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ONTARIO ENGLISH Catholic Teachers ASSOCIATION

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Government amends Bill 242 on Full-Day Early Learning

Ontario's Standing Committee on Social Policy held three days of hearings into Bill 242, the *Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010.* A wide variety of organizations, including OECTA, made submissions. "It is clear the committee listened to the concerns of classroom teachers as expressed by the OECTA brief," OECTA president James Ryan says. The Association's brief can be found in the Resource Library at **www.oecta.on.ca**

The committee also reviewed amendments to the Bill that were submitted by each of Ontario's three political parties.

The government's amendments provide greater clarity to the Bill and will ensure that the Early Learning Kindergarten Program (ELKP) is implemented in accordance with the government's stated position.

"This is welcome news for everyone involved in the ELKP," Ryan says. The Act will make clear that there will be a teacher in every ELK class. An Early Childhood Educator (ECE) may be assigned, depending on class size. The roles and responsibilities of the teacher and ECE will be more clearly delineated.

Teachers maintain primary responsibility for teaching duties that are currently attributed to them under the *Education Act* and Regulations, including duties related to report cards, instruction, training and evaluation of the progress of pupils in JK/K, the management of JK/K classes and the preparation of teaching plans.

Other changes ensure that teachers are not responsible for the extended program, and that ECEs can only be assigned to JK/K classes.

Although the consultation process was exhaustive and meaningful, OECTA expects that during the implementation process, on-going discussions with government will continue, especially while regulations and guidelines are being written. This will be consistent with the government's actions concerning the ELKP.

The new ELK program/curriculum will also clarify and distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and ECE.

OECTA is holding a special conference for all kindergarten teachers who are to be involved in the ELK program this September.

Scheduled for May 26 and 27, the conference will provide detailed information about the program to help teachers prepare to deliver the new ELKP and understand their roles and responsibilities.