

## OCEA Year-End Report 2025-2026

Rebecca Gauthier

2025-2026 OCEA Chair

It has been my honour to serve as the 2025-2026 OCEA Chair.

This year has been especially meaningful as we celebrate OCEA's 50th anniversary - a remarkable milestone that reflects five decades of leadership, collaboration, and commitment to advancing Co-operative Education in Ontario. Reaching this anniversary is both a celebration of our history and an opportunity to recognize the many educators, leaders, and community partners whose dedication has shaped OCEA into the strong and respected organization it is today.

For 50 years, OCEA has served as a professional voice and a point of connection for Co-operative Education teachers across the province. Through changing educational landscapes and evolving student needs, OCEA continues to fulfill its mission - "Facilitating and Supporting the Exchange of Ideas Among Experiential Learning Professionals" to support educators, strengthen professional practice, and champion the value of experiential and community-connected learning.

Over the past year, the Board of Directors has remained focused on providing strong governance, strategic oversight, and responsible stewardship of the Association's resources. Our work has been guided by a shared commitment to ensuring that OCEA continues to be responsive to members, relevant in a changing educational environment, and sustainable for the future.

This year, OCEA continued to provide meaningful opportunities for professional learning and connection through both the Fall Symposium and the Spring Conference. These events brought together educators from across the province to share ideas, strengthen practice, and celebrate the important work of Co-operative Education. Opportunities such as these remain central to OCEA's role in fostering collaboration, supporting professional growth, and maintaining a strong sense of community among members. I encourage all members to consider taking an active role with OCEA. This could be by presenting a workshop at either the Fall Symposium or Spring Conference, taking a role on a resource writing team, contributing to conference planning, or serving as an OCEA Board Member or Provincial Representative.

A significant highlight this year is the launch of OCEA's new Integration Resource, an important contribution that will support educators in strengthening and enhancing their programming. This resource reflects OCEA's continued commitment to providing practical, relevant, and forward-thinking tools for Co-operative Education teachers. I would like to extend special recognition and sincere appreciation to the Writing Team of Barb Omland, Sonya Kim, and Ali Meilach for their expertise, dedication, and thoughtful work in creating this valuable resource. Their efforts will have a meaningful impact on educators and students alike.

As we mark this 50th anniversary, it is especially important to recognize the many individuals who continue to sustain and strengthen OCEA. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my fellow Board members for their time, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the Association. OCEA Board Members: Pat Piro, Jenny Garrett, Thairn Sintic, Roman Nowak, Siobhain Bondy, and Michael Kolas. OCEA Provincial Representatives: Julie Bacon, Jennifer Boluk-Svec, Kim Leger, Rachel

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Reiter, and Diana Simonetta. Their dedication, insight, and willingness to serve are deeply appreciated and continue to guide OCEA forward.

I would also like to thank our members - Co-operative Education teachers and educators across Ontario - for your professionalism, passion, and continued commitment to student success. Your work in schools, workplaces, and communities creates authentic learning experiences that help students develop skills, confidence, and meaningful pathways for the future. The relationships you build and the opportunities you create are at the heart of what Co-operative Education represents.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the many presenters, planning teams, conference contributors, and community partners who have supported OCEA throughout the year. Your contributions enrich our organization and ensure that our members continue to benefit from relevant learning opportunities, practical resources, and valuable professional connections. An extended thank you to our multimedia and planning team from Escouade multimédia led by Stéphane Hunter and Marie-Andrée Ouimet. Your professionalism and attention to detail have been appreciated.

I would also like to take a moment to offer sincere thanks to Carol Madsen, Executive Administrative Assistant, for her continued support, dedication, and the countless ways she contributes to the smooth functioning and success of OCEA. Carol's work behind the scenes is invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for all that she does for the Association.

While this anniversary gives us an opportunity to reflect with pride on OCEA's history, it also reminds us to look ahead with purpose. The Board remains committed to supporting Co-operative Education teachers through strong leadership, responsive programming, and continued advocacy for experiential and pathway-focused learning. As education continues to evolve, OCEA will remain focused on meeting the needs of members and ensuring that Co-operative Education continues to be recognized as a vital and transformative part of student learning in Ontario.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued trust, support, and commitment to OCEA. It is a privilege to serve this organization at such a meaningful moment in its history. As we celebrate 50 years of OCEA, we do so with pride in all that has been accomplished and with optimism for the future ahead.

It has been my pleasure to be this year's OCEA Chair, and I look forward to working with everyone again in the upcoming year as OCEA Past-Chair in 2026-2027.

Yours in Co-operative Education,  
Rebecca Gauthier,  
2025-2026 OCEA Chair  
Co-operative Education Teacher, Rainbow DSB

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## Year-End Board Report

### Jenny Garrett, OCEA Vice-Chair

### 2025-2026

This past year has been one of continued progress as we strengthened our role as a voice for educators across Ontario who deliver co-operative education, SHSM, OYAP, and other forms of experiential learning. I continue to revisit the OCEA Mission Statement to ensure our work remains focused and aligned with our purpose:

*“Facilitating and Supporting the Exchange of Ideas Among Experiential Learning Professionals.”*

This year is particularly significant as OCEA celebrates 50 years of impact. This milestone is a testament to the value we have provided to educators and the broader education community over the past five decades. It also prompts reflection on the many dedicated educators whose time, energy, and vision helped build the strong foundation we benefit from today. This legacy would not have been possible without the exceptional dedication of Carol Madsen, whose 30 years of service as Executive Administrative Assistant have been instrumental to OCEA’s success.

In collaboration with Past Chair Pat Piro, we led two Pathways Roundtables on January 28, 2026, and April 1, 2026. These sessions brought together representatives from the Ministry of Education, OCTE, and OSCA. The goal was to foster meaningful dialogue, share information, address common challenges, and explore opportunities for collaboration across organizations.

OCEA continues to deliver two key events each academic year: the Fall Symposium (virtual) and the in-person Spring Conference for 2025–2026. In my role as Vice-Chair, I supported and promoted both events. I also had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop on the Ethics and Legal Issues Resource, a document developed by OCEA that remains a cornerstone in supporting educators in delivering effective and responsible co-op programs.

Additionally, I managed the elections process for the 2025–2026 Annual Business Meeting (ABM), which will take place on April 26, 2026, during the Spring Conference. The ABM is a vital part of OCEA’s governance, providing an opportunity to review our Constitution and By-Laws, and to elect Board members and Provincial Representatives.

This year has also provided many opportunities to support our Chair, Rebecca, as needed. I am looking forward to stepping into the role of Chair next year and continuing to build on the strong legacy of the past 50 years.

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## **Year-End Board Report Pasquale (Pat) Piro OCEA Past-Chair, 2025-2026**

The 2025-2026 school year continues to be a remarkable year for the OCEA community. Reflecting on my time as the Central Provincial Rep, the Vice-Chair, Chair and current Past-Chair, I have grown professionally and collaboratively with many teachers, students, organizations, employers and communities. This has been another satisfying and rewarding year. OCEA's Leadership Team works diligently to meet the challenges that educators are facing and respond to the needs of our members. The association's accomplishments in the past year are:

- OCEA's membership numbers continue to be strong, and we are pleased to welcome many new Co-op teachers and educators as members this year. We encourage all members take an active role with OCEA by presenting a workshop, being a resource writing team member, contributing to conference planning, or serving on OCEA's Team.
- OCEA is committed to keeping members up to date on the latest news about Cooperative Education and other forms of Experiential Learning occurring throughout the province of Ontario. Thank you to Carol Madsen, OCEA Executive Administrative Assistant, and our communications officer, Michael Kolinas, for publishing several e-newsletters and e-bulletins for our members this year.
- The Pathways Roundtable continues collaboration to strengthen our relationship with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Training and Skills Development, OSCA, OCTE, Skilled Trades Ontario, Skills Ontario, Job Talks, to name a few and you. These initiatives are benefiting Cooperative Education teachers and students.
- Working with graphics designers to revamp OCEA's image, logo and posters. You will notice our new brand image on our website, documents and advertisements.
- The 2026 OCEA Spring Conference will once again prove to be an exciting event with a tremendous number of workshops. The conference program has allowed for many opportunities to socialize and network with fellow educators from across our great province. We extend our sincere gratitude to the workshop presenters for their commitment to volunteering their time and expertise to prepare and provide professional development workshops for this event I'm sure it is very much appreciated and valued by OCEA membership.
- The Past-Chair is Involved with the planning of our annual business meeting (ABM).
- Actively participated on the conference planning team. A huge thank you to this year's Conference Planning Team: Carol Madsen, Marie-Andree Ouimet, Rebecca Gauthier, Roman Nowak, Jenny Garrett, Kimberly Leger, Siobhain Bondy, Antonina Gambino, Ali Meilach, Kelly Krug and Michael Kolinas for their exceptional work. The Conference Planning Team volunteer their time and talents to plan and organize this event, and their outstanding efforts are greatly appreciated.
- Continuously, supporting Cooperative Education teachers and community partners across the province of Ontario.
- Contributing articles and stories for the various OCEA publications.
- OCEA continues to recognize the outstanding contributions to Cooperative Education by honouring teachers at our Annual OCEA Professional Awards' Banquet. Nominations were received this year for the "S. J. (Jack) Ulan Professional Contribution Award" and "The George King Award of Excellence". Thank you to the nominators for recognizing their colleagues.

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We strive and continue to bring teachers involved in Cooperative Education from English and Francophone boards to collaborate and share their knowledge and experiences and positively become more involved. I encourage everyone to consider a more rewarding role and to experience involvement with OCEA.

Thank you to our membership for your passion and commitment to your students and for your continued support of OCEA. We hope that you enjoy your time at the conference, reconnecting with old acquaintances and forming new ones.

It has been my pleasure to serve in the role of OCEA Past-Chair!

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## **OCEA Year-End Board Report**

### **Thairn Sintic, OCEA Treasurer**

### **2025-2026**

It has been an honor to serve as the Treasurer of the Ontario Cooperative Education Association for 2025-2026. Being part of this team provides professional development that can't be found anywhere else. I enjoy having the ability to learn what is going on around the province and see new initiatives roll out firsthand. This is a wonderful group of people to work with, and I highly recommend this opportunity to all members.

As an organization, we continue to work with Baker Tilly, OCEA's accountants, to ensure timely and current reporting practices are met. OCEA has honoured financial obligations in a timely fashion, operated within a framework of fiscal responsibility, and provided a vision for the financial future of OCEA.

The 2026 OCEA Spring Conference "Celebrating 50 Years of Cooperative Education in Ontario: 1976-2026!" will bring us together once again in the spirit of collaboration, sharing, mentorship and personal growth. I look forward to welcoming you all once again!

Highlights from the 2024-2025 Review Engagement will be provided at the Annual Business Meeting. The Review Engagement is an overview and summary of OCEA's financial position as of August 31st, 2025. OCEA is in a solid financial position. This is attributable to the hard work and dedication of the OCEA Board, as well as sound guidance from our bookkeeper and accountants.

Looking forward, OCEA will continue to implement its strategic plan aimed at serving the membership with solid professional development and practical resources, rebuilding attendance at in-person events, monitoring expenses and ensuring the organization's financial stability.

## **Rapport de fin d'année - Directeur francophone Roman Nowak 2025-2026**

Ce fut un réel privilège de compléter un deuxième mandat à titre de directeur francophone pour l'Association de l'éducation coopérative de l'Ontario. Ces années ont été riches en apprentissages, en occasions de croissance professionnelle et en moments significatifs pour assurer une voix forte et engagée au service du personnel enseignant francophone de la province.

Cette année, nos objectifs principaux visaient l'établissement et la consolidation de rencontres provinciales bilingues réunissant les responsables de dossier en éducation coopérative et en apprentissage par l'expérience au sein de nos conseils scolaires. D'abord prévues deux fois par année, ces rencontres ont évolué vers un rythme mensuel, témoignant d'un réel besoin et d'un engagement soutenu. Elles offrent un espace précieux pour échanger sur les défis, poser des questions, collaborer à la recherche de solutions et partager des pratiques réussies. La participation de nos partenaires du ministère de l'Éducation a également permis de maintenir des voies de communication ouvertes, favorisant un dialogue continu, constructif et porteur.

Cette année a aussi permis l'élaboration d'une page sommaire des responsabilités liées à l'éducation coopérative, destinée aux équipes de direction des écoles. Présenté en version préliminaire lors de la conférence du printemps, ce document sera peaufiné à la lumière des consultations et des rétroactions reçues, en vue d'une publication par l'AÉCO d'ici la prochaine rentrée scolaire.

Enfin, le travail accompli avec l'équipe de coordination de la conférence du printemps, marquant le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'Association, demeure un moment fort de ce mandat. Cet événement a su mettre en lumière l'importance de notre association pour ses membres et pour nos écoles secondaires. La présence de Sam Demma a d'ailleurs contribué à rendre cette célébration encore plus inspirante et mémorable.

Je tiens à exprimer toute ma reconnaissance envers les membres de l'Association pour leur engagement et leur collaboration. Je veux également remercier tous les membres de l'équipe de direction de l'Association avec qui j'ai eu le plaisir de collaborer à travers ces deux mandats. Votre engagement, votre soutien et votre passion pour le dossier et votre rôle ont contribué à mon travail. Je souhaite beaucoup de succès à la personne qui assurera la relève à la direction francophone — un rôle essentiel pour soutenir et faire rayonner la voix des francophones à l'échelle provinciale.

Je vous souhaite à toutes et à tous une excellente fin d'année scolaire.

Roman Nowak

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## Siobhain Bondy, OCEA Director- at -Large: English 2025-2026

My inaugural year with the OCEA team has been both productive and rewarding. In alignment with our mission of "Facilitating and Supporting the Exchange of Ideas Among Experiential Learning Professionals," my focus remained on bridging the gap between educators and industry, particularly within the skilled trades. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to OCEA's Carol Madsen; her guidance and expertise have been instrumental to my successful transition into this role.

### Operational Highlights & Board Support

Throughout the year, I focused on supporting Board Leads and enhancing the efficiency of our monthly operations. Key achievements include:

- Co-op Board Lead Meetings: Co-chaired monthly virtual meetings alongside the French Director at Large. These sessions saw consistent engagement from over 150 Co-op Board Leads across Ontario.
- Collaborative Learning: Cultivated a forum for "questions from the field," addressing successes and challenges in Cooperative Education.
- Member Feedback Loop: Leveraged meeting insights to direct OCEA's resource development. This led to the creation of a One-Page Administrator Info Sheet regarding the 2019 Co-op curriculum to ensure clarity at the school-leadership level.
- Curriculum Focus: Maintained a strict focus on curriculum support, ensuring our guidance remains distinct from union or board-specific policy issues.

### Spring 2026 Conference Planning

As a member of the Spring 2026 Planning Committee, I managed the Exhibitors and Sponsorship portfolio.

- Outreach & Growth: In collaboration with the OCEA office, we contacted over 200 potential partners. I also integrated my existing industry connections into the OCEA network to expand our reach.
- Diverse Programming: We secured an abundance of interest for workshops and exhibits, specifically curating content for:
  - New OCEA members.
  - Cooperative Education for exceptional learners.
  - Skilled Trade placements
  - Curriculum
  - Health and Safety
- Strategic Planning: To address tightening education budgets, I have developed a duties and timelines flowchart to initiate the sponsorship procurement process earlier next year. This will be presented for review at the upcoming Spring meeting.

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## Stakeholder Relations & Industry Partnerships

Ontario is currently at a critical intersection where employers are seeking young talent to offset an aging workforce.

- Skilled Trades: Focused on developing deeper relationships with trade organizations and private companies to expand placement opportunities.
- Association Liaison: Continued active communication with the Ontario Council for Technology Education (OCTE) and related associations to explore mutual support and resource sharing.

## Future Outlook & Recruitment

I remain committed to my role as Director at Large (English) and am eager to continue our momentum. I highly encourage any members interested in professional growth to consider a role as a Provincial Representative or Board member. The resources and professional connections gained through OCEA have been invaluable to my career.

Moving Forward: Our goal for 2026-2027 is to finalize the early-start sponsorship model to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our events.

## Year-End Board Report

Michael Kolinas

OCEA Communications Officer (2025-26)

It has been a privilege to serve my first year on the OCEA Board of Directors as Communications Officer. I bring experience delivering cooperative education programs in both secondary and adult education settings, along with a strong belief in the value of experiential learning for students in all pathways: university, college, apprenticeship, workplace, and community living.

My involvement with OCEA began through attendance at the Spring 2025 Conference, where I was drawn to the high-quality professional learning and inclusive spirit of the association. I believe that practical, hands-on career experiences are key to helping students clarify their goals and make meaningful connections between learning and their pathway plans. Although I began my teaching career in mathematics, I became deeply invested in helping students apply their learning in meaningful, real-world contexts. Co-op is where these applications come to life, making learning more relevant and transformative for students.

As Communications Officer, my focus has been on supporting consistent and meaningful communication with OCEA members. Our communications strategy continues to include OCEA E-NEWS (thank you Carol!) and a growing social media presence, through which we share updates, opportunities, and stories that highlight the impact of experiential learning across Ontario.

The 2025 Virtual OCEA Fall Symposium exceeded our expectations, with strong attendance and overwhelmingly positive feedback. Post-event survey results showed that 97% of respondents agreed that the workshop content was appropriate and informative. Events like this reinforce the value of professional learning that connects educators across boards and regions, encouraging meaningful collaboration and shared practice.

We now look at OCEA celebrating a significant milestone with the 2026 Spring Conference, marking 50 Years of Cooperative Education in Ontario (1976-2026)! I extend many thanks to the Conference Planning Committee for their dedication and volunteer efforts, as well as to Escouade Multimédia for their exceptional event planning services, guidance, and technical support.

OCEA remains committed to strengthening Cooperative Education while supporting professional learning for educators across Ontario. Specialized programs such as OYAP, SHSM, and School-Work Transition continue to be a priority, along with other forms of experiential learning including Job Shadowing, Job Twinning, and Work Experience opportunities in the community. As labour markets and career pathways continue to evolve, the work that we do as co-op educators is becoming increasingly important.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Carol Madsen, OCEA's Executive Administrative Assistant, for her exceptional contributions to the organization. Her dedication, wisdom, and expertise keep everything running seamlessly, from coordinating communications to managing countless behind-the-scenes details. Not to mention her superpower: weaving wit, humour, and flair into our board meetings and day-to-day correspondence. We truly could not do this work without her, and her impact on OCEA's success is deeply appreciated.

As we move forward, I am excited to continue raising awareness of what OCEA offers co-op educators at all stages of their careers. I encourage members to remain engaged, seek opportunities to get involved, and invite colleagues to join OCEA by visiting us at [www.ocea.on.ca](http://www.ocea.on.ca). Our collective strength continues to grow through our shared commitment to student success!

*Yours in Cooperative Education*

Michael Kolinas

OCEA Communications Officer (2025-26)

Adult and Continuing Education Teacher

Bluewater District School Board

## 2025-2026 OCEA Membership Report 2026 ABM



TO: OCEA Members 2025-2026  
 CC: OCEA Board of Directors and Provincial Representatives  
 FROM: Carol Madsen, OCEA Executive Administrative Assistant  
 DATE: April 26, 2026

Memberships as of ABM:	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Statutory	757	820	800	680	573	835	606	849			
Non-Statutory	8	19	15	17	22	5	11	13			
Associated	0	2	1	1	1	3	3	7			
Retired Statutory	4	1	1	1	1	1	21	14			
Lifetime Statutory	27	24	23	25	25	25	25	24			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>559</b>

<b>NEW Memberships 2025-2026: 235</b>	<b>NEW Memberships 2024-2025: 308</b>
<b>RENEWED Memberships 2025-2026: 561</b>	<b>RENEWED Memberships 2024-2025: 558</b>

<b>NEW Memberships 2023-24: 310</b>	<b>NEW Memberships 2022-23: 298</b>
<b>RENEWED Memberships 2023-24: 530</b>	<b>RENEWED Memberships 2022-23: 426</b>

<b>Memberships by Region as of April 26, 2025:</b>	
SOUTH: 145	NON-REGION: 28
CENTRAL: 310	FRANCOPHONE : NORTH: 36
EAST: 99	FRANCOPHONE : CENTRAL-EAST-SOUTH: 65
NORTH: 113	<b>Total = 796</b>

<b>Memberships by Region as of April 20, 2025:</b>	
SOUTH: 185	NON-REGION: 30
CENTRAL: 338	FRANCOPHONE : NORTH: 35
EAST: 93	FRANCOPHONE : CENTRAL-EAST-SOUTH: 67
NORTH: 118	<b>Total = 866</b>

<b>Memberships by Region as of April 18, 2024:</b>	
SOUTH: 180	NON-REGION: 28
CENTRAL: 318	FRANCOPHONE : NORTH : 34
EAST : 73	FRANCOPHONE : CENTRAL-EAST-SOUTH : 88
NORTH : 119	<b>Total = 840</b>

<b>Memberships by Region as of April 11, 2023:</b>	
SOUTH: 156	NON-REGION: 16
CENTRAL: 276	FRANCOPHONE : NORTH : 20
EAST : 84	FRANCOPHONE : CENTRAL-EAST-SOUTH : 62
NORTH : 110	<b>Total = 724</b>