

Submission to Steering Committee on Gender Wage Equality¹

In April, 2015, the government of Ontario appointed a Steering Committee to lead the development of a wage gap strategy that will work to close the gap between men and women. As noted in the ministry news release announcing the Steering Committee, "the gender wage gap is a complex issue caused by many factors including...unequal gender representation in the workplace...." We believe that such a gap has existed in the education sector since the OPC's establishment in 1998. We welcome the opportunity to present this steering committee with our arguments so that the unfair and discriminatory wage gap impacting elementary principals and vice-principals in Ontario can be addressed and eliminated.

The Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) is the professional association representing principals and vice-principals employed in Ontario's public school system. The OPC's membership includes more than 5,000 secondary and elementary school principals and vice-principals. The OPC was founded and continues to operate on the premise that "a principal is a principal" – essentially, that the job of school administration is complex in both secondary and elementary panels, and that while some of the particular challenges may differ, they exist in equal measure.

Since November 2000, the governing body of the OPC has directed that the OPC advocate to "address the gap" between elementary and secondary administrator salaries – a gap that results from historical discrimination based on gender. The OPC has raised this concern repeatedly with the

¹ We are grateful to Cavaluzzo Hayes Shilton in assisting the OPC in its research and for rendering a legal opinion, upon which this submission is largely based.

Ministry of Education, but has not been successful in resolving this inequity.

Historical Discrimination Based on Gender

The field of work in elementary education has historically been female-dominated and the care and education of young children has been regarded historically as classic “women’s work.” Women historically were not perceived as “breadwinners.” Rather, their incomes were perceived as incidental to those earned by men in households where women lived with fathers or husbands – their incomes were for “pin money” only. Women working in elementary education at all levels (including school administration) thus had their work undervalued and underpaid, and the position itself was devalued as well by being so closely associated with “women’s work.”

Research shows that public school teaching and school administration have gone through various gender-linked stages over the last century and a half. Despite the often-superior qualifications and their predominance in the elementary teaching pool, women were significantly under-represented for most of the 20th century in elementary principal positions in Ontario. As well, according to research data reviewed by the OPC for selected years between 1911 and 1954 (see Appendix A, attached), if women were promoted to principal, they were often paid less than male elementary principals. In Ontario, it took until the late 1990s before women started to gain a real foothold as elementary principals. In the U.S., 55 per cent of elementary principals were women by 1929. Yet it took until

2005-2006 before Ontario's elementary principals were 62 per cent female. Elementary vice-principals reached 65 per cent female by that time. In contrast, and despite accounting for just over 55 per cent of the secondary educators, female educators as of 2012-2013 continue to represent only 48 per cent of the higher paying secondary administration positions.²

The OPC's archival research, documents obtained from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and academic research reveal a history of systemic gender discrimination against female educators and elementary principals in Ontario. This discrimination historically affected both their pay as teachers, their access to promotions to principalships and their pay once promoted. These historical patterns explain why elementary principals were primarily male-dominated rather than female-dominated until the 1990s. At the same time, it explains why salaries for this position were depressed relative to male-dominated secondary school teacher and administrator salaries.

In the U.S. context, men were initially hired as principals in the 1800s but women were then increasingly hired because they were "cheaper." Economics dictated employing women as elementary principals to balance the school budget: "Since they were usually willing to work for less than men, school boards eagerly cut costs by employing them."³ In U.S. research, this is referred to as a "clear pattern of sex assignment by

² Ministry of Education "Quick Facts" <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html>

³ Women and Administration: Confrontation or Accommodation by Jean Dresden Grambs, *Theory Into Practice*, Vol. 15, No. 4 Administration and Supervision/Leadership in Education, October, 1976, pp. 293-300, at p. 294. Research of Tyack cited in Grambs, *supra* at p. 293.

occupational levels."⁴ As a result, by 1929, 55 per cent of U.S. elementary principals were female.⁵

In Ontario, it was 2001 before women could gain access to 57 per cent of elementary principal positions. More broadly in Canada, it did not reach a majority (53 per cent) until 2004-2005. Ontario-wide, this has now increased as of 2012-2013 to women holding 65.5 per cent of the elementary principal and vice-principal positions.⁶

Even up to 1991, research showed that Ontario, at 17 per cent, had the lowest number of female elementary principals of any Canadian province.⁷ Another article using Canada-wide data from 1991 found that "although about 60 per cent of Canadian teachers are women, women hold only a small minority of decision-making positions in education."⁸ It concludes that women are "ready, willing, able and qualified to hold positions of administrative responsibility in education in Canada, but are still waiting."⁹ Despite the fact that fewer female teachers achieved promotion to elementary principal positions in Ontario than those in the U.S. before the 1990s, there is little doubt that depression of salaries was gender-based.

The extensive archival research carried out by the OPC for selected years from 1911 to 1954 demonstrates the following discriminatory patterns in

⁴ Grambs, supra at 294.

⁵ Grambs, supra at p. 293.

⁶ Ministry of Education "Quick Facts" <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html>

⁷ *Women and Men in Education: A National Survey of Gender Distribution in School Systems*, by Ruth Rees and Maryann Ayim. Canadian Journal of Education, vol. 16, No. 2 Spring, 1991 pp.455-457.

⁸ See *The Gender Composition of the Pool of Prospective School Principals* by Laverne Smith, Canadian Journal of Education, vol. 16, No. 4 Autumn, 1991 pp. 198-205 at p. 198.

⁹ Supra, at p. 198.

terms of women's access to the elementary principal's position and their pay once they broke through to the position:

- There is a significantly greater number of female educators (teachers) as compared to male educators.
- A greater number of females earned the highest and second highest category of qualifications as compared to their male counterparts.
- Despite the numerical superiority of female educators (which would normally be the career pool), there are a significantly greater number of males designated as elementary principals. This pattern continued over the period and, in fact, worsened in some circumstances. For example, in Toronto in 1911 there were 72 schools and 12 female principals. By 1954, the number of schools had increased to 94, yet there were still only 12 female principals. During both time periods, the female principals in Toronto generally earned less than their male counterparts. Some school boards had 1 or no female elementary principals.
- Coupled with this, the salary earned by a male principal in all these categories was generally markedly greater, for the most part, than that of female principals.
- Women were rarely appointed as secondary school principals.

Looking back at the history of gender discrimination against female educators, an ETFO Voice document¹⁰ states that, historically, Ontario female educators worked for less money because: they had few opportunities to work outside the home; once married, they could not remain in teaching; requirements for women initially were lower, reinforcing the notion of lower pay; and they were hired for younger grades, considered not capable of disciplining older children.

¹⁰ ETFO Voice, December, 2006. Pp. 3-5.

The document explains that "[a] school board could hire two women for the price of one man - even though his salary was already low. Teaching young children was thought to be motherly not scholarly. A hierarchy developed and even though women made up a majority of teachers, they were isolated from positions of power and decision-making. Men earned more and became principals, headmasters and inspectors." In 1928, the average salaries for Ontario male and female teachers were \$1,703 and \$1,155 respectively.¹¹

Recent Entrenchment of Historical Discriminatory Practices

Until 1998, public school education was funded by local school boards that could, if necessary, raise the mill rate to increase funding. Under that system, since 1975 (when they began to bargain collectively) efforts were made by teachers' federations/unions to equalize the salaries of teachers through their collective bargaining efforts. These efforts were largely successful and, coincident with the standardization of teaching credentials, teaching salaries in the two panels (elementary and secondary) have become more or less equal (with differences related only to additional qualifications).

Unfortunately, the gender wage gap was maintained between elementary and secondary administrators. While the compensation difference could, at one time, be said to have some non-discriminatory justifications when the qualifications were different, and there were significant numbers of

¹¹ ETFO Voice, December, 2006. Pp. 3-5.

small rural elementary schools, those differences have now largely been eliminated.

Now there are many elementary schools that are larger than some secondary schools; the qualifications (the Principal's Qualification Program), training and experience requirements in both panels are the same; the statutory duties of principals and vice-principals in both panels are identical; and, in the 31 public district school boards, principals and vice-principals from both panels have their terms of employment governed in a single group contract, without any differentiation in terms other than salary.

However, these changes have not translated into a narrowing of the gender salary gap between elementary principals or vice-principals and their secondary counterparts; indeed, as explained further below, the gender salary gap has increased. There is no rational basis - unrelated to historical gender discrimination - for an ongoing differential in salary, and certainly not for a widening gender gap.

In 1998, the Ontario government introduced a funding formula, which formally imbedded a lower salary for elementary administrators (P: \$77,779 and VP: \$70,976) than for secondary administrators (P: \$84,825 and VP: \$74,877). As a result, not only was the salary differential entrenched (\$7,406 between principals and \$3,901 between vice-principals in the two panels), but over the past 17 years, the gap has widened due to increases being applied to the benchmark by the provincial government on a percentage basis.

This funding formula entrenches the discriminatory pay gap by explicitly providing a model to school boards of the appropriate salary differential, thus having a disparate impact on the (now female predominant) elementary principals and vice-principals. It is clear that the model has had its intended impact in that boards generally state that they can't equalize the salaries because of the funding formula.¹²

According to the Ministry of Education's Technical Paper for 2015-16¹³, the benchmark salaries for principals and vice-principals are as follows:

- \$113,422 for Elementary Principals
- \$107,432 for Elementary Vice-Principals
- \$123,696 for Secondary (and combined Elementary/Secondary) Principals
- \$113,339 for Secondary (and combined Elementary/Secondary) Vice-Principals

The salary benchmark gap has thus widened between elementary and secondary principals to \$10,274 and between elementary and secondary vice-principals to \$5,907.

Since 2011, elementary principals have been paid 9.3 per cent less than secondary principals; elementary vice-principals are paid 9.4 per cent less

¹² There are some school boards that have agreed to certain temporary measures to stop the gender gap from widening and a couple of small school boards that have agreed to pay their administrators based on size of school. For the most part, however, salaries have been dictated by the existing salary grids, and percentage increases to salaries negotiated by teachers for their members have been "passed along" to principals and vice-principals.

¹³ *Technical Paper 2015-16*, Ministry of Education, Spring 2015, pp. 24.

than secondary vice-principals. In some boards, secondary vice-principal pay is almost equivalent to elementary principal pay, notwithstanding that a vice-principal's duties are delegated and no ultimate responsibility vests with that individual.

Unfortunately, despite ongoing advocacy about this issue, including this past year when the new funding formula was under discussion, no systemic movement has been made by the government to address the gender gap to date.

The OPC applauds the government for establishing this Steering Committee to assess ways to address systemic barriers that contribute to the wage gap. It is clear from this submission that the gap that currently exists between the female-predominant elementary and male-predominant secondary school administrators is based on historic gender discrimination.

As such, we urge this Committee to acknowledge the historical data, recognize the gender wage gap between elementary and secondary administrators - including how it has been entrenched by the government through the imposed funding formula - and recommend to the government that this wage gap be eliminated as soon as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our research and findings.

Appendix A – SUMMARY OF OPC Archival Research - Selected Years 1911-1954 (full research memo available upon request**)**

a) The Public Schools of the City Inspectorate:

The schools in the City Inspectorate, for the most part, had staffs of 10 or more, with the exception of sanatorium schools or hospital schools. The role of principal was predominantly assigned to male educators despite the numerical superiority of females in the schools. Male dominance in the role of principal is indicated for all the years illustrated, even in 1915 and 1943 when the assumption could be made that there would be fewer men available during these war years.

For the most part, female principals were found in the schools with fewer staff (0 - 3), as well as in some of the above-noted specialized ones. Coupled with this, male principals were paid significantly more than their female counterparts. For instance, in Ottawa in 1911 a top male principal earned almost twice as much per annum as a top female principal. By 1954, the male principal earned about 25% more. Toronto was the anomaly as the highest male and female principal made comparable salaries. The difference, however, was in the number of each that was in the highest category of salary with significantly fewer female principals.

b) The Public Schools of the County Inspectorates:

Most of rural County Inspectorate schools had only educator who was usually female. The urban schools, on the other hand usually had staffs (with the exception of sanatorium schools, etc.) consisting of anywhere from one or two educators to a half dozen or more.

Although females dominate in numbers as the "principal" in the rural schools, with few exceptions, they do not dominate in the area of salary. The role of principal was assigned to males in the urban schools despite the predominance of female educators and despite the similarity of their qualifications. As was also demonstrated, the male principals earned anywhere from \$100(Lanark West in 1911) to almost \$1,000 (Lambton East in 1948 and 1954) more per annum than did the female principals in the urban areas.

c) The Collegiate Institutes and High Schools:

Despite the limited data available to the researcher, it appears that the position of principal was assigned almost exclusively to males. The dominance of males as principals in high schools and collegiate institutes has roots as far back as 1891. When there are females in the role of principal in collegiate institutes and high schools, as are evidenced in 1948 and 1954, male principals earn approximately \$3,000 per annum more than female principals.