

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.



THE MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE

INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA), a member of the Canadian Home and School Federation, was founded in 1919, the foundation having been laid with the formation of the Toronto Council in 1916 under the leadership of Ada Mary Brown Courtice.

OFHSA is a non-profit volunteer organization supported mainly by membership fees from parents and/or individuals who endorse the aims and objectives of the Federation.

Home and School acts as a direct link between the home and the school, actively promoting Home and School objectives, the educational, social and environmental well-being of children and youth. We are involved in researching, studying, evaluating, formulating, and promoting proposals for the care and protection of children. Home and School brings together parents and educators concerned with the needs of children, youth and families in Canada.

Home and School differs from other community groups in that our organizational structure corresponds to all levels of government. Home and School Associations work closely with their local school, their Home and School Council and the local board of education. The Ontario Federation works at the provincial level partnering with government agencies such as the Ministry of Education.

Our strength lies in our ability to relate our membership views at all levels of government. Our policies and positions are based on resolutions adopted by our association members at our Annual Meeting.

PREFACE

This membership handbook was designed to help you promote your Home and School Association. It contains information about the organization to aid you in responding to questions posed by your membership. It also offers promotional ideas which can be useful in your membership campaigns. The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations is as strong as each individual member association. The hard work, commitment, and dedication of our association members provide a strong foundation for the Home and School Federation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, a province-wide network of dedicated members, is committed to informed and proactive involvement in our homes, our schools and our communities to obtain "The Best for Each Student".

BASIC BELIEFS

Basic Belief # 1

We believe parents/guardians are willing and active participants with those delivering education programs and services.

Basic Belief #2

We believe "Home and School" at all levels is an advocate for the learners in the public school system.

Basic Belief #3

We believe co-operative and healthy environments in the home, the school and the community are necessary for the development of each learner.

Basic Belief #4

We believe local, provincial and national parental networking is essential.

Basic Belief #5

We believe effective communication is critical.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF OFHSA

- To promote the welfare of children and youth
- To raise the standards of home life
- To promote the care and protection of children and youth
- To foster co-operation between parents and teachers in the training and guidance of children and youth, both during and after the school period
- To obtain the best for each child according to his physical, mental, social and spiritual needs
- To give parents an understanding of the school and its work, and to assist in interpreting the school in all its aspects to the public
- To confer and co-operate with organizations other than schools which concern themselves with the care and training of children and youth in the home, school and community; and with the education of adults to meet these responsibilities
- To foster high ideals of citizenship and promote through educational means international goodwill and peace.

ROLE OF MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

The role of Membership Chair is an important position – you are the 'salesperson' of Home and School. Your job is not only to write membership cards and fill out the lists to be sent to OFHSA, but also to be a promoter of Home and School and what the Federation stands for. It is the task of the Membership Chair to plan a campaign to enlist as many parents as possible as members of your association. As Membership Chair, you should ensure that information and membership forms go to all families in the school. At all meetings and school events be visible and friendly to all members and non-members. Promote your Home and School Association to the parents, the staff and the community. Train your committee members to help in the promotion and follow up. Without your efforts at the school level, OFHSA will not have the resources needed to advocate for the students in all of our schools.

WHO SHOULD JOIN?

Some associations make the mistake of selling memberships only to their executive members or to those parents who are active in the association. This, however, is not the way that Home and School Associations are meant to function. All parents and guardians of students in the school are to be invited to join the association. It is important that they understand what the Home and School Association stands for and why they should support that work.

When your Home and School Council or the Federation speaks on your behalf, they gather the input of thousands of members; they use the Policy Document developed by members over our long history, and they speak with a credible voice to governments and other education partners. That credibility derives in part from the number of members across the province who support the advocacy efforts of OFHSA. Encourage parents, administration and community members to join and support the work of the Federation, even if they do not have time to be personally active in the Home and School movement. Remember, that only paid up members are covered by the OFHSA Liability Insurance.

MEMBERSHIP CALENDAR

- May-June: Meet with your predecessor and discuss the role of the Membership Chair. What marketing techniques were successful? Order any materials such as brochures, membership cards and envelopes from the federation office. Look for slogans, posters and ideas that can be used for promotion.
- Sept-Oct: Plan a meeting with your committee if necessary and plan marketing strategies, such as posters, flyers and write-ups in newsletters. At a "Meet the Teacher" night or open house, set up a membership table in a highly visible area and display Home and School brochures, flyers, information sheets and posters. Ask your president to encourage the purchase of memberships whenever he or she is asked to speak on behalf of your association. Promote the work of your local Home and School Association and encourage membership by arranging to have forms sent home in the school's first day package of forms.

Once membership fees have been collected, prepare the membership lists, ensuring that membership numbers tally with the memberships sold and money collected. Give the membership money to your treasurer to deposit in the Home and School Association account. Forward your first membership list along with your payment to the Federation office as soon as possible. **Memberships are valid Oct. 1st - Sept. 30th annually.**

In order for members to be covered by the OFHSA Liability Insurance, their names must be on file in the federation office. The office also determines the number of the *OFHSA Bulletins* to be sent to your association based on paid memberships. Do not keep your membership lists and fees held back until all memberships have been sold, but send them in to the federation office as they are collected. New memberships may be sold throughout the year and remitted as collected.

November: Report to the Executive the number of memberships sold and any plans for selling additional memberships.

December: Please note all membership lists and fees need to be received at the federation office by December 31st to be considered for the association's voting status at the OFHSA Annual Meeting.

Jan-April: A membership list should be given to the nominating committee. At the Association's Annual General Meeting, report on the number of memberships sold, innovative methods used and, very importantly, thank all those who purchased a membership. It is also very important to recognize the assistance of your committee. Take every opportunity to thank them as well.

May: Ensure that your records are up-to-date. Evaluate the year's successes, and be ready to pass your information on to your successor.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

There are several types of memberships at the Association level.

Family Membership: Covers two adults (18 or over), living at the same address. BOTH names must be entered on the membership list. Counts as two members when determining the number of voting delegates for the OFHSA Annual Meeting.

Individual Membership: One individual adult member. Counts as one member when determining the number of voting delegates for the OFHSA Annual Meeting.

Life Membership: An individual is given Life Membership by an association in recognition of valuable contributions made to the association. The association purchases the Life Membership from the Federation for \$100, and the member is presented with a certificate and pin. The pin is included in the cost. There is no annual membership fee collected for the Federation thereafter. **Life Members of an association must be entered on the Association Membership List each year.** Counts as one member when determining the number of voting delegates for the OFHSA Annual Meeting.

Associate Membership: Can be an individual or family (2 members) who have their primary membership at another association. These members are identified on the membership list and card as *Associate Members*. No federation fee is collected, however, the association may choose to charge an additional fee which remains with the association. This type of membership does not count towards the association's total members when determining the number of voting delegates at the OFHSA Annual Meeting. They will be counted at their primary association.

***** All of the above types of memberships have voting privileges at the association. New members attain voting privileges after a 20 day waiting period.**

- Before you begin, make extra copies of the master "Association Membership List" form.
- At the top of the list, fill in the name of your Home & School Association and your Home & School Council, if applicable.
- Fill out the name of the president. Have an officer (president, treasurer) or the membership chair sign the bottom of each sheet along with the date the list was forwarded to the Federation.
- You will note there are eight columns at the top of the membership list. Please use as follows:

Column 1: For ease of counting memberships, number each membership in this column.

Column 2: Indicate the type of membership, using one of the following letters.

"F" for Family Membership

"I" for Individual Membership

"L" for Life Membership

"A" for Associate Membership

Column 3: Write one name for an individual membership. Write two names for a family membership. It is important for voting purposes to record each member. For every 25 members, an association is entitled to send one voting delegate to the OFHSA Annual Meeting, to a maximum of seven voting delegates per association.

Column 4: Please be sure to write the complete address, including box numbers, apartment numbers, street name and city. The Federation needs this information for voting and insurance purposes.

Column 5: Include the postal code.

Column 6: Phone number with area code.

Column 7: E-mail address.

Column 8: Have the member initial this column to give consent for the Home and School Association and OFHSA to use the e-mail address for communication purposes.

- Complete the Association Membership Summary form.

*** The **Association Membership List** and **Association Membership Summary** must be sent to the federation office along with an **Association cheque** covering the federation fees of \$15.00 per family or individual membership. Also include the annual *Association Insurance Fee* of \$100, which is the cost per association for liability insurance coverage for members and the association. Personal cheques will not be accepted.

*** Send membership lists and applicable fees to the Federation as collected. Do not wait to complete a page. Send updated membership lists as needed. Retain a copy of membership lists for your association records.

*** Membership Fees are non-refundable.

*** You may use electronic versions of the membership list if available.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Membership cards are available free of charge from the federation office. The membership card is given to the member after filling out the following information on the card:

1. The current school year
2. The name of the member(s). If the card is for a family membership, be sure to fill in two names.
3. The name of the association
4. The authorized signature - may be that of the president or any executive designated by the president (i.e. the membership chair).

Note: All Association Executive, H&S Council Executive and Federation Board of Directors must have a valid membership.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How is the OFHSA membership fee determined?

OFHSA's Finance Workgroup meets in January to review the Federation's financial situation. If a fee increase seems necessary, a "Notice of Motion" is distributed to all Home and School Associations in February/March along with other Annual Meeting materials (bylaw amendments and policy resolutions). With the approval of the OFHSA Board of Directors, the motion regarding the membership fee is then presented at the OFHSA Annual Meeting and is voted on by the association delegates (see Association Bylaws, Article III, page 3, and Federation Bylaws, Article V, item 2).

2. Once I've paid my fee, what am I entitled to?

When you pay your membership fee through your association to the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, you are entitled to:

- vote on all motions presented during your Association's meetings
- hold office in your local Association,
- represent your Association at local Home and School Council meetings,
- be chosen to represent your Association as a voting delegate to the OFHSA Annual Meeting,
- be insured for liability while you are carrying out sanctioned Home and School activities.

3. What does the OFHSA membership fee pay for?

To best understand how the Ontario Federation is financed, the year-end financial statements of OFHSA are available for examination. These are sent to all association presidents prior to the OFHSA Annual Meeting.

OFHSA membership fees are used in the following ways:

- To pay office rent
- To pay the executive secretary in the federation office (all other executive and board of directors are volunteers)
- To pay the cost of equipment, postage, paper, printing and copying, telephone, internet and website fees
- To pay the cost of providing resources, training and workshops for members
- To pay the expenses incurred by the OFHSA Board of Directors as they represent members' interests at federation meetings
- To pay the expenses incurred in advocating to government ministries, teachers' and trustees' organizations, and other groups interested in the welfare of children and youth
- To communicate with and provide service to members across the province
- To pay OFHSA's membership fee to the Canadian Home and School Federation
- To provide financial support to our Home and School Councils

A large portion of OFHSA's revenue comes from membership fees. Other income necessary to fully finance the operation of the Federation is derived from Ministry of Education grants and interest from the McLaughlin Endowment Fund.

4. Are Home and School Associations allowed to charge a local association fee?

Each association has the right to collect a local fee in addition to the federation fee (See Association Bylaws, Article III, item 3). Some associations exercise this option and collect a total amount in excess of the fee sent to the federation office. The remainder stays with the association. Other associations, however, collect only the federation fee and raise funds for local activities in other ways.

5. Why do I have to take time to fill in my name and address on the Association Membership List? Why can't this information be obtained from the school?

Schools and district school boards are not allowed under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to release names and addresses of parents to anyone, for any purpose. This also applies to municipal and provincial governments. In order to have accurate records of Home and School members, it is the responsibility of the Home and School Association to complete membership lists when a membership is purchased and to forward this information to the OFHSA office so that records are up-to-date and proper quantities of materials such as the *OFHSA Bulletin* are supplied to each association. OFHSA's Liability Insurance coverage also requires that the names and addresses of all members be on file.

6. Are Home and School membership lists ever given to an advertising company or third party?

No. It is the Home and School policy and a bylaw of the Canadian Home and School Federation, that membership lists shall not be given out for any purpose.

MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN TIPS

1. Place a Home and School bulletin board in the foyer of the school. Display up-to-date school and Home and School news.
2. Prepare a portable bulletin board display to be used at meetings, social events, education week displays, and presentations to new parents (Meet the Teacher, Kindergarten Registration).
3. Prepare an information flyer about your Home and School Association which is directed at newcomers and include the flyer in a "welcome kit" to be handed out to all new parents in the school.
4. Send a membership form, with an information package about your Home and School, home with every student in September each year. Highlight Home and School sponsored events and purchases from the previous school year and list the plans for the coming school year.
5. Put up a Home and School "family tree" or "train" in the school and add apples or train cars for each family that purchases a membership.
6. Show that your Home and School is a busy, active, and knowledgeable group, one that others will want to be part of.
7. Arrange for space in the school newsletter for Home and School news or prepare your own Home and School newsletter.
8. Have a family dinner, barbecue or other school community event where the fee includes an association membership.
9. Distribute a thank you letter to those who have joined. Be sure that all members get their copies of the *OFHSA Bulletin*.
10. Ask the school staff members to join Home and School. Place spare copies of the *OFHSA Bulletin* in teachers' boxes and in the staff room.
11. Send information regarding your Home and School activities to your local newspaper.
12. Have a meeting for new parents in the school year and make them feel involved and welcome in your school community.
13. Attract members through information sessions on topical issues, or include a guest speaker at meetings. Have a membership drive at the same time.
14. Provide various pamphlets and resource materials from the OFHSA office at your membership table.
15. Have posters or graphs on display showing Home and School sponsored activities and the number of volunteers involved at your school.
16. Make sure the members of your team are well informed about your local accomplishments and activities, and are knowledgeable about The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations and its provincial role
17. Speak a few minutes at each meeting on the progress of your membership campaign. Discuss campaign strategies and develop a plan.
18. Thank the school secretary and the teachers for handling your membership materials.
19. Set up a membership table at school meetings such as "Meet the Teacher Night", Kindergarten Registration or at registration for after school activities.
20. Smile, be welcoming and friendly! All the most active and loyal Home and School members joined because someone invited them to be part of a team. Reach out to everyone.

BENEFITS OF JOINING HOME AND SCHOOL

Parents Gain:

- a better understanding of their child's development - physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally
- a chance to be part of the team delivering education in their school
- an opportunity to know the staff and administration at the school
- an opportunity to offer support for the work of the school
- an insight into the educational programs offered to children
- an opportunity to meet the parents of their child's classmates
- a broader understanding of the education system
- an independent source of information about educational change
- a voice in the shaping of those changes, at the school, the school board and the province
- an appreciation of the need for parental involvement
- a network of other parents interested and involved in advocating to better meet the needs of children and youth
- access to advice, training, and resources to help them be informed and proactive volunteers

Teachers Gain:

- the support and understanding of parents
- the co-operation of parents in establishing common policies and directions in the school
- a forum in which new methodology and curricular change in education can be explained to parents
- the opportunity to better understand the students and the community of the school
- a group of dedicated, informed, highly motivated parent volunteers
- financial support for special programs and activities

Students Gain:

- a nurturing environment in which the home and the school co-operate
- a sense of pride in seeing their parents participating actively in the school community
- a feeling of confidence in consistent school policies supported by teachers and parents
- a greater opportunity for success through the combined efforts of parents and teachers
- a number of special activities designed to enhance their school learning
- parents with a greater understanding of curriculum and procedures at the school

The Community Gains:

Home and School provides an opportunity:

- to promote co-operation between parents and teachers in the community
- to promote support among parents for their school and its achievements
- for the community to learn the philosophy, objectives and routines of the school
- to participate in discussion groups on education, child development, and parenting
- to co-operate in group projects to improve the school and community
- to use the special talents of community members to enrich instructional and extra-curricular programs
- to form and submit policy resolutions at the OFHSA Annual Meeting that deal with concerns of children, youth and their families in Ontario

- to strengthen the child-parent-teacher relationship
- to organize or attend leadership training
- to join forces with a local, provincial, and national membership with similar views
- to gain leadership skills that increase confidence to take on other leadership roles in the community (many Home and School members have been elected as school board trustees and other public officers).

At the Provincial Level:

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA)

- ⇒ provides leadership in developing programs and projects
- ⇒ provides leadership training for local executive members
- ⇒ generates interest in the welfare of all learners
- ⇒ provides representation to other education and welfare organizations
- ⇒ presents policy resolutions directly to provincial ministries
- ⇒ works with the Ontario Ministry of Education in fostering understanding of current events and issues in education
- ⇒ represents your province at the national level.

At the National Level:

The Canadian Home and School Federation (CHSF)

- ⇒ is a strong voice, heard and respected by the federal government
- ⇒ presents national briefs and resolutions directly to federal ministries
- ⇒ is a co-operative organization where provincial representatives consult, promote and exchange ideas
- ⇒ strengthens the educational circle by calling for equalization of educational opportunities for all learners in Canada.