Student Voice Should Be at the Heart of Every Education Consultation

August 23, 2018

Toronto, ON – Students should always be at the center of any form of consultation, and their voices should always be at the forefront of any discussions regarding changes to our publicly-funded education system according to the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association – l’Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l’Ontario (OSTA-AECO).

On August 22nd, 2018, Premier Doug Ford announced that the Government of Ontario will be holding consultations regarding a wide range of educational issues starting September 2018. Consultations will address various topics including improving student performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), preparing students with transferable life skills, updating Ontario’s standardized testing regime, and a new Health and Physical Education curriculum. The Provincial Government also released the interim 2010 revised Health and Physical Education curriculum, which is to be used by educators until a new curriculum is released.

OSTA-AECO acknowledges the importance of parental consultation, however, the association urges the Provincial Government to provide an equal opportunity for students to take part in the development of these programs.

“The primary goal of any education system is to prepare its students for the future. Ontario’s education system is well regarded as one of the best in the world, thanks to the strong working relationship of all groups in our publicly-funded education system including trustees, teachers, administrators, parents and indeed students,” said Amal Qayum, President of OSTA-AECO.

“We need to ensure that the content students are learning in our classroom is up-to-date with the modern day realities that young people are facing. We need to ensure technology is leveraged in the classroom for positive 21st century learning and that all students have the information they need to be productive and responsible citizens in our society. It is crucially important that students who are currently being educated in our education system have a lead voice in any form of consultation. While we agree that parents should have a real and meaningful voice about their children’s education, we remind the Provincial Government and people of Ontario that education is for the students of Ontario.”
OSTA-AECO firmly believes that students are able to provide a culturally-relevant perspective and can identify the current needs of today’s young people. Their voices are an invaluable tool in the development of new strategies and curriculum. OSTA-AECO looks forward to working collaboratively with the Ministry of Education, as well as other educational stakeholders to ensure that the best interests of students are kept in mind throughout the upcoming consultations.

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About OSTA-AECO

The Ontario Student Trustees’ Association (French: l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l’Ontario), officially branded as OSTA-AECO, is a registered nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and the largest student stakeholder group in Ontario. The organization’s members are student trustees from school boards across the province.

OSTA-AECO’s mandate is to advocate on behalf of students at the provincial level, working closely with the Ministry of Education and other educational stakeholders. OSTA-AECO also provides professional development for Ontario’s student trustees in the form of three annual conferences.

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