comparisons of estimates, revised estimates and financial statements. This information is then utilized to support advocacy efforts with ministry staff on behalf of boards. In 2024, the Ministry of Education revamped education funding, renaming and restructuring Grants for Student Needs (GSN) to Core Education Funding (Core Ed).

The Core Education Funding is comprised of the following:

- 1. Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF):** The Classroom Staffing Fund supports the majority of staff that work in classrooms, including teachers, early childhood educators (ECEs) in kindergarten classrooms and some educational assistants (EAs). Note that the primary source of funding for EAs is the Special Education Fund.
- 2. Learning Resources Fund (LRF):** The Learning Resources Fund supports the costs of staffing typically required outside of the classroom to support student needs, such as teacher-librarians/ library technicians, guidance counsellors, mental health workers, school management staff as well as non-staffing classroom costs, such as learning materials and classroom equipment.
- 3. Special Education Fund (SEF):** The Special Education Fund supports positive outcomes for students with special education needs. This funding is for the additional costs of the programs, services and/ or equipment these students may require.
- 4. School Facilities Fund (SFF):** The School Facilities Fund supports operating (including cleaning and utilities), maintaining, renovating and renewing school buildings. It also provides additional support for students in rural and northern communities.
- 5. Student Transportation Fund (STF):** The Student Transportation Fund supports the transportation of students between home and school.
- 6. School Board Administration Fund (SBAF):** The School Board Administration Fund supports governance and administration costs for the operation of the school board, including its board offices and facilities, as well as for parent engagement activities.

 "...if you don't serve others, then what are you living for?"
— Pope Francis , St. Peter's Basilica, Nov. 3, 2015

Core Education Funding amounted to \$30.7 billion in the 2025-2026 school year. The ministry is investing a total of \$2 billion, primarily through capital funding, to support school boards to build, expand and renew schools. Other key Core Funding allocations include:

- **The Student Transportation Fund (STF)** is projected to increase by \$81.4 million (6.3 per cent) to a total of \$1.38 billion for 2025-2026.
- **Regional Internal Audit Investment:** Additional funding of \$2 million is being provided to enhance school board financial management through the Regional Internal Audit Team (RIAT) component within the Data Management and Audit Allocation.
- **Differentiated Funding for Online Learning:** The online learning and the in-person and remote learning credit load benchmarks are being updated to reflect a change to the assumption of the proportion of secondary students taking one online credit during the regular school day, equivalent to 16 per cent. The 2025-2026 secondary benchmark for classroom teacher staffing and related allocations will use a funded average credit load of 7.5 credits per pupil split between online learning (approximately 0.16) and in-person and remote learning (approximately 7.34).
- **Temporary Accommodations:** For the 2025-2026 school year, the Temporary Accommodations Allocation (TAA) is increasing from \$40 million to \$70 million.

Responsive Education Program (REP). For 2025-2026 REP funding of \$420.4 million was allocated to boards in the following areas:

Literacy \$99.5M	STEM \$71.4M	Supporting Vulnerable Students \$50.1M
Mental Health \$25.2M	Operations \$22.5M	
Student Readiness \$13.8M	Indigenous Education \$10.1M	French-Language Education \$8.1M

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- “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27)

OCSTA

LABOUR RELATIONS

Director of Labour Relations, Angelo Romano



Strategic Priority

Ensure that the OCSTA successfully fulfills its role as the legislated Employer Bargaining Agent for all Ontario's English Catholic School Boards in the Province of Ontario.

Overview

The OCSTA Labour Relations committee provides continued oversight and strategic direction regarding provincial labour relations and collective bargaining matters. The Labour Relations department staff, under the leadership of Angelo Romano, and labour relations advisors continue to ensure that OCSTA fulfills its obligations as the employer bargaining agent for all 29 Catholic school boards under the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act (SBCBA), and related workplace law statutes, including the Labour Relations Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Further, OCSTA helps support and provide guidance on the administration and implementation of collective agreements, the defense of Catholic school board interests in employment related matters and Crown advocacy. Within existing structures, OCSTA engages in advocacy, communicates concerns to the Crown in bargaining issues, protects the interests of Catholic school boards in central mediations and arbitrations. This includes and is not limited to the following:

1. Engagement in ongoing working groups mandated in collective agreements;
2. planning and preparation for upcoming collective bargaining;
3. consultations and advocacy; and
4. involvement in outstanding workplace issues respecting benefits and executive compensation.

OCSTA wishes to recognize and thank our 29 Member Catholic Boards for your confidence and strong support throughout this past year.

On December 31, Pam DeNobrega retired from OCSTA after providing decades of dedicated and faith filled service. We thank her for her outstanding service and wish her good health, happiness and all of God's blessings in her retirement.

Protecting The Interests of Member Boards

In protecting the interests of Catholic school boards in litigation, OCSTA participated as party, which included in several mediation and arbitration implementation matters. The labour relations department

continues to oversee and support central collective agreement and terms and conditions implementation matters, central grievances, mediations and arbitrations. In addition, on a local level,

OCSTA continues to provide assistance to boards on central interpretations and local grievances that may have a broader sector-wide impact, as well as supporting boards in first-contract negotiations.

Working Committees

OCSTA has been an active participant in ongoing working groups and committees mandated by collective agreements, a number of which have continued to operate in 2025-2026.

The Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS), a joint initiative between trustee associations, unions and the ministries of Education and Labour, has produced a survey on workplace violence and is in the process of reviewing resource materials, including an update to the Guide to the Law resource booklet. The PWGHS continues to meet and discuss health and safety issues arising in the educational workplace, including violence, the measles outbreak, air quality guidelines, reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), and best practices in the areas of health and safety.

OCSTA also continues to work with a dedicated provincial committee on health and safety with OECTA.

The Learning and Services Continuity and Absenteeism Task Force was a joint initiative between trustee associations, unions and the ministries of Education and Labour, with a mandate to review sick leave data and explore leading practices related to learning and service continuity and absenteeism. The work of this committee has concluded. OCSTA has taken additional steps to support boards with respect to the sick leave impacts on the sector (discussed below).

The Education Worker Diverse and Inclusive Workforce Committee is also a joint venture between trustee associations, unions and the ministries of Education and Labour. It strives to identify best

practices that foster diverse and inclusive workforces reflective of Ontario's communities, including but not limited to reviewing existing recruitment, retention and promotion strategies that aim to eliminate barriers for individuals who identify as members of historically underrepresented groups. The committee continues to meet.

The Principal Provincial Liaison Committee was formed during the last round of principal/vice-principal negotiations. It continues to meet, discuss and facilitate issues related to principal and vice-principal terms and conditions, including but not limited to implementation issues arising out of the most recent agreement. The committee includes representatives of the three principal associations, all four trustee associations and the Crown.

Collective Bargaining

OCSTA bargains provincial contracts on behalf of all 29 Catholic school boards in the province. OCSTA participates at six different bargaining tables with the Crown and the Council of Trustee Associations (CTA). The teacher federation/unions meet solely with their respective trustee association (e.g. OCSTA and OECTA) and the Crown. The SBCBA guides the process of provincial bargaining.

According to the SBCBA, the parties (union and employer representatives) and the Crown (participant) must agree on the issues that will be bargained centrally, and those items form the scope of central

bargaining. The CTA bargains with all education worker unions representing non-teaching staff in the four publicly funded school systems (English Catholic, French Catholic, English public and French public). As part of the CTA, OCSTA has representatives on each of the bargaining teams.

The current collective agreements in the sector expire on August 31, 2026. Under current rules, notice to commence collective bargaining may be served 90 days prior to expiration or, where a regulation is in place, up to six months in advance. The expected notice to bargain date is June 1, 2026.

Under the SBCBA, the parties are required to meet within 15 days of the notice, unless mutually agreed otherwise.

Labour relations staff have begun bargaining preparations for all bargaining units, including the creation of a stakeholder consultation process, including the distribution of a bargaining priorities survey, a data collection template and small-group stakeholder discussions. A considerable amount of uncertainty accompanies the upcoming bargaining process, including legislative changes, timing and the anticipated duration.

Labour Consultation and Advocacy

OCSTA continues to participate in ongoing Government of Ontario consultations on various education sector issues and has made every effort to put forward the concerns and priorities of school boards, including providing input regarding the most recent changes to Ontario

Regulation 298/25, which amends background check procedures for publicly funded school boards and also makes changes to Ontario Regulation 521/01 — *Collection of Personal Information*.

OCSTA has also worked to address matters arising from first agreement collective

bargaining, collective bargaining implementation issues, the Early Reading Screening program, attendance support programs, executive compensation and those issues distinct to Catholic school boards.

■ “Profound joy of the heart is like a magnet that indicates the path of life.” — Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Labour Stakeholder Engagement

OCSTA has continued to build strong relationships with its various stakeholders and partners in the sector through the offering of professional development and faith formation opportunities.

Senior Human Resources and Senior Business officials were invited to participate in a full day professional development

and faith formation opportunity, which was undertaken in collaboration with the Ontario Catholic School Business Officials' Association (OCSBOA).

Moreover, labour relations staff hosted a half day sick leave knowledge sharing forum to support Catholic school boards in navigating the increasingly complex and

rising costs associated with sick leave. The forum featured a presentation by representatives from School Boards' Co-operative Inc. (SBCI), along with a showcase of initiatives implemented by several school boards which have resulted in reduced utilization, cost savings, and improved operational efficiencies.

Benefits Trust

OCSTA is a party to the Employee Life and Health Benefit Trusts (ELHT) for the following groups:

- CUPE,
- OECTA,
- OSSTF-EW,
- ETFO-EW, and
- ONE-T.

The parties of the ELHTs continue to discuss and resolve operational matters of joint interest that arise. OCSTA, along with its partner trustee associations, participates as an employer representative on the OCEW and EWAO benefits committees in respect of these

benefit programs. OCSTA also has representatives on the OECTA Employee Life and Health Benefit Trust.

Labour Relations Resolutions

OCSTA's Labour Relations Committee continues to support local Catholic school boards by providing a forum for receiving, reviewing and,

where appropriate, acting on their labour-relations-related resolutions. Within existing structures, OCSTA engages in advocacy, communicates

concerns and positions to the Crown in bargaining and bargaining preparation, and protects the interests of Catholic school boards in litigation.

OCSTA

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Director of Catholic Education, Anne O'Brien



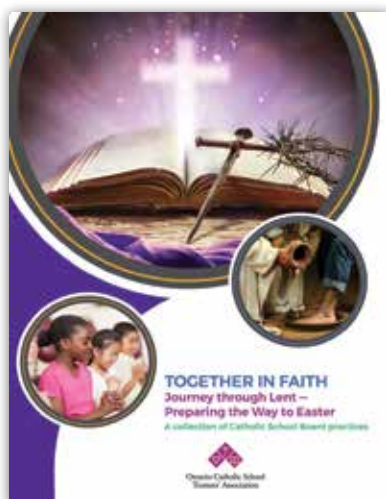
Strategic Priority

Engage trustees in an enriched capacity building program by assessing current needs and developing related services and resources to meet those needs.

Faith Formation Resources

OCSTA remains committed to supporting Catholic school boards in promoting the Catholic identity of publicly funded Catholic education. This priority is supported through the growing faith formation library featuring OCSTA's *Together in Faith* series of publications.



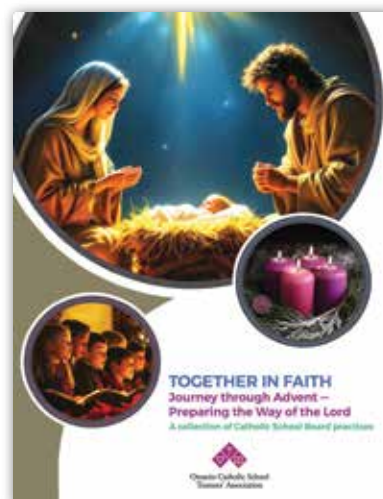


The Journey Through Lent

In 2025, OCSTA completed a collection of school board practices honouring the Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and sending of the Spirit of Christ in the publication *Journey Through Lent: Preparing the Way to Easter*.

This resource is organized into four areas, including home, school, parish and the Catholic community, offering promising Lenten and Easter practices taking place across our 29 Catholic school boards.

It is hoped that by sharing these promising practices, Catholic schools and districts can work in partnership with parishes, families and the community to celebrate faith and the life of Jesus Christ with our students and families throughout the Lenten season and every day.



The Journey through Advent

Around the world, Advent refers to a four-week season of reflecting on and celebrating the arrival of Jesus on Earth. It's a time to contemplate the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth and celebrate in joyful anticipation of when he will come again to reunite Heaven and Earth once and for all. This resource is intended to be a summary of promising Advent practices that are taking place across our 29 Catholic school boards in the Province of Ontario. These practices all support the call in *Renewing the Promise* for our children to encounter Jesus every day in our Catholic schools.

Journey Through Advent: Preparing the Way of the Lord promising practices resource is organized into four sections: home, school, parish and Catholic community.

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- Love of God and love of neighbour are one love," Pope Francis continued, explaining that "the contemplative dimension" of Lent can help us "release new energies," to be "more sensitive to one another: in the place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers." — Pope Francis, Lenten Message, 2019

Catholic Education Week

Each year, the Catholic community of Ontario engages in a week-long celebration of the distinct identity and significant contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week.

The 2025 theme for Catholic Education Week was “Catholic Education: Pilgrims of Hope” and took place during the week of May 4 to 9.



The theme for Catholic Education Week 2025 was inspired by the following considerations:

- In February 2022, Pope Francis announced that the theme for the upcoming 2025 Holy Year would be “Pilgrims of Hope.” “We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision.” (from Vatican News, a short video on the history of the Jubilee/Holy Year)
- The Holy Father asked us to focus prayerfully on the bonds that unite our whole human family, to reflect on the rampant poverty in our world, and to think about the plight of the many refugees forced to leave their homes. He also summons us, as stewards of Creation, “to contemplate the beauty of creation and care for our common home.”
- A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey of movement toward a goal, often lived together with others—and that certainly describes Catholic education. Hope—one of the three theological virtues—is grounded in our Easter faith in Jesus’ resurrection and renewal; this is what enables us to be builders, dreamers and leaders in Jesus’ name.

- The Jubilee Year provided us the opportunity to serve the common good and recommit ourselves to prayer, service and evangelization. As Catholic school communities, school boards, and as individuals active in Catholic education, we were invited to prepare for this special year, and to live it with enthusiasm, creativity and generosity.

The Five Sub-themes of Catholic Education Week

The five sub-themes for Catholic Education Week explore ways to live out Pope Francis’ call for each one of us to be Pilgrims of Hope:

- by honouring human dignity/honorer la dignité humaine (Monday).
- by caring for creation/prendre soin de la création (Tuesday).
- by responding to the poverties in our world/lutter contre les pauvretés (Wednesday).
- by serving in solidarity/servir en solidarité (Thursday).
- by living as peacemakers/vivre en artisans de paix (Friday).

Quote for Catholic Education: Pilgrims of Hope L'éducation catholique: Pèlerins de l'espérance

Our quote for Catholic Education Week 2025 is:

"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us."

(Letter on the Jubilee Year of Hope, February 11, 2022)

"Nous devons garder allumée la flamme de l'espérance qui nous a été donnée."

(Lettre sur le Jubilé de l'espérance; 11 février 2022)



Pilgrims of Hope Catholic Education Week Prayer

Pilgrims of Hope Catholic Education Week Prayer

Hope is our calling, O Lord,
and the destination of our pilgrim journeys.

As we mark this Jubilee Year of hope,
keep our eyes focused on Jesus,
and on the hope he reveals to us.

May our hope lead us to love genuinely and to live generously.
In the dignity of every human being, may we honour your
presence.

In our stewardship of creation, may we care for your creatures,
large and small.

As we strive to respond to the poverties of our world, may we be
bearers of your compassion. As we live as people of solidarity,
may we help to heal the divisions of our world.

In our lives as peacemakers, may we share the "Shalom" which is
your gift to all people. Hope is the flame that has been entrusted
to us;

may we keep it burning brightly,
to enlighten the path of our pilgrim journey.

All our hope is in you, O God,
in the name of Jesus our Lord and companion.

Amen.

Catholic Identity Series

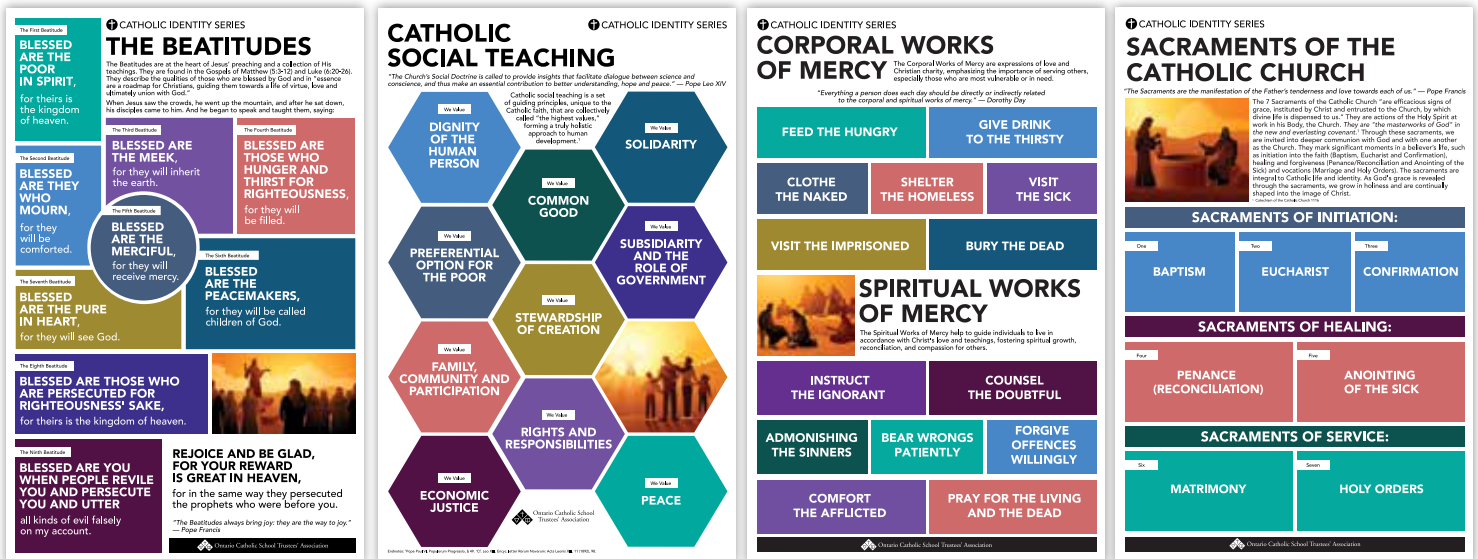
To support Catholic school boards in the celebration of the Jubilee Year, the OCSTA created a Catholic Identity Series of posters depicting a number of elements of our Catholic faith. The posters were developed and shared in each month's Pilgrims of Hope bulletin. The Jubilee Year Catholic Identity posters were provided to each Catholic school board in Ontario for teaching and display locally.

As outlined in the various OCSTA resources, we recognize that scripture, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, Catholic Social Teaching and the Sacraments are foundational elements that shape our Catholic identity.

Inspired by these foundational elements of our Catholic identity, students are inspired to live our faith, spreading the joy of coming to know and love Jesus Christ in their homes, parishes, schools and wider community.

We are grateful that Ontario's 29 Catholic school boards have introduced outstanding practices that give witness to their shared commitment to "place Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre" of students' learning experiences. The purpose of the next Together in Faith: Our Catholic Identity Series is to share and celebrate how we incorporate these elements into the academic and spiritual life of our classrooms, schools and systems.

Catholic Identity Series Posters:



■ Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy." — St. Francis of Assisi

SAINTS

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

"All of us must be Saints in this world. Holiness is a duty for you and me. So let us be Saints and so give glory to God!" — St. Thomas of Aquinas

Catholic saints are individuals who are recognized by the Catholic Church as having lived lives of exceptional holiness and virtue, offering their lives for others, were martyred for the faith, and whose lives are worthy of imitation. All Christians are called to be saints. Their lives offer concrete examples of how to live out the teachings of Christ in the midst of ordinary life. For Catholics, saints represent a "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) who have gone before, showing that holiness is attainable. In the Catholic Church, a canonized saint is a human who after their death is officially recognized as having "practised heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 828).

The canonization process in the Catholic Church is the formal procedure through which the Church officially recognizes a person as a saint. This process involves careful investigation of the person's life, virtues, miracles and impact on the Church. On the road to sainthood:

- 1. SERVANT OF GOD**
The canonization process typically begins after the person's death through which they can be considered for canonization (long after). The first official step is the title of "Servant of God," which is granted by the local bishop or the Vatican.
- 2. VENERABLE**
Once the Church has conducted a thorough investigation into the person's life, it will examine whether the individual lived a life of heroic virtue or suffered martyrdom for the faith.
- 3. BEATIFICATION**
The next step toward sainthood is beatification. Beatification is the official recognition that the person is in heaven and is worthy of public veneration, though they are not yet fully canonized as a saint. The person is declared Blessed (with a miracle required, or martyrdom recognized).
- 4. CANONIZATION**
The final step in the process is canonization, where the person is officially recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church. For Blessed individuals, one more miracle attributed to their intercession is usually required before they can be canonized. If the second miracle is verified, the Pope declares the person a saint in a formal ceremony, granting them a feast day and recognition as a saint within the universal Church.

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

"Those whose hearts are pure are temples of the Holy Spirit." — St. Lucy

The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit sustain the moral life of Christians. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit empower Catholics to live out their faith.

WISDOM	UNDERSTANDING
COUNSEL (RIGHT JUDGMENT)	FORTITUDE (COURAGE)
PIETY (REVERENCE)	FEAR OF THE LORD (AWE AND WONDER)

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are the visible signs of that empowerment in daily life. Together, they help form a Christian's identity and provide the grace needed to live a life that reflects Christ's love and holiness. The Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23:

LOVE (CHARITY)	JOY	PEACE
PATIENCE	KINDNESS	GOODNESS
FAITHFULNESS	GENTLENESS (MEEKNESS)	SELF-CONTROL

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

The Ten Commandments are a set of moral principles given by God to the Israelites, as recorded in the Bible, specifically in the Book of Exodus (Exodus 20:1-17) and Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 5:6-22). The Ten Commandments provide a foundational framework for how believers should relate to God and each other. They are a central aspect of what it means to be Catholic — not only in terms of outward behaviour but as an ongoing journey of conversion, grace and growth in Christlikeness.

"It is not that we keep His Commandments and then He loves us, but that He loves us then we keep His Commandments." — St. Augustine

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

The first three commandments focus on honoring God and maintaining a proper relationship with Him. The last seven commandments focus on living justly and peacefully with others.

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THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

"The Bible is not the story of our quest for God, but of God's passionate, relentless quest for us." — Bishop Robert Barron

The Bible is the divine inspired and written word of God. It holds profound spiritual significance for billions of Christian believers around the world. Comprising the Old and New Testament, it serves as the foundation of our faith, guiding us in our relationship with God, moral decisions, and daily living. More than just a historical document, the Catholic Bible is seen as the living Word of God, offering wisdom, comfort, and direction. Its teachings continue to shape hearts and communities reminding us of God's enduring presence and love in our lives.

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
- Genesis - Exodus - Leviticus - Numbers - Deuteronomy	- Matthew - Mark - Luke - John
- Joshua - Judith - Esther 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	- Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians - Galatians - Ephesians - Philippians - Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings - Isaiah - Ezekiel - Jeremiah - Lamentations - Baruch - Joel - Obadiah - Jonah - Micah - Nahum - Habakkuk - Zechariah - Malachi	- Hebrews - James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John - Jude
- Psalms - Proverbs - Ecclesiastes - Song of Songs - Wisdom - Sirach	- Paul's Letters - General Letters
- Isaiah - Jeremiah - Lamentations - Baruch - Joel - Obadiah - Jonah - Micah - Nahum - Habakkuk - Zechariah - Malachi	Apocalyptic Book

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PRAYER

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

Prayer helps nurture a closer connection with God, encourages self-reflection and supports ongoing spiritual development. Through prayer, Catholics come to understand their vocation, mission and identity as children of God and members of the Body of Christ. It's a personal, living relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through prayer, Catholics express love, gratitude, sorrow for sins and ask for help and guidance.

5 Basic Forms of Prayer:

- ADORATION** Praising God
- CONFESSION** Saying sorry
- INTERCESSION** Praying for someone
- SUPPLICATION (PETITION)** Asking for something
- THANKSGIVING** Thanking God

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2559) describes prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God."

"There is no such thing as being powered out for mission apart from Christ and a life of prayer." — Sister Therese Bonner

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

VIRTUES

CATHOLIC IDENTITY SERIES

Virtues are habits or qualities that help a person live in alignment with God's will and grow in holiness. Virtues are seen as essential for living a good and moral life, and they form the foundation for Christian living. They are categorized into theological virtues and cardinal virtues, with each playing a unique role in the life of a Christian.

The three theological virtues are the foundational virtues that directly relate to God. These virtues enable us to have a relationship with God and live according to His plan. Theological virtues:

- FAITH** Belief in God and trust in His promises.
- HOPE** Desire for eternal life and trust in God's grace.
- CHARITY** Selfless love for God and others.

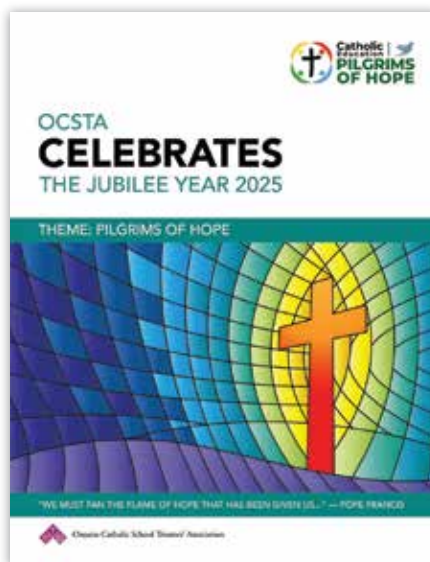
The four cardinal virtues are considered moral virtues, which guide our actions and behaviour in a way that aligns with moral goodness. Cardinal virtues:

- PRUDENCE** Wisdom in making decisions.
- JUSTICE** Fairness and giving others their due, in fairness and respect.
- FORTITUDE** Courage to face trials and challenges.
- TEMPERANCE** Moderation in desires and actions.

"All of us can attain to Christian virtue and holiness, no matter in what condition of life we live and no matter what our life work may be." — St. Francis de Sales

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

Throughout the Jubilee Year OCSTA issued a monthly "Pilgrims of Hope" Bulletin that served as a classroom and board-wide resource providing prayers, reflections, scriptural and faith tradition references in honour of the Jubilee Year. To capture the rich information of these bulletins for convenient future reference, OCSTA has compiled all Jubilee Year Pilgrims of Hope Bulletins into one publication. We invite all to [download](#) this publication from the OCSTA website.



Indigenous Leads Conference

OCSTA was pleased to host the third annual Indigenous Leads' Seminar for Catholic District School Boards. We had many engaging learning experiences led by distinct Indigenous voices and perspectives.

Evening Talking Circle with Albert Dumont



Albert Dumont, South Wind, is a poet, storyteller, speaker and Algonquin traditional teacher. He was born in Algonquin Territory (Kitigan Zibi). As Ottawa's poet laureate from 2021 to 2023, he has published six books of poetry and short stories, and two children's books, written in three languages.

Albert has dedicated his life to promoting Indigenous spirituality and healing, and to protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples, particularly the young. He has participated in Grandparent and Elders councils and many advisory committees in Ottawa and Toronto.



Marc Forquette, a French Algonquin member of the Apitipi Anicinapek Nation (formerly Wahgoshig First Nation), took Conference participants for a walking tour around Ottawa to discuss Truth and Reconciliation.

Marc is the founder of Makatew Workshops and provides hands-on workshops and educational speaking engagements with a focus on Algonquin culture and Truth and Reconciliation.



Keynote Speaker: Stephanie Sarazin

Stephanie is a multidisciplinary and multi-talented Anishinaabe woman from the Algonquin community of Pikwakanagan First Nation who shared perspectives and tips for Indigenous education educators from a community-support perspective. She also shared insights and observations about decolonizing and Indigenizing education that can inform school board reflection and planning.



Keynote Speaker: Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair

Interactive Reflection and Planning for Action: Indigenous leads were invited to participate in various groups facilitated by Niigaan Sinclair focusing on

1. Indigenous Spirituality in Catholic Systems and Smudging Protocols;
2. Collaborative Provincial Professional Development;
3. School Board Wide Indigenous Education Frameworks;
4. Intermediate/Secondary Indigenous Student Associations and Events;
5. Elementary Indigenous Student Associations and Events;
6. Land-Based Learning, and;
7. Indigenous Identity Affirmation Policy

■ "It is essential to show special care for Indigenous communities and their cultural traditions...For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values." (*Laudato Si'* 146)

Catholic Online Learning

Catholic Virtual Ontario is the e-learning initiative launched by OCSTA in 2022 in response to the government's mandate that all students be required to take a minimum number of online courses to graduate.

This initiative has helped to make available to students exceptional online curriculum developed through the lens of our Catholic faith, and meeting the approval of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and Ontario's Catholic school boards.

Phase 11. January 7 to June 12, 2025 – 13 courses

Code	Course Name
ASM3M	Grade 11, University/College Preparation, Media Arts
ASM3O	Grade 11, Open, Media Arts
AVI2O	Grade 10, Open, Visual Arts
AWQ2O	Grade 10, Open, Photography
ENGL1W	Grade 9, De-streamed, English
HFA4U	Grade 12, University Preparation, Nutrition and Health
HHG4M	Grade 12, University/College Preparation, Human Growth and Development
HNC3C	Grade 11, College Preparation, Understanding Fashion
HRF3OF	Grade 11, Open, Faith and Culture, French Immersion
HRT3MF	Grade 11, University/College Preparation, Faith and Culture, French Immersion
HZT4UF	Grade 12, University Preparation, Philosophy: Questions and Theories, French Immersion
PLF4M	Grade 12, University/College Preparation, Recreation and Health
TGJ2O	Grade 10, Open, Communications Technology

Phase 12. May 13 – August 14, 2025 – 5 courses

Code	Course Name
CPW4U	Grade 12, University Preparation, Canadian and International Politics
HHD3O	Grade 11, Open, Dynamics of Human Relationships
ICS3C	Grade 11, College Preparation, Introduction to Computer Programming
ICS4U	Grade 12, University Preparation, Computer Science (Remaining Units)
PPZ3C	Grade 11, College Preparation, Health for Life

Phase 13.

Code	Course Name
BEM1O	Grade 9, Open, Building the Entrepreneurial Mindset
BEP2O	Grade 10, Open, Launching and Leading a Business
CGC1W	Grade 9, De-streamed, Exploring Canadian Geography
EWC4C	Grade 12, College Preparation, The Writer's Craft
GPP3O	Grade 11, Open, Leadership and Peer Support
GWL3O	Grade 11, Open, Designing Your Future
HNC3C	Grade 11, College Preparation, Understanding Fashion
ICD2O	Grade 10, Open, Digital Technology and Innovations in the Changing World
TAS1O	Grade 9, Open, Technology and the Skilled Trades
TAS2O	Grade 10, Open, Technology and the Skilled Trades

Project Delivery Outputs and Performance Measurements — Beneficiaries and Usefulness

The main beneficiaries of this project are students in Catholic secondary schools. To date, 18,188 students from Ontario's Catholic school boards have registered in online courses in the first semester of the 2025-2026 school year via the Ontario e-Learning Consortium's (OeLC's) PRISM system. (Please note that some online courses were offered in local school boards and not listed in PRISM; therefore, these figures do not fully reflect the actual number of online sections offered.)

Grade	Sections
9	1
10	31
11	201
12	397
All	630

■ "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect."
(*Romans 12:2*)

In addition, please find in the following table data related to online courses from various subject areas and pathways. Note that this chart includes all regular day school courses offered by Catholic school boards in the first semester. It does not include night school, remote, or continuing education courses.

Subject	Sections
The Arts	13
Business Studies	73
Canadian and World Studies	76
Computer Studies	12
English	77
First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies	15
French as a Second Language	4
Guidance and Career Education	13
Health and Physical Education	26
Interdisciplinary Studies	9
Mathematics	42
Science	72
Social Sciences and Humanities	196
Technological Studies	2
Total sections in first semester	630

Subject	Sections
Academic	3
Applied	1
College	85
College/University	177
De-streamed	1
Essential/Workplace	0
Open	86
University	277
Total sections in first semester	630

As of February 9, 2026, 17,294 credits were earned by Catholic school students who had registered for an online course through PRISM in the 2025-2026 school year. This number is approximately a 50% increase from the 11,551 students who earned a credit by the mid-point of the school year in 2025.

In terms of the percentage increase over last year of students in the English Catholic education system who registered in online courses, ONSIS data is likely the best source for this information, since some Catholic school boards are not yet using PRISM to share seats in all their online courses. However, we know that 18,188 students from Catholic school boards enrolled in online courses in first semester via PRISM this year, as compared to 12,317 students last year at this time. This represents a 58 % increase over last year.

Catholic Virtual Ontario (CVO) Resources

CVO continues to create online resources to support the integration of Catholic content and context into our Catholic courses.

To view these resources, visit: www.catholicvirtualontario.org.



CVO Brochure

Get the facts about Catholic online learning courses and learn what to expect when you enrol in an online course through an Ontario Catholic district school board.



Student Trustees — Ontario Student Youth Day

On May 7, 2025, during Catholic Education Week (CEW), Catholic school board communities throughout our province celebrated Ontario Catholic Student Youth Day (OCSYD). The provincial Catholic student trustee leadership team took on the task of planning an engaging and interactive virtual event centred on our CEW theme, Pilgrims of Hope. All Catholic secondary school students were invited to attend.



Featured Speaker

Walking the Path of Leadership – Theland Kicknosway's Journey

Theland Kicknosway, Indigenous leader, singer and advocate from the Wolf Clan of the Potawatomi and Cree Nations.

As a powerful voice for Indigenous youth, Theland spoke about the importance of representation, cultural identity and the role of Indigenous influencers in shaping the future. Through music, storytelling and activism, he empowered all young people to embrace their roots, share their voices and create positive changes in their communities.



Indigenous Influencers Project and Presentation

Indigenous Influencers and Contributors — Student Trustees' Presentations

Student trustees individually presented their research on more than 50 key Indigenous leaders across Canada and beyond who were pioneers in their various disciplines. The students connected these influencers to the Catholic social teachings and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Alignment of the integration of this project into the Ontario curriculum was also reviewed.



Provincial Mass

His Excellency, Bishop Douglas Crosby

The Catholic Education Week provincial mass was celebrated by the Most Rev. Douglas Crosby, Bishop of Hamilton. Mass was live-streamed from the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King to classrooms and families across Ontario and beyond.

Indigenous Influencers — Posters

The student trustees' path to truth and reconciliation includes various priorities. Having studied Indigenous influencers and created posters of key individuals, this year's goal was to convert 59 Indigenous influencers posters to French to support learning in our French immersion classrooms. Samples include:

SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES AL HACKNER  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Al Hackner est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 2. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 3. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 4. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 5. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Citoyen de la Red Rock Indian Band, à Thunder Bay. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Al Hackner est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Al Hackner est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Présentation et biographie: Al Hackner est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES ASHLEY CALLINGBULL  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Ashley Callingbull est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 2. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 3. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 4. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 5. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Crie de la Première Nation criée d'Enoch. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Ashley Callingbull est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Ashley Callingbull est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Présentation et biographie: Ashley Callingbull est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES AUTUMN PELTIER  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Autumn Peltier est une activiste et une leader. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 2. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 3. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 4. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 5. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Anishinaabe du territoire non cédé de Williamsburg. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Autumn Peltier est une activiste et une leader. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Autumn Peltier est une activiste et une leader. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Présentation et biographie: Autumn Peltier est une activiste et une leader. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES JASON SIMON  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Jason Simon est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 2. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 3. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 4. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 5. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Anishinaabe, de la Première Nation Anishinaabe. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Jason Simon est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Jason Simon est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Présentation et biographie: Jason Simon est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:
SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES L'HONORABLE MURRAY SINCLAIR  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Murray Sinclair est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 2. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 3. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 4. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 5. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Anishinaabe, de la Première Nation Peguis. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Murray Sinclair est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Murray Sinclair est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Présentation et biographie: Murray Sinclair est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES NICOLE AUNAPU MANN  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Nicole Aunapu Mann est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 2. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 3. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 4. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. 5. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Wulak, membre issu des tribus indiennes de Round Valley. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Nicole Aunapu Mann est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Nicole Aunapu Mann est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Présentation et biographie: Nicole Aunapu Mann est une actrice et une chanteuse. Elle a été élue Miss Canada en 2012. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES WAB KINW  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Wab Kinw est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 2. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 3. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 4. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 5. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Anishinaabe, issu de la Première Nation Ojibway d'Ongarung. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Wab Kinw est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Wab Kinw est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Présentation et biographie: Wab Kinw est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:	SENE INFLUENCEURS AUTOCHTONES WILFRED BUCK  Cinq faits intéressants: 1. Wilfred Buck est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 2. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 3. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 4. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. 5. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Cri, de la nation criée d'Ongarung. Citoyen pour : Affaires indiennes (Indigenous Affairs) Présentation et biographie: Wilfred Buck est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Liens avec l'engagement social de l'Église: Wilfred Buck est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Présentation et biographie: Wilfred Buck est un homme d'affaires et un homme politique. Il a été élu député fédéral pour la circonscription de Thunder Bay en 1993. Sources, crédits et informations supplémentaires:

“My longevity, to still be curling at this age and be competitive, is something I can be proud of and enjoy. My message to anyone would be to just keep playing and keep enjoying it.”
— Al Hackner

Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario

Provincial Mass

On Saturday, October 25, President Bellmore, Executive Director Patrick Daly, Director of Catholic Education, Anne O'Brien and Director of Communications, Sharon McMillan, attended the annual Father Patrick Fogarty Catholic Education of Ontario awards banquet where more than 140 Catholic school students from across Ontario received recognition for their inspiring Christian service and academic and co-curricular achievements.



OCSTA President and CEFO Board Member Michael Bellmore with Principal Fiorina Christina Raso-Howard and student — representing St. Albert Learning Centre, Sudbury Catholic DSB — recipient of the Michael Monk Award for 2025.



OCSTA Director of Catholic Education Anne O'Brien participated in the presentation of CEFO awards to students from across the province.



Executive Director Patrick Daly with Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board award recipient, Joshua Canzio.



York Catholic DSB Chair Elizabeth Crowe and Trustee and OCSTA Board Member Jennifer Wigston with CEFO Award recipients from their board.

Modules

OCSTA continues to offer the following modules for Trustees to engage in ongoing self-directed professional learning, including our Dignity of the Human Person modules.

Module 1

Effective Governance

Module 2

Effective Governance for
Student Achievement and
Well-Being

Module 3

Roles and Responsibilities

Module 4

Common Ground, Common
Purpose: Key Relationships
in School Boards

Module 5

Director of Education:
Hiring and Performance
Appraisal

Module 6

The Strategic Role and
Multi-year Strategic Planning

Module 7

Exercising Authentic
Governance: The School
Board's Role as Policymaker

Module 8

Understanding Conflict and
Managing it Effectively

Module 9

Effective Community
Engagement to Support
Student Achievement

Module 10

Advocacy: Engaging the Public

Module 11

Legal Aspects of
School Board Governance

Module 12

Running Effective Meetings

Module 13

Education Finance

Module 14

School Boards and
Human Resources

Module 15

What Makes a
Great Board Chair?

Module 16

First Nation Trustees: Unique
Roles and Responsibilities

Module 17

Trustee Code of Conduct

Module 18

Social Media

Module 19

Audit and the Role of
Audit Committees

Module 20

A Journey Towards Truth
and Reconciliation

Module 21

Board Self-Assessment:
Governance Performance

CATHOLIC TRUSTEE ENRICHMENT



2025 AGM and Conference

OCSTA was pleased to co-host the Association's 95th AGM and Conference with the York Catholic District School Board. From May 1–3, 2025, more than 300 OCSTA delegates and guests participated in conference events at the Toronto Hilton/Markham Suites Hotel to celebrate publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario during this Jubilee year and aligned to the theme "Pilgrims of Hope."



As in previous years, this spring conference provided an opportunity for fellowship and connection as a community of Catholic education leaders to:

- discuss the issues impacting Catholic education;
- make decisions on the work and direction of the Association; and
- provide moments for reflective prayer, learning and consideration of the issues, ideas, opportunities and concepts that enrich and inspire Catholic school trustees and other education leaders.

The conference theme "Pilgrims of Hope" encompassed the mission of Catholic education. The conference program highlighted the importance of faith, community, perseverance, service and love in shaping students who will be the bearers of the message that our hope is in Christ. Through this pilgrimage, Catholic education invites everyone to embark on a journey toward a deeper relationship with God and to embrace the call to love and serve others.

Leading off the 2025 AGM and conference were the pre-conference regional meetings. At each of the five regional meetings, trustees discussed local and regional matters identified by participants in each region. Information was recorded by staff and used to inform ongoing initiatives and advocacy throughout the year.

President's Report



OCSTA President Michael Bellmore began his report with an acknowledgement and expression of gratitude for the dedication and faith-filled commitment to service demonstrated by the OCSTA Board of Directors, all Catholic trustees, directors of education and student trustees across the province.

He then reviewed the Association's current advocacy and strategic initiatives developed to address current priorities in Catholic education (the recorded President's Report is available in the Members Centre of the OCSTA website: www.ocsta.on.ca/members-centre)

Following his report, President Bellmore presented an award of recognition to Monica Galstyan, the York Catholic District School Board student trustee leader who also served as the provincial Catholic vice-president with the Ontario Student Trustees' Association. Monica was recognized for her dedication to connecting with her executive team and peers across the province to develop relevant and helpful student trustee leadership events and resources in alignment with the goals and priorities set by the Catholic student trustee membership.

■ "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." (*Matthew 9:35*)

Conference Presentation Highlights



Keynote presenter, former PC leader Tim Hudak.

The main sessions of OCSTA's 95th AGM and Conference featured high-profile speakers, presentations and workshops that examined relevant and current issues in education today, with a particular focus on matters shaping the priorities for Catholic trustees and other Catholic education leaders provincially. To access the presentations and recordings from the 2025 AGM and Conference, please visit the [OCSTA Presentations Centre](#).

Workshops

Conference workshops provided opportunities for smaller sessions that focused on key practices, policies and initiatives of relevance and priority to Catholic school boards. The lineup for the 2025 AGM and Conference workshops included the following:

1. Human Trafficking and Internet Child Exploitation — presented by York Regional Police
2. Current Topics in Labour Relations — presented by Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
3. The Need for an Integrated Approach to Manage Risk — presented by MNP
4. School Safety Zones: New Barriers to Local Safety Initiatives and Implementation — panel presentation by the Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB
5. Student Trustee Workshop: Walking the Path of Student Leadership and Service — presented by Theland Kicknosway, Indigenous leader
6. Student Trustee Workshop: Indigenous Influencers — presented by OCSTA and OSTA-AECO representatives



Student Trustees at the OCSTA 95th AGM and Conference in Markham.

■ "If one member suffers, all suffer with it: if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26)

- “The heart and soul of Catholic education is Jesus Christ, and our school system finds its very reason for existence in its communication of the Christian message. The goal of Catholic education is nothing less than a truly holistic formation of persons who will be living witnesses to the faith.”
– *Fulfilling the Promise*, 1993

Elections

All 8 candidates for the 2025 AGM Regional Directors election were acclaimed.

“I am pleased to acknowledge with gratitude all the candidates who put their name forward to serve the mission of Catholic

education at the provincial level as an OCSTA Regional Director. The newly acclaimed trustees accept the call to serve Catholic education and share a commitment to place Christ and the teachings of the

Catholic Church at the centre of students’ learning experiences. I look forward to serving with them in the best interest of Catholic Education,” said OCSTA President Michael Bellmore.

OCSTA Regional Directors — Election Results:

Region 1: Colleen Landers, Northeastern CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 2: Paul Landry, Kenora CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 3 (at large): Glenn Sheculski, Northeastern CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 4: Lori Di Castri, Bruce-Grey CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 5: John Van Heck, St. Clair CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 9: Morgan Ste. Marie, Durham CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 10: Brian Evoy, Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB (acclaimed)

Region 11: Danny Di Lorenzo, Niagara CDSB (acclaimed)

*CDSB — Catholic District School Board

Regions 6, 7, 8, 12 and 13 are represented by trustees who are appointed by their respective boards. View the complete list of the OCSTA Board of Directors [here](#).

OCSTA Awards Program

The Association was pleased to acknowledge outstanding Catholic education leadership and service through the annual OCSTA Awards Program. This year's awards recognized the following individuals:



2025 OCSTA Trustee Award of Merit Recipient Trustee David Howard, Vice-Chair, Renfrew County CDSB ([view profile](#))



2025 OCSTA Special Award Recipient Most Reverend Fred Colli, Retired Bishop, Diocese of Thunder Bay ([view profile](#))



2025 OCSTA Student Trustee Alumni Award Recipients Aaron Paul and Ajoy Paul, Former Student Trustees, Durham CDSB ([view profile](#))



l-r: Angela Kennedy, Toronto CDSB; John Caputo, Huron-Superior CDSB; OCSTA President, Michael Bellmore; Lindsay Liske, Huron-Superior CDSB; Sandra Turco, Huron-Superior CDSB.

25-Year Catholic Trustee Service Awards Recipients



John Caputo, Huron-Superior CDSB
Lindsay Liske, Huron-Superior CDSB
Carol MacEachern, Huron-Superior CDSB
Sandra Turco, Huron-Superior CDSB
Angela Kennedy, Toronto CDSB

Committee Acknowledgement

The 2025 OCSTA AGM and Conference was organized by OCSTA's Catholic Education and Trustee Enrichment (CETE) Committee and the Conference Planning Committee of our co-hosting board the York Catholic District School Board. We are sincerely grateful for the leadership and support provided by these committees and are pleased to list below the names of these committee members:

York Catholic District School Board Conference Planning Committee



Elizabeth Crowe — Chair, Maria Iafrate — Vice-Chair, Angela Saggese — Trustee, Jennifer Wigston — Trustee and OCSTA Director; Michaela Barbieri — Trustee, John De Faveri — Director of Education, Jennifer Sarna — Associate Director, Joel Chiutsi — Superintendent, Tim Laliberte — Superintendent, Mark Brosens — Director of Communications, Silvana Greco — Coordinator, Trustee Services, David Pimentel — Principal, Religious and Family Life Education, Nancy Davie — Consultant, Religious and Family Life Education, Francesca Sarcinella — Consultant, Religious and Family Life Education.

OCSTA Catholic Education and Trustee Enrichment Committee

Jennifer Wigston — Chair, Michael Bellmore — OCSTA President, Colleen Landers — OCSTA Director, Paul Landry — OCSTA Director, Mark Mullan — OCSTA Director, Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota — OCSTA Director, Garry Tanuan — OCSTA Director, Shawn Xaviour — OCSTA Director.

- “Dear Lord, I thank You for the works that You have done in Your Father’s name for they bear witness of You. I believe in You because I am Your sheep, You are my good shepherd. I heard Your voice, know You, and follow You. Thank You for the eternal life that You have promised to Your sheep. Lord, on this good shepherd Sunday, I will give thanks because in You I will never perish! No one will snatch me from Your hand. You Father, who has given me to You, is greater than them all, Amen.” — Pope St. John Paul II

OCSTA 2025 Fall Regional Meetings

The annual OCSTA cross-province fall regional meetings launched on September 17 with the East Region meeting hosted by the Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB, followed by meetings in the northeast region at the Northeastern CDSB, in the central region at the Halton CDSB, in the west region at the Wellington CDSB, and in the northwest region at the Thunder Bay CDSB.



OCSTA President Michael Bellmore at the East Regional Meeting, hosted by the Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB.



OCSTA West Regional Meeting delegates at the Wellington Catholic District School Boards Catholic Education Centre.



OCSTA Northeast Regional Meeting delegates at the Timmins Museum (hosted by the Northeastern CDSBs).



Chair of the Halton CDSB, Marvin Duarte welcoming delegates to the OCSTA Central Regional Meeting hosted by the Halton CDSB.



OCSTA Executive Director, Patrick Daly at the Northwest Regional Meeting.



Delegates at the OCSTA Northwest Regional Meeting hosted by the Thunder Bay CDSB.

Regional meetings provide an opportunity for Catholic trustees within each of the five regions of the province to discuss with their peers and the Association's provincial executive, local and system-wide issues and priorities in Catholic education.

In 2025, the fall regional meetings focused on the following topics:

- Bill 33 — *Supporting Children and Students Act*, 2025 and Education Governance
- Catholic Identity and the Role of Catholic Trustees

- Group discussions focused on the following topics:

- Current challenges
- Positive practices implemented by boards to mitigate the impact of current challenges
- Points of celebration and achievement

OCSTA appreciates the support of all participants in these local events and especially the Catholic District School Board hosts for each of the 2025 fall regional meeting sessions:

- Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB
- Northeastern CDSB
- Halton CDSB
- Wellington CDSB
- Thunder Bay CDSB

2026 Catholic Trustees Seminar



Inspired by Faith, United in Mission was the hope-filled theme for OCSTA's 2026 Catholic Trustees Seminar. This past January, almost 200 Catholic Trustees, Directors of Education, Student Trustees, Clergy, senior staff and partners in Catholic education gathered in Toronto

over two days to pray, learn and discuss a number of challenges and opportunities.

The tone for this year's seminar was set in the inspiring opening keynote address delivered by the Most Rev. Gerard Bergie, Bishop of St. Catharines and President of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. He spoke about the vocation of the Catholic School Trustee and encouraged delegates to embrace their shared mission to "go make disciples." While acknowledging the crucial importance of partnership, he highlighted unity as a "hallmark" in the history of publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

Catholic Trustees Seminar Workshops

The 2026 Catholic Trustees Seminar workshops were designed to equip Trustees with timely information on topics important to their role and relevant to the priority topics in education today.

Following is the list of workshops offered — please check the OCSTA 2026 Catholic Trustees Seminar Presentations section of the [Members Centre](#) on the OCSTA website to review documents and presentations that were shared with delegates.

Workshop Topics



Transparency, Accountability and Good Stewardship of Financial Resources — Discussion Panel — Presented by: Tracy McLennan, Associate Director, Corporate Services & Treasurer, Wellington CDSB; Paola Pace-Gubekjian, Associate Director of Corporate Services, Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB; and Erica Vervoort, CPA, CA, MAcc, Director, Audit and Assurance, Deloitte.

Effective Advocacy for Catholic School Boards — presented by: John Capabianca, VP and Senior Partner, National Practice Lead for Public Affairs, FleishmanHillard; Christopher Holz, Principal, Campbell Strategies.

Conversation in the Spirit — Strengthening Relationships, Cultivating Deep Listening and Discerning Priorities — presented by Linda Staudt, Canadian Synod Delegate and

Former Director of Education, London DCSB; Emelda Byrne, Director of Education, Windsor-Essex CDSB; Lisa Soulliere, Chair, Windsor-Essex CDSB; and Donna Nielsen, Trustee, CDSB of Eastern Ontario.

Crisis Management Practices in Catholic Schools —

Presented by: Michael Faught, Superintendent of Education; Mike Gundert, Coordinator of Religion & Family Life; Jessica Salmon, Manager of Strategic Communications, Algonquin & Lakeshore CDSB; Alexandra Frankow, Communications Officer; and Karen McKissick, CRSP, Safety Coordinator, Thunder Bay CDSB.

Student Trustee Workshops



Pilgrims of Hope: On the Path to Holiness — CCCB Pastoral Letter to Young People — presented by the Most Rev. Gerard Bergie, D.D., Bishop of St. Catharines and President of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.

Pilgrims of Hope: On the Path to Holiness — The Charisms of Saints (Working Session) — presented by Anne O'Brien, Director of Catholic Education, OCSTA; Ruben Da Silveira, Chair, Catholic Student Trustees.

Short Video Contest Awards

The OCSTA annual short video contest for students provides an opportunity for students in Grades 4–12 at our Catholic schools to interpret key values and tenets of our Catholic faith and social teachings using their skills in communications and the video medium.

This year, students were asked to create videos that communicate the 2025–2026 Catholic education theme “Pilgrims of Hope: On the Path to Holiness.”

Below are pictures from the awards screening and presentations at the 2026 Catholic Trustees Seminar. To view the winning videos, visit the [OCSTA website](#).

Elementary Division Winners



1st place: St. Mary's CES,
“Pilgrims of Hope — On a Path
to Holiness” Niagara CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)



2nd place: Pope Pius XII CES,
It Just Takes One Holy Voice
Sudbury CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)



3rd place: St. Marguerite
d'Youville Catholic Elementary
School, “Pilgrims of Hope: On the
Path to Holiness” Durham CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)

Secondary Division Winners



1st place: St. Paul Catholic High
School, “Defining Hope: The
Patriot Journey” Niagara CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)



2nd place: Fr. Michael McGivney
Catholic Academy, “Hope not
Magic” York CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)



3rd place: Cardinal Carter CSS,
“God Loves You” Windsor-Essex
CDSB

[YouTube Link](#)

OCSTA Catholic Education Leadership Speaker Series



The OCSTA Catholic Education Leadership Speaker Series is provided virtually and at no cost to OCSTA members. Each session offers access to live presentations by leading experts on topics that are important to Catholic education leaders and, in particular, Catholic Trustees.

At the start of the school year, we were pleased to welcome back author, historian, University of St. Michael's College (UofT) professor and former Catholic School Trustee Dr. Mark McGowan. Dr. McGowan's presentation was on a timely topic — **"The Integral Role and Contribution of Catholic School Trustees in Ontario."**

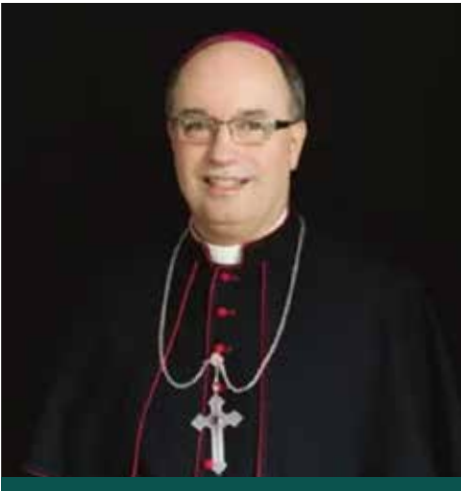
This very well-received presentation was followed up with a distinctly different type of session entitled **"Balancing the Heart and Mind: Reflections for Catholic School Trustee Well-Being,"** presented by Kelly Lazure Valconi, Sr. Manager, Pastoral Services, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB, and Fr. Jim Mockler, OCSTA Chaplain.



Following are a few excerpts from the feedback we received from participants in this session:

"Very practical tools that can be implemented easily and result in short-term and longer-term results. Presented with good scientific support and in a context of faith. Tailored specifically to my role as a Trustee in an often challenging environment. Extremely well done!"

"Outstanding leadership PD! I didn't want the workshop to end. The interaction with Fr. Mockler, reflection and the pause in time, encouraged deep reflection!"



Later in the fall during the Advent season, we were pleased to position our Speaker Series event for that time frame as an “Advent Retreat.” Leading this special evening virtual gathering and session was His Excellency The Most Rev. Daniel Miehm, Bishop of the Diocese of Peterborough and Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario liaison on the OCSTA Board of Directors.

Bishop Miehm’s presentation examined, through words and imagery, the panels on the Jubilee Doors at St. Peter’s Basilica (Rome), which depict pivotal moments in salvation history. As explained by Bishop Miehm, these images offer a rich visual means of understanding what Advent prepares us for: the coming of the long-promised Messiah and the unfolding of God’s mercy.

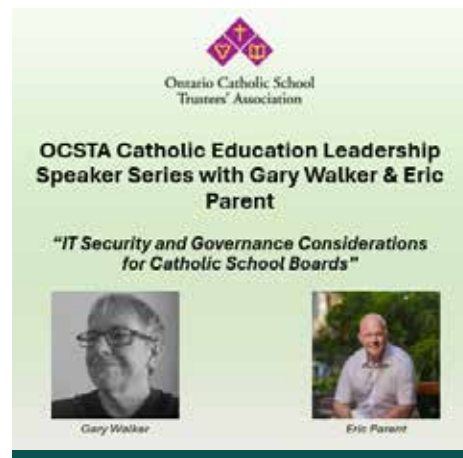
Finally, at the start of 2026, another timely and relevant speaker series was developed to address concerning security and IT issues in education.



As school boards undergo strategic restructuring of technology from the classroom to the administrative office, cybersecurity remains a critical component of operational stability. Cyberattacks have become more sophisticated, widespread, and damaging, requiring boards to shift from reactive defense to proactive risk management.

We were pleased to offer the following March Speaker Series session entitled **“IT Security and Governance Considerations for Catholic School Boards.”** This session was presented by Gary Walker, Business Continuity and IT Specialist and Eric Parent, Cybersecurity expert specializing in senior management coaching.

In our efforts to keep Catholic Trustees as informed and prepared as possible for changing and emerging issues and opportunities in education, OCSTA will continue to explore the most timely and relevant topics for these sessions, while incorporating into our research the interests and feedback of the Association membership.



OCSTA

COMMUNICATIONS

Director of Communications, Sharon McMillan



OCSTA recognizes that as democratically elected representatives of Catholic school boards, Catholic trustees interact with parents, board staff, parishioners, politicians and even the media, especially if serving as the Board Chair or spokesperson. To support the needs of trustees to be informed and prepared for these roles, OCSTA provides communication resources and tools through various means.

OCSTA Memos

Day to day legislative, operational, political and faith related news and updates are typically contained in Association memos that are sent directly to Catholic District School Board Chairs and Directors of Education for dissemination

to all trustees, depending on the confidentiality level of the memo. All memos are also accessible to members via the Members Centre on the OCSTA website.

- "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (*John 14:27*)

OCSTA Brochures

Early in 2026, OCSTA updated two key brochures that are available as printable files that can be downloaded, in addition to a limited number of printed copies.

- [Call to Service brochure](#): a colourful, two-sided bi-fold brochure that outlines the legal qualifications to becoming a Catholic

School Trustee and the primary responsibilities of this democratically elected governance role.

- Catholic Education — [Keeping Faith in Mind brochure](#): a colourful, two-sided, bi-fold brochure that describes with concise clarity Ontario's publicly funded Catholic education system. The

brochure also provides an overview of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. This brochure is ideal for parents and other Catholic ratepayers seeking to understand the distinctiveness and role of Ontario's Catholic education system.



Media Relations

OCSTA's efforts to raise the profile of Catholic education in social and traditional media also includes working with major provincial media to encourage coverage of the Catholic education provincial perspective on education matters.

- “No one can face life in isolation...We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead.” – Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*

Media Coverage

» TORONTO STAR «

Ontario seizes control of York Catholic school board, keeps Peel public under supervision, but choice of supervisors criticized

A record eight boards in the province have now been placed under supervision.

Toronto Star

Thursday, March 5, 2026,

Updated March 27, 2026

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association said it wants to work with the province to look at underfunding issues, particularly in special education, adding that "supervision should only be used as a last resort."

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CANADA

Catholic schools under Bill 33 gun, trustees say

Even before Ontario's Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, was officially passed Nov. 20, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association had voiced concerns about the problems it could cause and the lack of input from its members.

In the days following the bill's passing, Michael Bellmore, president of the OCSTA and chair of the Sudbury Catholic District School Board, spoke to *The Catholic Register* about those deep concerns in clear detail — including the bill's affect on the integrity of the Catholic school system.

"This legislation permits the minister to more easily take over a school board, as opposed to the past's very clear set of guidelines, and appoint a supervisor of their liking to have control over the board — that raises a huge flag for us," he said.



Ottawa's Catholic school boards grow faster than expected — again

French Catholic board says it has 6.3% more students this fall

Many factors at play

The president of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association said parents consider many things when deciding on the schools their children attend. (Both of Ottawa's Catholic boards accept students of all faiths.)

There are also unique factors at each board that affect those decisions, Michelle Bellmore wrote in an emailed statement.

"We also know that Catholic school boards' longstanding commitment to excellence in academic and co-curricular activities and priority on 'placing Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre' of students' learning experiences are significant contributing factors to the decisions made by parents," wrote Bellmore.

Association News Releases

OCSTA also generates coverage throughout the year by releasing timely news releases on priority topics for Catholic education. Trustees and Directors of Education are invited to view

all OCSTA's news releases for information and details on the Association's response to key announcements and developments in education. News Releases are stored at

the URL below (and are also sent to all trustees on the date of release): <https://www.ocsta.on.ca/category/news/news-releases>

Annual Catholic School Board Communications Seminar



Andrea Swinden, CMP, APR, Manager Strategic Communications, Halton CDSB



OCSTA Executive Director, Patrick Daly



Sharing best practices in Catholic education communications and leadership

Each year, OCSTA coordinates the annual Catholic School Board Communications Seminar for Catholic DSB communications staff. We were pleased to welcome at this year's event representatives from almost every school board in the province.

The 2025 Catholic School Board Communications Seminar Program included:

- Insightful commentary on the important role of CDSB communications staff by OCSTA President Michael Bellmore
- A comprehensive overview of key priorities in Catholic education today, presented by Executive Director Patrick Daly
- An examination of the OCSTA Catholic Identity Series resources that have been established to support greater awareness of Catholic values and principles and more frequent use in communications
- Andrea Swinden, CMP, APR, Manager, Strategic Communications — Halton Catholic DSB, who delivered a keynote presentation on internal communications entitled: One Mission, One Voice Nurturing Hope Through Internal Communications

- Pauline Stevenson, Manager, Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB who delivered a presentation on crisis communications entitled: Expect the Unexpected: Case Studies in Crisis Communications
- A roundtable discussion of best practices and achievements in Catholic education communications. We would like to thank the Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB for once again kindly agreeing to host this annual event and to Administrative Assistant Ashlee Cabral who helped in coordinating this seminar.

We are sincerely grateful to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB for providing the space for this gathering each year.

OCSTA

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

"One unified provincial voice for Ontario's English Catholic school boards..."



Throughout the history of Catholic education in Ontario, our system's strength has been our ability to organize our school trustees under the guiding principles of the Gospel to advance our shared goals for the promotion and protection of Catholic education in Ontario. We achieve those objectives through our ongoing lobbying efforts, our membership development services and the following key activities that directly benefit our members.

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- "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:27)

OCSTA:

1. Represents Catholic school boards on all provincial consultations and work groups.
 2. Provides advice to boards on significant policy issues.
 3. Provides an extensive array of classroom and community resources for Catholic Education Week. Information is located online at <http://www.goodnewsforall.ca>.
These resources resonate strongly with students, parents and parishes and boards have expressed their appreciation for the materials and information that are generated and shared.
 4. Lobbies the government on all funding issues most of which are identified by our member boards.
 5. Represents Catholic boards on significant legal issues as they arise.
 6. Develops provincial messaging and platforms on key issues and developments in education affecting Catholic schools and shares such strategic resources with boards.
- To further support effective school board communications and community relations, OCSTA hosts an annual professional development session for school board communication staff.
7. Provides enrichment opportunities for Catholic school board trustees and staff.
 - a. Supports online enrichment opportunities for Catholic school board trustees via the Trustee Professional Development Modules developed with input from OCSTA and delivered by the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) which is supported by all Ontario's school trustee associations. Those modules can be accessed online at the following URL: <https://modules.ontarioschooltrustees.org/?lang=en>
 - b. Annual trustee development events include January Catholic Trustees Seminar, Business Seminar, Labour Relations sessions (as needed) and the Annual General Meeting and Conference.
 8. The OCSTA Certificate Course in Leadership and Good Governance was made available to all trustees in 2019. Protects the interests of Catholic school boards by monitoring activity in the Legislature, including draft legislation, as well as the release of new Regulations to identify impact on Catholic boards and propose amendments as necessary.
 9. Maintains a provincial network, at both the political and staff levels, to position OCSTA to respond quickly to any issue of relevance to Catholic Schools.
 10. Serves as the designated bargaining agent for Ontario's 29 Catholic District School Boards.

This list is not exhaustive



In addition, OCSTA partners with the other three trustee associations and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) to provide many services, most with direct financial benefits to boards that are available only to boards that are members of their respective provincial association. For a comprehensive understanding, please go to the Ontario Education Services website at <http://oesc-cseo.org/English/services.html>

Examples of the services provided through OESC include:

- Serving as the intervenor at the Ontario Energy Board to keep energy costs down for school boards. An estimate of savings over the past year of \$3M for Ontario's Catholic school boards. This translates into a savings of \$5.50 per pupil which exceeds the cost of OCSTA membership.
- Provision of Behaviour Management Systems. This training is required for certain staff and is offered at a rate that saves all school boards, public and Catholic, approximately \$2M annually.
- Supporting the trustee election process by providing an array of resources located at <http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org> that are designed to
 - Raise the profile of trustee candidates and the municipal election process
 - Educate the public on the role of trustees and school boards
- Representation and co-ordination of initiatives pertaining to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This is ongoing and is meant to assist and guide boards through the various stages of implementation of the legislation and regulations. This service is a major savings for member boards that would otherwise be required to develop materials locally at significant expense.
- Development of resources on topics such as equity and inclusion, thereby saving each board the cost of developing such materials locally.

■ "The promise is that a true encounter with Jesus can and does take place, each and every day, within our Catholic schools. Together, we renew that promise by continuing to strengthen our Catholic schools as communities that exemplify the Good News of Jesus in word and in deed." — *Renewing the Promise*, pg. 15





ASSOCIATION GOVERNANCE

Executive

- Michael Bellmore, President, Sudbury CDSB
- Marino Gazzola, Vice-President, Wellington CDSB
- Beverley Eckensweiler, Past President, Bruce-Grey CDSB
- Patrick Daly, Executive Director

Regional Directors

- Region 1, Colleen Landers (Huron-Superior CDSB, Nipissing-Parry Sound CDSB, Northeastern CDSB, Sudbury CDSB).
- Region 2, Paul Landry (Kenora CDSB, NorthWest CDSB, Superior North CDSB, Thunder Bay CDSB).
- Region 3 (at large), Glenn Sheculski, Northeastern CDSB (Northern Regions No. 1 and 2).

- Region 4, Lori DiCastrì (Bruce-Grey CDSB, Huron-Perth CDSB, Waterloo CDSB, Wellington CDSB).
- Region 5, John Van Heck (London DCSB, St. Clair CDSB, Windsor-Essex CDSB).
- Region 6, Angela Kennedy, and Garry Tanuan (Toronto CDSB).
- Region 7, Luz del Rosario and Shawn Xaviour (Dufferin-Peel CDSB).
- Region 8, Jennifer Wigston, (York CDSB).
- Region 9, Morgan Ste. Marie, (Durham CDSB, Peterborough Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington CDSB, Simcoe-Muskoka CDSB).
- Region 10, Brian Evoy, (Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB, CDSB of Eastern Ontario, Renfrew County CDSB).

- Region 11, Danny Di Lorenzo (Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB, Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB, Niagara CDSB).
- Region 12, Mark Mullan, (Ottawa CSB).
- Region 13, Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota (Halton CDSB).
- Bishop Daniel Miehme, ACBO Liaison to OCSTA
- Fr. Jim Mockler, OCSTA Chaplain

OCSTA STAFF

Executive

- Executive Director, Patrick J. Daly
- Executive Assistant, Lorena Madalena
- Executive Assistant, Connie Araujo-De Melo

Legislation, Political Affairs, Finance

Legislative analysis, government submissions, advocacy, finance

- Director of Legislative and Political Affairs, Stephen Andrews
- Policy Advisor, Finance, Dan Duszczyzyn

Labour Relations

OCSTA is the designated employer bargaining agent for Ontario's English Catholic school boards

- Director of Labour Relations, Angelo Romano
- Manager of Labour Relations, Joseph Cull
- Labour Relations Advisor, Ron McNamara
- Labour Relations Advisor, Joe O'Hara

Catholic Education

Curriculum, faith enrichment programming, Catholic Education Week, Catholic Virtual Ontario

- Director of Catholic Education, Anne O'Brien

Communications

Media relations, membership communications, conference and Seminar program development, community relations, website management, publications

- Director of Communications, Sharon McMillan

Administrative Services

Event coordination, office management, accounting

- Director of Administrative Services, Margaret Binns
- Accountant, June Johnson

Administrative Support

Assistant — Communications and Catholic Education

- Ashlee Cabral

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-  "The more we foster and nurture Catholic identity, the more we promote the expression of that identity in service and witness to the world."
— *Renewing the Promise*, pg. 11

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■ "Education is a matter of the heart,
and God alone is its master." — St. John Paul II

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