



President's Message

September 8, 2020

TO: ALL TRUSTEES

CC: DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION, COMMS, HR, CFO

Good afternoon,

After nearly six months away from classes, school boards and schools across the province have now begun to reopen in an unusual and staggered return to classes. Our school communities are experiencing a range of emotions. Many are excited to return to a more normal routine and see friends, colleagues, and students again, however, there is undoubtedly an overarching sense of anxiety as well.

In my last message prior to the end of the 2019-2020 school year, I described this past year as “one of the most unusual and eventful” in recent memory. At that time, I also acknowledged the tremendous hard work, innovation, creativity, and compassion that had been exhibited by trustees, school boards, teachers, and education workers across the province and I speculated that this summer there were “a number of challenges that lie ahead.” This certainly proved to be an understatement.

I want to once again thank every one of you for the unprecedented amounts of work developing (and re-developing) plans, coming up with creative solutions, and keeping our school communities informed and engaged along the way. It is your hard work and dedication that will be instrumental in maintaining confidence in our public education system.

As we return to school, I'm very interested in hearing from you about the experiences in your boards. What were some of the biggest challenges and successes, both expected or unexpected? Please share your experiences with me at president@opsba.org.

Here below are some additional updates:

OPSBA AGM Updates:

The OPSBA 2020 elections will be held as part of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which will take place on September 26, 2020, by video conference. The deadline to

submit a nomination was Thursday, August 27, 2020. Election material, including the list of candidates, is available on the [AGM page](#) of the OPSBA website.

I would like to wish the best of luck to all those who have put their names forward, and to congratulate those who will be acclaimed.

Ontario Teachers' Federations' Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) Filing

OPSBA legal counsel and staff have fully reviewed an OLRB complaint regarding school reopening that was filed on behalf of all Teachers' Federations as well as Education Workers who are members of OSSTF or ETFO. OPSBA, along with the other Trustees'/School Board Associations, has applied for intervener status (to participate).

Provincial Government Updates

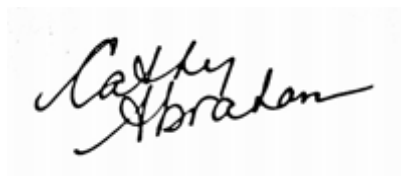
Throughout August, there were a number of funding announcements and memos released by the Ministry of Education. The issues addressed in the memos included Outbreak Protocols for public schools and Requirements for Remote Learning. For additional detail, I encourage you to check out OPSBA's latest [Legislative Update](#), if you have not already done so.

Final Thoughts

As I said recently in an [Op-Ed](#) in the Toronto Star, it's essential that we properly invest in public education. When it comes to our schools, what we don't spend now, we risk spending later on fixing problems that could have been prevented in the first place.

At a time when our education system is facing unparalleled challenges, it is more important than ever for all levels of government to work together. OPSBA will continue to convey that message to the government.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy Abraham

President

Ontario Public School Boards' Association