

POLITICAL ACTION NOW

A Newsletter for Unit Presidents, Political Action and Communication Committee Chairs

September 2008

Lobby Day

OECTA's first lobby day takes place Wednesday November 5. Unit Presidents and local Political Action Chairs will visit the Ontario Legislature to meet with their Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPPs) to discuss OECTA's issues and concerns. Participants will meet at Queen's Park at noon and will remain until 6:30 p.m. Registration packages from the Government Relations Department should reach units by the end of September.

Ontario NDP

The ONDP's leadership contest will be held at its next convention, March 6 to 8, 2009. The party permits all ONDP members to vote for the leader whether or not they attend the convention as delegates. The voting procedure has not yet been determined. Delegates will also debate party policy. Voting on policy is restricted to delegates only.

OECTA is following the preparations for this convention closely because the ONDP may debate whether or not to

withdraw its support for Ontario's Catholic education system.

One leadership candidate suggested that it would be a good idea for the party to review its current position in support of Catholic education. A change would severely undermine relations between OECTA and the ONDP.

At this crucial time, please encourage all OECTA members who belong to the ONDP to get involved by attending constituency meetings or the convention as delegates. OECTA members whose ONDP membership has lapsed should consider rejoining the party to participate in the important debate to protect our schools.

Full-time JK/SK

Last year, the McGuinty government appointed Dr. Charles Pascal to study full-day kindergarten and make recommendations for implementation of a "full day of learning." His report is due in March 2009. OECTA's research paper shows that the most effective program for 4- and

5-year olds is full-day Kindergarten delivered in schools by certified teachers, under the mandate of the Ministry of Education. The research paper can be found at

www.oecta.on.ca/publications/papers.htm

"OECTA Speaks on Full Day Kindergarten" has been mailed to every MPP and other educational stakeholders. Copies have been forwarded to units and can be found on the OECTA website at www.speakforchildren.ca/lobbying.htm Please meet with local MPPs to discuss this very important issue. The government makes the final determination on implementation of this important program. Teachers must ensure that our message is heard.

Federal Election

As referenced in Elaine Mac Neil's September 8 memo to unit presidents, OECTA does not take an active role in federal elections. However, we follow events with concern. Check the CLC website www.betterchoice.ca for election materials and issues sheets.