

Civil Rights In Public Education, Inc.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



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Major teachers' union to lobby for one public school system for each official language.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, OSSTF, was founded in 1919, and has 60,000 members across Ontario. It includes public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, social workers, psycho-educational consultants, child and youth counsellors, speech-language pathologists, continuing education teachers, instructors and support staff from several Ontario universities as well as some support staff at some Roman Catholic separate schools.

While one could deduce from reading certain sections of the Federation's by-law (5.1) and policy statements (7.4.1 & 9.5.3) that it is already on-side for one secular public school system, this did not take the form of any active participation toward this goal. However, at the annual meeting of its provincial assembly, this changed. The following are excerpts from OSSTF's "Single School System Policy" sent out to Presidents and Local Executives by Paul Elliott, President of OSSTF, dated November 29, 2013.

Delegates to AMPA (Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly) 2013 approved the following motions to include in our policies:
7.5.1 *It is the policy of OSSTF/FEESO that there should be only one publicly-funded school system for each official language.*
7.5.2 *It is the policy of OSSTF that no OSSTF/FEESO jobs should be lost as a result of moving to one publicly funded school system for each official language.*

These policies represent a significant departure from the federation's previous approach to the issue of school board organization in Ontario. It is important that our members understand fully the context in which these motions were passed and their intent.

As a part of any effort to promote our policies, we must ensure that our membership is fully informed of the extent to which we represent members in the Catholic education system and fully respectful of the value of the work they do on behalf of their students. There is no room in this discussion for overzealousness or ignorance to appear as disrespect for the legitimate interests of any segment of our membership. As mentioned later, it is also the case that no change in the current structure of publicly funded education is in any way imminent. There will be time to discuss the issue thoroughly and make plans in our members' best interests.

The History

OSSTF/FEESO's historical engagement with the issue of a publicly funded Catholic school system gained prominence in 1984 with then-Premier Bill Davis' announced intention to extend funding beyond Grade 10. The passage of Bill 30 in 1985 fulfilled Davis' plan, although opposition continued through venues such as court challenges. The federation opposed full funding, recognizing that it would result in a loss of students to the public system and therefore a loss of teacher membership.

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Other abbreviations

ETFO	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
OECTA	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Assoc.
CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees
FEESO & AEFO	Franco Ontario affiliates

The Current Context

During periods in which student enrolment and government funding were increasing, the pressures of funding multiple school systems were not felt significantly. In times of government-imposed austerity and the search for “efficiencies,” the duplication of expenses becomes a matter of greater concern. This was certainly the case in February 2012 when the McGuinty Liberals, through Minister of Education Laurel Broten, signaled her intention to strip significant funding from the contracts of all education workers, both support staff and teachers, within the school board sector. While OSSTF/FEESO, ETFO, AEFO, and CUPE resisted accepting contract concessions, OECTA engaged in extensive discussions, ultimately agreeing with the government to reduce sick leave entitlements, eliminate further gratuity accumulation, freeze members for a period of time on their salary grid progression, among other losses. OECTA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government in early July 2012.

Many of our members perceived OECTA’s capitulation as an attempt to curry favour with the government for a separate system whose existence might otherwise be in jeopardy. While there has been no confirmation that the government explicitly threatened the funding of the English Catholic school system if OECTA failed to comply with the proposed contract strips, it can be no surprise that some came to the conclusion that OECTA would likely be a weak link in negotiations as long as its very existence was a government-held bargaining chip.

Agreement to a profoundly-flawed Memorandum of Understanding was problematic in itself. Subsequent events only served to further concern many in OSSTF/FEESO. Already-declining enrolment exacerbated fears that any job action in the form of withdrawal from voluntary and extra-curricular activities would simply drive students to the neighbouring Catholic school. Instances of recruitment of public school students by OECTA members, in some cases rumoured, in others proven, understandably infuriated members. Many viewed as unacceptable the proposition that OECTA, having undermined our bargaining abilities, would then gain from our resistance to entirely unpalatable government proposals through increased enrolment and a “me too clause”. In light of the events of 2012, many members’ opposition to the ongoing funding of a system that duplicated expenses, weakened our bargaining position, and threatened enrolment and, therefore, members’ employment, began to coalesce.

Along with the policy motions mentioned above, AMPA also approved a motion as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT AMPA direct the Provincial Executive to create an in-house work group that would:

Study the implementation (with regard to financial, jobs, labour, and other implications) of moving to one publicly funded school system for each official language; and

Prepare interim policy motions as necessary for presentation at Provincial Council; and

Develop a multi-year action plan to create a public education campaign and lobby materials to promote the creation of one publicly funded school system for each official language; and

Seek approval for the implementation of a strategic plan from the April and/or June 2013 meetings of Provincial Council.

A strategic action plan was subsequently approved at June 2013 Provincial Council. A work group is investigating the statutory and constitutional process by which change could be made to the current systems, the potential effects on funding and union membership, the differences in curriculum delivery, and the most effective lobbying positions to adopt in order to support our policy.

Through the spring and fall of 2013, OSSTF/FEESO also developed our education platform, a lobbying tool to support our members' interests in the next provincial election, which will be launched at Lobby Day on December 5, 2013. In light of the issues articulated above, the movement to a single secular school system for each official language has been included as a plank in our platform.

The Philosophy

OSSTF/FEESO has an obligation to protect its members in their working lives. Defending access to and the quality of work for our members are the federation's highest imperatives. At the same time, we do not have an obligation to defend the denominational aspect of our members' work. OSSTF/FEESO is a secular organization representing members within the imperatives of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* across a spectrum of employers.

The Practicality

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In general, a distinctly positive aspect of the conscious promotion of our policy is that we will be leading opinion on how best to implement an amalgamation of systems. Under those circumstances, OSSTF/FEESO will not be caught flat-footed in responding to such a move by a provincial government and thereby best protecting and promoting our members' interests.

Going Forward

OSSTF/FEESO has a proud and extensive history of member protection. That quality of member protection will not diminish going forward. On behalf of all our members, we must grapple with the challenges presented at this time in our history in order to be prepared for the future. Promoting a properly funded system of public education in Ontario positions us well in our preparations. As mentioned, a plan for the promotion of a single publicly funded education system in each official language will be presented to AMPA 2014 for debate, amendment, and potential approval. It will include not only lobbying strategies but also strategies to defend the quality of our members' working lives, regardless of the system in which they currently work.

At this time in the province's history, there is virtually no prospect of a quick adoption of our policy by any major political party. Although public sentiment is evolving, the issue remains polarizing and progress should be expected to be slow. We will have time to plan and to adapt. Our members, therefore, should not be motivated by fear but be prepared to engage in moulding the strategies that will move us forward in protecting and enhancing public education and the best interests of OSSTF/FEESO members within a respectful and supportive environment.

End of quotations from President Paul Elliott's "Single School System Policy"

Ms. R. Landau's Application against the public funding of the separate school system is rejected.

In early 2012 Ms. R. Landau, a citizen of Ontario and a lawyer, brought an Application before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice which stated that the current public funding of separate schools on an equal basis with public schools, and of grades 9 to 12, was contrary to the Charter of Rights. Also submitted was the fact that at Confederation in 1867 separate schools received only about 2/3 of the funding per student as public schools and did not include secondary school funding.

Her affidavit pointed out that only about 6% of funding for separate schools comes from separate school supporters and that she, as a public school supporter, was contributing through general taxes to these separate schools.

On the other side, to oppose the Application, was the Attorney General of Ontario. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association intervened on the side of Ms. Landau to support her Application.

Before proceeding with the arguments in the Application, it has to be determined if the person or body submitting the Application has "standing". That is, the right to litigate the issue. The judge ruled in the negative. However, the judge did say that his decision "... should not stand as either an encouragement or an impediment to a subsequent legal challenge."

The judge also commented that the Ontario government could ask for s.93 of the Constitution to be amended to remove a constitutional obligation* to publicly fund separate religious schools, just as Quebec and Newfoundland & Labrador did.

* Manitoba removed its funding obligation through an Act passed in its own Legislature.

Time for one school system for Ontario

There's no good reason or justification for taxpayer-funded Catholic schools

By Michelle Zimic, Hamilton , ON

At present, Ontario funds two separate school systems in each official language. The establishment of these two separate school systems was originally formed to reflect the population's two main religions, Catholic and Protestant. The premise for this division is now outdated as Ontario is now a religiously diverse province. Our current segregated system of education is no longer reflecting our population. One publicly funded secular school system would provide a more updated reflection of a modern Ontario. One community school would draw neighbours together and refocus the role of our churches. Allowing our children to experience the many cultures and religions in our society would foster awareness and inclusiveness. Reducing the duplication of service in two parallel systems and the extra costs of transportation would be financially beneficial to our already debt-ridden province. The reduction of the environmental footprint would positively impact our natural environment for generations to come. The many benefits of a change to one school system in each official language would benefit all of Ontario.

One school system for everyone would connect and revitalize communities. In many of Ontario neighbourhoods, the population is fragmented by the division of our children into two school systems. My own street highlights this division to me. Our neighbourhood has

both public and separate elementary schools in close proximity. There is a palpable divide among the children and parents because of this. When the children are out at play I have noticed, that the students divide themselves into play groups by school. This is a natural result as they are more familiar with their classmates. I have noticed that the relationships of the neighbourhood parents are segregated by school affiliation as well. Adults too can be impacted, as a shared interest in their children can create a bond among parents. Imagine a neighborhood in which every child on the street attended the same school. How would this shared affiliation affect the relationships in that district? When the school hosted an event, all of the neighbourhood families could be involved. One community school would impact our culture and community by bringing families and children together with a common interest.

Looking back on the communities of the early settlements, the schools and churches provided the hub of those villages. How would one school system impact the churches of our community? Catholic Schools are providing religious education and preparation of the Catholic sacraments. In the recent events from Rome with the appointment of the new Pope Francis, much attention has been given to the Catholic faith. One of Pope Francis' missions is to revi-

talize the Catholic religion. Many families that have students attending Catholic schools have made this choice because they are passionate about the importance of religion in their children's upbringing. Yet despite the thousands of students attending Catholic schools, demonstrating this desire for education in the Catholic Faith, Rome is concerned with declining attendance in the churches. Removing religion from the publicly funded school system would then leave the churches as central providers of that religious instruction. Wouldn't this benefit the Catholic Churches in the communities by reinvigorating church attendance, thus bolstering a sense of community in both our schools and churches?

Our culture in Ontario is evolving. Our society is a mosaic of religions and cultures. One school system would provide a venue in which all children, regardless of cultural background or religion, could grow and learn together. This provides a real world experience as opposed to growing up segregated into one's own religious group. Children from a young age could learn about the other cultures and religions of their classmates, thus growing with an understanding of the differences. Education and understanding are important in learning to live as a community, ignorance often breeds intolerance.

The financial impact of two school systems in Ontario is crippling. Our government is in fiscal crisis and cost cutting measures are crucial. Moving to one school system is an obvious way to save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. Providing two school systems is duplicating services at a high price tag. Quite simply, one school board would eliminate this duplication. Declining enrollment in our schools has been and will continue to impact school boards. Some schools are running below capacity which is creating an inefficient use of school buildings and resources. Some communities, particularly in rural areas, do not have enough students to support both Catholic and Public schools yet both are provided at high cost to the taxpayer. This also creates an issue of lost opportunity as low enrollment in schools may mean that those schools are unable to offer a variety of courses and programs to benefit students. There is also the high cost of transportation of students. Too frequently students have to travel by bus or car to attend the school of choice, often passing a school he/she could attend along the way. This is expensive, inefficient and not environmentally friendly. It would be preferable if the majority of students could walk to their local schools.

Finally, what is the impact on our natural environment of moving to one school system? As stated in the previous paragraph reducing the use of buses and other vehicles as transportation to schools of choice not only reduces the financial cost of this service but also avoids pollution and use of fuel.

The ecological footprint of schools could be reduced. Currently many schools are operating below capacity, yet the building of new schools continues. There are presently circumstances in which public and separate schools are occupying land space in close proximity to each other, sometimes even side by side and neither is used to full potential. The cost and environmental impact of heating and maintaining below capacity schools is a waste of both monetary and environmental resources.

After considering these features of one school system, it is difficult to determine even one viable benefit to Ontario's society as a whole of continuing with our current segregated school system. Defenders of maintaining the status quo have provided reasons such as: the funding of Catholic education is in the Canadian Constitution, the Catholic System provides a better education, religious education in schools provides children with a moral compass and the change to one school system would cost Ontarians jobs. First of all, the Constitution includes a process that permits the establishment or abolishment of funding for Catholic schools. The Ontario legislature has the power to pass legislation to enact the abolishment. The provinces of Quebec, Manitoba and Newfoundland have already enacted this process. As provinces they too are bound by the Constitution. Many people believe that Catholic schools provide a better education. This very well may be the case. Let's assume that this is

true and the Catholic system is in fact superior. Why is it OK then to offer a better education to only some of Ontario's children? Why not establish one system using this better model? The process of an amalgamation does not mean the abandonment of all processes and practices currently in the Catholic schools, rather it would be a melange of the good in each of the systems. To address the idea that religious education helps to provide a moral compass, nobody would deny that morals are important for all children and should be included in every education system. As for the religious component, community churches, temples, synagogues and other places of worship are available already for religious education. Is it really the state's obligation to fund religious education for only one faith? Finally, many people are concerned about the cost of jobs to Ontario workers. The Ontario government has already demonstrated that amalgamation can be achieved without job loss. In the 1990s the number of school boards across Ontario was reduced by amalgamating smaller boards into larger school boards. When these amalgamations took place all teachers and educational staff were hired on by the newly created board. These jobs were then "red circled" so that as employees left these positions they were not replaced. Thus the total number of employees was reduced over time. This model could be used again!

The Ontario of today is a remarkably different society than

that of the society in which our current education system was established. It is important for Ontario to be progressive in its reflection of its citizens. Ontario, like all of Canada's provinces, strives to be fair, inclusive and fiscally prudent to meet the needs of its citizens. It is time to align our education system with these same goals. The features of

one publicly funded secular school system in each official language provide numerous benefits to our society as a whole. Not only would this one school system be inclusive and fair for all, it would also help to reduce the current debt and to strengthen our communities through the historical hubs of schools and houses of worship.

Our modern society has also established the need for environmental conservation, one school system is a "greener" solution.

It is time for a change.

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Ms. Zimic is part of a group of CRIPE members in the Hamilton area.

Financial scandals which waste millions are bad, But a **Billion Dollars** is a lot of money.

In recent memory there are some minor scandals involving the federal government.

Sponsorship scandal

While the Liberals were in power in Ottawa from 1993 to 2006, their government initiated a "sponsorship program" which was an advertising campaign in the province of Quebec to highlight the accomplishments of the federal government to the advantage of Quebecers. The money, however, was misused.

The Gomery Commission was established to conduct a public inquiry and file a report on the matter. Various misdeeds were identified—a million dollars wasted here and a few hundred thousand there.

The overall operating cost of the Commission was \$14 million.

The total cost to taxpayers was a one-time waste of around a measly \$16.75 million. But the public's fascination was riveting.

Senate scandal

Between November 21 and December 6, 2012, the Senate began investigating Duffy, Harb, and Brazeau's housing expense claims on the basis that they were ineligible to make them. On February 8, 2013, the Senate hired an auditing firm to investigate the claims.

In February 2013, an external audit of Pamela Wallin's travel expenses began. The audit ordered Wallin to repay \$121,348 in improper expense claims. On 13 September 2013, it was announced that Wallin had reimbursed the Senate.

Duffy repaid an amount, so did Brazeau, and Mac Harb repaid over a hundred thousand and retired.

Such a fuss over an amount less than half a million. Add a few million for auditors' expenses and it's still less than a paltry \$20 million. But what a fuss over a few million!

Ontario's gas plant scandal

Now here is a scandal that not only has corrupt government figures disgraced, but a significant dollar cost levied against the taxpayers of—not the whole country – but just the population of Ontario. Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk released a report putting the total figure at close to \$1.1 billion for the cancellation of two natural-gas-fired electric generation plants. The Liberals cancelled the plants so they would retain some seats in those areas—and they did.

What did the opposition say?

From a report in the Ottawa Citizen of October 9th, 2012, emphasis added:

Reaction to the report was swift and merciless.

"Someone needs to be held accountable and responsible," said Lisa MacLeod, the Progressive Conservative energy critic and MPP for Nepean-Carleton. "Someone's head needs to roll"

and someone needs to be fired, and I would suggest it be Kathleen Wynne."

MacLeod accused the Liberals of helping a private company at the expense of taxpayers and said the updated cost of cancelling the gas plants will be a "lightning rod" for an angry public.

"This could have built 25 brand new, state-of-the-art high schools at 50 million bucks a piece," MacLeod said. "People aren't going to take this anymore."

Let's get this straight, Conservative MPP Lisa MacLeod said: **"Someone's head needs to roll..."** because a **"private company"** was helped by the government to the tune of \$1.1 billion.

Now read that again. For **"someone's head"** read **Dalton McGuinty, or Kathleen Wynne, Tim Hudak and Andrea Horwath.** For **"private company"** read **the separate school system.**

Now put it all together. The leaders of the three main political parties in Ontario are **"helping a private company"**, the **separate school system**, through an outright gift of between **\$1 and \$1.4 billion** of yours and my tax dollars every year.

Let's remember

From CRIPE newsletter #111, it has been found that the excess dollar amount given to support the political parties' separate school system is between \$1 and \$1.4 billion paid for by an **annual head tax of \$141 per Ontario taxpayer.** (See page 7 of issue #111.)

Lifetime for this expenditure — just one single year. Public good? Questionable at best. Otherwise, **no benefit for Ontario society.**

Comparable uses for one billion dollars. \$1 billion is a lot of money.

SHIPS

A replacement for the HMCS (Her Majesty's Canadian Ship) Protecteur costs \$1.3 billion, of which two are on order.

The original budget for the new CCGS (Canadian Coast Guard Ship) icebreaker, the John G. Diefenbaker, was \$720 million with construction to begin in 2015. The estimated cost for the ship has now been raised by \$600 million bringing the total cost to \$1.3 billion. **Such as ship's life is useful and measured in decades.**

SPACE PROBE

NASA's new robotic explorer, Maven, for Mars Atmosphere and Volatile EvolutionN, was launched on Nov. 18, 2013. It carries eight science instruments to help solve Mars' environmental puzzle. The answers from this mission will add to the body of knowledge about the planet which will last forever. The mission cost a paltry \$671 million and **the results are permanent and useful.**

SUBWAY TUNNEL LINK

A subway for passenger traffic has been completed between Europe and Asia 60 metres below the Bosphorus Strait near Istanbul.

The 13 km link between the two continents will carry subway commuters and eventually serve high-speed and freight trains. The construction **cost was \$2.8 billion.**

Dreamed of for 150 years, the tunnel is **useful and will last for decades.**

THE RING OF FIRE

The term "Ring of Fire" refers to the huge mineral deposits in the 5,120 square kilometres of the Hudson and James Bay watersheds chock full of chromite, nickel, copper and zinc worth well over \$100 billion.

The mining company Cliffs Natural Resources announced in November that it was suspending operations in the area because the infrastructure necessary to develop the deposit was stalled. Premier Wynne doesn't know where to get the money because **the capital investment to open up the region for development could be in the range of \$800 million to \$1 billion.**

The value to Ontario, Canada, and the working population would be tremendous, but Ontario governments prefer **to waste over \$1 billion each year** to support their separate school system.

PAN AM GAMES

From day one the cost of hosting the 2015 Pan Am Games has been estimated to be about \$1.4 billion. Costs are mounting so **the taxpayer bill may end up closer to \$2.5 billion.**

But at least the **sports facilities and the athletes' village can be used for decades** into the future as a side-effect benefit. In contrast, there is no discernable benefit to the \$1.3 billion annual cost of supporting the government's separate school system.

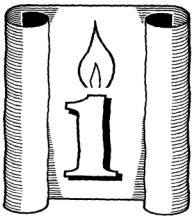
Ontario government priorities are obviously misplaced.

WHO WE ARE

Civil Rights in Public Education, Inc. is an organization composed of citizens of differing backgrounds, living in more than 155 communities across Ontario, committed to one strong public education system, which offers neither privilege nor prejudice to anyone.

OUR AIMS ARE

- To serve as advocates for civil rights in public education so that the public is informed about the issue of publicly-funded separate schools.
- To hasten the day when Ontario's education policy recognizes the dignity and worth of all children, their right to equality, and their right to freedom from religious discrimination.



OUR LOGO

Our logo is composed of a background scroll representing the charters of rights which guarantee fundamental freedoms to all individuals; the numeral "1" signifies equality and social unity in one public education system for each official language; the flame above is the universal symbol for freedom.

Going forward together

Since the beginning, CRIPE's reason for being has been a strong objection to the widespread divisive religious discrimination which has accompanied the public funding of the Roman Catholic separate school system. The blatant, systemic religious discrimination has been most evident, and felt, in small communities. Whether in local community activities which involve the whole population, or in the school workplace, the two-tier citizenship imposed by the federal and provincial governments has torn apart many communities through the unequal treatment of citizens.

We now have a committed supporter for our ideals, because, as the content of page two shows, the motivation of OSSTF is clear: to create two secular education systems—one in English and one in French; recognize the current cultural diversity in Ontario; and reinvest the savings from the benefits of eliminating the duplication of public education services that currently exists back into the public education system. We aim to partner with OSSTF to achieve this goal.

A Thought to Consider

I have cherished the ideal
of a democratic and free society
in which all persons will live together in harmony
and with equal opportunities.

Nelson Mandela, A portion of his trial speech before imprisonment.

To be added to the mailing list, send \$20.00 to
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**ABOVE ALL WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT NO CITIZEN OF
ONTARIO, NOW, OR EVER IN THE FUTURE, IS PRIVILEGED
OR DISADVANTAGED PUBLICLY BECAUSE OF HIS/HER
FAITH, OR ABSENCE OF FAITH.**