



Press Release

For Immediate Release

13 December 2008- The Honourable Gerard Kennedy was awarded for his contributions at the Fall General Meeting of OSTA-AECO. He received the inaugural "Student Trustees' Award of Distinction".

Mr Kennedy was lauded by the association president Andrew Pawluch, a grade-twelve student from Sudbury, for his work as Minister of Education. Mr Pawluch noted the breadth of Mr Kennedy's contributions, saying, "Students across Ontario value Mr Kennedy's good work in achieving labour peace, the new legislation for student trustees and his general work to advance the student vision."

Throughout his keynote address, Mr Kennedy spoke about the importance of the student voice. "The student voice has not been as respected as it needs to be to help the education community advance."

Mr Kennedy also noted that "having a vigorous student voice is a great way to ensure a generation isn't discounted". Indeed, he continued, saying, "The main reason I was excited about student trustees' involvement is the positive influence on your schoolmates...Some [adult] trustees no longer have or have never had children in the system. They're dedicated but they need your perspective."

Before receiving his reward, Mr Kennedy challenged the young trustees to recognise that "connecting the student voice is your job. There's no one else who can do it. You can speak up for your peers".

As the largest student stakeholder in Ontario's education system, OSTA-AECO represents the 1.9 million students in the English Public, English Catholic, French Catholic and French Public school boards. The association promotes the unity without conformity of all affiliated student trustees in order to advance the student vision in Ontario.

Student trustees are elected by their peers to bring the student voice to district school board tables. Through a non-binding vote, they present their peers' perspective to improve the quality of education in schools across the province.

For more information, please contact Jonathan Scott at director.communications@osta-aeco.org or 705 795 0548. Aussi disponible en français.