



## **Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association**

### **School Organization Committee Report**

A committee of Supervisory Officers met in December of 1999 and January of 2000 to:

- review the impact of secondary school organization changes on students and school programs
- review current legislative requirements in relation to the organization of schools;
- determine effective use of school funding;
- review expedient models of structure and staff assignment;
- consider parameters of organization;
- find ways of making staff workloads more balanced.

At the secondary level, the committee was asked to study effective school organization within the prescribed 1250 minutes and based on an average class size of 22. The intention was to consider applications that allow for or impede the assignment of basic instructional periods in an organization which meets provincial requirements and provides effective learning structure for students.

The committee reported back to the Board of Directors of OPSOA on January 21, 2000.

#### **Overview and Program Implications**

The study committee found that there have been significant negative impacts on the program and the culture of secondary schools in Ontario as result of the implementation of the new funding model. A reduction in student support areas such as guidance, library, special education, ESL, alternative and co-operative education has occurred in all of the reporting boards.

The increased expectation in scheduled teacher time has left teachers with significantly less time to facilitate co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Two very obvious impacts have resulted.

First, there is less time available during the school day to provide the necessary on-call and supervision coverage and there is a noticeable decrease in important curriculum events such as field trips and inter-school competitions. This change is a significant loss to the educational experience for Ontario students.

Second, the increased teaching assignment has taken valuable time away from teachers' ability to assume responsibility for coaching and other essential extra-curricular programs. In the past, these activities were supported successfully through flexible in-school timetable schedules. The increased amount of scheduled time has decreased this flexibility significantly. This adjustment has resulted in a major change to our secondary school culture. It is also a loss to the number and quality of curricular and co-curricular experiences available to Ontario secondary school students.

In addition, senior officials from boards report that the safety of schools has been compromised as a result of the reduction in teacher time available for student supervision.

At a time when the Ontario government is sponsoring a significant reform of its secondary curriculum and expecting increased rigor and accountability, there is growing concern that these goals of secondary school reform can not be achieved within the current context. The required resources have been reduced. Leadership in curriculum development, through department heads and regional consultants, has been reduced at this critical time. Increased supervision, program and management responsibilities for Principals and Vice-Principals distract these leaders from other proactive activities in the areas of program, student and community development.

The present formula has resulted in secondary school timetable models that are not beneficial to students. Having a teacher assigned to four credit classes on a given day is not a suitable pedagogical model. Students receive instruction from teachers who have inadequate time for preparation and evaluation of their work. Individual interaction has been reduced. Other models that divide teaching responsibilities for a given class between two or more teachers result in a serious lack of instructional continuity for students.

The current funding model does not and will not serve the needs of Ontario students as originally planned. As the next stages of Secondary School Reform unfold, with an emphasis on career development, workplace experience, increased academic rigor and accountability, the resources are not available for the implementation of the original vision.

The degree of impact of these pressures has varied from board to board depending on the resources that existed in a given board prior to September 1998.

### **Data Reviewed by the Committee**

The secondary school organizations from a number of boards were reviewed to determine current strategies to achieve operational staffing within the funding envelopes. The chart below is a summary of the results of this review. It is based on a model of student and teacher timetables of 75 minute periods with a student taking a full timetable having four periods. This satisfies the 5 hours of instructional time per day for compulsory school age children and the time requirement of a minimum of 110 hours for a credit. An assignment of six periods translates into three per semester or six throughout the school year on an alternating day schedule. In all cases, the boards involved in this review had expenditures above grants for secondary teacher costs.

Data collected shows that boards, based on local conditions, employed a variety of strategies in order to try to accommodate student program and staffing assignments. Some solutions were more drastic than others and many were one time only solutions exhausting existing funds.

Area	Strategies	Financial Impact
Teacher Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom teachers - 6 + 125 minutes/5 day cycle</li> <li>Differentiate assignment for certain classifications e.g. Guidance Counsellors, Librarians, Co-op, ESL, Alternative Education, Special Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides programs and services closer to funding dollars available</li> </ul>
On-calls (Credit Resource)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use as part of 125 minutes</li> <li>Based on section 11(a) to (g) of the regulation on instructional time definition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction of occasional teacher budget</li> <li>Provides additional revenue to teacher line</li> <li>Reframes teacher planning time</li> </ul>
Library Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varying triggers for Library allocation</li> <li>librarians assigned more periods (6.5, 6.67, 8.0)</li> <li>use 125 minutes of classroom teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides services closer to funding dollars available</li> <li>Allocation based on Ministry formula</li> </ul>
Guidance Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varying triggers for Guidance allocation</li> <li>modification of 125 allocation</li> <li>counsellors assigned more periods (6.5, 6.67, 8.0)</li> <li>Blending of Guidance and Co-op</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides services closer to funding dollars available</li> <li>Allocation based on Ministry formula</li> </ul>
Alternative and Co-operative Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate assignments (e.g. 6.5, 6.67, 7.0 or 8.0)</li> <li>Use 125 minutes of classroom teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides program and services closer to funding dollars available</li> </ul>
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate assignments (e.g. 6.5, 6.67, 7.0 or 8.0)</li> <li>Use 125 minutes of classroom teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides program and services closer to funding dollars available</li> </ul>
ESL/ESD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate assignments (e.g. 6.5, 6.67, 7.0 or 8.0)</li> <li>Use 125 minutes of classroom teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides program and services closer to funding dollars available</li> </ul>
Class Size Determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflecting attrition rate data for semester II courses</li> <li>Semestering senior division for all schools</li> <li>Blending of Special Education classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could affect funding based on average credits of 7.5</li> </ul>
Position of Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No time release for department administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides support closer to funding dollars available</li> </ul>
Teacher Advisory Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current practice is within 1250</li> <li>Include within 110 hours/credit; deliver through modified timetable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional cost</li> </ul>
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not counted as part of 1250</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per Education Act</li> </ul>
Other Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moving money from other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pressure on other areas</li> </ul>

## Conclusions

1. Present funding changes have had a negative impact on program and school culture.
2. Existing and expected salary grids directly affect the ability to stay within the funding for secondary teachers.
3. Without additional funding, an assignment of "6" is not possible within the funding for secondary teachers.
4. Four teaching periods for any part of a semester/term is not pedagogically acceptable.
5. Other funding pressures will reduce flexibility for the next school year. (e.g. potential salary increases, special education resolutions, loss of previous grants)

The Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association represents the Superintendents and Directors of Education who are responsible for the operational effectiveness of secondary schools in the Public District School Boards of Ontario. This current review of problems encountered in the provision of appropriate staffing reveals a serious dilemma which will intensify in the coming year. Supervisory Officials, charged with the duty of providing effective education for many thousands of students, ask that the Ontario government and the Ontario Ministry of Education consider the seriousness of these issues and their impact on the education of students. OPSOA is prepared to work with Ministry officials to find workable solutions for effective learning.