

In our November newsletter: A new Ombudsman podcast,
French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report
coming December 7, National Child Day, and more!

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Listen in on our “Lost Opportunities” investigation

Recognizing and upholding young people's rights on National Child Day

**French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report coming
December 7**

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about delays**

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Canadian Council of
Parliamentary Ombudsman

Conseil canadien des
ombudsmans parlementaires

Ombudsman Paul Dubé hosted the inaugural episode of “[Making It Fair](#),” a new podcast by the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman, which delves into issues of administrative fairness across the country.

In this episode, the Ombudsman and staff from our Office discuss our "[Lost Opportunities](#)" report (released this past April), which examined the government's overly secretive planning procedures for the sudden closure of two youth custody and detention programs in Northern Ontario – and the effects on the four Indigenous youths who were housed there.

The group discusses the impetus for launching the investigation, the investigative process, and how the Ombudsman's 16 recommendations were designed to keep the same mistakes from happening again.

"We certainly heard expressions of outrage from northern Indigenous communities and leaders, and very soon afterward, we did receive a complaint," Ombudsman Dubé explains in the podcast. "In very short order, we decided that an investigation was in the public interest – not about whether to close the programs or not, but on what happened, namely the failures in communication and consultation, and the impact of those failures."

The lead manager on the investigation, Yvonne Heggie, shares more in the podcast about what staff heard in interviews with the young people, three of whom were transferred to new facilities with just a few hours' notice. "Two of the youths expressed sadness about the closure of the youth custody program, and one said they were concerned about being moved further away from their home," she said. "Staff told us that another youth appeared hurt and yet another youth, who was undergoing gender transition, was quite distressed."

All of the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve the planning and implementation of such closures in future were accepted.

Hear the whole podcast on Apple, Spotify, Pocket Cast, Google or on the [CCPO Podcasts webpage](#) and stay tuned for new episodes featuring ombudsman offices from across Canada as they share expertise about fairness in public administration.

[Recognizing and upholding young people's rights on National Child Day](#)



November 20 was National Child Day, which celebrates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a global pledge to recognize the rights of children and youth. Canada ratified the UN convention in 1991, and in Ontario, the rights of young people receiving certain government services – like child welfare and residential care services, youth criminal justice and mental health services – are contained in the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, of which our Office is a member, called on everyone to speak out, to ensure the rights committed to in 1991 are respected and upheld. Like many others, our Office created [a video](#) to mark the day, in which Ombudsman Paul Dubé explains the importance of these rights – and how our Office can help young people.

French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report coming December 7



French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke will table her third Annual Report, covering the period from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022, on December 7 at a press conference at Queen's Park. Her report highlights the work of our Office's French Language Services Unit, and includes recommendations to improve services in French across Ontario.

Watch for our announcements on social media to find out how you can access the report and watch the Commissioner's press conference live on our website.

[LTB: Investigation update, our role addressing individual inquiries about delays](#)



In recent weeks, our Office has received several inquiries from members of the public regarding the status of our [investigation into delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board](#) (the "LTB").

Investigators have completed the fieldwork and we are now working on the final report setting out the findings and recommendations to help improve the system for property owners and tenants. Our investigation involved more than 40 formal interviews and reviewing thousands of documents. We expect to release the report in the new year.

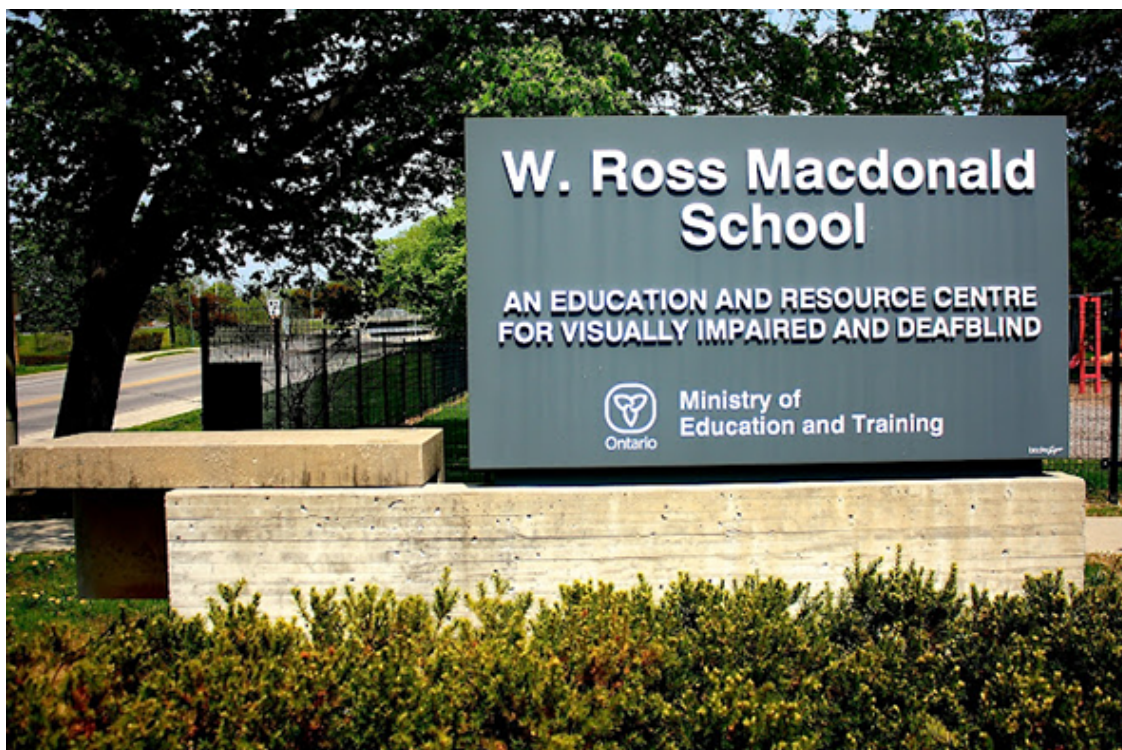
We understand how urgent LTB matters can be for individuals. However, the Ombudsman cannot overturn or investigate public policy decisions made by elected officials, such as the government's policy on rent increases or how to manage housing demand and supply. In addition, consistent with our role as an independent and impartial Office, we do not advocate for, provide legal advice to, or represent individuals against public sector bodies.

Nevertheless, the Ombudsman can – and does – address administrative issues that arise when such policies are implemented and our Office has resolved hundreds of individual cases related to administrative issues in the LTB while at the same time working on this systemic investigation. We will continue to assess each individual case to determine if there is a service matter or fairness issue we can address, and respond if warranted.

[You can read more here about what the Ombudsman can – and can't – investigate.](#)

Do you have a complaint or question, and think we might be able to help? [Contact us today.](#)

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE



Speaking with students and staff at the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind

Upcoming changes in regulation to the *Education Act* will strengthen the rights of students of Ontario's provincial and demonstration schools, giving them protected access to the Ombudsman's Office, beginning January 1, 2023. This change will ensure students who

need to contact the Ombudsman are allowed to do so privately and without delay.

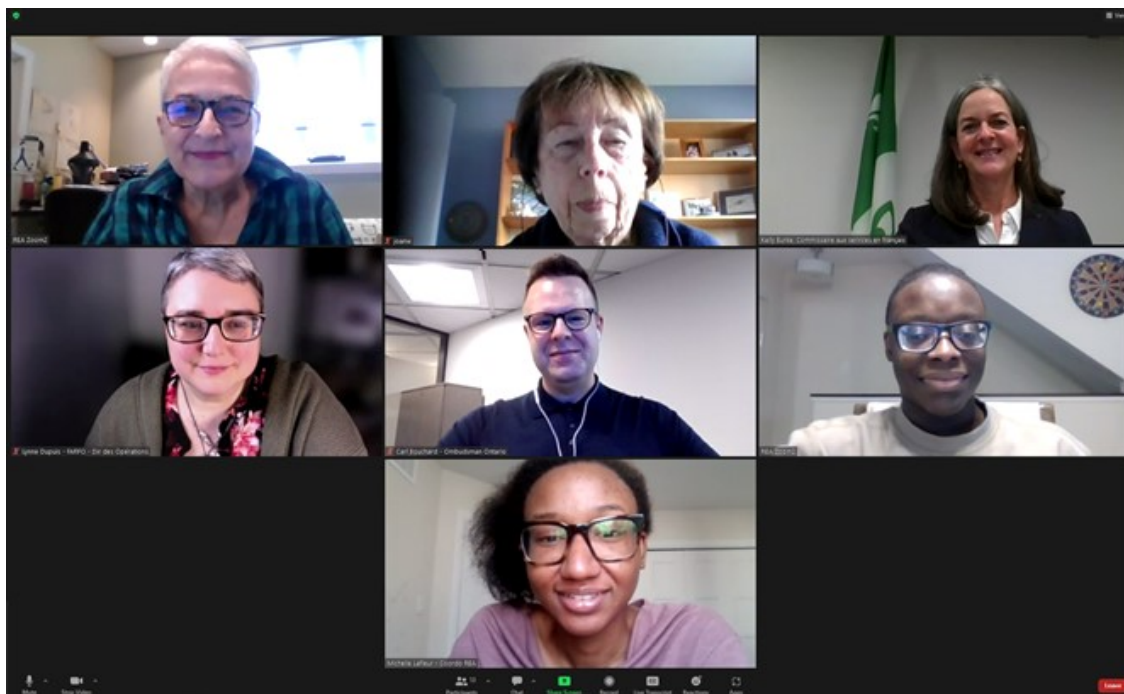
On November 17, our Office provided a presentation about these changes to 75 students between Grades 7 and 12 at W. Ross Macdonald, a school for students who are blind, low vision and Deafblind.

Students engaged in a lively discussion with our staff, asking questions such as:

- Can I get help with my accessibility needs at the school?
- What can I do if school staff are not respecting my rights?
- Can I call the Ombudsman's Office on someone else's behalf?

Ombudsman staff explained that students can contact us if they have any questions or complaints about their education, student lodging or rights. Our Office will also send accessible resources suited to each provincial and demonstration school as the new regulation takes effect.





From students to seniors - reaching out to Francophones of all ages

On November 9, French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke gave a presentation to international students at the [Université de l'Ontario français](#). The presentation allowed students to learn about the *French Language Services Act* and the Commissioner's role in safeguarding linguistic rights for future generations of Franco-Ontarians. The students engaged in a dialogue with the Commissioner that helped them better understand how they belong to the Franco-Ontarian community in all its expressions.

On November 15, the Commissioner gave a presentation to members of the [Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario](#) and [Retraite en Action](#). The hour-long online session gave members the opportunity to ask questions about the Commissioner's role and responsibilities, and share their experiences with government services in French.

Remember, if you have problems accessing services in French, you can always contact us by [visiting our website](#).



Helping seniors: Thank you for having us, OSSCO!

On November 22, delegates attending the Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organization's (OSSCO) 2022 conference visited our staff at the exhibitor trade show, where we answered questions, distributed resources, and handed out copies of our [2021-2022 Annual Report](#). We appreciated the opportunity to connect with seniors and to let them know about the many ways the Ombudsman's Office can help them resolve administrative issues with driver's licences, health cards, ServiceOntario, social services programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and much more.

[Learn more about how to file a complaint or ask a question.](#)

HOW WE HELPED – CASE SUMMARIES

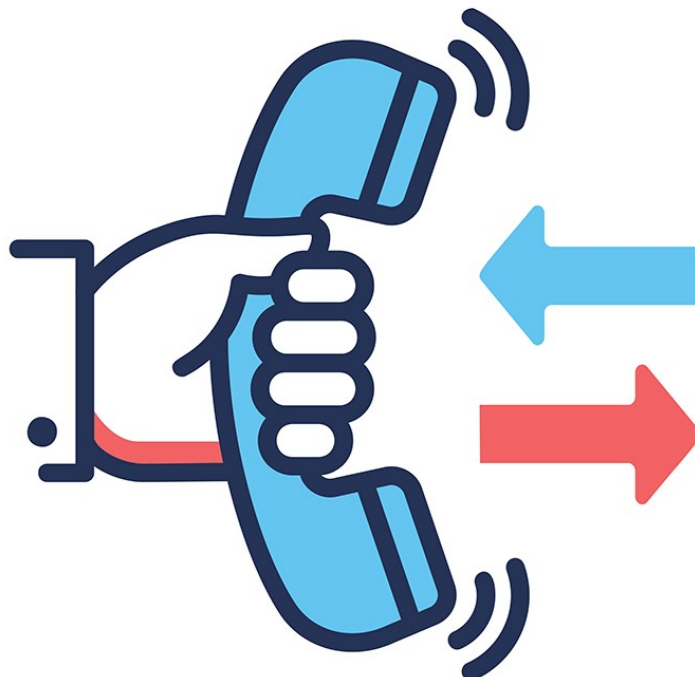


Uninterrupted visits

A 13-year-old in the care of a children's aid society (CAS) contacted us when he didn't hear back from his CAS about making arrangements to see his mother. The youth had regular weekly visits scheduled with his mother at his grandmother's house, but his grandmother was going away for three weeks, and he wanted to know how his visits would be scheduled.

Our staff reached a supervisor at the CAS, who confirmed they had made new plans for the youth to visit his mother. We remained involved until we received confirmation that the CAS had connected with the youth, who told us he was happy with the temporary arrangement.

Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth



Your call is important...

A Francophone woman contacted our Office to report that she had to be transferred twice on the phone before she could speak to a bilingual staff member on a call to her local Home and Community Care Support Services (HCSS) agency. She was seeking physiotherapy treatment for her father.

After we raised the issue with the regional Ontario Health agency, it confirmed that corrective action had been taken by the HCSS. This included improved training for staff on handling calls in French, and the addition of questions about French services to its satisfaction survey.

We communicated these actions to the woman, who was pleased with the outcome.

Learn more about the French Language Services Unit which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French



[Septic solution](#)

A homeowner sought our help with servicing his septic tank – which was located on the property of a neighbour who would not allow access. We helped him reach the right people at the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, who arranged to visit both properties and speak with both the homeowner and the neighbour. They mutually agreed to have the tank serviced, and the Ministry subsequently provided the homeowner with information about how to relocate the septic tank to his own property if he chose.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems](#)

[File a complaint or contact us here](#)



The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school

In our November newsletter: A new Ombudsman podcast, French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report coming soon... boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. Ombudsman Paul Dubé was reappointed for a second five-year term, beginning on April 1, 2021.

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land.

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