

## SCHOOL AND BOARD ADMINISTRATION

School principals and vice-principals may belong to associations depending on the system in which they work. They do not belong to OTF or an Affiliate. After removal from the teacher federations in 1998, they established voluntary organizations to act on their behalf and to provide various services and supports to their respective members. The three Ontario principal organizations are l'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO), the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) and the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC).

Superintendents and directors may also be involved in associations. For example, the Council of Directors of Education of Ontario (CODE) includes all directors in the system; superintendents and directors may also be part of another organization of supervisory officers more specific to their system. As a group, school and board administrative teams carry out functions at their respective levels in overseeing delivery of education in the province. As with teachers, school and board administrators are members of OCT and subject to the same professional standards.

In addition to the administrative side, there is also the governance side of school boards. The 72 Ontario school boards (French Catholic, French public, English Catholic and English public) are all governed by boards of trustees. These trustees, elected through municipal elections, are charged with broad-based decision-making within the parameters of Ontario education policy, regulations and funding. They are a conduit for communication between their local constituents and local board administrators as well.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Minister of Education, appointed by the Premier, provides overall direction for education in the province. He or she can make regulatory changes through Cabinet; the Government can bring forward changes to the *Education Act* or other legislation that impacts education in the province.

The Government sets the provincial budget for education and the Ministry of Education determines the grants to school boards on that basis.

Decisions made at Queen's Park reach the classroom in many ways. The Deputy Minister and his/her staff, through provincial and regional offices, oversee the new policy directions and initiatives of Government.



## TEACHER CERTIFICATION

While teachers may have earned their teaching qualifications elsewhere, the majority of Ontario's teachers graduate from one of the many education faculties in Ontario. The faculties provide the initial teacher education program to Ontario's teacher candidates.

However, certification which determines salary level is decided by two other organizations.

The Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) evaluates teachers who teach or wish to teach in the French or English Catholic systems or in public elementary schools. Three Affiliates (AEFO, ETFO and OEFTA) oversee the work of QECO. For public secondary teachers, OSSTF (OSSTF Certification) assesses and assigns salary placement.

Teachers are well aware that education is very political. OTF and the Affiliates maximize their opportunities to share the expertise and advice of teachers on issues important to education. They regularly provide collective advice and input to both the Minister and the Ministry. OTF and the Affiliates represent the views of the profession when sought; equally, when issues are important to them, they offer unsolicited advice as well.

# PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

## Who does what?





## ONTARIO TEACHERS' PENSION PLAN

Given the complexity of the relationships in education, in some respects, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) is simple. The OTPP is a Defined Benefit Pension Plan (DB Plan) which means that members know what to expect in terms of a pension when they retire. All teachers who work in Ontario's publicly funded school system, along with others who hold teaching certificates, such as administrators and other teachers who work for designated employers or designated private schools, are automatically in the OTPP. All service in the Plan is seamless since a teacher can move from one school board to another, from elementary to secondary, or between systems (i.e., public to Catholic) within Ontario and their pension service stays intact and accumulates. Participation is mandatory and automatic for OTF members.

The other critical point about the OTPP is that it is a partnership. The actual administration and investment decisions of the Plan are left to the experts who are hired to perform that role—the CEO of the Plan and Plan staff. Plan oversight, however, falls to the nine-member Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board (OTPPB). OTF appoints four directors, as does the Government of Ontario; the Partners mutually appoint the Chair of the OTPPB. The Partners take this responsibility very seriously and ensure that the OTPPB reflects the significant talent and expertise required to oversee the management of a \$140+ billion pension fund.



## FEDERATIONS/AFFILIATES

By virtue of the *Education Act*, all teachers in publicly funded schools belong to one of the four federations, all of which are OTF Affiliates. All teachers who teach in a francophone school board, Catholic or public, are members of AEFO. Teachers in English Catholic boards are OECTA members. Elementary teachers in English public boards are ETFO members and English public secondary teachers belong to OSSTF. Teachers may be members of more than one Affiliate; for example, if they teach occasionally in different systems or panels. Some Affiliates have only teacher members while others include educational support staff.

While each Affiliate offers a wide and slightly different range of services to its members, they are all recognized as unions and charged with representing members in their employment relationship with school boards—individually and, through negotiations, collectively. Each Affiliate exists to support and protect its members and ensure they are treated fairly, including support for due process in disciplinary matters with employers or with the College of Teachers.

The Affiliates typically offer many supports beyond protective services; for example, they advocate for their members through political engagement, education research, and interaction with Government, partners in education and the broader society. As well, they provide professional services and supports to their members. They are outspoken advocates for quality public education for students and the conditions that help make that goal possible.

The Affiliate collects tax deductible dues from their members. It sets its own fee and budget through its governance structure but the ultimate decision takes place at annual meetings which are democratic, representative assemblies of members. From the fees, each Affiliate funds the services it offers to members and makes remittances to other bodies to which they belong, including OTF. Affiliates direct fees to OTF, based only on their number of full-time equivalent teacher and occasional teacher members.

Members in each Affiliate are eligible to run for Affiliate Provincial Executives, to elect local leaders and, through those local leaders, have a voice in provincial decision making and elections. In addition, Affiliates have additional governance structures such as councils of presidents and local and provincial committees to allow for member input and participation.



## ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), established by the *Teaching Profession Act* of 1944, is the professional organization for Ontario's teachers. All teachers are required by law to belong to OTF as a condition of teaching in the publicly funded schools of Ontario. The four teacher federations are the Affiliates of OTF: l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

OTF's primary role is advocating for the teaching profession, for its member teachers and for publicly funded education. It is OTF's statutory duty to work explicitly and implicitly in the interest of the province's teachers. Unlike the Affiliates, OTF does not engage in collective bargaining. However, OTF does take positions to support teachers' ability to offer the best professional service and speaks out on issues of general education policy. OTF is the Partner (or Sponsor) along with the Government of Ontario in the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan; it is charged with representing the interests of all teacher pension plan members—active and retired. OTF offers a variety of services and supports to members such as numerous professional learning programs. OTF advocacy extends to interaction with other educational stakeholder groups and partners.

Before the creation of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), OTF served the dual role of regulating teacher discipline and being an advocate for the profession. With the creation of the

OCT in 1997, a line was drawn between professional advocacy and professional discipline, with OTF filling the former role and OCT the latter.

The OTF fee is included in the tax deductible dues a teacher pays to his/her federation. For each full time equivalent teacher, the four Affiliates remit an annual fee of \$30.40 to OTF. Unemployed teachers do not pay fees. The core work of OTF is supported entirely by these fees, which are approved annually by the Board of Governors.

The OTF Board of Governors includes 40 members—ten from each of the four federations. The OTF Executive, which meets more often than the Board, includes the President, General Secretary and elected Table Officer of each of the four federations (AEFO, ETFO, OECTA and OSSTF) along with the appointed OTF Secretary-Treasurer.

## ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) was established by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996 and is responsible for regulating key aspects of the professional lives of 239,000 members. Its role is to foster public trust and confidence in education. It is accountable to the public for how it carries out its responsibilities. It ensures appropriate standards for teacher training and accredits teacher education programs. OCT issues teaching licenses to teachers who have met the criteria and publishes a register of all members. It sets and enforces professional standards of practice for teachers. In the work of the College, the public interest is paramount—rather than the individual or collective interests of teachers.

The Governing Council of the OCT is responsible for the development and approval of the policies that regulate the teaching profession in Ontario. It also sets the budget and the fee which is collected for all teachers wishing to maintain a licence. The 37-member Council includes 23 elected College members and 14 members of the public, appointed by the Government. All College members are eligible to vote in Council elections, although participation in the last two triennial elections has been less than 5%.

Teachers are most likely to interact with the College by taking the necessary steps to acquire and maintain their licence. Teachers may, however, be the subject of a complaint that results in investigation and discipline by the College; in those cases, the College

acts as prosecutor and the member must defend him or herself. If the teacher is also a member of a federation, he or she may receive support from their federation in protecting their right to due process and a fair defence.

Unlike the four Affiliates, OTF does not represent individual members at the College. OTF represents the views of the profession to OCT on broader policy measures which impact the teaching profession as a whole.

