



TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

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Forty-Second Annual General Meeting

<https://zoom.us>
November 20, 2025

1.	CALL TO ORDER
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Chair Cecilia Aponte-de-Hanna called the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to order at 5:51 PM with quorum of at least 50 members (74 present). She welcomed everyone to the AGM.

2.	APPROVAL OF AGENDA
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Meeting materials included the agenda.

MOTION to approve the agenda as presented.
Moved by Tracy Crewson
Seconded by Harvinder Bawa Makkar
CARRIED, 98% in favour, 0% against, 2% abstained

3.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
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Meeting materials included the draft minutes.

MOTION to approve TESL Ontario's 2024 Annual General Meeting minutes as presented.
Moved by Janice Sy
Seconded by Danielle Freitas
CARRIED, 93% in favour, 0% against, 7% abstained

4.	CHAIR'S REPORT – CHAIR
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Chair Cecilia Aponte-de-Hanna reported on the year's achievements for April 2024 to March 2025.

Advocacy & Member Support

TESL Ontario continues to engage with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to seek a solution to the current challenges posed by immigration and international student visa policies. TESL Ontario launched a member representation campaign and collaborated nationally to advocate for fair wages and job security. A major milestone was inclusion of language instructors in the National Organization Classification, NOC 4021, which elevated professional recognition. In addition, a new member representation webpage keeps the membership updated on advocacy.

Technology & Infrastructure

This year the Teaching Resources Directory was redesigned, a tax receipt download portal was added to TESL Ontario's website, Career Centre offerings were expanded, and a new website was launched to host Specialized Skills Certificate courses.

Volunteers & Membership

With a 99% volunteer retention rate, volunteers are TESL Ontario's strongest supporters. To recognize their contributions, new appreciation initiatives included Linked-in endorsements and certificates, and a Volunteer of the Year award debuting at this year's conference.

Membership continues to grow steadily. Long-term members are now recognized with their own milestone certificate.

Thank you to members who responded to the 2025 Member Survey. This valuable feedback will provide a springboard for future planning.

Professional Development

TESL Ontario hosted two regional professional development (PD) events and launched two new certificate courses: *Classroom Management & Conflict Resolution* and *DEI Essentials*. The 52nd Annual Conference in 2024 welcomed 1,268 attendees across 75 sessions. PD also included 19 webinars, mentorship events, three issues of *Contact* magazine, and 40+ blog posts with an average monthly readership of 11,000.

Financial Health

TESL Ontario remains financially strong. Financial reports are shared with Board members and all members are invited to engage with the financial report during the Annual General Meeting.

Looking Forward

In 2026 TESL Ontario will launch a third certificate course on creative language learning tasks, add more PD offerings, introduce new recognition initiatives, and unveil a redesigned blog site.

Heartfelt thanks go to our dedicated Board members, Executive Director, staff, volunteers, and especially you, TESL Ontario members. Your commitment is the foundation of TESL Ontario's ongoing success.

5.	READING AND ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS
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a. PRESENTATION OF 2024/25 FINANCIAL REPORT – SB PARTNERS

Meeting materials included the independent Auditor’s report and audited financial statements for the fiscal period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Auditor Mustafa Dossajee of SB Partners presented the report. This chartered accounting firm was engaged to conduct the audit.

Independent Auditor’s Report

This report corroborates the financial health of TESL Ontario. It has four sections.

The first section talks of the audit opinion. It states that the financial statements are presented fairly and in accordance with accounting standards tailored to not-for-profit organizations. “Presented fairly” is a key term implying a clean audit given on the financial statements of the organization.

The second section talks of the basis for the audit opinion. The auditing firm works in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP). SB Partners obtained sufficient information to provide an audit opinion.

The third section talks of the role of management and those charged with governance. Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements. Governance is responsible to oversee the financial process.

The last section talks of the Auditor’s responsibilities. This section of the report elaborates on key elements that are part of the audit process in accordance with GAAP. The Auditor looks at material misstatements, conducts tests on internal controls, evaluates the appropriateness of accounting policies, considers the appropriateness of going concerns and the basis of the accounting, determines if the association can continue for the foreseeable future, and evaluates the overall content and structure of the financial statements. The Auditor is required to note any exceptions to those charged with governance. The Auditor presented the financial statements to the Board at the end of the audit process, at the last Board meeting of the current Board’s term, and discussed in detail with the Board the audit and the financial statements.

Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position

This statement provides a snapshot of the association’s assets and liabilities as of March 31, 2025. The association had total assets of approximately \$1.2 million, slightly up from last year, \$48,000, mostly from cash operations, both with respect to cash generated from operations and intangible

assets created for certain courses for which the benefit is in the future. The net benefit of \$48,000 represents a surplus for the year.

Statement of Operations

This profit and loss statement shows line items of revenues generated and expenses incurred, followed by the net position. Total revenues were \$983,000, up \$17,000 from the prior year, mostly due to the annual conference. Attendance increased at the annual conference compared to the prior fiscal year. Expenditures are relatively flat year to year. That resulted in a net excess of approximately \$37,000, representing a surplus.

The Auditor called for questions. There were none.

b. APPROVAL OF 2024/25 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – CHAIR

The Chair called for the following motion:

MOTION to approve the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Moved by Laura Little

Seconded by Paramita Dutta

CARRIED, 93% in favour, 0% against, 8% abstained

c. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR FOR 2025/26 YEAR – CHAIR

The Chair called for the following motion:

MOTION to appoint SB Partners as Auditor for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

Moved by Erin Mayer

Seconded by Patrick Chan

CARRIED, 91% in favour, 0% against, 9% abstained

d. TREASURER’S REPORT – TREASURER

Treasurer Ban Al-Saffar reported on the first seven months of the current fiscal year, April 1 to October 31, 2025.

Revenue

In the first seven months, 37% of revenue was from membership fees, 40% from certification fees, 17% from projects and the annual conference, and 6% from other sources.

Revenue from membership and certification fees were higher than expected as TESL Ontario received more certification and CCPLAR applications before October 31.

Project revenue included registration fees for TESL Ontario’s annual conference before October 31.

Other revenue sources included webinar fees paid by non-members, in-person PD events, sponsorship and advertisement fees, interest income on the organization's GIC investments, and commissions from The Personal insurance company.

Expenditures

In the first seven months, 50% of expenses were for membership costs, 43% for accreditation costs, and 7% for project costs.

Membership costs included Chapter rebates, webinar and professional development offerings, members publications (including *Contact* magazine and the TESL Blog), and development of additional membership benefits. In January 2025 TESL Ontario introduced a new Tax Receipt Portal, offering members a secure and convenient way to access and download tax receipts for their annual membership fees. TESL Ontario expanded its professional development offerings with the launch of the Specialized Skills Certificate Courses in summer 2025. Also, the TESL Blog received a visual update to better align with TESL Ontario's refreshed online presence.

Accreditation-related expenses included maintenance of the online Registry of Certified Teachers and the administration of certification processes.

Project costs included administrative fees for the Annual Conference up to October 31.

Summary

From April 1 to October 31, TESL Ontario had total revenue of \$608,000. During the same period, expenses amounted to \$557,000. The organization currently has a surplus of \$50,000, and conference revenue continues to be received. Overall, TESL Ontario remains in a strong and stable financial position.

6.	<i>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</i>
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Executive Director Allison Keown reported.

It has been a challenging time for this sector, with federal funding cuts and international study permit reductions affecting programs, educators, and learners across the province. Even so, our community has continued to show incredible resilience, creativity, and commitment.

While remaining focused on the goals of our Strategic Plan, we also recognize the need to pivot, to represent members and speak up to government bodies about the real impacts that their funding and policy changes are having on this sector.

Through it all, TESL Ontario has stayed true to its purpose: supporting our members, advancing professional development, and strengthening our collective voice.

The Strategic Plan (2023/2027) provides a framework that guides everything we do at TESL Ontario. We are now nearing the end of the third year of the 5-year plan. The Strategic Plan is built around five key pillars that help us stay focused on what matters most to our members, even as the sector around us continues to change:

1. Members and Volunteers

Members and volunteers are the heart of TESL Ontario. We exist to support the growth and success of educators in our field. TESL Ontario now supports nearly 4,600 members in the English training field and has the help of more than 200 volunteers across the province. This year we:

- introduced new member welcome packages and launched long-term member recognition certificates
- expanded employer outreach and free job postings for TESL professionals
- built a new volunteer recognition webpage and Volunteer of the Year award
- updated Chapter operations guidelines
- launched a new self-serve tax receipt module for members

Alongside our work to strengthen member experience, we also continue to advance the standards that define our profession:

2. Accreditation and Certification

TESL Ontario's certifications and professional designations, including OCELT certification, continue to be highly respected across Ontario and beyond. Around 82% of members now hold certification, reflecting a strong commitment to professional standards in our field. This year we:

- strengthened visibility of OCELT certification across Ontario
- collaborated with program providers and launched the Standards Modernization Project
- promoted the vital role of certified educators in program success

Certification is only one part of professional growth. Supporting ongoing learning and development is equally important:

3. Professional Development

Supporting professional development is at the heart of our mission. TESL Ontario continues to be recognized as a leader in professional development and a trusted resource for the language training community in Ontario and beyond. In 2025 nearly 2,000 members participated in webinars, workshops, and mentorship events, and another 1,200 have joined us for this week's TESL Ontario Annual Conference. This year we:

- offered 22 free PD events
- produced a 3-day virtual conference
- offered an in-person regional workshop
- developed resources and shared them through our YouTube channel, TESL blog, *Contact* magazine, Career Centre, and Directory of Language Teaching Resources
- strengthened research-to-practice connections

- launched a new Specialized Skills Certificates Program

We are proud of the programs and learning opportunities that we offer. Equally important, our internal operations remain strong and forward looking:

4. Organizational Excellence

Good governance and responsible operations are vital to TESL Ontario's success and to the value provided to our members. It is essential to continue to review and strengthen our internal practices and ensure our committees are well-supported in their work. This year we:

- updated the Board succession planning process
- created a new Operational Policy Manual
- strengthened committee collaboration and support

None of this work happens in isolation. Our impact depends on the relationships and partnerships that we build:

5. Partners and Stakeholders

TESL Ontario remains committed to representing the membership and keeping their concerns front and center in every conversation with government and sector partners. Building strong stakeholder relationships and strategic partnerships continues to be essential to expand member benefits, resources, and PD opportunities, and to strengthen the collective voice of our members across the province. By fostering connections with leaders in our field we can better advocate for the profession and provide meaningful support to those working within it. This year we:

- advocated with IRCC and participated in federal consultations
- launched a social media advocacy campaign and MP letter templates
- expanded our advocacy network through new collaborations
- deepened government engagement and policy input through letter campaigns to ministers, sharing survey data reports, pre-budget submissions, and conference session planning
- Achieved NOC recognition for adult language educators
- collaborated with other provincial TESL organizations through quarterly interprovincial meetings and joint national initiatives
- introduced a new Member Representation webpage to help members stay informed about our advocacy work and progress

Thank-You

None of this progress would be possible without the remarkable Board, staff, contractors (including the *Contact* magazine editor and Specialized Skills Course developer) and volunteers who have driven so much of our progress this last year.

Looking Forward

As we move into the final two years of our Strategic Plan, we do so with a strong sense of purpose and community. This past year has reminded us of both the challenges our sector faces and the

incredible strength within it—the dedication of our members, the creativity of our educators, and the collective voice that we continue to build together.

TESL Ontario remains committed to driving meaningful change through innovative programs, strong partnerships, and continued advocacy on behalf of our members. Together we will keep moving forward, supporting one another, elevating our profession, and ensuring that English language education in Ontario continues to thrive.

7.	<i>PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BY-LAW SECTION 10 (AFFILIATE CHAPTERS)</i>
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Meeting materials included a proposed amendment to the By-laws, Section 10: Affiliate Chapters.

The Chair presented the Board’s proposed amendment to change “Affiliate Chapter(s)” to “Chapter(s)”.

Legally speaking, an *affiliate* is a separate organization with its own governance and financial independence that maintains a formal relationship with a parent body. A *chapter* functions as an extension of the parent organization, operating under its By-laws and oversight and sharing its financial structure.

TESL Ontario’s regional groups fit the second definition. They operate fully under TESL Ontario’s governance and By-laws, are supported financially by and are administered by Head Office, and do not exist as separate legal entities.

Until the mid-2000s, TESL Ontario’s original regional groups were known as Affiliates. At that time the Board recognized that the term “Affiliate” didn’t accurately describe their legal status, so adopted the term “Affiliate Chapter.” It is now time to take the final step of officially recognizing regional groups as “Chapters.” It is a name change only and does not affect how the groups operate or the great work they do engaging members and supporting PD locally.

Section Ten – ~~AFFILIATE~~ CHAPTERS

10.01 ~~Affiliate~~ Chapters

The Board may approve the creation and dissolution of ~~Affiliate~~ Chapters as required. The Board will establish rules and requirements for ~~Affiliate~~ Chapters.

This is the entire by-law. While the word “Affiliate” is removed, the rest of the By-law and its intended meaning remain exactly the same.

The Chair called for the following motion:

*MOTION to approve the Draft Updated By-law, Section 10 - Affiliate Chapters as amended.
Moved by Paramita Dutta*

*Seconded by Janice Sy
CARRIED, 92% in favour, 0% against, 8% abstained*

8.	<i>NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR</i>
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Christopher Smrke, 2025 Nominations Committee Chair, reported.

This year the committee continued its work from last year to review and update documents that are necessary for Executive and committee roles. As part of the updating process, the committee considered feedback from committee members and the membership with regards to usability of the documents, the fullness of the information used to make decisions, and information not currently included in applications and profiles but considered useful for the process.

This year the committee continued to use social media to help candidates run and to help members make an informed decision on who to vote for.

Four positions on the Board were available. The committee shortlisted fifteen applicants to six and put their names forward for election.

509 members voted, representing 11.2% of the membership. This is the same percentage of participation as two years ago and a slight reduction from last year's 12.5% of the membership.

The election results are that Ban Al-Saffar and Diane Mensch are re-elected to a second term, and Farnaz Karimian and Matthew McGravey are elected to join the Board, for the upcoming 2025/2026 Board year. Congratulations to you all.

Thank you to the members of the Nominations Committee for your efforts and participation. Thank you to all who submitted an expression of interest and applied. And thank you to the membership for the engagement you showed by reviewing the candidate videos and profiles, voting, and providing the committee and Board with feedback that can be used to improve this process.

9.	<i>PRESENTATION OF NEW BOARD – CHAIR</i>
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The Chair presented the 2025/26 Board of Directors: Ban Al-Saffar, Cecilia Aponte-de-Hanna, Jen Artan, Danielle Freitas, Farnaz Karimian, Matthew McGravey, Diane Mensch, Mary Rizzi, and Christopher Smrke.

The Chair extended heartfelt thanks to outgoing Directors Kate Paterson and Nicola Carozza for their dedicated service to the Board. Throughout their tenure both contributed their time, expertise and thoughtful leadership to advancing TESL Ontario's mission and to supporting the English

language education community across the province. Their insight, professionalism and commitment to the association's values has made a lasting impact, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

10.	MEETING ADJOURNMENT
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The Chair invited questions from the membership and encouraged anyone whose question is not addressed in this meeting to send it to the board at chair@teslontario.org.

Danielle Heffernan asked if TESL Ontario can survey the membership to find out how many hours teachers across the sector are committing to unpaid training and prep time, then formulate a request to IRCC to expand funding to cover prep time for teachers to teach and assess students.

The Executive Director offered to forward her request to the Board for discussion.

Cheryl Ekodeu stated that many LINC teachers are concerned about IRCC refusing to fund Ellii use in LINC programs. She asked, Can TESL Ontario help advocate for us?

The Executive Director offered to make a note of this concern but advised that appealing to IRCC likely will not produce results.

Jocelyn Javier asked, What is TESL Ontario doing to advocate with IRCC for job security?

The Executive Director responded that last year she worked with a number of other provincial organizations including TESL Saskatchewan and ATESL (TESL Alberta). They wrote letters to then-Minister Mark Miller about wage equity and related topics within our industry. TESL Ontario submitted a pre-budget submission to IRCC along with member concerns. TESL Ontario has had conversations with government representatives and will have a panel discussion with them tomorrow where they will address these questions as well.

A member stated that she misses attending in-person conferences and that a number of others agree with her. She asked, Is there any plan to meet in person in the future?

The Executive Director responded that it is a fair question and asked often, but there is no plan to return to an in-person annual conference. A virtual conference remains the most responsible choice, and several important factors influence the decision. Members were polled and a little more than 50% prefer to remain virtual. The cost of planning an in-person event and hosting it comes at a very high cost which would drive up ticket prices. In the past the government provided conference assistance funding that covered registration, travel, and accommodation. That is a thing of the past and will not be coming back despite numerous conversations with government. Without conference assistance, the cost of an in-person event would do a disservice to the membership. By remaining virtual, TESL Ontario can offer the conference at a reasonable rate and without barriers so that all members have an opportunity to participate.

Carmen M. asked, Is there any way TESL Ontario can post more information on courses and advice on career options (lateral moves) for members who will be affected by IRCC cuts?

The Executive Director responded. We have been discussing webinars and blog posts to help members repurpose skills in other potential areas in the sector. Stay tuned as that will be worked on over the next while.

Aldona Piasecka asked, Is there still a chance that stage II will not be cancelled in 2026?

The Executive Director responded, To the best of my knowledge, no. We raised a lot of concerns to IRCC, took in member feedback and put that in a communication with IRCC, spoke with representatives from IRCC about this. They are unlikely to budge at this time, but they are looking at different options that might help to mitigate some of the issues that will arise from this. We are not giving up but at the moment there isn't much of a chance of that happening.

There being no more questions, the Chair called for the following motion:

MOTION to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Jen Artan

Seconded by Danielle Freitas

CARRIED, 96% in favour, 0% against, 4% abstained

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Certified to be a true copy this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Chair

Secretary