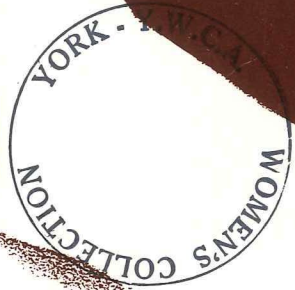


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OPPORTUNITY FOR CHOICE

AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION
IN SCHOOL
BOARDS

OPPORTUNITY FOR CHOICE

AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION
IN SCHOOL
BOARDS



Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario
1260 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2B8

**The goal is equal opportunity.
The method is Affirmative Action.**

What is Affirmative Action?

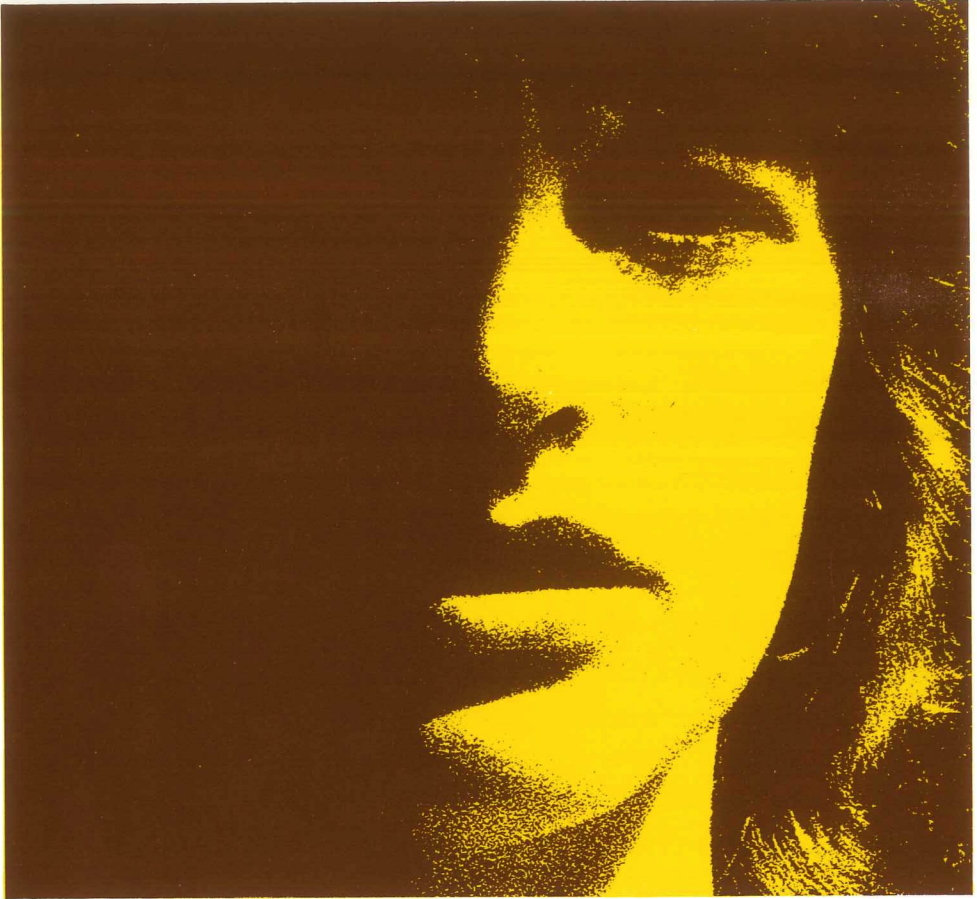
Affirmative Action is a result-oriented programme to increase the representation of minorities and women at all levels of the workplace.

(Employment and Immigration Canada)

Do Ontario school boards need Affirmative Action?

Yes. Approximately 67 per cent of all teachers in Ontario's public elementary schools are women, yet almost 88 per cent of those in administrative positions are men.* It is clearly not in the best interest of school boards or the students they serve to continue to select almost ninety per cent of their educational leadership from approximately one-third of the potential talent pool.

*(*Source: Ministry of Education Statistics
"Teachers In Ontario By Employment Status,
Sex and Type of Duty 1980-81"
Table 20-20.01, 15/04/81.)*



**“It stands to reason
that an educational system
that prides itself
on offering equality
of opportunity
to its students
should practise the same attitude
in respect
to those who serve
within that system.”**

*(Thomas L. Wells,
Minister of Education,
November, 1973.)*



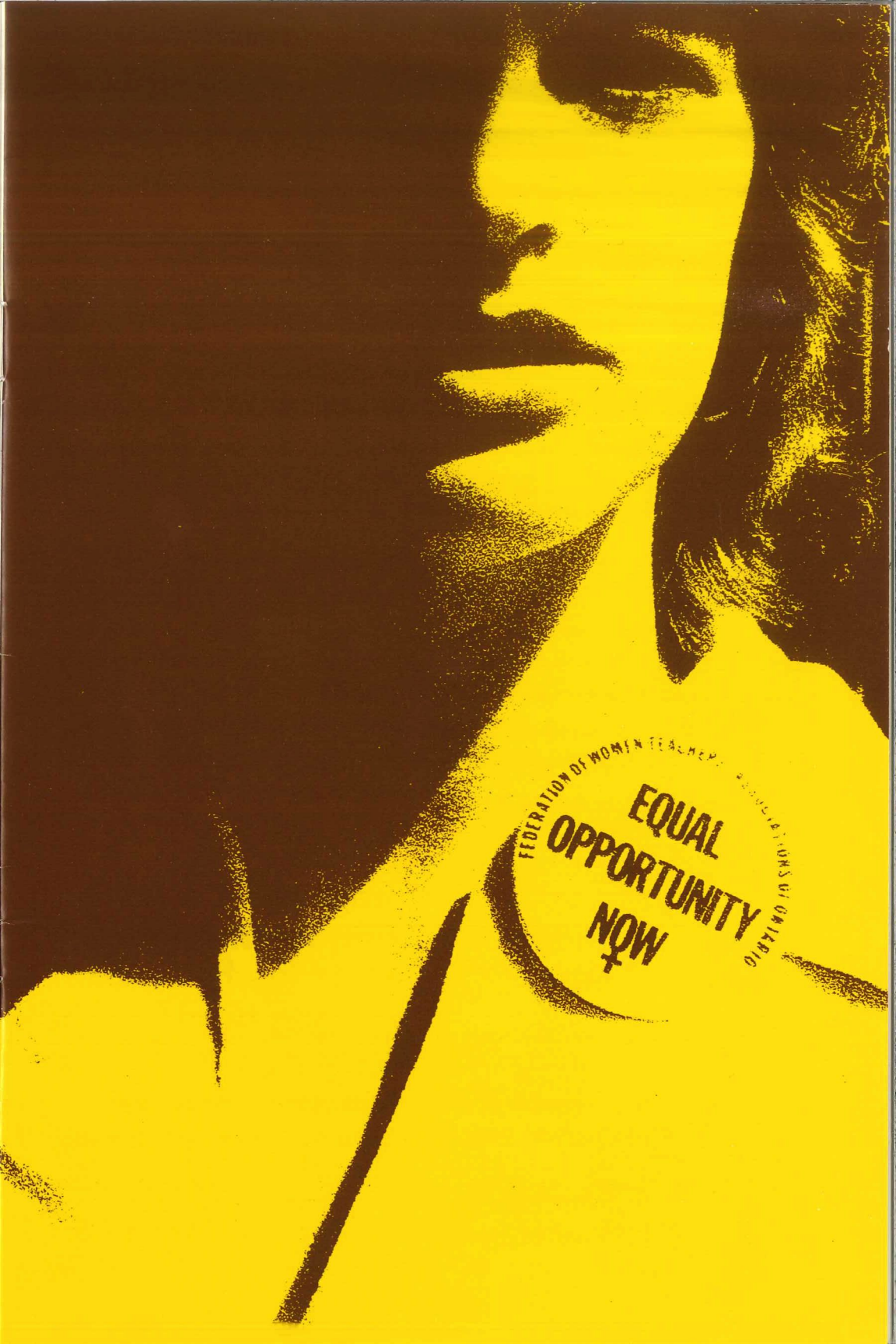
Are Affirmative Action programmes being implemented by other employers in Canada?

Yes. Affirmative Action programmes have government support and are presently being implemented in many federal and provincial government jurisdictions. The Ontario Government established Affirmative Action programmes for women in all of the ministries, Crown agencies and Crown corporations under the supervision of the Women Crown Employees Office in 1974. Most of these employers now have six years of experience with Affirmative Action.

The Women's Bureau of the Ontario Ministry of Labour has had an Affirmative Action Consulting Service since 1975. They have already worked with more than three hundred employers across Ontario to establish voluntary Affirmative Action programmes.

The Federal Government recently established an Affirmative Action Division within Employment and Immigration Canada to assist employers, especially those with large Federal Government contracts, to adopt Affirmative Action programmes on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Federal Government is currently studying the feasibility of introducing a 'contract compliance' programme. Such a programme would require companies with large contracts with the Federal Government to demonstrate that they have implemented effective Affirmative Action programmes in order to qualify for renewal of their contract with the Federal Government.

Some private sector companies who have developed Affirmative Action programmes voluntarily are reporting significant improvements in productivity. They also frequently note an improvement in employee morale, a lower absentee rate and a reduction in staff turnover after their Affirmative Action programmes have been established for some time.



FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ONTARIO

**EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY**

NOW
♀

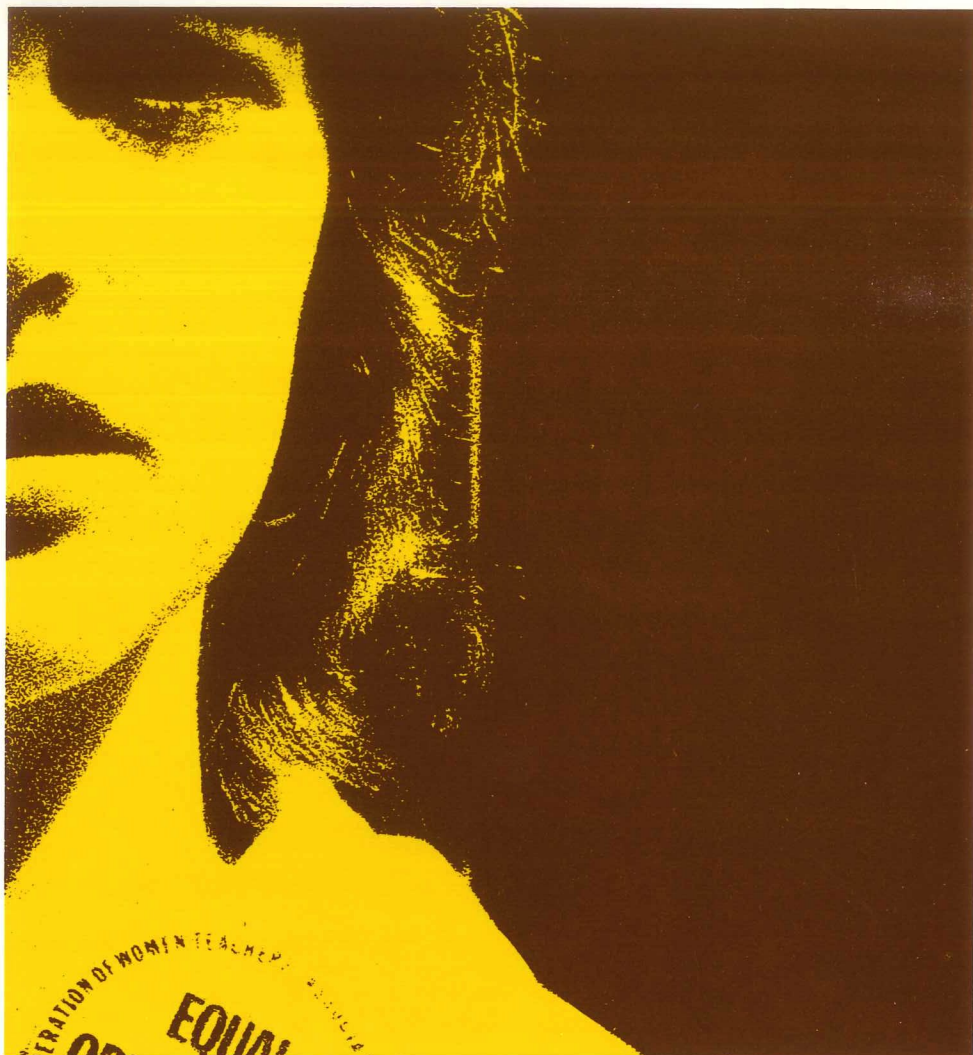
**The goal is equal opportunity.
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Does the Ontario Ministry of Education support Affirmative Action programmes for school boards?

Yes. The Ministry of Education has urged Ontario school boards to have an equal opportunity policy for employment and promotion since 1973. In 1976 the Ministry of Education asked school boards to formulate an Affirmative Action plan to implement that policy. The most recent memorandum on equal opportunity was issued by the Ministry in April, 1980. It pointed to the continuing large discrepancy between the proportion of women and men in positions of responsibility within the Ontario school system. The Ministry of Education has an Affirmative Action programme for its own employees and is urging school boards to adopt Affirmative Action programmes themselves.

Is an Affirmative Action programme a curriculum programme, an employment programme or both?

An Affirmative Action programme is an employment programme - not a curriculum programme. Of course, efforts to make the curriculum non-sexist are commendable. A curriculum thrust, as one component of an Affirmative Action plan, can provide a long range support structure for a comprehensive Affirmative Action programme within a school board. However, curriculum innovations alone do not constitute Affirmative Action.



**An Affirmative Action programme
within a school board
should focus primarily
on increasing employment opportunities
for current women employees
of the Board
as well as those
the Board expects to hire
in the near future.**



Do men teachers need Affirmative Action programmes to increase their number in the teaching profession?

No. Men currently hold 51% of all teaching and educational staff positions in the public elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.* Furthermore, only about one-third of all secondary school teachers are women.* The recruitment of women to teach in the secondary schools remains a significant challenge to school boards who realize the importance of providing role models for young women about to enter the work force.

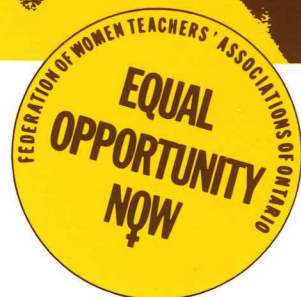
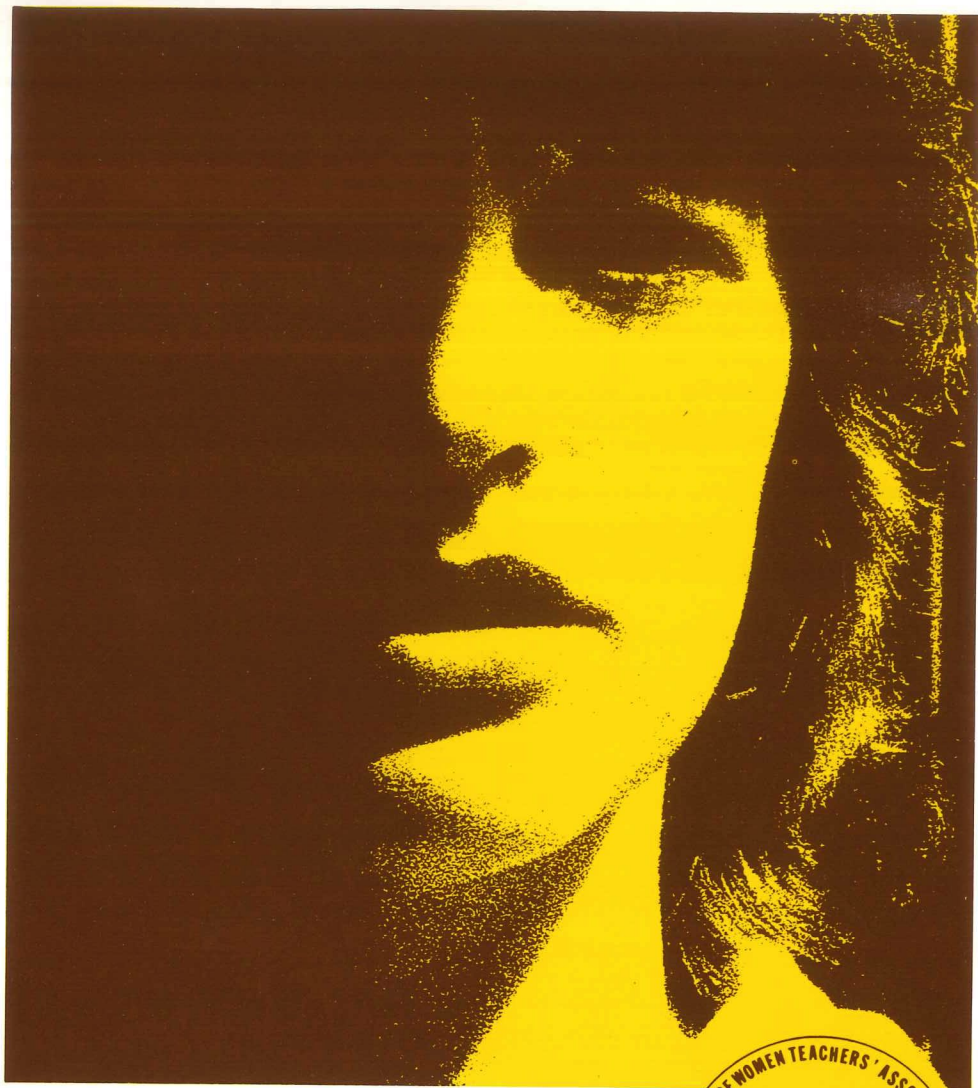
Men have also been steadily increasing as a percentage of the elementary teaching force during the last four decades as the chart below indicates:

Year	Men as a percentage of all public elementary teachers in Ontario**
1944	15.5%
1970	27.4%
1973	30.4%
1979	32.9%
1980	33.5%

Women teachers should resist arguments which encourage them to give up their traditional place in the educational system until they are represented in large numbers in educational administration and in the secondary school system.

* Working Paper #24 for the Commission on Declining Enrolments in Ontario - The Implications of Declining Enrolment for Women Teachers in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario, Dr. Dorothy E. Smith, Tables 1.1 and 1.3.

**Data obtained from Ontario Teachers' Federation membership statistics



Whenever there is a reduction in occupational segregation in the United States, this “seems to be accomplished by men entering the female occupations, rather than the reverse.”

*(Edward Gross,
Social Problems, Vol. 16, #2, 1968.
'The sexual structure of occupations
over time'.)*

Does an Affirmative Action programme benefit both women and men employees?

Yes. Women employees benefit because Affirmative Action ensures that they are able to take their rightful place in the employment structure based on their skills and abilities. Men employees also benefit because they have an option to select career paths which satisfy their individual needs and are free from the stereotyped assumption that they will become administrators.

Is Affirmative Action a form of discrimination?

No. Discrimination based on prohibited grounds in employment is illegal under the Ontario Human Rights Code. In fact, the Ontario Human Rights Commission encourages employers to establish Affirmative Action programmes to increase the employment of members of a group of persons identified by their race, creed, colour, age, sex, marital status, nationality or place of origin who are underrepresented in certain job categories.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission invites employers to submit their Affirmative Action programmes to the Commission for approval.* For example, a school board might decide to establish an Affirmative Action programme to increase the representation of women in educational administration. This board would be able to proceed without fear of reprisal based on a charge of discrimination once approval for the programme is received from the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

(*Source: *The Ontario Human Rights Code, Part 1, Section 6 (a)*)

**The goal is equal opportunity.
The method is Affirmative Action.**

Will Affirmative Action result in preferential treatment for women?

All selection is a form of preferential treatment. When one candidate is selected from a number of candidates a preference has been expressed. This preference has traditionally been exercised to the benefit of men in competitions for positions within educational administration. Women have never been treated equally in this competition due to a number of historical and attitudinal factors. An Affirmative Action programme would ensure that women candidates who are well qualified and prepared are given the same careful consideration as men candidates for positions in educational administration.

Does Affirmative Action mean that women who are less qualified than men would be more likely to be promoted simply because they are women?

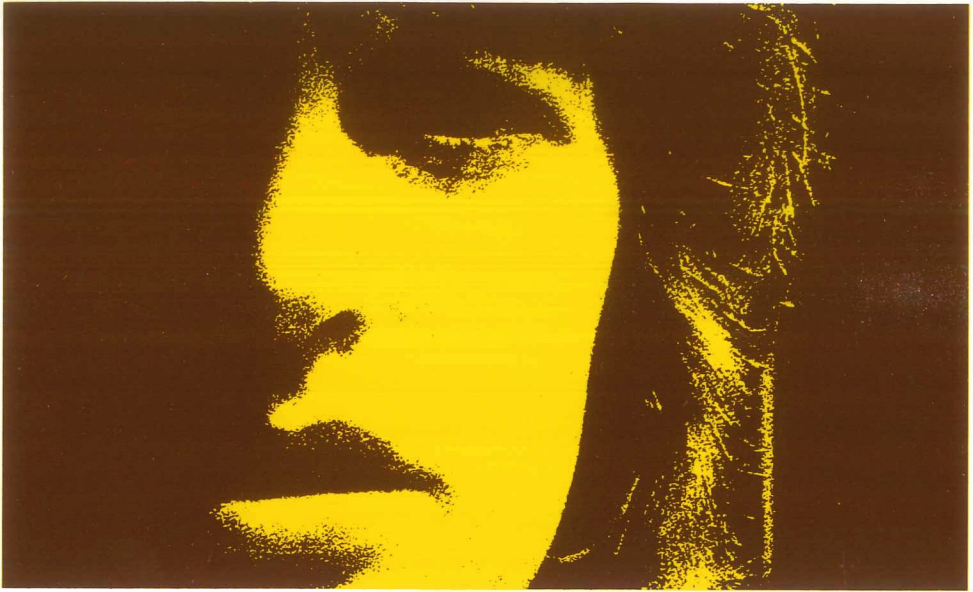
No. Women who are promoted to positions of additional responsibility in school boards should hold qualifications which are equivalent to those of other candidates. Naturally, women should not have to be overqualified in order to obtain the same jobs as men. For example, one school board in Ontario has forty-two principals. One of these principals is a woman and she has an Ed.D. Not one of the remaining forty-one men principals has a doctorate degree.

**The goal is equal opportunity.
The method is Affirmative Action.**

Aren't most school boards equal opportunity employers already?

No. Too often candidates have been recruited only from the traditional 'old boys' network' and promotion decisions have been made informally. This practice has contributed to the development of a system whereby women hold approximately ten per cent of all administrative positions in the public elementary schools. One man teacher in four can expect to be promoted to a position of added responsibility during his career but only one in fifty women teachers can realistically hold this expectation.

An effective Affirmative Action programme would review all employment practices and systems to be sure that some employment practices do not result in employment discrimination against certain groups of employees. Such system-based or 'systemic' discrimination can exist even when there is no intent to discriminate. Indeed, in the school system, discrimination exists in most cases in practices and procedures embedded in employment systems rather than as bigotry or bias on the part of individuals.



“Up-and-coming, ambitious young men are encouraged by more senior men. For instance, in elementary schools where there is no vice-principal, there has always been a ‘key man’, usually the teacher of the senior grade. He is the stand-in principal when the principal is out of the school. It is the sort of position that will eventually lead to promotion. It is still widely assumed that men are the only ones to be considered for such posts of responsibility.”

*(Fiona Nelson,
Sex Stereotyping in Canadian Schools,
Women in the Canadian Mosaic,
edited by Gwen Matheson, 1976.)*

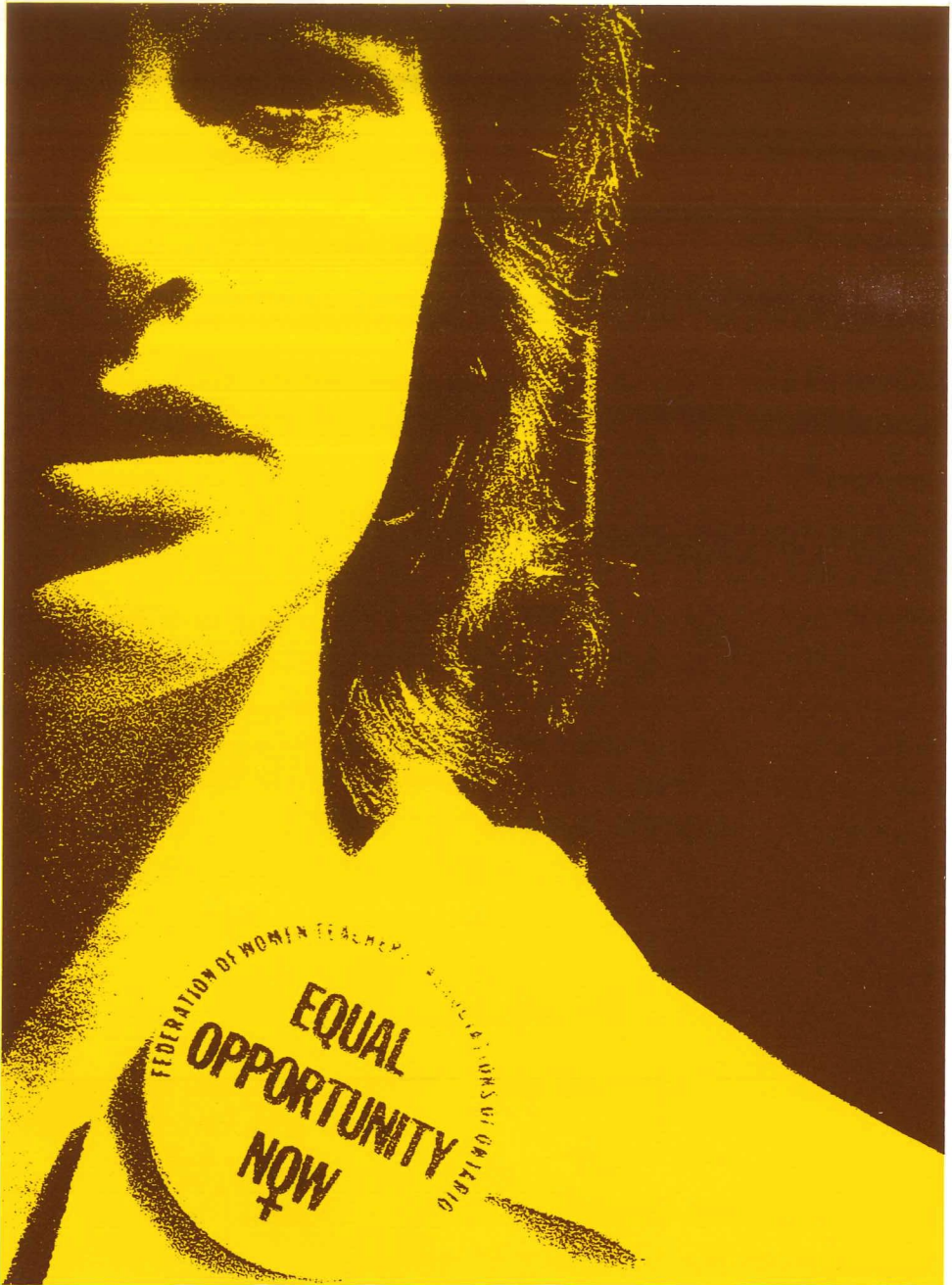


**The goal is equal opportunity.
The method is Affirmative Action.**



Should some training programmes be offered to women employees only, as part of an Affirmative Action plan?

Yes. Some educational programmes should be directed toward women employees only and designed to meet the special needs of women workers; that is, to compensate for the different experiences and socialization processes which have shaped the lives of women. Other programmes are designed to assist women in dealing with the day to day realities of their professional and personal lives which are different from those of men.



**The equal treatment of unequals
does not bring about equality.
It only perpetuates and strengthens
existing patterns of inequality.**

Does Affirmative Action mean 'quotas' and is there any real difference between 'goals' and 'quotas'?

Affirmative Action programmes in Canada do not contain mandatory quotas since this might result in the hiring and promotion of underqualified women in order to meet numerical requirements. However, an effective Affirmative Action programme should contain goals which are realistic considering the number of women employees available, their education, experience and career interests. Timetables should be established for meeting these goals in the same way as timetables are established for other goals of the Board.

These timelines should be both short and long range. Every effort should be made by school board administrators to meet the goals established within the designated time frame. If some goals are not met within the specified time, a review of the situation should be conducted so that revisions can be made which address the problems being encountered.

Goals are realistic management targets. They are not quotas.

**The goal is equal opportunity.
The method is Affirmative Action.**

Will women teachers who do not wish to be promoted be pressed to seek promotion?

No. Affirmative Action will not force promotion on anyone. It will encourage those who have not personally considered the possibility of seeking promotion to do so. It will also provide women with special educational opportunities in order to overcome the effects of tradition and socialization.



“It is reasonable to hypothesize that groups of women differ from groups of men primarily in orientations toward interpersonal relationships and level of aspiration. One might interpret this as consistent with the training of women for family roles and thus label it a sex linked attribute. But such orientations could also be seen as realistic responses to women’s structural situation in organizations, of the kinds of opportunities and their limits, of the role demands in the organizational strata occupied by women, and of the dependence of women on relationships for mobility.”

*Dr. Rosabeth Moss Kanter,
Women and the Structure of
Organizations: Explorations
in Theory and Behaviour,
Another Voice, 1975.)*

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Is there legislation which makes Affirmative Action programmes mandatory in Canada?

Not yet. Affirmative Action programmes undertaken by employers are voluntary at present. Canada does not have legislation which makes Affirmative Action compulsory. Canada also lacks an established regulatory body which has the power to impose fines on employers in relation to the equal employment opportunity targets.

However, if the voluntary approach to the introduction of Affirmative Action in Canada does not appear to be effective and does not begin to redress historical imbalances in the work force, then legislation may need to be introduced.



What are the potential advantages of an effective Affirmative Action programme for a school board?

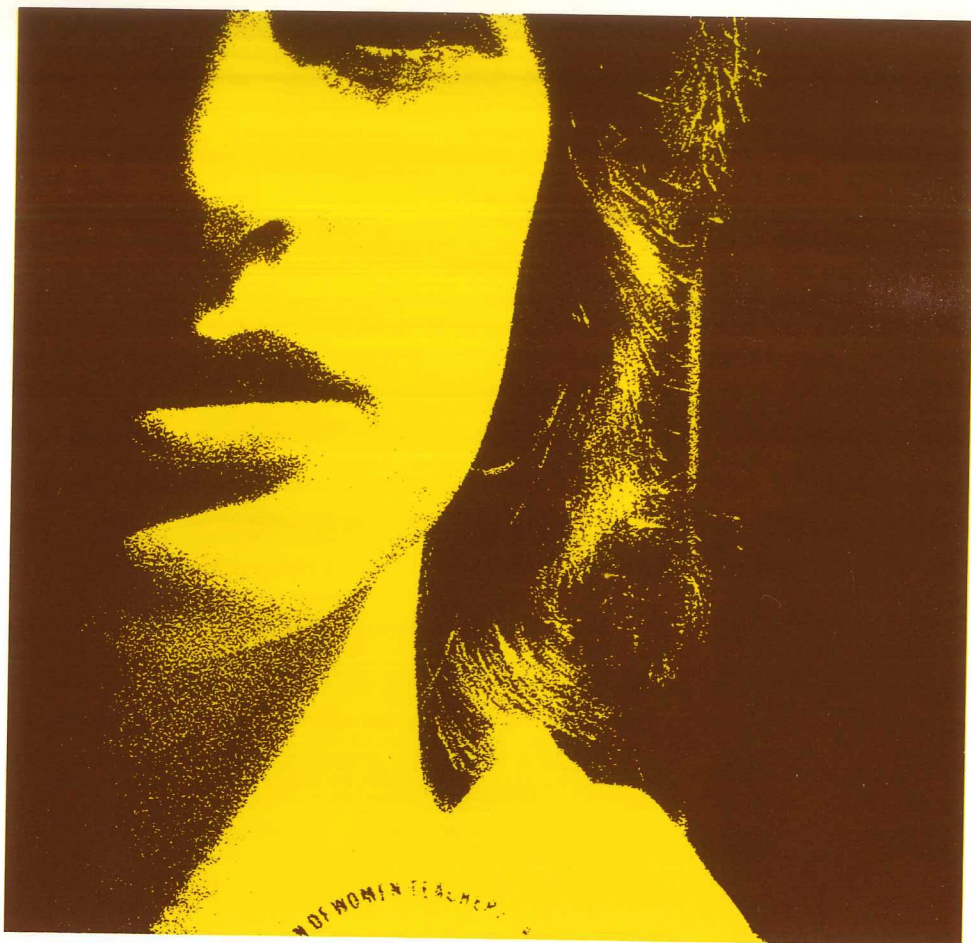
- (1) It is reasonable to expect that the educational system would be enriched since educational leaders would be drawn from a much larger talent pool.
- (2) Teacher morale should improve since the system would be fair and perceived to be fair.
- (3) The public image of the school board would be enhanced as it is recognized as an equal opportunity employer. In order to substantiate this claim, of course, a visible programme of activities should be developed to bring about equality between women and men in the workplace.
- (4) Human resource planning should be improved so that employees are better matched to their jobs based on their skills and abilities. The underutilization of the talents and resources of women teachers should be reduced and eventually eliminated. This should lead to an overall improvement in the quality of educational services provided by a school board.
- (5) Girls and boys in the student population would have both women and men available to them every day as role models representing a broad range of work roles within the school system.

What components are required to make an Affirmative Action programme effective?

Six elements are essential for the success of an Affirmative Action programme within a school board. These six elements are:

- (1) **Education**
 - i) to prepare women to compete successfully for advancement, and
 - ii) to prepare school administrators to encourage women and to accept and work comfortably with women in leadership roles in education.
- (2) **Identification** - of women who are qualified, experienced and wish to seek promotion.
- (3) **Fair and objective promotion procedures** - to ensure that all candidates are given appropriate and serious consideration.
- (4) **Numerical goals and timetables** - to increase the representation of women within specific job categories where they are underrepresented. This is critical to the success of an Affirmative Action programme.

Realistic goals should be developed based on an assessment of the number of women who already hold the qualifications necessary for promotion within the school system and short and long range timetables should be established in relation to these goals.



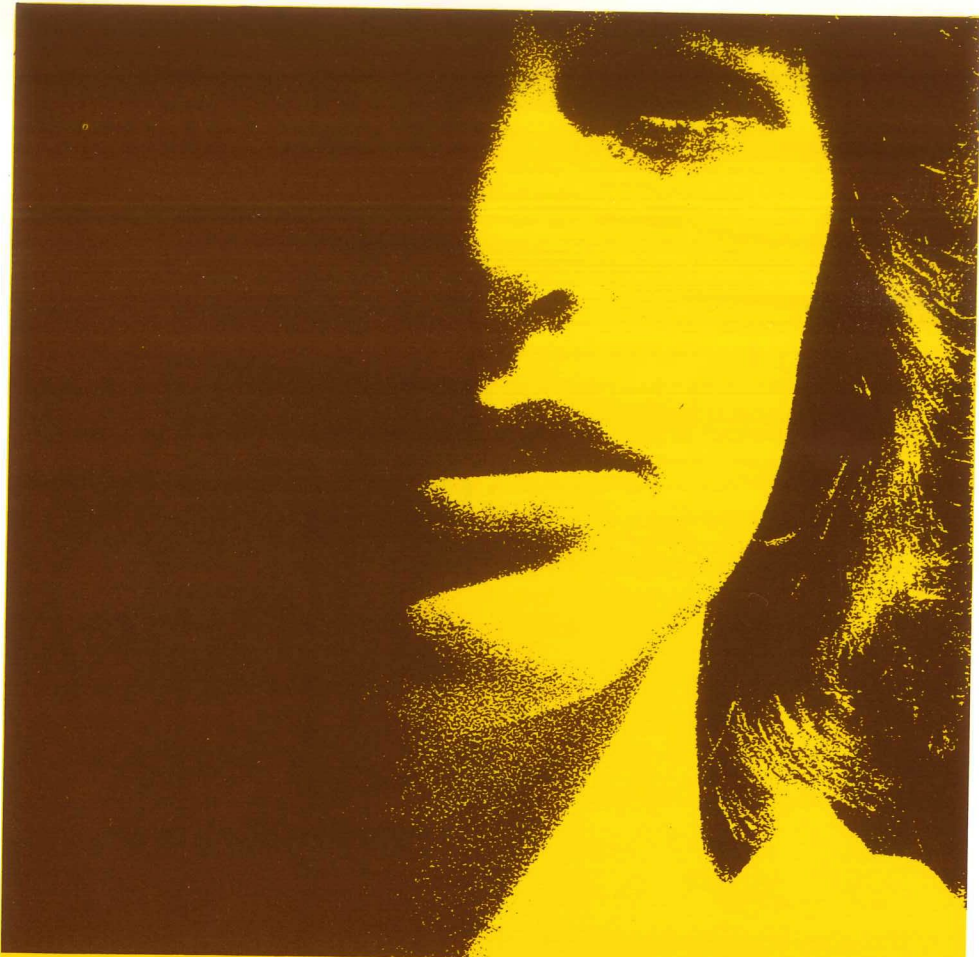
- (5) **Accountability** - for the effective implementation of an Affirmative Action programme must be required from the Director of Education in the same way as the Director is considered responsible for the implementation of curriculum goals.

One of the main criteria used during performance reviews for educational administrators must be the degree of success realized in implementing the Board's Affirmative Action programme.

- (6) **The right to appeal** - a hiring or promotion decision made by the Board.

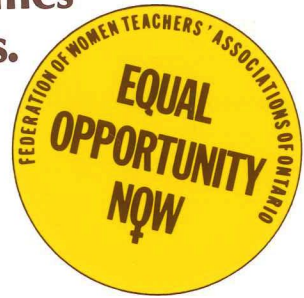
What steps must be taken to establish an effective Affirmative Action programme?

- (1) The Womens Teachers' Association Executive should evaluate the political climate and the awareness of the Board and the community in relation to Affirmative Action.
- (2) The WTA Executive or an Affirmative Action Committee should seek the support of WTA members and other groups.
- (3) A survey should be conducted in order to gather accurate statistical information about the status of women and men employees of the Board.
- (4) The WTA Executive or Affirmative Action Committee (in co-operation with other community groups, Federations and unions) should write a brief on the status of women and men employees of the Board including recommendations for positive action.
- (5) The brief should be presented to the Board of Education and their approval should be sought to establish a Board policy on Affirmative Action and an Affirmative Action programme to implement this policy.
- (6) Commitment to the Affirmative Action programme must be received from the Director of Education. This commitment should be reflected in the establishment of an Affirmative Action budget and the appointment of a co-ordinator to supervise the implementation of the Affirmative Action Programme.



**Affirmative Action will inspire
many women
to re-evaluate their lives
and work roles
within a new climate -
one which offers real opportunity
for choice.**

The most effective way to proceed toward Affirmative Action will vary from one school board to another since every school board is unique. FWTAO is prepared to provide direct assistance to WTA's who wish to work toward the establishment of Affirmative Action programmes within their own school boards.



**Please telephone
the FWTAO provincial office
for assistance.**

**Telephone 964-1232 for Metro Toronto
or for**

Area Codes

416

519, 613, 705

807 (Call collect)

Call

1-800-268-7002

1-800-268-7205

416-964-1232



**Federation of Women Teachers'
Associations of Ontario**
1260 Bay Street, Toronto,
Ontario M5R 2B8

