



ready, set...VOTE
provincial election kit

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GET STARTED

Introduction

WHY THIS ELECTION MATTERS

Ontario's provincial government plays a critical role in shaping the lives of our members, families and communities. We have learned from experience that it does matter who wins the next election on October 6, 2011.

It matters for education. The provincial government sets priorities, determines funding, and controls policy at all levels of education from early learning right through to post-secondary. These decisions shape not just the learning conditions of our students, they also affect the working conditions of our members.

And it matters in many other areas vital to our well-being as individuals and as a society, including:

- Social programs such as health care, social assistance, and child care
- Legal and human rights
- Employment standards and workplace safety
- Environmental protection
- Water, sewers, transportation, and energy

OSSTF/FEESO'S INVOLVEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

OSSTF/FEESO has identified provincial election readiness and direct involvement in the 2011 campaign as a priority focus for provincial, local and member action. We believe we can have a significant effect on the outcome through our efforts to:

- Inform the candidates and the public about education issues
- Support pro-education and progressive candidates
- Motivate members to get involved
- Get out the vote

WE NEED TO BE STRATEGIC

OSSTF/FEESO is most effective when we work with a common focus, a co-ordinated plan, and targeted resources. There must be a clear framework for action supported by a strong partnership between the provincial leadership and local districts of OSSTF/FEESO.

As we head into the 2011 election, our memories of the onslaught experienced during the Harris years may have faded after two successive Liberal governments. Yet there is no question that public education and our members have benefited over the past eight years. It hasn't been perfect, but we must remain very clear about what the return of a Tory government would mean for public education, as well as for other concerns such as economic growth and jobs, health care, social policy, public services, and the environment.

Ken Coran, President

A Framework for Action

OSSTF/FEESO's strategy for the 2011 provincial election is centred on four main goals:

- Elect a progressive government that will back a properly funded, quality public education system
- Strengthen support for public education in Ontario
- Develop ongoing and effective political relationships
- Build a strong foundation for future action

These goals will guide the development of OSSTF/FEESO's plans for next fall's election and into the post-election period. Success in meeting these goals will establish a positive environment not just for upcoming bargaining, but also for influencing government policy after the election on a wide range of education and other issues of importance to Ontarians and our members.

ELECT A PROGRESSIVE GOVERNMENT

In 2003 and 2007, OSSTF/FEESO built its strategy around electing a government that would support public education and take a progressive stand on other issues affecting the well-being of members, students, and their communities.

We were strategic and concentrated on ridings where we could make a difference. Our over-riding goal was to shift the balance enough to prevent the Tories from forming the next government. This meant putting our resources where there was a real chance to stop the Conservative candidate from winning. In practice, this often resulted in backing a Liberal candidate. But it also meant electing a strong NDP presence that would hold a Liberal government accountable.

Our challenge in the 2011 election is still getting a government elected that we can work with on education and other issues. This is not a Conservative government led by Tim Hudak.

This means again concentrating on priority campaigns that offer the best chance to:

- Prevent a Conservative candidate from winning a seat away from an incumbent Liberal or NDP MPP
- Stop a sitting Conservative MPP from being re-elected
- Help more pro-education and progressive Liberal and NDP voices get elected

Know where the different parties stand on issues important to voters.

Links to Party websites:

- Ontario Liberal Party
www.ontarioliberal.ca
- Ontario NDP
ontariondp.com/en
- Green Party of Ontario
www.gpo.ca
- Ontario PC Party
www.ontariopc.com

Kit resources:

- Who Says They're All the Same?
- Get the Facts



STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

In the 2011 campaign, public education will likely to take a back seat to the economy when it comes to issues. For this reason, the OSSTF/FEESO platform *Public Education Works for Ontario* offers a vision about the vital role that education does and must continue to play as we move ahead in the 21st century. Education remains key to our students' success in their personal lives and as contributing members of our society. But it is also the core—the heart—of healthy communities and a vibrant and sustainable economy.

The *Public Education Works for Ontario* campaign is built on four pillars:

1. Provide every student with a broad range of learning opportunities.
2. Give every student a strong understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.
3. Enable every student to make a contribution to our society and economic future.
4. Make our schools the hub of involved and caring communities.

These pillars emphasize the integral role of public education in our economy and our society, and they help us frame specific needs for the early years through elementary and secondary school and on to post-secondary. The package is a valuable tool to raise the profile of education issues both during the campaign and beyond.

The *Public Education Works for Ontario* platform can be used to:

- Influence the election platform and priorities of political parties
- Build campaign support for endorsed and other progressive candidates
- Inform the voting public, the media, and our communities
- Lobby the government on education policy and priorities

In the past two elections, OSSTF/FEESO put forward an election platform setting out our priorities for public education. Education was a commanding issue in both elections and the *Student Success Plan* and the *Students First Plan* were successful in highlighting student needs and reaching voters.

To see the OSSTF/FEESO education platform *Public Education Works for Ontario*, click the link on our website at www.osstf.on.ca.



DEVELOP EFFECTIVE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The 2011 provincial election is also a chance to open doors with candidates and the parties they represent. The influence our members have on how voters perceive the parties and their record on education is one part of the story. The working relationships that we develop with aspiring MPPs on the campaign trail are another. Both are important elements in our continuing ability to raise matters of concern and have governments listen.

As active participants in the political process and as campaign volunteers, our members play a role larger than simply casting their vote. This includes opportunities to:

- Shape the election issues and policies the candidates and their parties decide to run on
- Build influence with party leaders and organizers in the constituency and at Queen's Park
- Connect with other political party members and stakeholders
- Create pressure on government to resolve differences in a pro-active way
- Establish a foundation for effective lobbying with both government members and opposition members, as well as their staffs

BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE ACTION

An election campaign is an opportunity to raise awareness with all our members, and to mobilize and train new political activists in your district.

It is also an opening to reach out to other people and organizations in our communities to highlight and build support on matters of common concern. Potential partners for us in this election include obvious allies such as other education unions, parent groups, and student leaders. They could also involve a variety of labour, community and social justice activists within the riding.

A strong cadre of member activists, together with a wide network of contacts and allies, creates a solid foundation for effective political action between elections, whether the focus is on educational issues and bargaining, or on other important issues such as health care, housing or public services. The many benefits include:

- Experienced campaigners
- Larger numbers
- Pooled resources
- Wider outreach and audience

When you need a friend, it's too late to look for one!
Shifting the Balance, 2003



A Powerful Partnership

The OSSTF/FEESO election strategy for 2011 is based on a partnership between our provincial organization and our local leadership. Work done at the provincial level strengthens our collective ability to influence policy and target resources effectively. But elections are won and lost riding by riding and it is the on-the-ground efforts of members in each district that will make the difference on Election Day.

ROLE OF PROVINCIAL OSSTF/FEESO

The primary responsibilities of provincial OSSTF/FEESO in this election are to promote a common education platform; develop strategic priorities; and provide resources, training and direct support for local member and district/bargaining unit involvement. To be effective, each of these roles requires ongoing consultation with local leaders, as well as with the political parties and our provincial education partners and allies.

1. Promote the Education Platform

The OSSTF/FEESO education platform *Public Education Works for Ontario* will be promoted through:

- Kits for distribution to members, candidates, political parties and media
- Website links featuring platform themes and what each requires
- Advertising through different media opportunities and outlets
- “Branded” items for members, candidates and the public
- Information in OSSTF/FEESO publications such as *Update* and *Education Watch*
- Social media and electronic communication tools, including Facebook and Twitter

2. Develop Strategic Priorities

To meet our objective of electing a progressive and pro-education government, provincial OSSTF/FEESO will work together with districts to determine priority constituencies based on election data from 2003 and 2007, polling information, ongoing discussion with political parties, and local issues. These priorities will reflect where OSSTF/FEESO involvement and resources will make the most difference.

Priority ridings will be designated as follows:

- Level 1: Ridings where there is a significant chance to shift the seat away from the Conservatives, or prevent a Conservative from winning a seat held by the Liberals or NDP
- Level 2: Ridings where there is some possibility of keeping, or taking, a seat away from the Conservatives

Are you an OSSTF/FEESO Facebook friend yet? If not, go to www.osstf.on.ca and sign up today!

Other factors that may be involved in designating priority campaigns include our ability to:

- Piggyback on a high profile campaign or candidate
- Provide support for current or future allies in government, or as opposition critics
- Draw attention to Conservative weak spots



3. Provide Support

Provincial OSSTF/FEESO will support district/bargaining unit election strategies as follows:

» **Direct Assistance**

Where there are Level 1 and Level 2 ridings, provincial OSSTF/FEESO will provide direct support to help districts make a donation to the endorsed candidate, mobilize member volunteers, and get out the vote:

- Level 1: Financial and provincial staff support
- Level 2: Some financial support

» **Training**

Provincial OSSTF/FEESO will provide training opportunities for all district and bargaining unit leaders and campaign organizers, including:

- AMPA Workshop and Campaign Kickoff
- Election Readiness Conference—April 29-30, 2011
- Summer Leadership Workshop

This election readiness booklet is another resource for local Political Action Committees and/or Election Teams. As well, provincial staff is available to assist with the development of specific local action plans, communication strategies, and membership workshops.

» **Resources**

Provincial OSSTF/FEESO will provide items designed to support member awareness and engagement in all districts/bargaining units. This will include “branded” promotional items/handouts as well as DVD, electronic, and social media tools.

Ready, Set...VOTE

For more information and to register for the OSSTF/FEESO Election Readiness Conference on April 29-30, 2011, go to www.osstf.on.ca

We can help!

- Plan
- Train
- Mobilize

Contact the OSSTF/FEESO Communications and Political Action Department for assistance with developing your local election plan.

Kit resources:

- List of Districts and Ridings

DISTRICT AND BARGAINING UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each district is responsible for creating an election action plan:

- Focused on designated priority ridings
- Consistent with OSSTF/FEESO goals and platform
- Based on a realistic appraisal of the local situation and available resources

The priority for districts with Level 1 and Level 2 ridings is to work with the endorsed candidate's own election team and campaign to:

- Elect the candidate

The election plan of all districts will include strategies to:

- Motivate members
- Work with allies
- Build public support

A district election plan needs to address two distinct, but related components:

- Direct support for the endorsed candidate's campaign, where applicable
- Engagement of members, allies and voters

SUMMARY

Provincial OSSTF/FEESO	District/Bargaining Units
<p>Promote the education platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Advertising • Website <p>Develop strategic priorities for ridings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with districts • Discussion with political parties • Analysis of data <p>Provide Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and staff support for Level 1 ridings • Financial support for Level 2 ridings • Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMPA Workshop, Election Readiness Conference and Summer Leadership • Election Readiness Kit and Resource booklet • Local training and planning assistance • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election promotional items • Social media, DVD • Publications, including <i>Update</i> 	<p>Districts with Level 1 & 2 Ridings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct campaign support for the endorsed candidate, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • donations • volunteers • advocacy to members • Get Out the Vote (GOTV) • E-day assistance <p>All districts and bargaining units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage members • Work with allies • Build public awareness and support

It Takes Local Leadership

CREATE A CAMPAIGN

The “nuts and bolts” of local campaign planning don’t change a lot from election to election. Whether it is next October’s provincial campaign or last fall’s municipal/trustee contest, your district/bargaining unit plan should be built around four main components. They are:

- Elect the preferred candidate by supporting his/her campaign
- Motivate members to become involved
- Work with allies to build strength
- Build public awareness and support for education issues

But there is one very important difference. In a provincial election it not only matters which candidate wins, but which political party gets the most seats. Even a few seats shifting from one party to another can make all the difference in who forms the next government. For this reason, our first task going into this election is to identify those ridings most likely to change hands, then work to get our endorsed candidates elected.

1. Elect the Candidate

If your district includes a Level 1 or Level 2 riding, the priority is to work with the endorsed candidate’s election team. Our role is to assist the candidate’s own campaign, not substitute for it.

Contact the campaign manager or headquarters well before the official campaign starts to find out what is needed. Remember that workers and financial support are the backbone of any successful campaign. Your help will be warmly welcomed—and remembered.

Suggestions:

- Make a formal endorsement
- Donate the maximum allowable from the district
- Identify and draw on OSSTF/FEESO members who are already involved with the political party of the endorsed candidate
- Ask all members to work as volunteers on the candidate’s campaign. There are many jobs that need to be done, including foot canvassing, phoning, stuffing envelopes, putting up signs, building campaign events, or pulling the vote on Election Day
- Make sure members know who the endorsed candidate is, why the district is supporting him/her, and the importance of voting
- Plan E-day activities to get out the vote
- Follow up after the election with a letter to the MPP asking for a meeting

Step Up: Be Counted

The OSSTF/FEESO 2010 Municipal/Trustee Election Kit remains a good source of information on building an election campaign. It is posted on our website.

Know the Rules!

For information on Ontario’s Election Campaign Finances, go to www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/FAQs/ElectionFinances.htm

Your first goal is to help elect the candidate by getting out members as campaign volunteers and as voters.

Kit resources:

1. What can Campaign Volunteers Do?
2. Sign up Member Volunteers
3. Get out the Vote
4. Letter to Elected MPPs



2. Motivate Members

In addition to direct candidate support in priority ridings, all district campaign plans should include activities aimed at engaging and motivating members at the local level. Not everyone will become active campaign volunteers, but all members should be made aware of the OSSTF/FEESO education platform and our goals as a union in this election.

It is also a priority to encourage our members to vote. Education issues are important, but before they vote, members should also be aware of where parties stand on other matters of concern.

The more OSSTF/FEESO members are recognized as voters who understand the issues and are committed to coming out on Election Day, the more influence we have.

Suggestions:

- Circulate clear information on the OSSTF/FEESO education platform *Public Education Works in Ontario*
- Start early and stay in touch regularly.
- Draw on well-established communications tools to reach members, including newsletters, e-mails, website, and flyers/posters
- Take advantage of social networking sites, blogs and Twitter
- Include short election readiness updates on the agenda of all meetings
- Employ the personal touch with worksite visits, social events, or direct phone calls, where feasible
- Remember the worksite rep is a strong and effective link with members
- Focus on key issues that resonate locally, including education as well as other concerns
- Provide concrete and accurate information on endorsed candidates, election events, advance polls and where to vote
- Make use of fun and engaging approaches, such as contests or YouTube
- Distribute “branded” items such as pencils, bookmarks, and stickers

OSSTF/FEESO member interest and involvement in the provincial election is not a given. Nor should we assume they will vote only on education issues or in greater numbers than the rest of the population.

Many OSSTF/FEESO members were not yet working in education during the Harris/Eves years. Take steps to address their experiences and concerns as part of your outreach to motivate and engage members.

Kit resources:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Election Awareness Poster/Flyer



3. Work with Allies

We will be more effective in the provincial election campaign if we work with others. Building a network beyond our own members helps expand voter support, get attention for key issues, and build momentum for future concerns.

We want to raise awareness of the OSSTF/FEESO education platform. But it's important to remember that voters, including our members, do not vote only on education matters. They are concerned with other issues affecting them and their communities, such as the economy, health care, HST, energy, and the environment.

Suggestions:

- Seek out progressive organizations and people you have worked with before, including education partners, campaign activists, community allies, and labour groups
- Brainstorm a list of others whose interests might coincide with yours, including anti-poverty advocates, cultural/ethnic associations, environment groups, and community health care activists
- Look for common ground where you can work together and/or pool resources with others, including organizing all-candidates' meetings or a public forum, or sponsoring a "meet and greet"
- Ask for specific support, such as an endorsement of the candidate or a letter to the editor on education issues
- Reciprocate by agreeing to bring the issues of other groups to the attention of the candidate, your members, and/or voters

Pay attention to the concerns of your members—and your neighbours! This will help you identify the issues that will mobilize voters in this election.

Remember other organizations or individuals may not be willing to endorse your candidate or work on his/her campaign, but there are other ways you might be able to work together.

Kit resources:

- When You Need a Friend

4. Build Public Support

Seek openings to promote the OSSTF/FEESO platform. Remember you are aiming to bring voters onside for this election and beyond. The more effective we are in getting our message on public education out, the more effective we will be in getting a commitment from the candidates and political parties for the future.

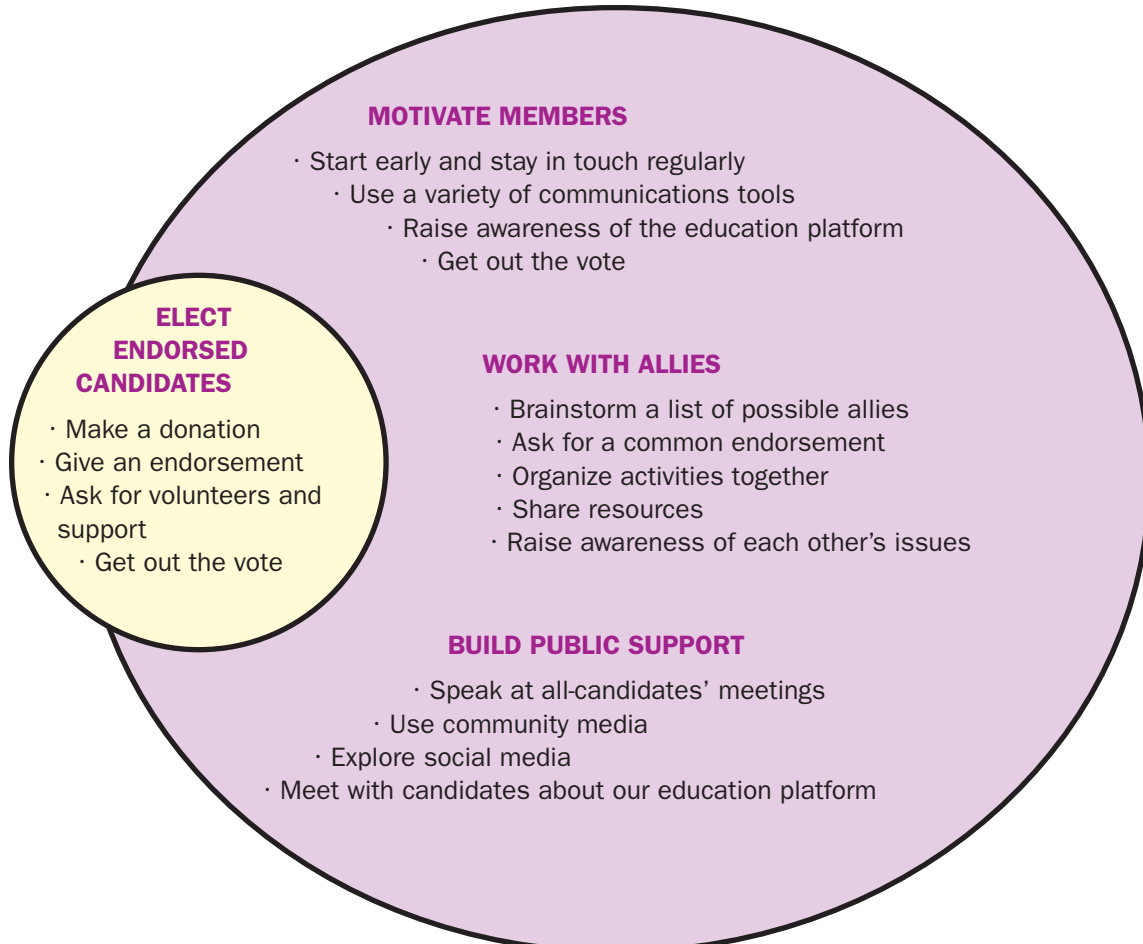
Suggestions:

- Use local media to highlight issues or raise the profile of your candidate and/or education issues. This includes letters to the editor, talk/phone-in shows, press releases, and pictures of events
- Focus on the positive elements of your candidate's platform and/or what a strong public education system delivers. The goal is to build confidence, not fuel antagonism
- Draw on the local connections of members to create opportunities for your endorsed candidate to speak with and meet voters
- Create opportunities to highlight the OSSTF/FEESO education platform *Public Education Works for Ontario*, such as questions at all-candidates' events, meetings with the candidate and staff, or use of media

Use the OSSTF/FEESO education platform *Public Education Works for Ontario* to link education issues to the needs and interests of voters and your community.

Kit resources:

- Write a Media Release
- Get your Letter to the Editor Published
- Ask the Candidates





FINALIZE YOUR PLANS

There's a lot to do in a few short months. To be effective, you will need to lay out a detailed plan and timeline from now until Election Day. Determine where you will focus your resources and decide what you are going to do, when it will take place, and who is responsible.

Once you have a plan, take a close second look to make sure it is consistent with your goals and you have the resources to carry it off.

1. Set Up Your Election Team

Your first step is to establish a local team to lead the work. Your Election Organizing Team will need to coordinate district campaign activities and member volunteers, liaise with your district and bargaining unit leadership, and update provincial office staff.

Look for people who have been active on your Political Action Committee, worked on previous provincial campaigns, have links with your candidate's party, and/or are connected to local education, labour or community groups.

Also think about the future. Take the opportunity to recruit and train newer activists.

2. Fill in the Blanks

Look at all four components of your election campaign plan: elect the candidate, motivate members, work with allies and build public support.

Determine what the right mix of these elements is for your district and members. Once you have established your main goals, you are ready to nail down the details of your plan.

Some guidelines to keep in mind are:

- Choose your tactics thoughtfully. There are many approaches you can take to achieve your goals. It is important to select those that will get the best response from your members and in your community
- Be careful to match your plans with your available resources
- Reach out to involve members in all aspects of the campaign. The more successful you are in this, the more you can accomplish
- Respect your volunteers. Tips for encouraging volunteer participation include:
 - Be realistic in what you ask
 - Be organized so you don't waste people's time
 - Build in social time and fun activities
 - Provide training to increase the skill and comfort level of your members
 - Say thanks

Your immediate goal is to nail down clearly the details of your election plan:

- What
- Why
- When
- How
- Who

Remember all elements are important but the priority is to give direct support to the campaigns of endorsed candidates in Level 1 and 2 ridings.

There are two critical questions to ask when choosing tactics for your campaign:

- How will this help us achieve our goal?
- Do we have the resources to pull it off successfully?

If the answer to either question is "no," look at something else.

Step Up: Be Counted
2010



3. Lay Out a Timeline

Once you know the outline of your plan, take out your calendar. Use a “backwards planning” approach to schedule what is going to happen when.

Your timeline will make it possible to review your plan to see if it is realistic and whether you can fit in all you want to do. Just as importantly, a timeline will help you see how to prepare and build your campaign effectively.

The timeline starts now. Although the official campaign does not begin until next fall, that will be too late to reach our members and the voting public.

Good planning is essential, but the course of an election campaign is not always predictable! Don't hesitate to shift course if new issues emerge or if things are not working as well as you would like.

Kit resources:

- Election Readiness Checklist
- Timeline for Campaign Planning

MOVE INTO ACTION

READY...

The OSSTF/FEESO education platform and election readiness strategy provide the foundation for the work we need to do in the months leading up to the provincial election on October 6, 2011. Provincial OSSTF/FEESO will provide ongoing support and direction, but local districts and our members have a critical role to play if we are to meet the goals we have set for ourselves.

SET...

The next stage is for districts to finalize their plans. This means setting out what we need to do to maximize support for endorsed candidates in Level 1 and 2 ridings, and to motivate members, work with allies and build public support.

It's not going to be easy. It will take time, money and the commitment of local leaders and our members to ensure the next provincial government is both pro-education and progressive, and one we can work with on behalf of our members, our students and our communities.

It's time to start moving and get out the **VOTE**.

Check the OSSTF/FEESO website regularly for election readiness updates and resources (www.osstf.on.ca)

