



Government Consultation: Education in Ontario

To: Presidents and All Members
From: Harvey Bischof, President

For Action

The Ontario government launched its curriculum consultation process that invites parents, students, educators and interested individuals or organizations to provide feedback on the education system in Ontario. According to the information on the website, the first part of this consultation went live on September 28, 2018. Open submissions can be made electronically on the website, www.fortheparents.ca, until December 15, 2018. Details on the upcoming online survey and regional town halls have not yet been made available.

The Provincial Executive is encouraging all members to participate in this consultation process.

According to the government's website, "parents across the province" can address concerns and provide feedback in seven identified areas below but the form is not restricted to parents only.

1. Improving student performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
2. Preparing students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding
3. Improving provincial standardized testing
4. Ensuring students graduate with important life skills, including financial literacy
5. Managing the use of technology in classrooms, such as cell phones
6. Building a new age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis
7. Developing the first-ever Parents' Bill of Rights

When providing feedback to the government during the consultation process, members are encouraged to consider the numerous challenges that Ontario's schools and students face relating to program funding, individual supports, and infrastructure. Members should also not feel constrained by the leading nature of at least some of the questions (e.g., "What steps could schools take to ban cellphone use in the classroom?"). OSSTF supports educator professional judgment as a crucial aspect of quality publicly funded education.

To assist members with the government-identified areas of concern for their consultation on the education system in Ontario, a list of related OSSTF policies has been provided (Appendix A). The policies can be found on the OSSTF website at <http://www.osstf.on.ca/about-us/constitution-bylaws-policies.aspx>.

Local leaders are asked to draw this information to the attention of all OSSTF members. If you have any questions concerning this DBU, please contact Cathy Renfrew, cathy.renfrew@osstf.ca, at the Provincial Office.



APPENDIX A

Areas of concern for Ontario government's consultation	Related OSSTF/FEESO Policy
1. Improving student performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)	It is the policy of OSSTF that the goals of education should, through the expansion of knowledge, enhance the student's ability to: 7.1.2.2 use mathematical skills with confidence in practical situations ; 7.1.2.3 use science and technology to gain access to information and make decisions;
2. Preparing students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding	7.14. Skills Training Programs and Apprenticeships It is the policy of OSSTF that: 7.14.1. skills training should be developed within the context of the goals of education in Ontario; 7.14.2. skills training programs should: 7.14.2.1. be open to all students; 7.14.2.2. be designed to embody the generic skills built into the regular school program; 7.14.2.3. incorporate information that enables the trainees to work safely; 7.14.2.4. incorporate information to help trainees understand their rights both individually and collectively; and 7.14.2.5. flow from teacher-based identification of skills needs, and should be developed in conjunction with labour as well as with employers or consultants; 7.14.3. skills training programs appropriate for the age and developmental level of the trainees should be offered through public secondary schools; and 7.14.4. school workplace apprenticeship programs should be designed so that: 7.14.4.1. successful graduates have the same options available to them as do graduates of the regular program; 7.14.4.2. they have additional options which result from completing a considerable portion of an apprenticeship program; and 7.14.4.3. they allow for the easy transition of students to and from the regular program.
3. Improving provincial standardized testing	7.6. Student Assessment and Evaluation It is the policy of OSSTF that: 7.6.1. province-wide, system-wide, or international tests should not be used in the supervision or evaluation of teachers or to compare schools and/or district school boards; 7.6.2. there should be no reintroduction of public, province-wide exit examinations;

	<p>7.6.3. student assessment instruments should be developed by the Ministry of Education and/or district school boards in collaboration with the teaching federations during all stages of planning, development, implementation and review;</p> <p>7.6.4. if province-wide or system-wide tests are used, then they should:</p> <p>7.6.4.1. take into account the diversity of the student population in Ontario;</p> <p>7.6.4.2. be based on curriculum objectives;</p> <p>7.6.4.3. be used to make recommendations to improve student achievement;</p> <p>7.6.4.4. be used to make recommendations to improve teaching strategies and/or modify program;</p> <p>7.6.4.5. be free from discriminatory bias;</p> <p>7.6.4.6. be reported to the student and parent by appropriate personnel who have access to pertinent printed information;</p> <p>7.6.4.7. be accompanied by current information useful in interpreting scores from test programs;</p> <p>7.6.4.8. employ a transparent and consistent passing standard, which is similar to that required for any secondary school credit, and which is established and released prior to the administration of the test; and</p> <p>7.6.4.9. have their design and evaluation procedures clearly and concisely explained to all members of the education community, including parents and students;</p> <p>7.6.5. the classroom teacher should be the primary assessor/evaluator of student progress;</p> <p>7.6.6. any assessment/evaluation strategy should be of benefit to the students;</p> <p>7.6.7. student assessment/evaluation should be a significant aspect of the learning process;</p> <p>7.6.8. students should be assessed and evaluated through a variety of written and non-written strategies;</p> <p>7.6.9. information from provincial standardized testing should not identify any student by class section or teacher;</p> <p>7.6.10. OSSTF opposes, in principle, the use of the Blended Mode Assessment Process imposed unilaterally by any employer;</p> <p>7.6.11. employers should accept zero as a mark when teachers, in their professional judgment, believe this is the appropriate mark;</p>
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	<p>7.6.12. members should be allowed to use the assessment tools that, in their professional judgment, best meet the needs of their students and Ministry reporting requirements;</p> <p>7.6.13. teachers should only be required to complete report cards twice per course, as outlined by the Ministry of Education;</p> <p>7.6.14. the Ministry Identification Number of the Ontario Secondary School that grants each credit should be shown on the Ontario Student Transcript;</p> <p>7.6.15. province-wide or system-wide testing should not be administered in a format that disadvantages any students or limits them from full participation; and</p> <p>7.6.16. no Member should be required to use EQAO assessment as any part of a student's final mark.</p> <p>10.8. Education Quality and Accountability Office It is the policy of OSSTF that:</p> <p>10.8.1. the Education Quality and Accountability Office and its testing program should be abolished and that the savings should be allocated to the province's elementary and secondary public schools.</p>
4. Ensuring students graduate with important life skills, including financial literacy	<p>It is the policy of OSSTF that any educational change should follow a Ministry of Education change protocol that:</p> <p>7.3.1.3 includes a clear vision of student outcomes for both students leaving school to enter the workforce directly and students proceeding to post-secondary education;</p>
5. Managing the use of technology in classrooms, such as cell phones	<p>It is the policy of OSSTF that:</p> <p>7.5.16 where computers and other digital technology should, according to the member's professional judgment, be an integral part of the instruction, assessment and evaluation process that:</p> <p>7.5.16.3 the employer should ensure that all students have access to the technology required to fulfill the expectations of all curriculum programs in such a way that neither students nor OSSTF members are disadvantaged.</p>
6. Building a new age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis	<p>It is the policy of OSSTF that the goals of education should, through the expansion of knowledge, enhance the student's ability to:</p> <p>7.1.2.8 assume responsibility for a healthy life style;</p> <p>7.1.2.11 understand and challenge human rights violations such as sexism, racism, homophobia and harassment and other forms of such injustice including violence;</p>
7. Developing the first-ever Parents' Bill of Rights	<p>7.9. Student and Parent Rights and Responsibilities It is the policy of OSSTF that:</p> <p>7.9.1. equality of educational opportunity should be a matter of right for all Ontario students;</p> <p>7.9.2. all publicly funded educational institutions should make available to students a variety of programs provided by the institution's personnel, to suit special needs. These programs should accommodate:</p>

	<p>7.9.2.1. students at risk and students identified by the IPRC;</p> <p>7.9.2.2. the need for work-study programs, co-operative education programs, linkage programs and apprenticeship programs, designed, co-ordinated, and evaluated by teachers and, where appropriate, in consultation with management and labour, to suit the vocational aims and expectations of students;</p> <p>7.9.2.3. the need for flexible and bias-free entry, re-entry and transfer policies in response to individual student needs; and</p> <p>7.9.2.4. the needs of students with regard to eliminating the effects of current and past gender role stereotyping, and the design of programs and resource materials to meet those needs;</p> <p>7.9.3. all students should be encouraged to take a well-rounded program composed of both compulsory and non-compulsory subjects;</p> <p>7.9.4. schools should be organized to provide:</p> <p>7.9.4.1. a variety of levels of instruction;</p> <p>7.9.4.2. appropriate groupings of students for instructional purposes;</p> <p>7.9.4.3. programs to assist students in selecting levels of instruction;</p> <p>7.9.4.4. programs to ease transition between levels of instruction; and</p> <p>7.9.4.5. safeguards which ensure that working class and immigrant students are not penalized by being disproportionately streamed into lower levels of academic instruction;</p> <p>7.9.5. corporal punishment should not be used in the disciplining of a student;</p> <p>7.9.6. that program and curriculum reviews by the Ministry of Education should incorporate student feedback on the program and curriculum and that such feedback not be used to evaluate schools or staff;</p> <p>7.9.7. no student should be refused admission to a secondary school on the basis of linguistic background;</p> <p>7.9.8. the study of and inquiry into controversial, difficult, and disturbing issues should be a fundamental right of students;</p> <p>7.9.9. school advisory councils should include, but not be limited to, parents, teachers, support staff, and students; and that such councils should be governed by a constitution which states clearly the goals, rights, and responsibilities of the council and recognizes the primacy of the <i>Education Act</i> and Regulations, and collective agreements;</p> <p>7.9.10. Ontario parents should have the right to have their children educated in the Canadian official language of their choice, and that educational authorities should have the duty to provide suitable facilities to do so at all levels of education;</p>
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	<p>7.9.11. a parent's expression of concern about any aspect of a student's program and the suggestion of alternative contents and methods should be a fundamental right of the parents of the student;</p> <p>7.9.12. students and/or parents should be required to pay for textbooks and other school-purchased educational resources which are lost or damaged;</p> <p>7.9.13. policies, programs, curriculum and learning resources should be in place to ensure that all students have an opportunity to obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma;</p> <p>7.9.14. there should be no implementation of alternative or substitute Ontario Secondary School Diplomas;</p> <p>7.9.15. all Ontario employers who are covered by the provisions of the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> and who hire student employees on a part-time or casual basis should exercise their duty to provide information, instruction and supervision to protect the health and safety of those employees in the same manner as if they were regular full-time employees;</p> <p>7.9.16. undocumented students graduating from Ontario secondary schools should be considered under the same fee structure as Ontario resident students for post-secondary education;</p> <p>7.9.17. all Ontario students should have access to gender neutral washrooms in their places of learning;</p> <p>7.9.18. Ontario students should have the right to use washrooms that co-relate with their identity and /or expression; and</p> <p>7.9.19. residents of Ontario without legal immigration status should have full access to public education.</p>
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