

July 20, 2010

Meeting with the Minister of Finance at Toronto Eaton Marriott Hotel

Over 60 people (and lots of media) were crammed into the Trinity room of the Toronto Eaton Marriott hotel on the afternoon of Tuesday July 20, 2010 to listen to the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Finance. (Was there no room “at the Inn” in Queens Park? Optics of cost saving were not good – although there were no Oatmeal Raisin Cookies!)

The 2 hour gathering was a 3 Act play (Trilogy?)

Act 1 – A speech from the Minister of Finance, Hon Dwight Duncan. The speech can be found on the website of the Ministry of Finance but is also attached herewith.

Act 2 – A detailed explanation of the numbers from the Deputy Minister of Finance. This is attached herewith.

Act 3 – An “In Camera” session with the Minister and the Deputy where the likes of people like me on behalf of OASIS had 2 minutes to make comments/ask questions. The presentation of OASIS is also attached herewith.

Did we learn anything? There will be more discussions/consultations!
Did the Ministry learn anything? One can only live in hope!

We did understand that all existing Interest Arbitrations are being put on hold and that no new Interest Arbitrations will begin – both pending further discussions.

There were no specific answers to our question as to whether the 2 year 0% and 0% is voluntary or to be legislated.

We did understand that organizations would be able to give increases if they could fund it out of existing resources but that may be a dangerous position which would suggest that there is surplus in the system!!

Certainly further clarification of the process and the expectations is needed.

We did hear that any savings would “stay in the sector”

We also heard that MCSS received a 7.1% increase in funding while over the same time period the Ministry of Education only received 6.1%. The argument of historical underfunding fell on deaf ears.

The mantra is on preserving, maintaining, sustaining and, if possible, enhancing public services while at the same time paying down the debt – the interest of which is \$3.6 billion annually! (\$3,000 per day for every citizen of Ontario!!!)

There will be further consultations and OASIS will have representatives at those consultations. Stay tuned.

Respectfully submitted
John F. Bedell
For OASIS