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*OASBO is dedicated to the pursuit and support of quality education for all students.*

## **PRESIDENT'S UPDATE**

### **ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE FEBRUARY 7-8, 2008 BOARD MEETING**

The Board welcomed Russ Coles from the Information & Communication Technology Committee Technology Committee and Alexandre Beaudin from the Admissions Enrolment Committee to make a presentation on **OnSIS Sustainability** and to request the Board's support of the recommendations contained in the document. The two main considerations are: What are the expectations of OnSIS? and What do boards have to put in place to make it sustainable? At present there are no guidelines and the committees are suggesting that clear rules be set by the Ministry. Reliable and efficient applications are needed to make the process easier. Some of the key steps suggested include the necessity of having senior management in place who understands the process fully; establishing data ownership, building support, automation, reliable software to include security and edit checks, and collaboration to reduce duplication of effort. It is recommended that a joint steering committee of representatives from school boards, the Ministry and vendors be set up to open dialogue and ensure that the data requirements are clear. The Board agreed to assist in facilitating communication by setting up a meeting between the OASBO and COSBO executives to discuss potential actions.

Don Higgins, OASBO Past President and Senior Team Leader, School Business Support Branch, Ministry of Education joined the meeting to present an update on **Operational Reviews**. He indicated that the objective of the Reviews is to strengthen management capacity using best practices that have been established to help operate more effectively. The operational review process includes the creation of an advisory committee which provides direction to ensure that the review will have relevance; establishment of a reference group to address trustees' associations desire to be involved; input from sector stakeholder groups such as OASBO and COSBO.

The Ministry has sought input from the Auditor Generals' office, Ministry of Finance and other branches such as Field Services and Communications and testing of the review guide process with pilot boards. Field work was conducted in October/November 2007 with 6 pilot boards: Ottawa Catholic, Trillium Lakelands, London Catholic, Hamilton Wentworth, Simcoe County and Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic. The general findings in the governance and administration, financial management, human resources management and school operations were that school boards are complex operations and one size does not fit all. The professionalism of senior board staff is outstanding and board workload is a two-way street with the Ministry. The initial reports will be released in early spring 2008. The ongoing activities of the Operational Reviews include release of an Operational Review guide (Dec. 2007), release of Wave 1 Operational Review (early 2008), commence Wave 2 Operational Review (Jan.-March 2008), release of 3-year roll-out schedule for all boards (Feb. 2008), establish advisory committee to work with Review Teams to identify key performance indicators, and on-going stakeholder consultation (COSBO and CODE) will be represented on the advisory committee.

Plans for **May 8-9, 2008 Annual Conference** are progressing well. The theme is *"Embracing Change and Sharing Success – Englober le changement...Partager la réussite"*. Dr. Lauren Woodhouse, educator/entertainer/scholar will deliver the keynote address on Thursday morning, and David Phillips, Canada's weather guru will base his presentation on climate change and weather extremes and the adverse impact it will have on Canada. The conference planning committee has done an exceptional job in

setting up the program for the committee workshop sessions. The Education Industry Show is filling up quickly and over two-thirds of the booths are sold.

Discussion took place on establishing a rotation schedule for **future Annual Conference venues**. The Board selected Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Alliston, Ottawa and London. Sudbury was also considered and may be include in the schedule if a suitable venue is found. The Board approved the location for the 2009 Annual Conference and Education Industry Show. The event will be held at the Nottawasaga Inn in Alliston, Ontario. Hamilton was suggested for 1020 pending the updated report to be brought back to the sub-committee dealing with future conference venues.

A short update on the University of Guelph **Business Diploma Program** was presented. The course developers for two of the core courses have been assigned. OASBO Executive Director, Bill Blackie has been assigned for developing the courses on the Introduction to School Board Administration and Legal Governance. A Gold Mine session will be presented at the 2008 Annual Conference to give members a preview of the components of the Diploma Program which is scheduled for launching in September 2008. Discussion took place regarding 'ownership' of the curriculum. It seems that OASBO will likely control the content of the courses and the University of Guelph will likely control the delivery.

The Board meeting was followed by a session on **Governance**. Directors discussed structural governance, positive and negative aspects of a new structure, functional governance and next steps. The Board also discussed topics related to Committee representation versus regional and language representation. All agreed that Committees are the foundation of the Association and representation should be based on region or language. Under consideration was the concept of 6 sub-groups with 2 committees represented in each group. One Committee representative per sub-group would serve on the Board as Director. For the position of Vice president, an election by the membership would be held as in the past. There was agreement that the current 9 members of the Board should remain unchanged and the 2-year term should continue. The model is still in its development stages. Members of the Rep Team will be asked to provide input, followed by a membership survey before introducing the concept at an Annual General Meeting. In 2009 a vote could be taken regarding the new governance structure and By-law changes. The general agreement was that in order to be a strong Board, there must be a stronger reflection of the Standing Committees.

Brian Greene  
OASBO President