



PRESS RELEASE

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Students challenge the Ontario Civics and Careers Program

TORONTO, ON -- November 16, 2009 – The Ontario Student Trustees' Association - l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO) is calling for reform in the Ontario Civics and Careers curriculum. After consulting students across the province, the organization has released its twelfth report titled "Inspiring Citizenship" that critiques the effectiveness of Ontario's current Civics and Careers program.

"We are the citizens of tomorrow and deserve comprehensive preparation for the real world," said association President Gorick Ng, "Students in Civics and Careers are not learning enough about themselves, their future opportunities or the country we live in. We want change."

The report celebrates the courses' successes while also recognizing flaws in their content and delivery. It states many students are not benefiting from the current program. According to OSTA-AECO, it also highlights the reality of biased pass-fail rates; students either ace the courses or fail them.

"Inspiring Citizenship" presses that Civics and Careers courses also suffer from student apathy. In a survey initiated by the organization, 74 per cent of Ontario students consider the courses of low importance. Some even commented that it was "a waste of time". This declining interest in civics and careers poses a risk to the participation of future voters and youth's connection to politics.

"Many of us are still unsure of how to get involved politically. Some students enter their last year of high school only to find they have not taken the correct courses to enter a desired field. These are the problems our Civics and Careers programs are intended to solve, but are failing to do so." said Mr. Ng.

OSTA-AECO proposes the courses be merged into a single, semester-long course. Called "Citizenship", the hybrid course would feature a focus on specific community involvement activities and a more defined curriculum.

As the largest student stakeholder in Ontario's education system, OSTA-AECO represents the over 2 million students in the Ontario education system. The association promotes unity without conformity of all affiliated student trustees in order to advance the student vision. Student trustees are youth representatives elected by their peers to bring the student voice to school board tables to improve the quality of education across the province. Please visit www.osta-aeco.org for further information about the association and the student trustee position. The student report "Inspiring Citizenship" can be found at http://www.osta-aeco.org/Reports/2009/Inspiring_Citizenship.pdf.

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