

Position Papers of OSTA-AÉCO



Created:
2007-2008 Policy Committee

Amended:
2008-2009 Policy Committee
2009-2010 Policy Committee

The Student Trustee Vote

Rationale: Student trustees across Ontario champion unique, innovative and refreshing perspectives on educational issues that are sometimes overlooked on the policy-formation level.

Whereas denying student trustees the right to a binding vote thwarts the advancement of a student voice and a united vision, and;

Whereas per section 55(5) of the Ontario Education Act student trustees have the right to partake in certain in-camera sessions closed to the public, demonstrating the high standing and trustworthiness of student trustees, and;

Whereas the student voice is most effectively communicated by granting student trustees equal opportunities to participate in Board functions as other Board trustees, and;

Whereas per section 55(7) of the Ontario Education Act student trustees receive equal opportunities to Board trustees, including access to professional development, resources and training, and;

Whereas student trustees are elected representatives, and are to be held accountable to the student senate, and;

Whereas the student voice must be articulated fairly and expressively for the benefit of the school board, and;

Whereas the student voice must be represented fairly and articulated expressively for the benefit of the school board and to accurately reflect the students' in decision-making, and;

Whereas student trustees shall have the right to abstain from voting and be counted as equals within the quorum of the entire board, and;

Whereas student trustees further desire the right to move motions, to incite discussion:

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario furthers the dynamic and effectiveness of student representation across Ontario by supporting a recorded, binding vote for student trustees at the Board table on a policy-formation and decision-making level.

Utilization of the Student Senate

Rationale: Student trustees across Ontario strive to provide fair and effective student representation. Behind every student trustee, a strong representative and supportive body must be found in a student senate, representing students of all demographics within respective Board jurisdictions.

Whereas per Board policy, such as Policy A:1 Responsibilities 4, 5 of the District School Board of Niagara, the student trustee shall serve as a direct liaison between the student senate and the school Board, and;

Whereas under Board policy, such that of Policy T:01 Appendix A section 2(1) of the Windsor-Essex Catholic School Board, the student senate shall be deemed a representative body of all students within respective Board jurisdictions, and;

Whereas the student senate shall be comprised of elected/appointed secondary school students, so that within respective Board jurisdictions, each school shall have at least one representative within the student senate, and;

Whereas per section 55(12) of the Ontario Education Act the individual boards shall have the discretion to draft policies concerning student representation;

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario encourages school Boards across Ontario to create, sustain and recognize student senates as representative bodies to which student trustees shall be held accountable. The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario supports a student voice and a united vision articulated through the work of student senates and student trustees across the province of Ontario.

Technology and Multimedia in the Classroom

Rationale: The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario lobbies for student success and academic achievement through equitable representation. Consistent technologic advancements have helped foster a greater quality of education for students across Ontario. However, technology must be utilized to further student achievement, and must not disturb or interfere with academic instruction.

Whereas the appropriate and respectful use of electronic and multimedia devices does not interfere with the administration of academic instruction, and;

Whereas the use of personal music devices can help students to concentrate and can further an appreciation of music, and;

Whereas per Board Policy, such as policy 222 Section B 1.8 of the York Catholic District School Board, all incidents involving electronic misuse, including but not limited to bullying, mischievous actions or the disruption of academic instruction, and harassment are met with disciplinary action, and;

Whereas students may require electronic devices such as cell phones, personal data management systems or laptops in case of emergency and to further their education, and;

Whereas the discretion of teachers, administration and staff support shall deem whether or not the use of technology in the classroom is appropriate at specific times;

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario deems the use of electronic devices in the classroom appropriate providing that teachers, administrators and support staff deem its usage appropriate. The misuse of electronic devices shall be met with in-school disciplinary actions and the removal of these privileges.

Environmental Education and Green Schools

Rationale: Students across Ontario’s publicly funded education system are among the leaders of today and tomorrow. As such, students across the province must be actively involved in exercising effective practices to help deal with the increasingly urgent concerns and potential problems surrounding climate change and the well-being of our environment.

Whereas resources pertaining to environmental education are available and accessible to students across Ontario’s publicly funded education system, and;

Whereas by accessing these resources, students acquire the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices necessary to champion environmentally responsible practices, and;

Whereas Ontario curriculum policy reflects the ongoing changes taking place in the world, and incorporate the importance of environment friendly practices in accordance with ISO14001 and ISO14004 from the International Organization of Standardization, and;

Whereas schools are the property of the government and should be reflective of the government’s current efforts to combat climate change, and;

Whereas students should learn in environments that are ecofriendly and be encouraged to partake in programs that promote and protect the environment;

The Ontario Student Trustees’ Association-L’Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l’Ontario supports the incorporation of environmental education within Ontario’s educational curriculum policies and encourages students within Ontario’s publicly funded education system to model environmentally friendly practices in the effort to champion green schools across the province as the government moves to ensure ecofriendly school construction and repair.

Safe Schools and Cyber-bullying Prevention

Rationale: Dignity and respect of the person must be upheld and exemplified among students enrolled across Ontario's publicly funded education system. Safe and nurturing communities must be fostered in order to nurture academic achievement and student success. Both in and outside of the classroom, students must exemplify respect and common courtesy towards one another.

Whereas students vibrantly demonstrate respect and responsibility both inside and outside of the classroom, and;

Whereas students receive instructional education detailing social justice, responsibility and communal interconnectivity, equipping students with the necessary interpersonal skills to repel injustices within schools, and;

Whereas per section 307 and 309 in the Safe Schools Act incidents involving bullying and injustice warrant disciplinary measures, including in-school disciplinary measures, suspensions, and expulsions, and;

Whereas student based programs and resources are accessible, actively engaging students, parents, teachers, administrators and support staff, and;

Whereas school Boards implement preventative strategies and programs, such as those outlined in Policy II-40 of the Halton Catholic School Board, and;

Whereas school Boards establish Safe Schools Advisory Committees mandated to thoroughly examine and implement safe school practices across the Board, and;

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario condemns all forms of bullying and injustice in Ontario's schools. Students must embody and exemplify respect, responsibility and virtue both inside and outside of the classroom, encouraging self growth and academic achievement.

Healthy Schools

Rationale: Students across Ontario’s publicly funded education system require a healthy learning environment in order to reach the fullest of their potential. Healthy lifestyles must be promoted and encouraged through education, social networking and access to essential resources.

Whereas best practices concerning physical activity, bullying prevention, personal safety, substance abuse, growth and development, mental health and healthy living are exemplified in Ontario schools, and;

Whereas students receive quality, curriculum approved instruction and programs pertaining to healthy living, and;

Whereas the government is moving to ban unhealthy food as a means of promoting healthy eating habits, and;

Whereas Canada’s Healthy Food Guide should be incorporated into the school’s food service to promote healthy eating habits, and;

Whereas students who have dietary restrictions and needs will be accommodated for, and;

Whereas students should receive quality physical activity daily, as outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 138;

The Ontario Student Trustees’ Association-L’Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l’Ontario encourages students to partake in student based programs and curriculum approved instructional education and activities promoting healthy and conscience lifestyles.

E-Learning

Rationale: The growing dependence on technology has formed new and exciting learning initiatives and opportunities, among them E-Learning. The growing E-Learning provides educational opportunities of great quality and must be monitored and constantly improved as the students across Ontario develop uniquely.

Whereas per Ontario's E-learning Strategy, E-Learning provides students who would otherwise not have access to and to those completing credits in order to graduate the opportunity to complete one or more Ontario Secondary School courses, and;

Whereas per the E-learning Ontario policy document, students participating in E-Learning courses are provided with the information and ability to voice opinions and suggestions to the School board and E-Learning Ontario, and;

Whereas per OSIE; Re-envisioning Learning Online, it is established that student – educator communication remains vital and necessary for the success of the students;

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario promotes the successful adaptation of e-learning Ontario, awareness and communication of the student voice, and the furthering of new and successful educational strategies.

Fair Labour Practices

Rationale: Students across Ontario recognize the rights that belong to their fellow human being and wish to see those values honoured in the actions of their school board. They wish that the products manufactured for and supplied to their board be made in humane working conditions complying with both international and local laws and standards.

Whereas suppliers of products are not involved in forced labour, whether that be involuntary prison labour, indentured labour or bonded labour, and;

Whereas no child labour is used by suppliers ; child defined as a person under the age of fifteen unless local minimum age law stipulates a higher age for work or mandatory schooling, or less than 14 if the minimum age law is set at that age in accordance with developing country exceptions under ILO Convention 138, and;

Whereas workers do not suffer harassment and abuse and do not face discrimination, with women having the ability to take maternity leave without penalty and do not undergo forced contraception and pregnancy testing, and;

Whereas hours of work among suppliers are consistent with the Ontario Employment Act of 2000, and;

Whereas wages either match national legal standards or industry benchmark standards, whichever is higher in the circumstance, and;

And whereas employers provide workers with a safe and healthy workplaces in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act in its latest incarnation, last amended in 2007;

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-L'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario recognises that unions are vital for promoting social and economic empowerment, equitable economic growth, and the democratic reforms needed to ensure a fair and equitable trading partnership and the most powerful force is when consumers demand social responsibilities from labels and as such urges the school boards of Ontario to take a stand to support Fair Labour Practices in the production of their apparel.