



OAPCE 2022-2023 Year End Report

Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education

Engage

This past school year, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) has continued to advance

its parent engagement strategy with a focus on communication tools and channels that will maximize information sharing across the province among OAPCE liaison representatives in the membership boards to parents and stakeholders.



The spring of 2022 saw the return of our in-person conference that was held in Milton, Ontario. The theme of the conference was “Re-Claiming and Re-Engaging Parents As Partners.” During the conference, the audience was treated to a carousel of connections that saw a stellar line up of speakers during the course of the day. Each speaker’s presentation continues to be made available as an ongoing resource for parents at <https://www.oapce.org/conference2022/>. Conference delegates were invited to explore the vendor market. This market was focused on providing resources for parent engagement and school councils as well as fundraising ideas. Delegates also received a series of books from several of the vendors.

OAPCE has invested heavily in a robust web presence with a focus on providing regional committees with the opportunity to grow their local sites within the greater provincial website. Regional directors have been working to ensure that regional websites reflect local events and priorities. This has resulted in an increased visibility for all regions, new or existing, to maintain the consistency of the OAPCE brand. We will continue to explore appropriate social media channels to further engage parents.

Regional committee growth across the province has been a significant priority this past school year. Specific regions with new OAPCE Directors included Waterloo, Algonquin Lakeshore, and Niagara. These regions held inaugural regional meetings that provided essential information relating to governance and policies to parents. All regions also hosted a guest speaker at the meetings for the personal development of all parents. This brought a consistent message and created an equitable learning experience for parents in all corners of the province.



Advocate

Advocacy for publicly funded Catholic education is a cornerstone of OAPCE's mandate.

In March, OAPCE engaged with the Minister of Education to highlight some key issues that parents have raised collectively from across the province. One item most notably was to develop a strong and inclusive parent engagement strategy to support parent engagement in a post-COVID world. OAPCE shared that this could be as simple as revamping and updating the outdated parent engagement resources on the Ministry website.



A recurring theme among the secondary school parents was the need for students to have more time to “catch-up.” This was evident in our 2021 Parent Survey. OAPCE tabled that consideration be given to consider reinstating an additional year of high school. Most parents wish for Grade 13 or OAC (Ontario Academic Credit) to be brought back. Parents feel that many students are still adjusting to what life is like after the pandemic. Many are still playing catch up academically and navigating their mental health, along with other issues and pressures.

In addition, OAPCE continues to reach out regularly on topics tabled from across the province to bring them to the Ministry's attention by attending meetings with the Parent Education Priorities and Engagement Branch. Most recently, OAPCE followed up on last year's parent survey that identified that more support is needed for students as a result of the wide sweeping losses in all areas of development due to the pandemic. We continue to engage to be actively included and consulted rather than simply informed of decisions.

The advocacy work that OAPCE does is also in partnership with several other organizations. Most notably this past school year, the role of Chair of the Institute of Catholic Education (ICE) was held by our OAPCE Executive Director. This strong and effective partnership will see OAPCE as an integral support to the annual ICE Symposium taking place in May 2023. OAPCE was also integral in hosting several information sessions with parents from across the province in partnership with ICE to help advance the parent engagement around the hope expectations for the resource updates that are planned as they refresh the teaching material of the Fully Alive program.

Our advocacy has always focused and will continue to focus on an effort to ensure that our children across the province are learning in a Christocentric environment and being taught the curriculum through the lens of the Catholic faith. Parents recognize that the relationship between learning and believing is fundamental in Catholic schools and expect their children to graduate within the framework of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs). Graduates not only gain knowledge and skills but values, empathy, and compassion.



Enhance

At OAPCE, enhancing parent education is firmly grounded in the continuous learning of parents.

As such, OAPCE looks to host several learning events throughout the year with a goal to remove barriers to have parents actively participate and is eager to provide parents with resources and information that will support parents in their communities. Each year, our conference provides travel subsidies for parents attending out of the host area as well as recording conference speakers so that sessions can be posted to the website at a later date for those parents who cannot participate in person.

OAPCE successfully produced monthly issues of our newsletter publication “Parents4Parents Press.” This faith-based publication highlights updates to support advocacy and engagement opportunities through OAPCE activities, Ministry updates, and resources and showcases Catholic partnerships. In addition, OAPCE designed, developed, and published several parent engagement support tools — Parents4Parents 1Pagers. These focus on key activities that parents can undertake in various areas within the parish, school, community, and online.

OAPCE was pleased to partner with the Ontario Catholic School Trustee Association (OCSTA) to present a webinar in the fall in conjunction with “Catholic Virtual Ontario” (CVO). This well-attended event helped educate parents on the availability of Catholic designed, developed, and delivered online learning courses. The recording remains available on the OAPCE website for parents that were unable to attend the event in real time.



Internal Operations

During the year, OAPCE saw many changes within the membership for our Board of Directors. We said goodbye to our Liaison Bishop from the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Most Rev. Bishop Dabrowski and welcomed Most Rev. Bishop Yvan Mathieu. We are forging a wonderful new relationship with Most Rev. Bishop Mathieu and look forward to his continued guidance and support of OAPCE. Within the regions, many long-standing OAPCE Directors' terms expired. We thank them for their years of volunteer service on the OAPCE Board of Directors and in their communities, as well as for helping us achieve our many objectives. We also welcomed several new Directors this year, including Algonquin Lakeshore, Hamilton, and Niagara.

On the governance side, the organization continues to maintain good standing within the Canada Revenue Agency, meeting all of the requirements of a nonprofit organization. The annual financial review was successfully completed and is available on the website. In addition, the biannual review of the bylaws was conducted, and amendments will be tabled for approval at the annual general meeting held in Kingston on April 22, 2023.

To end, we thank all of our Catholic School Board members for their support. We also thank all our publicity funded Catholic Education partners for their continued relationship, most notably the Institute for Catholic Education and its Executive Director, Dr. Anne Jamieson, for her strong commitment to our organization and to our Executive Director. Thank you to Honorable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education for his ongoing support of OAPCE and Catholic education.

Most importantly, a huge thank you to all of our parents across the province for continuing to support their children in the home, in the classroom, at the school and board levels, and in the parish. Without this strong engagement, advocacy, and finding ways to enhance our system, the gift of Catholic Education would not be as it is today.

