

Ontario Public Supervisory Officials Honour Outstanding Leaders

At the annual Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association (OPSOA) conference in Toronto on April 17, two OPSOA members were presented with the Distinguished Leadership Award. This award is presented annually to Supervisory Officers who demonstrate outstanding ability and leadership in public education.

This year's recipients are Gerry Connelly, Director of the Toronto District School Board and Ken Thurston, recently retired Co-ordinating Superintendent of Education with the York Region District School Board. These individuals have demonstrated exemplary leadership at both the district and provincial levels.

Gerry Connelly has had a long and distinguished career in public education. Gerry is the Director of Education for the Toronto District School Board. During her career Ms. Connelly has held several leadership positions in education including acting as the Director of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch with the Ontario Ministry of Education.



As Director of Education for the Toronto District School Board, Gerry has demonstrated exemplary leadership for 33,000 staff. She works with trustees and other stakeholder groups to raise student achievement, ensure fiscal responsibility and improve public confidence in public education.

In addition to her work with the Toronto District School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education, Gerry has participated in the Canadian International Development (CIDA) project in South Africa to assist in the development of a post-apartheid curriculum. Ms. Connelly is the former Co-chair of the United Way for the Toronto District School Board and has served in a number of different leadership roles with other charitable organizations.

Ms Connelly is a sought-after national and international presenter who has shared her leadership and curriculum expertise in publications and through conferences and workshops. Most recently, Gerry was keynote speaker with the Minister of Education at the Canadian Safe Schools Conference.

OPSOA is extremely pleased to recognize this outstanding educational leader and the contributions that she has made.

Ken Thurston has provided exemplary leadership in public education throughout his career. Ken recently retired from the position of Co-ordinating Superintendent with the York Region District School Board. Prior to that he served as Director of Policy and Research with the Ontario Education Improvement Commission and as a supervisory officer with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.



As Co-ordinating Superintendent with responsibility for Human Resources, Ken guided the work of the York Region District School Board Human Resources department. He developed positive relationships with all employee groups and provided outstanding leadership in all areas of his work including labour relations, school councils and the development of community partnerships. Ken has inspired colleagues and staff with his commitment to reflective practice and personal professional learning.

Ken impacted directly on education throughout Ontario in his work as author of *The Road Ahead* series and the Education Improvement Commission document, *Best of Effective Practices*. He has also authored numerous articles for professional journals.

Ken has provided leadership in provincial and national education organizations. He has served as president of OPSOA and board member of the Canadian School Administrators Association (CASA).

Throughout his career, Ken has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting leadership growth and development in public education. His commitment truly reflects the OPSOA vision and agenda.

Ontario Public Supervisory Officials continue to provide vision and leadership across thirty-two district school boards and as representatives and leaders on all provincial education initiatives. This year's two recipients of the OPSOA Distinguished Leadership Award provide outstanding role models for all educational leaders in the province.

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