

Significant Events in the History of Catholic Education in Ontario

1841 First School Act for the Province of Upper Canada

- There was a need to obtain some financial support from the Crown to pay teachers salaries
- Government responds - permitting the establishment of denominational schools and more permanent funding growth

Tache Act

- Extends right of Upper Canada's Catholic minority to create and manage their own schools

1863 Scott Act

- Sectarian bitterness was very strong and threatened minority rights in Upper Canada
- Archbishop Charbonel provides leadership
- Government responds
- Gave Catholic trustees all the rights and powers of their public school counter-parts: Catholic schools were also allowed a share of Common School fund by Canadian government.

1867 British North America Act

- Need to constitutionally secure minority rights of Catholics re: education
- Government responds by including Section 93 and the educational rights of the Catholic minority were secured **constitutionally**

1925 Tiny Township Case

- Need for financial support for high schools
- Lay Catholic leadership emerges
- Government responds - Catholics have just claim for funds for Grades 9 and 10 - no constitutional rights beyond that **but** opens the door by stating that the provincial government **could** grant funds beyond Grade 10

1930 Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association is Founded

1930's Catholic Taxpayers' Association

- Efforts made to secure equitable distribution of corporate and business tax to Catholic Boards

1950/60 Hope Commission

- Recommends that elementary level be cut back to K-6

1961 OSSTA Publishes 1st Catholic Trustee Magazine

- Publication continues until 1997 with revised format introduced in 1986
- Replaced by Catholic Trustee Newsnotes in 1997

1963 "Equal Opportunity for Continuous Education in Separate Schools of Ontario" - Brief to Premier and Minister of Education

- This was a major step towards obtaining full funding for Catholic schools. The Brief enjoyed the support of all Catholic partners including the Bishops
- One of the highlights of the Extension campaign was the Student Rally at Maple Leaf Gardens organized by the Ontario Catholic Students' Federation
- In 1971, the Brief was rejected by the then Premier - William Davis

1969 County and District School Boards Created (known as Larger Units of Administration)

1969 OECTA/OSSTA Religious Education Courses Launched

- Courses in the teaching of catechetics offered in winter and summer
- Certificates issued by joint associations to teachers who successfully complete the course
- Courses would eventually expand to Course 1, 2 & 3 and be recognized by the Ministry for qualification purposes

1972 Focus on Faith for the Future program Established by OSSTA

- Major thrust of the program was to develop a total Catholic school community which would embrace all its component parts - trustees, teachers, administrators, priests and parents

1976 Blair Commission Tours Province to assess reaction to taxing Catholic High School Property

- Through the combined efforts of clergy, trustees, teachers, parents and students the Tax Plan was scrapped

1978 Government Approves Religious Education Credits for Grades 0 & 10

1980 Bill 82 Grants Catholic schools the right to provide "Special Education"

1984 Grade 9 & 10 Students in Catholic Schools are Recognized as "Secondary" School Students

1984 Premier Bill Davis Announces Intention to Extend Funding to Grades 11, 12, & 13 (OAC) in Catholic Schools

1985 Passage of Bill 30 (including s.136 1.a.) - Extends Full Funding to Grades 11, 12, & 13 (OAC) in Catholic Schools

- Would be challenged in the Court of Appeal of Ontario and in the Supreme Court of Canada
- Section 136 1.a., a Clause which restricted, to a ten year period, the rights of Catholic school boards to prefer to hire Catholic teachers was inserted. It would later be challenged in Court

1985 Completion Office of the Separate Schools Founded

- Provides a forum for Catholic partners, including OSSTA, to address political issues arising from "extension" - Bill 30

1986 Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) Founded by the Ontario Council of Catholic Bishops

- OSSTA is a member of the Institute and actively contributes to the work of the partners around issues of Curriculum, Teacher Education, Faculties of Education, etc.

1986 Bill 30 Declared Constitutional by the Ontario Court of Appeal

1987 Bill 30 Declared Constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada

1991 ICE Publishes "Blisshen Report"

- Provides a vision of the goals for Catholic students as they were articulated by parents, clergy, teachers and trustees

1992 Ontario Fair Tax Commission

- OSSTA Participates in Work of Property Tax Working Group including presentation of Minority Report

1993 Royal Commission on Learning Appointed

- OSSTA attends Hearings and presents Submission; "The Hope That Lives Within Us"

1995 Royal Commission on Learning Issues Report: For the Love of Learning

- OSSTA responds

1995 School Councils Established

- Purpose is to bring parents and teachers together for the local management of their schools

- OSSTA publishes two major documents: Evolution of Catholic School Councils and Involving Other Parents

1995/96 Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs re: Amendment to Term 17 of the Terms of Union Between Canada and Newfoundland

- OSSTA supports Newfoundland Catholics in their fight to protect Catholic Education in their province

1997 Justice Sharpe rules that Section 136 of the Education Act is Unconstitutional and of no force or effect

- This ruling would be appealed in the Appeal Court of Ontario
- The Appeal Court supports Justice Sharpe's ruling
- Application to appeal the Appeal Court's decision is dismissed
- Section 136 was struck out by the Court as it was unconstitutional. Catholic boards have the constitutional authority to take matters of faith into account in hiring, advancing, promoting and dismissing employees. Employees are entitled to challenge such preferential practices, however, where the qualification is not reasonable and bona fide

1997 OSSTA adopts new Name - Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

- This name more accurately reflects our mission as the provincial representative of English Catholic school trustees

1997 Bill 104 - Fewer School Boards Act (1997)

- Roman Catholic Separate School Boards reduced from 53 to 29 Catholic District School Boards and six School Authorities. Catholic trustees reduced from 710 to 250

1997 Education Improvement Commission

- Commission mandated to oversee and direct the amalgamation and operation of schools and to oversee the transition of the new system of education governance in Ontario

1997 Bill 160 - Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997

- Introduces a fair and equitable funding formula for public and Catholic schools
- OCSTA supports direction taken by the Government in the area of curriculum, standards, accountability, reporting and funding

- OCSTA expresses reservation about some of the initiative in the area of governance, in the matter of labour relations and negotiations and about the pace of the comprehensive educational reforms in certain areas

1997 Ontario Regulation 461/97 Establishes Policy Guidelines for Representation of the Interests of Pupils on School Boards

- OCSTA publishes "Embracing the Future: Catholic Pupil Representatives on Catholic School Boards" to help school boards develop local policies
- OCSTA Launches Web Site for Student Representatives
- OCSTA assists in coordinating in-service opportunities for Student Representatives

1997 Religious Education as Teaching Subject Introduced in Faculties of Education

1998 Bill 160 - Constitutional Challenges

- Justice Peter Cumming (General Division Court of Ontario) finds that it is unconstitutional for the provincial government through Bill 160 to suspend the right of Catholic school boards to set a local mill rate
- All other aspects of the challenge are unsuccessful
- OCSTA reaffirms that it is unlikely that Catholic boards would see any benefit in exercising their right to tax as raising money beyond equitable levels would be inconsistent with our long-standing goal of fair funding for all students
- The government appeals the lower court's decision re: taxation and OPSBA, OECTA, other teacher unions and individuals appeal other parts of the lower court's decision. OCSTA is an intervenor
- A panel of 5 Ontario Court of Appeal judges hear the Appeals and eventually reverses the ruling of the lower court. OCSTA is an intervenor
- The decision of the Court of Appeal would be challenged in the Supreme Court of Canada

1998 Government Financial Support for Creation of Catholic Curriculum for Catholic Schools

- Coordinated through the Institute for Catholic Education

1999 OCSTA Adopts New Logo

- Considerations which guided the design included the need to symbolize in a contemporary style the traditional goals and mission of the Association

2000 Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities

- Heralds an era of accountability
- OCSTA publishes document "Visioning the Future: A Reflection on the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities from the perspective of Catholic Schools"

2000 Bill 74 - Education Accountability Act, 2000

2001 Bill 160 Declared Constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada

2001 Bill 80 - Stability & Excellence in Education Act

2001 Task Force on Effective Schools Established

OCSTA responds with document entitled: A Catholic Response to the Task Force on Effective Schools