

**Attention News Editors:****School principals support calls for ban on handguns**

Important step to make schools safer

TORONTO, Sept. 26 /CNW/ - The Ontario Principals' Council, representing 5,000 principals and vice-principals in the province's publicly funded elementary and secondary schools, has joined the call of Ontario's Premier, Toronto's Mayor and community groups to ban the possession of handguns.

"We know that banning handguns will not, in and of itself, ensure a safer society. However, we feel it is important to support any measure possible to decrease the injuries and deaths that handguns cause," said Laura Hodgins, President of the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC).

With the growing number of handguns in society, some of those guns are making their way into schools. "Our schools are a microcosm of society," said Hodgins. "What happens in a community inevitably seeps into schools. We can't expect schools to solve the issue of violence when society has not been able to. We can't prevent guns from coming into schools if they are in our communities. But we can call on the federal government to ban guns as an important safety initiative. If we can keep guns off the streets, we can keep them out of schools."

In addition to a gun ban, the OPC has called on the government to endorse and fund a set of standards for all schools around supervision. A key component is an increase in the number of trained adults to supervise students, monitor hallways and deter intruders.

"Some people have called for more video cameras in schools as a safety measure. While we know that cameras can help capture an incident on tape, they do not prevent incidents from occurring in the first place. Nothing is more important for keeping students safe than people. We need more trained adults to supervise, counsel, monitor, mentor and guide our students. Technology cannot replace the human factor."

The Ontario Principals' Council is the professional association representing 5,000 principals and vice-principals in Ontario's public elementary and secondary schools. Established in 1998, the OPC advocates on behalf of public education and provides professional supports to its Members. Education Leadership Canada, a division of the OPC, develops and delivers professional development supports for school leaders provincially, nationally and internationally.

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**ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL - More on this organization**

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