

March 4, 2010

Government acknowledges need for greater clarity in Bill 242

Now that Second Reading of Bill 242, the *Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*, introduced on February 17, has concluded, OECTA will press for amendments during hearings before the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Association is moving quickly. Following a review of the Bill by legal counsel, staff drafted positions to be used in a lobby for positive change.

James Ryan, OECTA president, met with senior government officials on March 1 to discuss teachers' concerns. He emphasized the need to ensure that the roles of the teacher and ECE are clear and distinct to avoid confusion in classrooms. He also identified the challenges posed by large classes and insisted that OECTA's concerns about teacher workload and job performance are issues that must be resolved. To discuss these and other concerns further, additional meetings have been scheduled.

The government was receptive to OECTA's concerns and has acknowledged the necessity for clarity in the legislation.

On March 2, OECTA's Provincial Executive met with legal counsel as well as staff, to establish direction on what action is to be taken by the Association.

Both OECTA and the government have a common

interest in ensuring that this new program is successful. The government is committed to hiring an additional 3500 Kindergarten teachers and 9000 ECEs over the next five years, to ensure success for the program.

Research confirms that students' early success translates into greater success throughout their school life and adulthood.

A properly implemented Early Learning Kindergarten Program (ELKP) benefits not only the Kindergarten teachers directly involved with the program, but also the whole school community. OECTA believes the road to success for the ELKP depends on ensuring that these new teams of teachers and ECEs understand their respective roles and responsibilities.

OECTA is committed to defending teachers' job security and working conditions. Clear legislative language is the first step towards insuring that positive, productive teams are established in ELKP classrooms. The experience that our Kindergarten teachers bring to the ELKP will provide a foundation for success. OECTA will be vigilant and pursue the matter until essential changes are made.