

DECEMBER 2025

The OCSBOA Digest

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

As we bring the calendar year to a close and look ahead to the second half of the school year, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Executive Director, Peter Marchini, Executive Assistant, Lesley McDowell, the OCSBOA Directors, and all conference attendees and sponsors for their invaluable contributions to our 70th Annual Conference this past fall. The success of this milestone event was made possible through your commitment, collaboration, and dedication to excellence.

I would also like to warmly welcome and thank our new Directors, Ida Bruno and Stacy Hogg, for generously volunteering their time, expertise, and talents in service of OCSBOA. Your willingness to support Catholic education in Ontario through leadership and stewardship is deeply appreciated.

To all member school boards and colleagues for your continued support of OCSBOA, we extend our appreciation. We value our strong partnerships across the Catholic education community and remain committed to working collaboratively in support of students, families, and faith-based education throughout the province.

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, let us take time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas as we prepare for the coming of Christ. This season invites us to be grateful for the many blessings in our lives, while also remaining mindful of those in our communities for whom this time of year may be challenging. Let us seek meaningful and tangible ways to extend compassion, generosity, and support to others.

"The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.' And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'"

— Luke 2:10–14

On behalf of the Ontario Catholic School Business Officials Association Board of Directors, I wish you and your loved ones a safe, peaceful, and joyful Christmas season. May this time provide an opportunity for rest and renewal, so that you may return in the new year refreshed and energized to continue your important work in service of students and Catholic education. With warm regards,

ON BEHALF OF THE OCSBOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Milka

Milka Zlomislic
President
OCSBOA



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LUNCH AND LEARN SESSIONS & PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Our Lunch and Learn Sessions have begun for this year. We have had 2 sessions already and 2 are scheduled for the new year.

October - [Air Filter Technology](#)- QAir

November - [Productivity Hacks](#) - OCSBOA

January - [Building Personal Resiliency](#) - SBCI

February - [Accessibility in Communication](#) - NCDSB

You must be a OCSBOA member to register for these sessions. Registration links are sent out about 1 week before the event. If you are not a current OCSBOA member please click on the link to be taken to the registration form

[Registration Link](#)

2026 Board of Directors

President - Milka Zlomislic

Vice President- Khaled Elgharbawy

Executive Director-Peter Marchini

Directors

Kevin Sun

Betty Stavropoulos

Vince Artuso

Kerry Pomfret

Ida Bruno

Rosalia Betti

Roger Mabardi

Stacy Hogg

Alem Birhane



*May the joy of Christ's Nativity bring you hope, love, and
blessing this Christmas and always.*

2025 OCSBOA CONFERENCE

Despite being a smaller gathering this year, our conference was a tremendous success—filled with meaningful conversation, valuable learning, and inspiring connections.

Attendees engaged deeply in every session, sharing ideas, best practices, and encouragement that truly strengthened our community.

Thank you to everyone who participated, presented, and supported the event. Your presence and enthusiasm made this year's conference impactful, personal, and memorable.

Kaleb Dahlgren

This year's keynote address was delivered by none other than Kaleb Dahlgren. Kaleb delivered an uplifting and deeply inspiring presentation that resonated with every person in the room. Through powerful storytelling, authenticity, and warmth, he shared his journey of resilience, gratitude, and hope—reminding us of the strength found in community and the importance of caring for one another.

His engaging style, positive spirit, and heartfelt message left attendees motivated, reflective, and encouraged to face challenges with compassion, perseverance, and faith.

It was truly a highlight of the conference and a moment many will carry forward long after the event.

Artificial Intelligence

The IBM presentation on Cybersecurity and AI in K-12 Business Operations offered school business officials a timely and practical look at how boards across Canada are strengthening digital security while preparing for responsible AI adoption.

Participants learned about current threat trends in education, including the rising sophistication of attacks and the increasing importance of identity protection, strong data governance, and proactive planning. A practical cybersecurity checklist highlighted essentials such as MFA, managed SOC services, secure backups, vulnerability assessments, and clear incident response and continuity plans.

The session also explored the rapidly evolving world of Artificial Intelligence, emphasizing both opportunity and caution. Ontario's AI trust and governance framework and Gartner's AI TRISM model were discussed as key guides to ensure AI use is transparent, secure, equitable, and well-managed.

Real-world examples showcased how tools like Microsoft Copilot can support productivity in areas such as finance and HR when implemented thoughtfully and securely.

Overall, the presentation reinforced that while technology continues to advance quickly, school boards can confidently navigate risk and realize value by prioritizing readiness, good governance, and strong security foundations.



OCSTA Finance and Labour Presentation

OCSTA gave us an overview of Finances at Ontario Boards. The presentation highlighted the growing financial challenges facing school boards as rising operational demands continue to strain already limited budgets. Significant cost pressures are being driven by increasing special education and student transportation expenses, expanding technology and infrastructure needs, and ongoing investments in digital resources, capital projects, and temporary accommodations.

Sick leave utilization under current collective agreements is adding further operational and financial burden, while staffing costs and statutory benefit contributions such as EI and CPP continue to rise. Compounding these pressures, the moratorium on school closures limits opportunities for boards to find meaningful cost savings.

In addition to financial pressures, boards face heightened cybersecurity risks and the emerging need to responsibly implement and manage artificial intelligence tools.

These evolving priorities require both funding and specialized planning to ensure protection, continuity, and strategic use of technology.

From a compliance perspective, 66% of boards are currently balanced budget compliant. However, several boards continue to face ongoing deficits, with some experiencing three consecutive years of shortfalls and deeper cumulative financial challenges. Ten boards now require Minister approval after exceeding allowable deficit limits and must develop and follow formal In-Year Deficit Elimination Plans. Continued monitoring and support will be essential as boards work to stabilize finances and maintain services for students.

Overall, the presentation underscored the urgent need for sustainable funding, strategic planning, and proactive measures to navigate the financial, technological, and operational realities facing school boards today.



OCSTA Executive Director -Patrick Daly

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of OCSBOA and all those serving in Business Official roles across Ontario's 29 Catholic School Boards. Your work is essential to the smooth and effective operation of our school systems and has a direct, positive impact on fulfilling the mission of Catholic education in our province.

As the Bishops of Ontario wrote in their 1989 Pastoral Letter This Moment of Promise: *"There is no such thing as 'just a job' in a Catholic school. There are only various forms of Christian service, each calling for extraordinary service."*

These words resonate deeply with the dedicated men and women who faithfully serve in Business Official positions. Over the years, we have witnessed individuals at boards such as Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board exemplify this extraordinary service, living their vocation with commitment and integrity.

We also commend OCSBOA for selecting the theme for this year's conference: Navigating Change, Empowering Growth. In today's dynamic environment of publicly funded Catholic education, reading the signs of the times and leading change with boldness and prudence is more important than ever. As one thoughtful reflection reminds us, *"Courage is when you risk something for the sake of something that is genuinely good."*

Your courage and dedication exemplify this truth and are vital to the continued strength and growth of Catholic education.

OCSTA thanks each of you for your service and assures you of our ongoing friendship and support. God bless all the members of OCSBOA.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 OCSBOA CONFERENCE SPONSORS

On behalf of the OCSBOA membership, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your generous support of this year's conference. Your sponsorship played a key role in making the event a success and allowed us to provide meaningful learning, collaboration, and engagement opportunities for all participants.

Your commitment to supporting this event enhanced the conference experience. We truly value your partnership.

2025 OCSBOA Conference

The 2025 conference will be held at White Oaks Conference Centre in Niagara on the Lake from September 23-25. Look for more information in the New Year!

Amazon	Keel, Cottrelle
ASI Group	McCarthy's Uniforms
Apply to Education	Moffett & Duncan
Dell Technologies	Carmichael Engineering
Ebase	Q-Air
HTS	Hicks Morley
IBM Education Consulting	Paradigm Shift Technologies
iSYS	Pre-Eng
Investigative Risk Management	RTOERO
SBCI	Mondo Contract Flooring
OECM	ThinkDox

*Thank
you!*

Christmas Fun!

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOME TOGETHER TIME WITH THE FAMILY HERE ARE SOME LISTENING SUGGESTIONS:



VINYL CAFE: A CHRISTMAS COLLECTION
A CLASSIC SPOKEN-WORD HOLIDAY COLLECTION

- DAVE COOKS THE TURKEY
- FERRETS FOR CHRISTMAS
- CHRISTMAS ON THE ROAD
- CHRISTMAS AT THE TURLINGTONS'
- POLLY ANDERSON'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
- CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
- ON THE ROOF (DAVE ON THE ROOF)

YOU CAN FIND THESE STORIES ON SPOTIFY OR APPLE MUSIC

EVERY CHRISTMAS EVE, CANADIANS GATHER AROUND TO LISTEN TO ONE OF CBC'S MOST CHERISHED HOLIDAY TRADITIONS—"THE SHEPHERD" BY FREDERICK FORSYTH. FIRST BROUGHT TO LIFE ON CBC RADIO BY THE LEGENDARY ALAN MAITLAND, THIS BEAUTIFULLY TOLD STORY FOLLOWS A YOUNG ROYAL AIR FORCE PILOT LOST IN FOG OVER THE NORTH SEA ON CHRISTMAS EVE, DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR A WAY HOME. WHAT UNFOLDS IS A HAUNTING, HOPEFUL TALE FILLED WITH MYSTERY, GRACE, AND QUIET WONDER. FOR MANY FAMILIES, HEARING "THE SHEPHERD" HAS BECOME AS MUCH A PART OF CHRISTMAS AS LIGHTS AND CAROLS, OFFERING A MOMENT OF REFLECTION AND TIMELESS STORYTELLING EACH YEAR. CLICK THE LINK BELOW FOR THE STORY...

[THE SHEPHERD](#)