

2025-2026

Annual Report

Message from the Chair



“

TESL Ontario has remained strong by focusing on supporting members, strengthening our profession, and ensuring that the voices and experiences of English language educators continue to be represented and heard.

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Dear members of the TESL Ontario community,

As Chair of the TESL Ontario Board of Directors, it is my privilege to share with you the highlights of our organization's work and achievements for the fiscal year 2025-2026.

Although we cannot ignore the current challenges that continue to affect English language education in Ontario and across Canada, TESL Ontario has remained strong by focusing on supporting members, strengthening our profession, and ensuring that the voices and experiences of English language educators continue to be represented and heard.

Career and Professional Development

A priority this fiscal year has been supporting members during a period of employment uncertainty. TESL Ontario expanded its career development resources with 13 new career-development videos, enhanced its Mentorship Program, and continues to plan for new career development opportunities. For example, in 2027, we will launch a new Career Bootcamp course and plan to launch a Career Readiness Mini-Event with the purpose to equip members with relevant training and networking.

The launch of the TESL Ontario Ambassador Program has also created new opportunities for members to connect and to share their experiences, elevating the value of belonging to our professional community.

In addition, this year, we delivered 22 free webinars and launched our third Specialized Skills Certificate course, *Creative Tasks and Activities for Engaging Language Learners*. We also developed new ways to make professional learning accessible and relevant with the launch of the Micro PD YouTube series and the new Research to Practice Spotlight series. In addition, our annual Research Symposium, Teacher-Researcher Workshop, and development of a SSHRC funding application are representative of our commitment to learning more about topics related to our field of English language education.



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Advocacy

TESL Ontario continues to make its presence known at the federal and provincial levels through pre-budget submissions and voicing the challenges, needs and priorities of our members, the students we serve, and the importance of English language education. Our advocacy efforts are therefore ongoing and purposeful.

We have also renewed and expanded our partnerships with other organizations, including TESL Canada and TESOL Spain, opening network channels to the membership for collaboration and professional development opportunities beyond TESL Ontario.

Volunteers and Chapters

Our volunteers and Chapters continue to be pivotal in the strengthening of the organization. We expanded our National Volunteer Week recognition efforts and continued the tradition of celebrating volunteers through our Volunteer of the Year Award, first introduced at the 2025 Annual Conference.

We also strengthened and streamlined the operational procedures for all Chapters, ensuring consistency and accountability across the organization.

Accreditation and Certification

Spreading awareness about the relevance of our certification and accreditation programs is also at the forefront of our growth. This fiscal year, we developed three new certification videos, increased outreach to TESL students through presentations and in-person exhibits, and updated our certification portal with a list of frequently asked questions to make the accreditation and certification process easier to navigate.

Another major achievement has been the modernization of TESL Ontario's accreditation standards and the Accredited Training Structure and Topics Framework which now offers greater flexibility for accredited training providers.

Technology and Organizational Excellence

This year also marked the completion of our five-year work modernizing TESL Ontario's digital platforms, including updates to the TESL Blog and Contact magazine websites, which are now in alignment with the organization's current branding and use friendly functionality.

At the organizational level, we expanded our use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to better understand membership growth and retention, revenue diversification,

member engagement and participation, and most importantly, member satisfaction. This enhancement will provide valuable benchmarks as we start to plan for our next Strategic Plan.

Looking Ahead

As we enter the final year of our 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, our focus will increasingly shift from developing new initiatives to evaluating, strengthening, and sustaining our position as leaders in the field of language education. In 2027, TESL Ontario will be busy reviewing the achievements and lessons of the current Strategic Plan, and use KPI data to establish meaningful benchmarks, assess the impact of key initiatives, and identify programs and practices that should continue.

Acknowledgements

As I conclude this report, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone whose commitment makes TESL Ontario the strong and resilient organization it is today. As I end my six-year journey as Board member and two years as Chair of the Board, I am honoured to have served my

organization and community at the strategic level and thank you for your trust.

To my fellow Board members, committee members, Chapter representatives, and volunteers, thank you for the time and dedication you continue to give to our organization and our profession. To all our members, thank you for your continued commitment to TESL Ontario.

I would also like to acknowledge our Executive Director, Allison Keown, and the entire TESL Ontario staff team for their leadership and dedication throughout another demanding but productive and rewarding year. Their ability to respond to immediate challenges while continuing to advance our strategic goals are evidence of their professionalism and deep commitment to TESL Ontario.

With deep appreciation,



Cecilia Aponte-de-Hanna
Chair, TESL Ontario Board

Events



TESL Ontario's local Chapters continued to provide valuable opportunities for members to connect, learn and engage with colleagues in their local communities throughout the year.

TESL Durham hosted a Spring Professional Development event in May, along with a Fall Benefits of Membership information session, providing members with opportunities to strengthen their professional learning while also learning more about the benefits and resources available through TESL Ontario.

TESL Hamilton-Wentworth held a Fall Networking Event in September, providing members with an opportunity to connect with colleagues and build professional relationships within the local language education community.

TESL Kingston offered a variety of social and professional opportunities throughout the year, including a Spring Social Mixer in June, a second Social Mixer in September, and a Fall Professional Development Workshop in October.

TESL London continued its chapter programming with a Professional Development event in April, providing members with an opportunity to begin the new fiscal year with local learning and engagement.

TESL Niagara hosted its Spring Conference in June, bringing members together for a larger-scale professional development and networking opportunity.

TESL North York/York Region held two virtual Professional Development opportunities during the year, in May and October, with its October programming also incorporating the chapter's Annual General Meeting.

TESL Ottawa offered both in-person and virtual opportunities, beginning with its April Annual General Meeting and accompanying in-person event, followed by a virtual Fall Professional Development event.

TESL Peel-Halton-Etobicoke hosted a Summer Professional Development event featuring presenter Tanya Chernova, providing members with a focused opportunity for professional learning during the summer months.

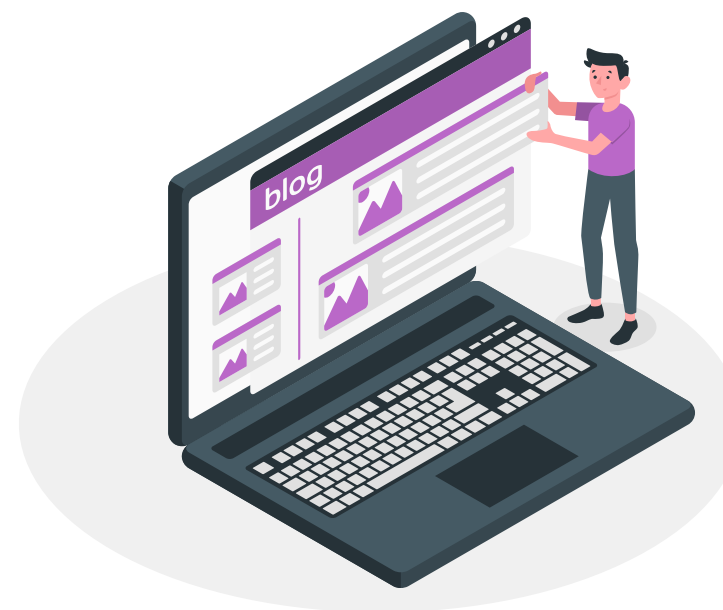
TESL Toronto continued its strong annual programming with **TOSCON** in June, its annual virtual **T4T event** in February, and its annual **Employment & Networking Event** in March, offering members opportunities spanning professional development, career development and networking.

TESL Waterloo-Wellington held its Annual General Meeting and accompanying Professional Development event in May, bringing local members together for both chapter business and professional learning.

TESL Windsor combined its Annual General Meeting with a Professional Development event in May, providing members with an opportunity to participate in chapter activities while connecting with colleagues.



Member Services



Over fifty (50) new posts were published on the TESL Ontario Blog during the 2025–2026 year...

The TESL Ontario webinar program had a very successful year in 2025, with twenty-two (22) webinars held during the year...

The Association maintained an average membership of 4400-4450 members in 2025, marking a slight decline from the highs of 2024. Just over eight percent of members hold a “standard” or non-certified membership, while ninety-one percent hold certificates of accreditation (OCELT, ICTEAL, CTESOL).

In 2025 TESL Ontario continued to actively build an engaged member community with a wide variety of professional development and networking opportunities, while further building and enhancing additional valuable resources through social media platforms, the TESL Ontario YouTube channel, the Directory of ELT/FSL Resources, CCPLAR pathways to certification, our TESL Career Centre and additional in-person professional development events.

The TESL Ontario webinar program had a very successful year in 2025, with twenty-two (22) webinars held during the year, along with three (3) TESL Mentorship events and other special online, interactive events. The live PD series featured a variety of topics to address all areas of professional development, including using AI to code ESL activities, fighting burnout with balance, using storytelling for language learning, integrating into the Canadian workforce, practical supports for disabled learners, gamification, and mentoring ESL students. Additional topic-specific series were included within the webinar program for 2025, including a diversity, equity and inclusion stream and a research series, curated with the assistance of TESL Ontario’s committees.

Over fifty (50) new posts were published on the TESL Ontario Blog during the 2025–2026 year, continuing to provide members with a diverse range of practical resources, professional perspectives, classroom ideas and discussions relevant to today’s language education environment. Topics ranged from emerging issues such as generative AI and digital literacy to classroom strategies, language-learning experiences, equity and belonging, professional advocacy and reflections from the field. The TESL Ontario Blog is a member-driven space for TESL educators to share perspectives, resources



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and classroom experiences, and currently reaches thousands of individual readers worldwide each year, our most popular and far-reaching public facing resource.

TESL Ontario maintains regular communication with its membership through a monthly email series highlighting upcoming professional development opportunities, social media events, available resources, and recent publications. In addition, quarterly publications such as *Contact* magazine and the *Membership Minute* newsletter offer deeper insights into issues, events, and resources relevant to the ESL community in Ontario. Throughout the year, members also receive targeted emails about volunteer opportunities, external PD events, research surveys, TESL Ontario's member representation and advocacy efforts, and other initiatives. Notably, 89% of TESL Ontario members choose to stay connected through these regular communications.

In addition to TESL Ontario's regular email communications, the membership is also actively engaged through updates, outreach, event marketing and resources on social media platforms. Under the supervision of the Coordinator, Social Media and Professional Development, several teams comprised of dozens of volunteers work to

ensure content is regularly curated and updated on TESL Ontario's LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube platforms, in addition to supporting the blog, webinar series and more. These dedicated volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of the association, bringing passion and innovation to their roles and TESL Ontario extends heartfelt thanks for their contributions.

In 2025, TESL Ontario expanded its Volunteer Recognition efforts to provide more frequent and meaningful ways to acknowledge the contributions of our valued volunteer community. New initiatives included monthly prize draws for volunteers, quarterly draws for complimentary TESL Ontario memberships, and the introduction of Volunteer Skills Certificates recognizing the contributions of moderators, content creators and leaders within our volunteer base. These initiatives are intended not only to thank our volunteers for the time, skills and energy they contribute, but also to recognize the important role they play in helping TESL Ontario deliver programs, resources and services to our members and the broader TESL community.

In 2025, TESL Ontario also introduced *Milestone Certificates* as a new way to recognize and celebrate the

long-term commitment of our members. Certificates are being provided to members reaching 5, 10, 15 and 20+ years of consecutive membership, acknowledging the individuals whose continued support helps strengthen our association and move it forward. While a small gesture, these certificates offer a meaningful way for TESL Ontario to say *thank you* to the members who have been part of our community for many years and whose ongoing involvement contributes to the strength and sustainability of the association.

TESL Ontario continues to seek out new opportunities to enhance the value of membership through exclusive savings and benefits. While we lost our Chapters-Indigo member discount in 2025 as a result of the company's internal changes, we were pleased to offset that loss with the addition of Perkopolis, a substantial member savings program offering discounts across a wide range of national and local retailers, services and experiences. We have also continued to expand our selection of other local and online savings opportunities, ensuring that members have access to a growing range of practical and meaningful benefits beyond their professional development and networking opportunities.



2025 saw the presentation of a third consecutive in-person component (TESL Ontario Connect) at the Annual Conference, an in-person spring professional development opportunity held in Oakville, as well as an increased number of in-person professional development and networking events attended by the TESL Ontario staff to promote association membership and certification, including a regional PD event presented by TESL Ontario.

Accreditation Services



...the TESL Ontario Accredited Training Structure and Topics Framework was revised to better reflect developments in adult second language education...



TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization

One of the major accreditation initiatives during the 2025–2026 fiscal year was the modernization of TESL Ontario’s TESL Program Accreditation Standards. Following recommendations from the Accreditation Standards Committee in April 2025, TESL Ontario undertook a focused review aimed at addressing identified gaps, improving clarity, and aligning the standards and related policies with current best practices in adult English language education.

TESL Ontario Program Accreditation Adjudicator Sharon Rajabi led the research and review process, with input from a subcommittee of Accreditation Standards Committee members. Her recommendations were submitted in August 2025 and subsequently reviewed by TESL Ontario staff in consultation with the committee. The modernization initiative was completed in February 2026.

As part of this work, the TESL Ontario Accredited Training Structure and Topics Framework was revised to better reflect developments in adult second language education, including learner-centred and context-responsive practices, intercultural and sociocultural competence, technology-enhanced language learning, ethical professional practice, and reflective development. The Practicum Requirements and Mentor Teacher Role and Responsibilities document and other accreditation materials were also reviewed and updated.

The TESL Program Accreditation Application Form, Self-Assessment Report template, and Appeal Application Form were also updated, converted to fillable PDF documents, and posted on the TESL Ontario website. A temporary moratorium on new TESL program accreditation applications was implemented from May 2025 to January 2026 to facilitate completion of the modernization work.

The initiative also established a formal five-year cyclical review of TESL program accreditation standards. This review process is intended to ensure that the standards remain current and responsive to developments in research, professional practice,



TESL Ontario continued to promote OCELT certification and raise awareness of certification pathways through presentations and sector events during the year.

and sector needs. TESL Ontario may also amend existing standards, establish new standards, or issue temporary guidelines within a five-year review cycle when necessary.

Accredited Training Program Relations

TESL Ontario continued to work closely with accredited training providers throughout the year. In 2024, TESL Ontario had conducted a study examining adult ESL instructors’ and employers’ perspectives and experiences regarding different TESL training delivery modalities. A report summarizing the research method, preliminary findings, and implications was distributed to accredited training providers in June 2025. The findings indicated, among other things, that instructors and employers valued TESL training that prepares graduates to teach in both in-person and online environments. Employers also identified TESL Ontario certification as an indicator of training program graduates’ preparedness for classroom teaching.

The annual joint meeting between the Accreditation Standards Committee and accredited training program representatives was held in June 2025 using a newly introduced format. The meeting consisted of two consecutive one-hour sessions. During the first session, attended by

committee members and training program representatives, Sharon Rajabi introduced the TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization Initiative, answered questions, and invited feedback from training providers. The second session was reserved for training program representatives.

TESL Ontario also continued its annual accreditation renewal process. Sixteen annual reports were received from accredited TESL programs during the year. They were all approved and their accreditation certificates were renewed.

The University of Toronto submitted an accreditation application for its MEd in Language and Literacies Education (Language Teaching Field). Following the review process, the program received interim accreditation in January 2026.

In February 2026, Fanshawe College notified TESL Ontario that it had discontinued its TESL program and would not renew its accreditation. As of February 2026, TESL Ontario had 15 accredited TESL training programs.

Post TESL Certificate Training (PTCT)

TESL Ontario continued to support specialized professional development through the Post TESL Certificate Training program.



In March 2025, New Language Solutions Inc. submitted an application for approval of its *Introduction to Avenue Learning Leadership* course. This eight-week mentored online course addresses topics including technology-enhanced language learning, blended learning, artificial intelligence, leadership and innovation theories, and navigating organizational change. The course received PTCT approval in April 2025.

The PTCT annual report template was also redesigned as an Excel spreadsheet to allow TESL Ontario and course providers to more easily record and follow up on changes, comments, and questions throughout each renewal cycle.

Annual reports for New Language Solutions’ *Online/Blended Language Training Using Moodle (LearnIT2teach Stage 3)* and *Developing e-Materials for Language Training (LearnIT2teach Stage 4)* were reviewed and approved in October 2025.

Promoting TESL Ontario Certification

TESL Ontario continued to promote OCELT certification and raise awareness of certification pathways through presentations and sector events during the year.

Activities included participation in the TESL Toronto Employment Event in April and the TOSCON Conference in June, as well as presentations on TESL Ontario certification at Seneca Polytechnic in April and November, Humber Polytechnic in September, the Canadian College of Educators in November, and at the TESL Toronto Networking Event in March. TESL Ontario also delivered a TESL career presentation at the TESL Ontario Conference in November 2025.

Certification Statistics

TESL Ontario continued to process applications for OCELT certification, TESL Trainer certification, PTCT Instructor certification, certification reinstatement, and applications through the Competency-and-Credit Based Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (CCPLAR) pathway.

TESL Ontario had received 361 certification applications during the fiscal year and approved 336 applications, representing a year-to-date applications-to-approvals ratio of approximately 93%.

Awards

2025 TESL Ontario Recognition Awards



Sparks of Excellence Award
Malgorzata (Margaret) Holec



TESL Ontario proudly recognized Margaret Holec with the Sparks of Excellence Award for her exceptional dedication to learners, colleagues, and her community. As a LINC instructor and PBLA Lead at UHC – Hub of Opportunities, Margaret set the standard for excellence in language instruction and assessment. Her leadership in implementing and refining PBLA practices since 2015 has strengthened the quality and integrity of the organization’s programs, while her mentorship and encouragement have inspired professional growth among her peers. Known for her innovation and meticulous attention to detail, she consistently developed tools and resources—such as learner manuals and digital platforms—that enhance learning and accessibility for newcomers.

Beyond the classroom, Margaret exemplifies community engagement and inclusivity. As a long-time volunteer with TESL Windsor, including service as Vice President and President, she has strengthened the professional community through inspired leadership, dynamic events, and expanded outreach. Her commitment to cultural connection extended further through initiatives like founding a youth group for newcomer children, co-hosting the What’s Up Windsor radio program, and establishing language and arts programs that celebrate diversity and multilingualism.

A consummate educator, leader, and community builder, Margaret Holec brings creativity, compassion, and professionalism to everything she does. Her tireless commitment to learners and her vision for inclusive, engaging language education embody the very spirit of the Sparks of Excellence Award.



Sparks of Excellence Award
Katherine (Kate) Maven

With more than 15 years of experience as an ESL instructor, Kate distinguished herself as an educator whose creativity, passion, and generosity continually enriched the TESL community. As a teacher, she engaged learners with imaginative lessons that motivate and inspire. Beyond the classroom, Kate has authored several books, including *101 Secrets of Success in Canada* and its accompanying workbook, which provide newcomers with practical tools to navigate Canadian culture, education, and workplaces with confidence.

Kate's commitment to professional development is equally inspiring. Since 2009, she designed and delivered dynamic TESL workshops—such as *Tricks for Teaching Tough Sounds*, *Boost Your Creative Chi!*, and *Monday Morning Wake-Ups!*—which have been well received at TESL Ontario's annual conference and chapter PD events across the province. She also gives back generously as a conference moderator and by freely sharing her lesson materials, games, and ideas with colleagues.

Creative, collaborative, and dedicated, Kate embodies the very spirit of the Sparks of Excellence Award. Her contributions have had a lasting impact on learners, colleagues, and the broader TESL community, and she continues to inspire through her innovative teaching, resource creation, and mentorship.



Volunteer of the Year Award
Althea Raymond

Since joining the TESL Ontario Webinar Team in 2015 and taking on the role of Moderator Manager in 2021, Althea has demonstrated outstanding dedication, leadership, and professionalism. She has played a central role in strengthening TESL Ontario's webinar program by training and mentoring new moderators, updating resources, and ensuring that every session is well-organized and smoothly executed.

Her thoughtful coordination, fairness, and commitment to excellence have created a supportive environment for volunteers and presenters, while ensuring educators across the province benefit from high-quality professional development.

Althea consistently goes above and beyond in her volunteer work. Whether stepping in at the last minute to moderate a high-attendance webinar with over 200 participants or providing guidance and support to her team around the clock, she approaches every challenge with calm problem-solving and generosity of spirit. Her professionalism, inclusivity, and innovation have strengthened TESL Ontario's capacity to deliver meaningful learning opportunities while fostering a sense of community among volunteers and members alike.

Through her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment, Althea has made a lasting positive impact on both TESL Ontario and the wider ESL community. She exemplifies the values of dedication, collaboration, and excellence, and we were proud to recognize her as TESL Ontario's Volunteer of the Year.



Distinguished Contribution Award
Art Rekhtin

For well over 15 years, Art Rekhtin has been a visionary leader in Ontario's English language education sector—an innovator whose work has transformed programs, tools, and professional practice across the province. As Manager of Newcomer Programs at Caledon Community Services, Art redefined language instruction as a pathway to full participation in Canadian life. His implementation of the HyFlex learning model after the pandemic offered learners the flexibility to attend in-person, online, or both—an innovation that preserved accessibility and community at a critical time. His presentation at the 2024 TESL Ontario Conference and subsequent *Contact Magazine* article have since guided practitioners across the province in adopting blended learning with purpose and empathy.

Before joining CCS, Art's forward-thinking leadership at Achev helped modernize the national language assessment landscape. He directed the redevelopment of the Canadian Language Benchmarks Online Self-Assessment (CLB-OSA) tools and introduced the first-ever writing assessment, a resource that became essential during pandemic lockdowns. This work, now a cornerstone of settlement language assessment in Canada, reflected Art's hallmark combination of foresight, innovation, and deep respect for learner experience.

Art's contributions to TESL Ontario are equally enduring. Through more than a decade of volunteer service—as Member-at-Large, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chapter Representative—he helped modernize financial systems, strengthen communication across chapters, and champion initiatives such as the TESL Ontario Mentorship Series, which has since supported hundreds of new educators. His colleagues consistently describe him as calm, principled, and collaborative—a steady presence whose leadership strengthened the organization during both growth and challenge.

A recipient of an Honourable Mention for Leadership from the Bhayana Family Foundation in 2025, Art continues to model inclusive, community-driven leadership through his work with CCS's iDREAM Committee and his ongoing mentorship of emerging professionals. Through every role, he has built systems that foster belonging, resilience, and opportunity. TESL Ontario proudly recognized Art Rekhtin with the 2025 Distinguished Contribution Award for his exceptional vision, service, and lasting impact on the profession.

TESL Ontario Working Committees



The Colleges and Universities Committee had an active and productive year focused on professional development, member engagement, and representation within Ontario’s postsecondary ESL/EAP sector.

Colleges and Universities Committee

The Colleges and Universities Committee had an active and productive year focused on professional development, member engagement, and representation within Ontario’s postsecondary ESL/EAP sector. The committee delivered a C/U-focused session at the 2025 TESL Ontario Conference addressing employment preparation for college and university educators. Elements of the session were subsequently adapted for a mentorship event, extending the reach of this work. The committee also participated in the TESL Toronto Networking/Employment event and hosted *Colleges and Universities: Sharing Experiences*, providing opportunities for educators to connect and exchange perspectives on issues affecting the sector.

A significant focus of the year was the development and implementation of the committee’s 2026 Strategic Plan. Organized around Professional Development, Engagement, and Member Representation, the plan established clear priorities for strengthening professional learning opportunities, developing and sharing C/U-specific resources, maintaining meaningful connections with members, and ensuring that their perspectives are reflected within TESL Ontario. Committee members assumed responsibility for specific initiatives and continued this work collaboratively throughout the year.

The committee also strengthened its efforts to better understand and respond to the needs of C/U members. An annual Pulse Survey was developed and administered to gather information about member priorities and sector experiences. The findings helped inform the committee’s professional development priorities, with artificial intelligence emerging as a particularly strong area of interest. The committee also continued to consider broader issues affecting colleges and universities, including changes to international student policy and their implications for institutions, educators, and learners.

The Conference Committee is particularly grateful to all those who attend each year and take the time to provide constructive and informative feedback.



The Research Advisory Committee focused its 2025/26 activities on strengthening research engagement and professional learning opportunities for TESL Ontario members.

Lastly, the committee also completed a substantial recruitment process, reviewing 18 applications using established candidate evaluation processes and DEI hiring guidelines. Two new members, Mitra Rabiee and Plamen Kushkiev, joined the committee, bringing additional perspectives and capacity to its work. The Colleges and Universities Committee extends its sincere appreciation to all members for their expertise, collaboration, and commitment throughout the year and looks forward to continuing to strengthen professional learning, connection, and representation across the C/U sector.

Conference Committee

The Conference Committee meets monthly throughout the year to focus on planning, hosting and evaluating the annual conference. The work of the committee would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of this volunteer committee and the TESL Ontario staff.

The 53rd annual conference took place on November 19-21, 2025. It was a great success with over 1200 people registered. There were 79 sessions, including 2 keynote addresses, the annual research symposium, 72 concurrent sessions, 3 career development sessions and 3 special sessions including the AGM, and program administrator meeting. The sessions covered a range of topics including learning strategies, technology, research and timely resources. Gamification was once again incorporated to increase online engagement among attendees.

Moderators and presenters reported they were well prepared through scheduled orientation sessions while sponsors were happy with the response from participants to their sessions and products. Our now-annual in-person event, TESL Ontario Connect, was attended by 125 people, focused on *Evolving Excellence: Teaching Strategies That Grow With You*, and included a panel discussion followed by roundtable discussions among the attendees. During this exciting evening, we were pleased to honor 2 Sparks of Excellence Award recipients, 1 Distinguished Contribution Award winner and our inaugural Volunteer of the Year award recipient.

85% of surveyed conference attendees rated the overall conference *Good, Very Good or Excellent*. Feedback from participants, committee members and staff provided many suggestions for consideration, including: spreading themed sessions (i.e.: AI, literacy, wellness) over all three days of the conference rather than having multiple themed sessions on one day, increased programming for novice teachers, more sessions that focus on the practical vs. theory, shorten the conference to two days, and increase the number of prizes and giveaways. While some attendees called for a return to an in-person conference, the majority support the virtual format, citing the convenience of attending, access to recordings after the event, and avoiding travel & accommodation costs that employers can not cover. As the committee has worked on the conference for 2026, we have kept these suggestions in mind.

The theme for the 2026 conference is **“Resilient. Relevant Ready”**. The conference will held November 4-6, 2026, and will again be virtual to accommodate as many members as possible at an affordable registration cost. TESL Ontario Connect will return for its fourth year, once again held at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) on November 4. The format for the conference will be similar to last year with keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, and the special sessions including the AGM and government panel. This year’s keynote speakers are Drew Fagan, speaking about *“Navigating Change in English Language Teaching: Transformation, Collaborative Engagement, and Reflective Practice”* and Lindsay Clandfield, presenting *“The Limits of Wonder: A Critical Look at Technological Enthusiasm in Education”*. Our conference website is operating with the marketing campaign beginning in the spring and continuing until the conference is underway.

The Conference Committee is particularly grateful to all those who attend each year and take the time to provide constructive and informative feedback.

Research Advisory Committee

The Research Advisory Committee focused its 2025/26 activities on strengthening research engagement and professional learning opportunities for TESL Ontario members. The committee played a central role in organizing the annual Research Symposium and Teacher

Researcher Workshop, both delivered at the November 2025 TESL Ontario Conference. These well-attended sessions provided opportunities for members to explore current research, share knowledge, and consider how research can inform classroom practice.

Throughout the year, the committee also supported the development of a SSHRC Partnership Engagement Grant application focused on Ontario’s adult TESL workforce and reviewed research-related findings from the 2025 Member Survey to help identify member priorities. Committee members also identified potential speakers and topics for TESL Ontario’s research webinar programming, helping to strengthen connections between current scholarship and the professional interests of members.

A key initiative was the development of the new Research to Practice blog series, designed to bridge the gap between research and classroom practice by translating current scholarship into accessible, practice-oriented resources for TESL Ontario members. TESL Ontario extends sincere appreciation to the members of the Research Advisory Committee for their expertise, commitment, and contributions throughout the year.

TESL Ontario Working Committees continued →

During this report period...the Accreditation Standards Committee’s work focused primarily on the TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization Initiative.



Accreditation Standards Committee

The TESL Ontario accreditation standards committee develops the standards for adult English language teacher certification, TESL trainer certification, post TESL certificate training (PTCT) course approval, PTCT instructor certification, TESL program accreditation, and professional development (PD) recognition. It also supports accredited TESL training providers by developing guidelines to help them maintain the quality of their training. Currently, the standards committee is structured as follows:

- A Chairperson (volunteer)
- One LINC Teacher (volunteer)
- One ESL Teacher (volunteer)
- Two TESL Trainers (volunteers)
- Two LINC/ESL Program Managers (volunteers)
- TESL Ontario Executive Director
- TESL Ontario Adjudicator
- TESL Ontario Accreditation Services Manager

The volunteer members of this committee are recruited from the TESL Ontario membership. The committee chair is appointed by and reports to the TESL Ontario Executive Director.

During this report period, the standards committee held five meetings. The committee’s work focused primarily

on the TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization Initiative.

At the beginning of the report period, the committee reviewed findings from employer and TESL graduate surveys on TESL program delivery modalities. The surveys gathered perspectives and experiences related to in-person, synchronous, asynchronous, and blended training and highlighted the importance of flexibility, interaction, practicum experience, and quality assurance in teacher preparation. The findings, together with the committee’s ongoing discussions about changes in program delivery and the limitations of the existing accreditation standards, helped inform the subsequent review and modernization of TESL program accreditation standards.

The TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization Initiative aimed to align the standards with current best practices in the TESL field, address identified gaps, and enhance clarity. The committee reviewed recommendations arising from research, an environmental scan of comparable organizations, a review of TESL Ontario’s existing standards, and consultation with accredited training providers.

At the annual joint meeting with accredited training providers in June 2025, the standards committee met with representatives from accredited TESL programs to discuss the TESL Program Accreditation Standards Modernization Initiative. The discussion addressed the purpose and scope of the initiative, current challenges experienced by training

providers, alignment with other TESL certification standards, developments in AI and educational technology, mentor teacher recruitment, and program review practices. Training providers were subsequently invited to provide additional feedback to inform the modernization work.

As part of this work, the TESL Ontario Accredited Training Structure and Topics Framework was revised to reflect developments in adult second language education, including learner-centred and context-responsive practice, intercultural and sociocultural competence, and the growing role of technology. Furthermore, the updated framework maintains strong expectations for professional practice, ethical responsibility, and reflective development, while allowing purposeful flexibility to respond to diverse learner needs and instructional settings.

The committee’s work also led to updates to the Practicum Requirements and Mentor Teacher Role and Responsibilities. The updated requirements strengthened expectations for diverse practicum experiences, clarified that online asynchronous practica were not eligible, and introduced a proviso allowing fully online-synchronous practica in extenuating circumstances. The committee also updated the Code of Conduct and Terms & Conditions for Accredited Training Providers to align the wording related to practicum placements with the practicum requirements and clarify training providers’ responsibility for arranging practicum placements.

In addition, the committee established a five-year cyclical review process to help ensure that TESL Ontario’s accreditation standards remain current and responsive to developments in research, professional practice, technology, and sector needs.

Member Representation and Advocacy



TESL Ontario continued to strengthen its advocacy and member representation efforts throughout 2025–2026...

TESL Ontario continued to strengthen its advocacy and member representation efforts throughout 2025–2026, with a particular focus on the significant funding and policy changes affecting language education. In response to federal IRCC funding reductions, TESL Ontario continued to engage with government decision-makers, submitted a federal pre-budget consultation brief, launched the **#FundLanguageEducation** social media campaign, and provided members with tools to advocate directly with their elected representatives. These efforts highlighted the essential role of language education in supporting newcomers' settlement, employment and successful integration into Canadian society.

At the provincial level, TESL Ontario continued to advocate for stable, sustainable funding and high-quality language education through government consultations and an Ontario Budget pre-consultation submission on behalf of our members. TESL Ontario submitted Member feedback remained central to this work, helping to identify the issues and challenges most important to educators, program administrators and learners and ensuring these concerns were brought directly to government representatives. TESL Ontario also joined the **We're Better Together** campaign as a partner organization, further strengthening collaboration with organizations advocating for the importance of settlement and language education.

Advocacy efforts also continued to promote the value and professional recognition of language educators. TESL Ontario maintained its **OCELT Education Campaign**, highlighting the qualifications and expertise of OCELT-certified educators to employers, while continuing collaborative work with TESL organizations across Canada on issues including wage equity, job security and professional recognition.

Together, these initiatives reflect TESL Ontario's ongoing commitment to ensuring that both language educators and the learners they serve have a strong voice in the policies and decisions that shape the sector.

CONTACT Magazine

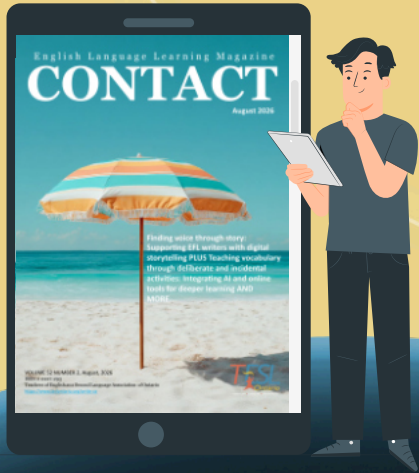
An archive of both current and previous issues can be accessed at:
contact.teslontario.org

Contact, the professional development magazine of TESL Ontario, has been serving the research, professional development, and teaching needs of the English Language Teaching (ELT) community since 1974.

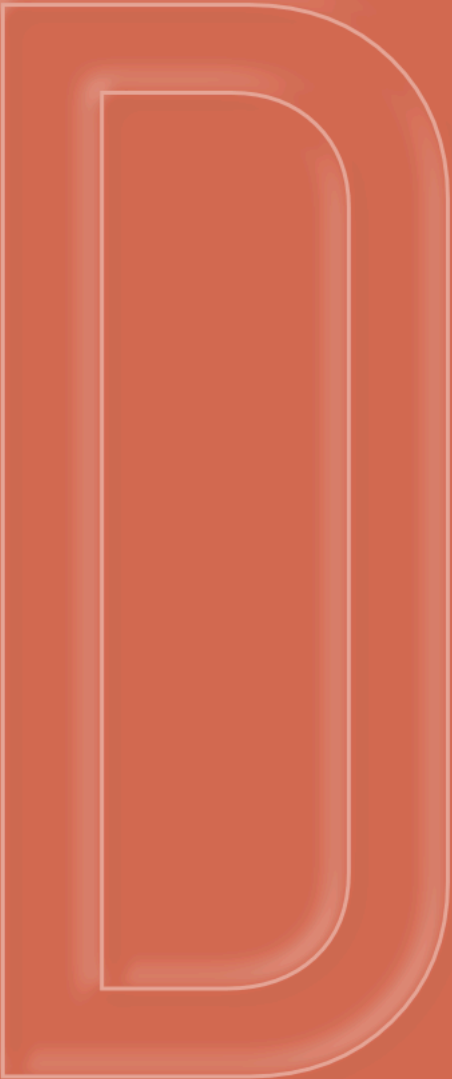
Published three times a year—March 31, August 31, and November 30—**Contact** brings together a diverse range of perspectives and topics relevant to ELT professionals. The March edition highlights selected presentations and contributions from the TESL Ontario Conference, while the August and November editions feature articles spanning a broad spectrum of interests, including theoretical perspectives, professional and personal reflections, EAP, LINC, vocabulary development, and topics related to podcasting, teacher development, and hybrid courses.

The **Spotlight** section recognizes ELT professionals throughout Ontario and Canada, providing an opportunity to showcase the varied and meaningful work taking place across the field. We greatly appreciate the many contributors who share their expertise, experiences, and perspectives, helping readers better understand the changing landscape of English language teaching.

Through each issue, our aim is to encourage thoughtful reflection, promote dialogue, and invite ELT professionals to consider both their classroom practices and the wider impact of their work. We continue to welcome submissions from members of the ELT community and value their contributions in helping **Contact** remain a relevant, engaging, and dynamic resource for the profession.



Directory of ELT (English Language Training) & FSL (French as a Second Language) Resources



Launched in 2017, the TESL Ontario Directory of ELT (English Language Training) and FSL (French as a Second Language) Resources is home to a rich collection of English- and French-language resources in curriculum development, teaching and learning, research, professional development for instructors, and technology for language teaching and learning. The Directory identifies and provides access to resources that have been vetted to ensure alignment with best practices in adult language training. It also provides valuable linkages to support ESL and FSL teachers, program managers, and other stakeholders in locating relevant, high-quality resources.

The Directory team continuously updates its content by identifying, vetting, and adding new materials each month. During the 2025-2026 reporting period, the Directory’s resource experts vetted and posted 64 new resources. In addition, the Resource Maintenance and Verification Assistants regularly monitored links throughout the Directory and removed, repaired, or updated broken and outdated links. The Directory Technical Assistant also monitored and managed the Directory’s WordPress pages and features to help ensure the website remained functional, accessible, and up to date.

Serving on the Directory team during the 2025-2026 reporting period were Dr. Allyson Eamer (team lead), Shokooh Amirpour, Nisha Sriganesh, Meral Hussein, Sahar Ghiassi, Maha Bazzi, Anney De Gobeo, Yen-Phan Luu, and Ivy Ruan

Throughout the reporting period, the Directory attracted visitors from a wide range of countries, reflecting its reach beyond Canada. Visitors accessed the Directory from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Singapore, France, Germany, Spain, and many other countries around the world.

Technology



...TESL Ontario completed a major upgrade to its digital infrastructure...

In June 2025, TESL Ontario completed a major upgrade to its digital infrastructure by migrating its main website, web modules, and associated email accounts from a shared server environment to a Managed Dedicated Server. This transition strengthens the reliability, performance, and security of TESL Ontario’s digital services, providing a more robust foundation to support the organization’s growing online needs.



In July 2025, TESL Ontario launched its new Specialized Skills Certificate Courses website:

teslontario.learnworlds.com



In September 2025, TESL Ontario successfully launched the redesigned TESL Blog module:

blog.teslontario.org

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In December 2025, TESL Ontario launched the new Milestone Certificate module:

milestones.teslontario.org

In July 2025, TESL Ontario launched its new Specialized Skills Certificate Courses website (<https://teslontario.learnworlds.com/>), offering TESL professionals flexible, self-paced opportunities for professional development. The online courses are designed to strengthen teaching practices, develop leadership skills, and support career growth in the evolving field of English language education. With diverse and practical content, educators can learn at their own pace while earning professional development credit. Most courses provide 8–10 hours of professional development credit, helping educators enhance their skills, strengthen their resumes, and advance their TESL careers. The launch represents an important step in expanding accessible, high-quality professional learning opportunities for TESL professionals.

In September 2025, TESL Ontario successfully launched the redesigned TESL Blog module (<https://blog.teslontario.org>), featuring a modern look and design aligned with the organization’s broader web presence. The updated platform includes enhanced functionality and a more user-friendly interface, making it easier for users to navigate, access, and engage with blog content. The redesign enhances the overall digital experience while providing a consistent and accessible platform for sharing resources and insights with the TESL community.

In December 2025, TESL Ontario launched the new Milestone Certificate module (<https://milestones.teslontario.org/>), providing members with a personalized way to celebrate their long-standing commitment to TESL Ontario and the profession. Members who have reached 5, 10, 15, or 20+ years of membership can now download a personalized Milestone Achievement certificate recognizing their dedication and contributions. This initiative provides a meaningful way to express appreciation for the ongoing support and commitment of TESL Ontario’s longtime members and their role in advancing excellence in English language teaching.

Operations



TESL Ontario now serves over 4,400 members, a large number of whom are TESL Ontario certified.

The operations of TESL Ontario are carried out by our staff members:

- Allison Keown, Executive Director
- Eva Csiszar, Operations Manager
- Reza Mazloom-Farzaghy, Accreditation Services Manager
- Dave Fraser, Manager, Member Engagement and Communications
- Kevin Gamble, Office Manager
- Mohsen Jazeb, Event Coordinator
- April Barlow, Coordinator, Professional Development and Digital Engagement

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, and supervision of the Executive Director, the office staff carry out the functions of membership support, including membership benefits, webinars and social media, TESL Ontario accreditation, which includes TESL Ontario’s CCPLAR service, financial management, project and contract administration, office administration, liaison function with ministries, other agencies and the public and, of course, the delivery of our significant TESL Ontario Conference.



Board of Directors



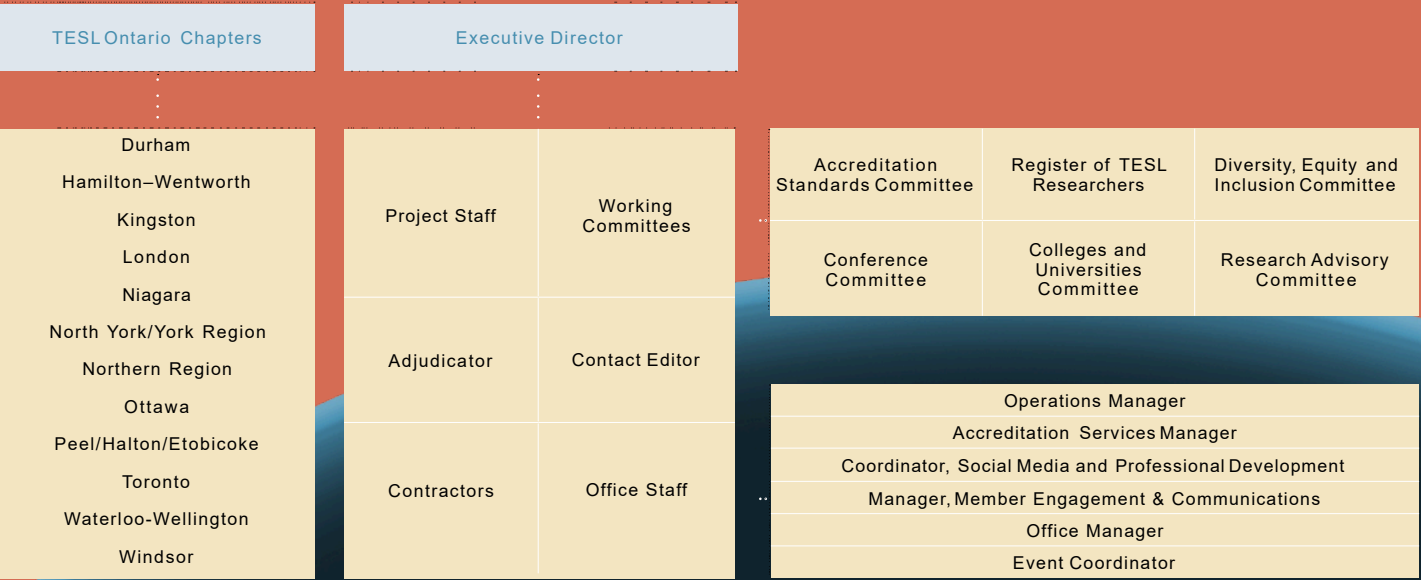
The Board of Directors is comprised of nine members, all designated members-at-large. A chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer are elected each year from amongst these nine directors, following the annual general meeting. The Board meets a minimum of five times per year. Operational matters of the association are managed by the executive director. The executive director is guided and governed by board policies and serves a pivotal role in the organization.

The TESL Ontario board uses a policy governance model as its “operating system”. Policy governance enables the board to focus on the larger issues, to delegate with clarity, to control operation’s job without interference, to rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the organization - to truly lead the association. The job of the board’s directors is to decide, through strategic planning, the kind of “targets” the association is to produce. It relies on the Executive Director to interpret and work with staff, paid and voluntary, to achieve the means to meet those targets.

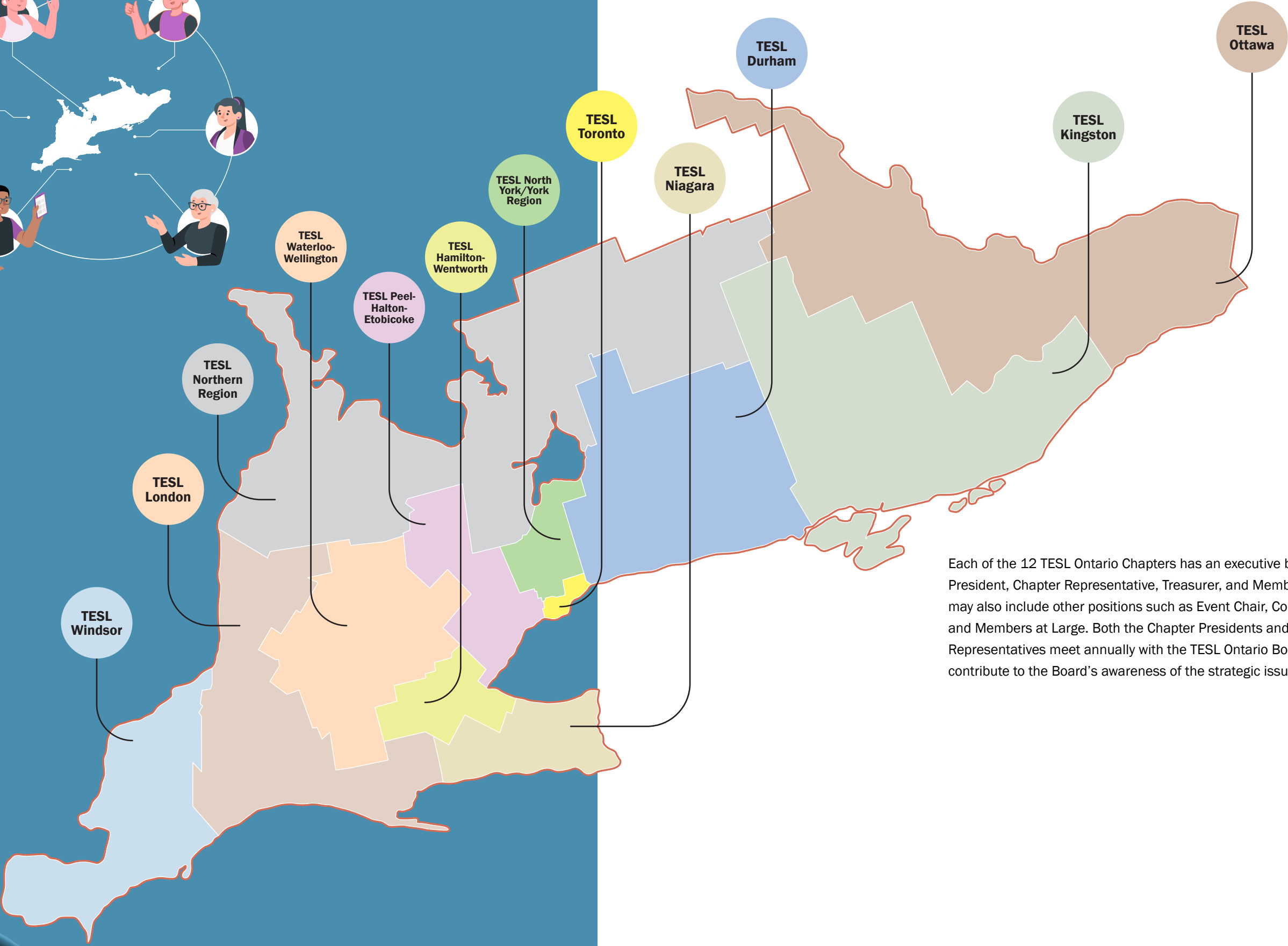
2025-2026 Board of Directors

- | | |
|---|--|
| Chair Cecilia Aponte de Hanna | Member-at-Large Farnaz Karimian |
| Vice-Chair Diane Mensch | Member-at-Large Matthew McGravey |
| Secretary Jennifer Artan | Member-at-Large Mary Rizzi |
| Treasurer Ban Al-Saffar | Member-at-Large Christopher Smrke |
| Member-at-Large Danielle Freitas | |

TESL Ontario Board of Directors
Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Five Members at Large



Chapters



Each of the 12 TESL Ontario Chapters has an executive body consisting of a President, Chapter Representative, Treasurer, and Membership Secretary, but may also include other positions such as Event Chair, Communications Officer, and Members at Large. Both the Chapter Presidents and Chapter Representatives meet annually with the TESL Ontario Board of Directors to contribute to the Board’s awareness of the strategic issues of their members.

Financial Reports



The condensed financial information below represents the abbreviated annual financial statements of TESL Ontario for the year ended March 31, 2026.

Readers of the condensed financial information are cautioned that the information contained may not be appropriate for their purposes and may be misleading

without referring to auditors' report and the information contained in the notes to the financial statements. The independent auditors' report and complete audited financial statements, which include notes and more detailed supplementary financial information, are available on the TESL Ontario website at <https://teslontario.org/about/>

Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	330,849	336,191
Short-term investments	799,277	805,524
Amounts receivable	791	750
Prepays and deposits	11,300	15,475
	\$ 1,142,217	\$ 1,157,940
Capital Assets	14,955	16,495
Intangible Assets	44,396	35,505
	\$ 1,201,568	\$ 1,209,940
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	62,855	65,978
Deferred contributions	322,343	330,000
	\$ 385,198	\$ 395,978
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	416,370	413,962
Internally restricted	400,000	400,000
	\$ 816,370	\$ 813,962
	\$ 1,201,568	\$ 1,209,940

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets Year Ended March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
REVENUES		
Membership fees	351,995	347,756
Accreditation fees	373,317	388,441
Annual TESL Ontario Conference		
Publisher fees	2,800	3,050
Registration fees	166,480	170,211
Sponsorship	6,250	3,500
Project revenue		
Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)		
Pay Equity Program	9,259	9,259
Interest and other income	57,691	61,130
	\$ 967,792	\$ 983,347
EXPENDITURES		
Membership	171,292	163,484
Accreditation	181,920	173,464
Annual conference	134,415	145,631
Affiliate Chapters' operations	53,509	44,871
Office and administration	365,623	363,870
TESOL affiliation	768	791
Board and committee meetings	24,540	21,544
Occupancy	33,317	32,070
	\$ 965,384	\$ 945,725
Net excess of revenues over expenditures for the year	\$ 2,408	\$ 37,622
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 813,962	\$ 776,340
Net assets, end of year	\$ 816,370	\$ 813,962



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