

ONTARIO ENGLISH  
**Catholic  
Teachers**  
ASSOCIATION

**EDUCATING  
FOR THE  
COMMON  
GOOD**

CONFERENCE

**PROGRAM**





# EDUCATING FOR THE COMMON GOOD



# President's Message



*“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” (Matthew 7:12)*

As Catholic teachers, our commitment to advocacy and social justice issues is at the core of who we are, and the Educating for the Common Good conference has been central to these efforts and our social teachings for years.

While we work to ensure our Association represents the voice and experience of our diverse members, as Catholic teachers in the publicly funded education system, we also play a broader role in fostering awareness and respect of others, preparing students for the modern world, while giving every student entrusted in our care the tools and knowledge to manage relationships and wellbeing. By creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning and working environments for students and teachers, we can advance the causes of equity and human rights.

This has been particularly challenging to achieve in the last six years amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ford Conservative government's disdain for teachers and refusal to properly invest in publicly funded education. We cannot carry on like this any longer. To realize the best possible schools for the students we serve, we need to elect a government that values the common good in the next provincial election in 2026. This is the first step in our next round of bargaining, and part of our ongoing mission to work toward a socially just society for all Ontarians.

Teachers' unions have always been on the frontlines advocating for progressive social change. Challenging the status quo through social justice, the teachings of our faith, empowerment, and action. Engaging in the difficult work of negotiating for our collective, rather than individual, needs. It is through this lens of deeply held and commonly shared values that OECTA has evolved into who we are today, and what we strive to become going forward.

In recent years, our notion of collectivism, both as OECTA members and in our broader communities, has been challenged by world events, a global pandemic, widening socio-economic disparities, 24/7 access to technology and social media, and an enhanced emphasis on individual survival and success. We have felt the impact in our own union. This concerns that our sense of collectivism is being lost. A yearning to return to our fundamental values of collectivity, inclusion, empathy, dignity, respect, and equality. This is part of our collective commitment to the common good both as teachers and union members.

The Educating for the Common Good conference represents the mosaic that is OECTA, the intersection of justice and activism, unionism and politics, and the teachings of our faith. It is my hope that this conference will ignite change and renew our commitment to each other, so that our members can imagine a better future, a more hopeful future. Together, we can enhance our view of the world through each other's eyes.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'René Jansen in de Wal'. The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract, with long horizontal strokes.

René Jansen in de Wal  
President



## OCTOBER 3 to 4, 2024

### Westin Harbour Castle Hotel

#### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

**8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

**Registration**

**10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Opening Comments and Liturgy**

**11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**Keynote Speaker:** Jesse Wentz

**12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

**Lunch** (provided)

**1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Workshops Session A**

**2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

**Break**

**2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Workshops Session B**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Wrap Up and Prizes**

**4:30 p.m.**

**Mindful Yoga and Meditation**

**9:00 p.m.**

**Game Night**

#### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

**8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

**Sign in at Registration Desk**

**9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.**

**Opening Comments**

**9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.**

**Keynote Speaker:** Ingrid Palmer

**10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

**Break**

**10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

**Workshops Session C**

**11:45 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

**Lunch** (provided)

**12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Workshops Session D**

**2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.**

**Break**

**2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

**Plenary: National Film Board**

**3:15 p.m.**

**Closing and Prizes**

# EDUCATING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

## WORKSHOPS

Thursday, October 3 / 1:15 to 2:30 p.m.

## Session A

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUDIENCE	LOCATION
<b>A1</b> <b>Mental Health and Wellness: The Importance of Caring for You</b>	A teacher is always “on,” whether in the classroom or at the grocery store meeting a child you’ve taught. Stress is a natural part of life, but when it overwhelms us, it can have serious consequences. If your vessel is empty, you will have little left to share with family, friends, students, and colleagues. This mental health workshop will provide you with strategies and resources to nurture your own mental wellness.	All Teachers	Pier 7
<b>A2</b> <b>A Deeper Look at AI</b>	Find out why a 20+ year technology advocate is sounding the alarm on artificial intelligence. Come ready to engage in conversation, debate and discuss the merits and dangers of AI for the profession.	All Teachers	Pier 5
<b>A3</b> <b>Social Media: A Tool for Engagement and Advocacy</b>	Social media is a powerful tool for Catholic teachers—to share your experiences, engage others on key issues, and champion the causes that matter to you, your communities, and the students you serve. However, there are also potential issues to be aware of and navigate while using social media. This workshop will provide key tips to effectively engage, disseminate, and amplify YOUR message on social media platforms as you take action, while maintaining your professional reputation.	All Teachers	Pier 8

<p><b>A4</b></p> <p><b>A Call to Action: Teaching Through an Anti Racist Framework</b></p>	<p>Uncover the history of why racial disparities exist in Canada and why it is not enough to “not be” racist. An antiracist framework acknowledges the role of the public educational system in Canada in producing and reproducing racial, gender, and class-based inequalities in society. Using our Catholic faith as a guide, participants will have the opportunity to work together in solidarity, articulate their faith and deepen their relationship with others by sharing their own lived experiences. Attendees will learn to teach a curriculum through the “big ideas” in an attempt to combat biases that reinforce current systems of domination.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 3</p>
<p><b>A5</b></p> <p><b>Mental Health Matters Every Day!</b></p>	<p>We all know that mental health matters, but it can be tricky to know how to scaffold and sequence mental health learning throughout the year. In this session, we will explore how to create mentally healthy learning environments, where to access evidence-based resources and information and how to steep mental health learning in the Catholic faith. Participants will come away with grade/panel specific resources that make integrating mental health learning throughout the year simple and straightforward.</p>	<p>All teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 4</p>

**Thursday, October 3 / 2:45 to 4:00 p.m.**

## Session B

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUDIENCE	LOCATION
<p><b>B1</b></p> <p><b>How to Motivate AIDE Action Through Telling Your Story</b></p>	<p>This workshop provides an overview of the importance of connecting one’s personal narrative with students and other educators for AIDE change. By doing so, we encourage educators to be proactive when facing equity issues within the classroom and school. Participants will learn skills for developing authentic stories, drawing from techniques developed by Marshall Ganz, a professor at Harvard University. Ganz’s teachings empower individuals to build personal power, which leads to collective power, fosters meaningful relationships, and supports social justice activism. Ganz’s techniques were utilized to develop powerful social narratives that motivate others to take action for positive social change.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 5</p>
<p><b>B2</b></p> <p><b>You, Your Students, Your Duty of Care: Human Rights in Action</b></p>	<p>As teachers we have a Duty of Care, meaning we have a legal obligation to care for and protect students from all foreseeable risks of injury and harm, which includes upholding students’ right to an education free from discrimination based on fifteen human rights grounds. This workshop will help teachers understand the scope of their professional obligations as they relate to teacher conduct in and outside of the learning environment.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 7</p>

<p><b>B3</b></p> <p><b>Learning to Say “No”</b></p>	<p>Do you find yourself saying “yes” to people and immediately regretting it? In this workshop we will look at the reasons why we often take on “extras” when we really want to say “no.” We will examine practical strategies to make effective use of “no,” to bring about a better work-life balance.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 8</p>
<p><b>B4</b></p> <p><b>Teaching for Belonging: Embedding Student Identities into your Language Arts Program</b></p>	<p>This workshop will engage students in activities and provide resources for teachers to meet the new Language Arts curriculum, specifically in the area of A3.2 Identity and Community within a context of anti-biased and Anti-Racist Education. Examples of resources and learning opportunities from Kindergarten to Grade 8 will be provided in this engaging, interactive and hands-on workshop.</p>	<p>Elementary Teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 3</p>
<p><b>B5</b></p> <p><b>Mental Health Matters Every Day!</b></p>	<p>We all know that mental health matters, but it can be tricky to know how to scaffold and sequence mental health learning throughout the year. In this session, we will explore how to create mentally healthy learning environments, where to access evidence-based resources and information and how to steep mental health learning in the Catholic faith. Participants will come away with grade/panel specific resources that make integrating mental health learning throughout the year simple and straightforward.</p>	<p>Kindergarten to Grade 12 Teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 4</p>

**Friday, October 4 / 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.**

## Session C

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUDIENCE	LOCATION
<p><b>C1</b></p> <p><b>Flip the Switch on Apathy: How to Build Collective Power through Community Activism</b></p>	<p>We are at a political watershed moment! The Ford Conservative Government’s attacks on publicly funded education have resulted in deteriorating mental health, pushing teachers to leave and rethink the teaching profession while dealing with poor working conditions and a lack of resources. Have these conditions left you feeling powerless about the state of affairs in your classroom, school, and community? Look no further—hope isn’t lost! This workshop will provide you with an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, and tools with colleagues to enhance self-awareness and find ways to implement constructive actions in your local school community and classrooms. Through conversations and developing meaningful relationships, we can make positive changes as we lead up to the next provincial election.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 4</p>

<p><b>C2</b></p> <p><b>AIDE and Catholicism: Catholic teaching and Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity— They can go together!</b></p>	<p>In this workshop, we discuss how Catholic theology can be supportive of many concepts related to accessibility, inclusion, diversity and equity. We share specific resources curated by OECTA in support of this, and apply this dialogue to real-life conversations in schools.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 7</p>
<p><b>C3</b></p> <p><b>Inspiring Women to Find their Voices</b></p>	<p>When you can find your voice and use it, you can expand the trajectory of your career. Women are often not comfortable speaking up. They face challenges and barriers when trying to promote themselves. Join us as we delve into how we can use our voices to navigate obstacles and explore opportunities beyond the role of the classroom teacher.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 8</p>
<p><b>C4</b></p> <p><b>Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking (Grades 7-12)</b></p>	<p>Sexual crimes against children are rising at an alarming rate in Canada. Education is key to protecting our students. This session will explore grade 7-12 educator tools, resources, and lesson plans to discuss child sexual exploitation and sex trafficking at a developmentally appropriate level in your classroom. We will explore resources developed by the White Ribbon Campaign, in partnership with OECTA, that will assist teachers in addressing these sensitive topics through a Catholic lens. Lessons are preventative, safe and positive learning experiences. Participants will leave with a complete toolkit of lesson plans linked directly to the Ontario Curriculum, including the Religious Education and Family Life expectations.</p>	<p>Intermediate and Secondary Teachers</p>	<p>Pier 5</p>
<p><b>C5</b></p> <p><b>Actioning the TRC's Call to Action 63</b></p>	<p>This session will explore ways in which teachers can respectfully navigate the inclusion of Indigenous voice, experience, and content across the K-12 curriculum. Paying attention to situating learning according to local Indigenous territories and knowing your learners.</p>	<p>All Teachers</p>	<p>Dockside 3</p>



Friday, October 4 / 12:45 to 2:00 p.m.

## Session D

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUDIENCE	LOCATION
<b>D1</b> <b>Feeling the burn? A wellbeing workshop for teachers concerned about burnout</b>	<p>“Teaching is a deeply rewarding vocation filled with countless meaningful moments. It is also highly demanding and becoming increasingly so, as social forces amplify pressures and expectations. Burnout rates are rising and the magic 85 factor looms at an abstract distance like a mirage. A teaching career can span three decades. Or much less. Sometimes, somewhere along the way, we can feel a little lost and feel the rising temperature of burnout. In this practical workshop, teachers will explore the topic of burnout, and consider the connection between burnout and social justice. Though there are no universal solutions, there is much valuable research to equip teachers with awareness and strategies to guard against the burn.</p> <p>“Burn bright, not out.” ~ H. Khan”</p>	All Teachers	Dockside 3
<b>D2</b> <b>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Black, Indigenous and Racialized Student Allyship</b>	<p>This workshop challenges educators to examine the messages present in the texts and media used in teaching. What story does your classroom library tell? The role that the texts we use play in creating inequities within the classroom will be discussed. Participants will examine ways to incorporate Culturally and Historically Responsive teaching and learning while creating safe, anti-racist and inclusive learning spaces for students. Through reflective discussions, participants will explore the importance of incorporating historical and present-day successes of racialized groups especially when teaching about oppression and ways to focus on cultivating joy and belonging in our classrooms. Participants will also explore meaningful and practical ways to use stories and media to challenge and dismantle the single story and incorporate a CRRP educator mindset in the classroom, while providing a safe learning environment and fostering student allyship.</p>	Elementary and Intermediate Teachers	Pier 5
<b>D3</b> <b>Praying for Justice</b>	<p>Experience and leave with all the resources you need for twelve different prayer experiences (liturgies, meeting openers, gatherings), in twelve different styles, with twelve topics that weave together justice issues and the liturgical year. Each experience can be completed in 10-15 minutes. Good for staff, units, personal reflection, small groups and I/S students. Come and leave with them all in an editable document.</p>	All Teachers, Local Unit Leaders	Pier 7

# D4

## Voting Rights Through Time

How inclusive is our democracy? That's the inquiry question that engages students in Voting Rights through Time, an activity where students explore the stories of women, youth, Japanese Canadians, First Nations Peoples and Inuit in the history of federal voting rights since 1867. In this workshop, you will learn how to bring historical thinking to life in your classroom through structured, student-centred discussions about inclusion and exclusion in voting rights in the past, present and future. Students practice critical thinking, speaking and listening while they explore their own place in our elections and democracy. This activity supports curriculum expectations in History, Geography, Civics, Politics, Law, Equity Studies, Social Sciences, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies, French Immersion and French as a Second Language.

Grade 5 to 12 Teachers

Pier 8

# D5

## Catholic Social Teaching

This session will explore how Catholic Social teaching can be implemented in both your classroom and school settings. Making connections between Ontario curriculum and real life situations that affect our learners of the 2025 classroom.

Kindergarten to Grade 8 Teachers

Dockside 4



## Mindful Yoga and Meditation



Whether you are a regular YOGI or hesitant to join, this class is for YOU! Join us for a guided yoga experience with a special focus on breath and body awareness to foster a sense of inner connection, peace, and joy.

This session will help individuals discover the beauty of inner stillness, cultivate mental strength, and harness the power of breath to slow down, settle in and let go of physical, mental, and emotional tension.

Immerse your senses in a harmony of guided meditation, gentle movements, and practical breathing techniques for a truly enriching and inclusive yoga experience.

**Participants should come prepared with a yoga mat or floor towel and comfortable clothing.**

**NAMASTE!**



# GAME NIGHT!

**Don't be uptight  
join our game night!**



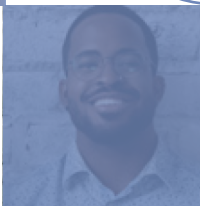
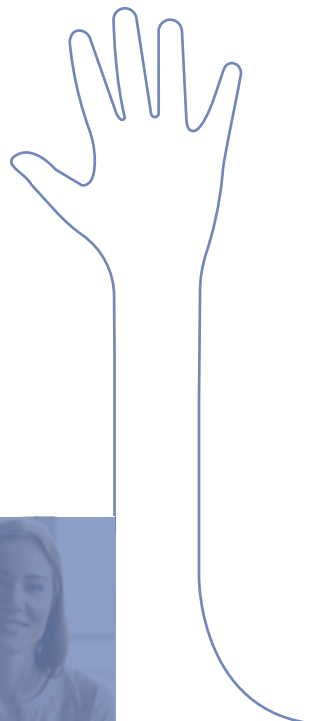
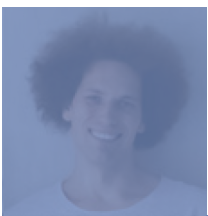
It's starting at 9 p.m.,  
best to be on time.

Get ready for an evening of fun and games where winners and losers will gather all the same.

Come enjoy a friendly competition of skill, wit, or maybe just luck.

There's something for everyone, whatever you choose, you'll be sure to have fun and a laugh too.

**Bring your A-game, teachers.**



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