



OAPCE Year End Report for 2020–2021 and 2021–2022

Introduction

The OAPCE Board of Directors has opted to consolidate the activities over the last two years into one comprehensive report due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020–2021

Engage

Throughout the 2020–2021 school year, OAPCE continued to widely distribute our newsletter “Parents4Parents Press.” Our publication is circulated to our email distribution list along with being made available on our website. Each edition features information under the sections of Engage, Advocate and Enhance. We feature a “Parent Partner Spotlight” that showcases one of the OAPCE partners. When applicable, we also highlight a “From the Ministry of Education” section as well. In different publications, we also highlight news from various regions that are part of OAPCE membership.

In the past two years, OAPCE was able to welcome the returning Catholic schools boards of Waterloo and Niagara to the OAPCE Board of Directors. OAPCE continues to support the growth of its presence by helping to facilitate meetings and events at the regional level. OAPCE is looking forward to supporting more regional events across the province in the coming school year. Growth and increasing membership are a key objective of OAPCE to ensure we provide for parents from across the province of Ontario.

As with most organizations, web presence is a key to engaging with people. To that end, OAPCE undertook a comprehensive redesign of our web presence. It included adding regional portals so all regions have, and/or, could expand their existing web presence under a unified OAPCE umbrella. It is an ongoing initiative that we continue to build on.

Advocate

OAPCE engaged directly with parents and advocated on their behalf to the Ministry of Education on several topics. The focus was on what strategies, policies and actions could be taken to support the wide depth and breadth of learning needs across the province because of the pandemic. OAPCE utilized survey tools and direct input from regional directors to ensure the voice of Catholic parents was communicated to the Ministry. OAPCE worked with Ministry staff to access grant monies to support the delivery of various virtual learning opportunities for parents across the province.



Enhance

Given the challenges faced during the pandemic, OAPCE focussed heavily on activities and events that would support parents. Instead of a one-day conference, OAPCE utilized a different approach. This approach featured pre-recorded webinars released for viewing on the new website over several Saturdays.

“Parenting Positively in a Pandemic” was held on November 7th, 14th and 21st, 2020. OAPCE featured pre-recorded webinars released over the course of three consecutive Saturdays. Speakers included Michael Way Skinner, Penny Patrician, Dr. Anne Jamieson and Miguel A. Martinez. Our first Virtual AGM was also conducted on the last day of the series and was well attended by many OAPCE representatives from across the province.



The new realities of the pandemic has provided the opportunity to connect virtually and was once again used as the platform as OAPCE was proud to host a webinar series focussed on engagement. “Parent Engagement and Education Webinar Series,” held on March 2nd, 10th and 24th, 2021, showcasing several speakers to support parents. Guest speakers included Paul Davis, Anthony Perrotta and Wes “Maestro Fresh” Williams. All of these presenters provided information and resources to parents to navigate the new education world they have been dealing with.

The “Empowering Parents Virtual Conference” was held on May 14–15th, 2021. The virtual conference opened with Cardinal Collins blessing our parents from across the province, followed by keynote speaker Kevin Frankish. In addition to this live event, pre-recorded webinars were available on May 15th. Webinar presenters included Dr. Josephine Lombardi (“Empowering Parents to Be Experts in Humanity”), Wayne Jones (“Victorious Living! Victorious Parenting) and Teresa Hartnett (“Engaging and Empowering Parents: Working Together for Our Children”).



Once again, these webinars were very well attended and feedback received from many parents was positive and appreciative of the ongoing resources that have been provided to them. The highlight of this Conference was that every participant received the first “OAPCE ToolKit” which was mailed directly to them that included several books, resources, pamphlets and OAPCE Swag - a very well received item that everyone enjoyed!

2021–2022

Engage

In July 2021, OAPCE conducted a virtual crowdsourcing ideas board activity. The theme was ‘STOP, START, CONTINUE with Education’ in Ontario. A report was prepared that summarized the findings and was shared on our website as well as directly with the Ministry of Education.

During the 2021–2022 school year, OAPCE continued to update parents with our “Parents4Parents Press” newsletter. The publication is distributed throughout the year via email to our parent distribution list that includes thousands of parents from across the province, along with being available on our website. Surveys, consultations and the newsletters are all part of our engagement process.

Advocate

OAPCE continues to work in partnership with the Ministry of Education as the parents across the province focus their energy on supporting their children emotionally and academically. As students and parents embark on a path forward in a world that has been changed forever as a result of COVID-19, support is needed now, more than ever. Early in 2022, OAPCE conducted a province-wide survey to gather feedback on the plans and priorities parents feel should be the focus in government education policy. The report yielded a clear picture for the Ministry of what parents felt was needed going forward to support their children.

As in the previous year, the Ministry supported OAPCE through grants that resulted in several parent learning events throughout the school year.

Enhance

OAPCE continues to build on its commitment to enhancing Catholic education by supporting parents. During the school year, we continued to create learning opportunities for parents across the province.

November 20th, 2021 – Rebuilding our Resiliency as Parents – Webinar

The opening comments for this webinar were presented by Bishop Joseph Dabrowski. Lifecoach Miguel Martinez provided fundamental principles and practices that will drive resiliency and rebuild stability in the home. This powerful workshop combined evidence-based studies with faith-based principles. The second webinar featured the team of Sara Westbrook (emotional resilience strategist) and Paul Davis (internet safety expert), who shared strategies that were beneficial to parents or guardians and their children, on how to handle emotions before using a keyboard as an emotional outlet that can be hurtful instead of helpful.

On May 28th, 2022, OAPCE returns to an in-person venue for a conference after a long hiatus. The theme for the conference is “Reclaiming and Re-engaging Parents as Partners.” The event is scheduled to take place at Bishop P.F Reding Catholic Secondary School in Milton, Ontario.



Internal Operations

The OAPCE Board of Directors continues to execute their strategic plan. Like many organizations, all modes of operation pivoted to virtual delivery and continue to do so.

The organization invested heavily in enhancing its web presence with a contemporary design that features access to customized regional web presence regardless of the region’s size or if the region is established or has recently joined OAPCE as a member. The objective is to create opportunities for new regions to be able to engage with local regional parents. This web realignment also achieved a unified look and feel for those regions with regional councils. This will allow for all regions to utilize OAPCE promotional materials and products without incurring costs at the regional level.



OAPCE continues its unification efforts in the social media realm. While planned for next school year as part of the greater communications plan, OAPCE was spurred into action because of fraudulent accounts being created presenting themselves as OAPCE. The Board responded by closing all social media accounts for a period until accounts could be secured. OAPCE worked with the various platform providers to ensure that accounts representing OAPCE were legitimate. Based on this experience and the advice and guidance of experts in the field, the organization is limiting its exposure and utilizing the platforms for one-way communication.

The OAPCE Operations team, along with the Board of Directors, completed a comprehensive review of the policies that govern the organization. The policy review cycle is every three to five years. This update has spanned two years, as we continuously need to adapt to the changes in the way we do business, courtesy of the pandemic.

On the financial side, OAPCE continues to operate based on membership fees paid by school boards and supports parent engagement via grants from the Ministry of Education. The audit review has been completed for each operating year as required under the Canada Revenue Agency.



Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education