

History of Ontario Secondary School DANCEFEST

2023 – present – We are LIVE & In Person Celebrating Dance

OSSDANCEFEST2023 was *LIVE!* and in person with **208 dance entries** performed by **373 participants** from **16 registered schools** plus **1 independent** and **1 home school** participant. The event was held at the University of Waterloo, Theatre of Arts, in Waterloo where **OSSDF2024** continued in 2024 and is planned for the Humanities Theatre for **OSSDF2025**.

OSSDANCEFEST2023 was *LIVE!* and in person with **208 dance entries** - an increase of 245% over our OSSDF2022 virtual event - and was performed by **373 participants** from **16 registered schools** plus **1 independent** and **1 home school** participant. Adjudicators, **Sarah Vance, Cathy Harris** and **Shelley Kenney** recognized schools and participants for their outstanding artistry and performance efforts with **Special Awards** and **Awards of Excellence for Outstanding Performances** (technical achievement), **Outstanding Choreography** (artistic achievement) and **OVERALL AWARDS of Excellence for DANCE ARTISTRY** (based on cumulative of technical & artistry achievement) with **Holy Names High School** in Windsor awarded the **Most Inspiring OSSDF2023 School** for the second year in a row. BRAVO to all our young choreographers and dancers. The workshops organized by Meghan Kidd and Katie Knowlton earned high recognition from students who felt represented by the diversity offered including an Indigenous workshop led by Robyn Michaud that was sponsored by Cathy Bowman and Laurel Brown.

In 2024, **OSSDF2024** returned to the UW, Theatre of Arts to greater success. **226 dance entries** performed by **406 participants** embraced the unique staging this year. The Board introduced a new category, K-Pop dance entries, to be added to our registrations. Student choreography was very creative due to the two levels and multiple entries to the stage. Plans are currently being made for **OSSDF2025** at the University of Waterloo's Humanities Theatre which is a larger proscenium stage that has been recently renovated.

The introduction in 2020 of **OSSDF Teachers' Council meetings** allowed Ontario educators to meet and share information and resources; participate in "live" workshops; and, gain opportunities to discuss the changes/reactions in education. Joanna Perlus assumed the position as Teachers Council Convenor for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 and will continue in 2025.

OSSDF is very pleased to collaborate with the **Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (CODE), DANCE ONTARIO, and DRAMA SOUND**, wonderful arts organizations that support dance students, dance educators, dance artists and dance companies. In 2023, OSSDF and CODE committed to a joint project to create a video documentary on Arts Advocacy that we hope to present to the Ministry of Education upon completion in the fall

of 2025 to request consideration of reintroducing the importance of keeping the arts vital in education.