



January 15, 2024

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
315 Front Street West
Toronto ON M5A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

Re: Request for Amending Ontario Regulation 298 (Operation of Schools – General)

At its December 7, 2023 meeting, the Council of the Ontario College of Teachers approved a request for amendments to Regulation 298 (Operation of Schools – General) of the *Education Act* to impose restrictions on teachers licensed under the new transitional certificate that align with existing restrictions imposed on multi-session transitional certificate licensees. In particular, the amendment would prevent new transitional certificate licensees from being assigned to classrooms where they do not have the requisite subject/division qualifications.

In July 2023, and at the request of the Ministry of Education, Council approved the creation of the new Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration (TCQR), which was implemented on August 30, 2023. The new Transitional Certificate allows for students enrolled in initial teacher education programs in Ontario to work in publicly funded schools as occasional/supply teachers while completing their studies.

Through ongoing consultations with school boards and faculties, the College has learned that school boards have begun hiring TCQR licensees into Long-Term Occasional (LTO) teacher positions. The College has advised school boards and Faculties of Education that, while College regulations do not prohibit hiring TCQR licensees into LTO positions, this practice poses serious risks to the teacher candidate's ability to complete their teacher education program as accredited.

While school boards ordinarily assign teachers based on their subject/divisions of qualification, there are provisions in the teacher assignment sections of the *Education Act*, specifically section 19 of Regulation 298 (Operation of Schools – General), that permit schools to assign teachers to classrooms that are not based on the teacher's subject/division of qualification, with some restrictions. The employment of TCQR licensees as LTOs amidst the ongoing provincial teacher shortage increases the probability that schools may assign TCQR licensees to subjects/divisions for which they are not qualified.

Considering the above-summarized employment practices undertaken by school boards, it is notable that the potential risks in placing a TCQR licensee in a classroom where they do not have a qualifying subject/division are already partly addressed in legislation. For example, s. 19(4)(a) of Regulation 298 indicates that a multi-session TCQR licensee shall not teach in a division or teach a subject for which they do not hold a qualification.

TCQR licensees, like multi-session TCQR licensees, are only partway through their initial teacher education program and are less qualified or able to perform work outside their respective subject/division of qualification. As such, the same teacher assignment restriction on teaching outside of one's subject/division should apply for TCQR holders, just as it does for multi-session TCQR holders, in order to reduce risks to student learning or safety.

In this regard, the College is seeking to amend section 19(4)(a) of Regulation 298 to read as follows [amendments in bold and underline]:

19. (4) An agreement under subsection (3) respecting the assignment or appointment of a teacher to teach in a division or to teach a subject for which he or she does not hold a qualification,

(a) shall not be made in respect of a teacher who holds, or is deemed to hold, a multi-session transitional certificate of qualification and registration **or a transitional certificate of qualification and registration** under the teachers' qualifications regulation (O. Reg. 298/19/4)

The College looks forward to working with the Ministry of Education to make the necessary regulatory amendments as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Diana Miles
Chair of Council

DM/LL/SS/kb-pgt



Linda Lacroix, OCT/EAO
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer