

Ministry of Education

Minister

315 Front Street West
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest
Toronto ON M7A 0B8



April 17, 2023

Diana Miles
Chair of Council

Linda Lacroix
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Ontario College of Teachers
101 Bloor Street West
Toronto ON M5S 0A1

Dear Ms. Miles and Ms. Lacroix:

Thank you for the ongoing collaboration to regulate teachers in the public's interest, including strengthening student safety and protections. I appreciate that the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is focused on transparency, accessibility, being nimble, and most importantly having a safe environment for all our students.

As you know, today I am tabling *The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act* (the Act). The Act would, if passed, ensure the province's public education system focuses on what matters most: important life-long skills like reading, writing, and math. The partnership between the minister and the OCT will help us achieve this goal. We will continue to build on progress made to train and certify world-class teachers and cut approval times.

To this end, I am asking the OCT to come forward with proposed regulations and/or regulatory amendments to modernize teacher education and certification processes to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure proficiency of teacher candidates in math, literacy, reading, special education, mental health, the use of technology in the classroom, and leadership skills.
- Enable eligible teacher candidates to gain real-life experience by working as a teacher while finishing Initial Teacher Education through a transitional certificate – supporting Ontario's students with the educators they need.
- Introducing a new Specialized Experience Certificate for teacher candidates with qualifications in priority areas, including technological education teachers, internationally educated teachers, Indigenous language teachers, and French language teachers.
- Cut the timeframe for the certification of new teacher candidates in half and align with the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act* to reduce time for domestic mobility and internationally educated candidates (e.g., 50 days).
- In addition, I am requesting that officials at the OCT work with representatives of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) to come forward with a proposal in Summer 2023 that:

- Identifies opportunities for accelerated Initial Teacher Education programs to attract skilled professionals and individuals with unique training as teacher candidates.
- Reforms divisional structures of Initial Teacher Education to reflect new teacher qualifications and to align with other Canadian jurisdictions, making it easier for educators trained in Canada to work in Ontario classrooms.

I would also like to confirm that, if passed, the Act would move forward with nine legislative amendments requested by the OCT to increase public confidence in the regulation of the teaching profession, ensure the protection of students, and enhance efficiency in the OCT's investigations and discipline operations. Those amendments include:

- Allowing for student victims of alleged sexual abuse, child pornography or criminal sexual acts by any teacher (not only their direct teachers) to receive funding for therapy. Currently, the provisions require there to be a direct relationship between student/teacher for students to receive funding for therapy.
- Clarifying certification reinstatement timelines for individuals that had their licenses revoked, in support of the policy intent that it should be five years from the date of revocation before an individual may seek reinstatement from the College.
- Requiring that orders made by the Discipline Committee relating to professional misconduct are not stayed (i.e., paused) on appeal.
- Requiring that members who had their certificate suspended for non-payment of fees or failure to provide information, or had their certificate suspended or revoked as a result of a Fitness to Practise / Discipline Committee decision or who wish to reinstate must first successfully complete the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program requirements.
- Expanding the fine mechanism if employers fail to provide additional information to the OCT on teacher discipline matters.
- Removing the provision that the employer becomes the complainant to a matter when a report required by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act (OCTA)* is filed.
- Granting authority to the Investigation Committee to refer a matter directly to the Discipline Committee where a member is convicted or found guilty of a Criminal Code offence that is also the subject matter of a complaint.
- Granting authority to the Investigation Committee when a determination is made on a complaint against a member to require the member to undertake remedial training or education.
- Allowing the Discipline Committee to make a decision without holding a hearing or allowing the member to make submissions if the member has been found guilty of a criminal sexual offence that requires mandatory revocation under the OCTA.

The Act will also align the OCT with other regulators with an amendment to provide the College with the flexibility to establish by-law making authority respecting the criteria for the use of the Inactive/ Non-Practicing title and establish a process for members with fee payment suspensions to be revoked after three years.

The Act would also add foundational professional teacher education program requirements in the OCTA, including math and literacy requirements in the Ontario curriculum, as prescribed in regulation.

I would also like to note that the ministry has reviewed in detail the recommendations in the College's Action Plan from last Fall, alongside the key education priorities we are pursuing. I appreciate that the College has acted and moved on several of the recommendations, however given the urgency required to increase access to qualified educators, and the safety of children, we are asking for a swift turnaround on regulation implementation

The College's work on the Action Plan, together with the changes I am requesting will help ensure Ontario's education system is unified in its focus on improving student outcomes, now and for years to come.

Please reach out to ministry staff for any assistance or questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Lecce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

c: Hon. Jill Dunlop
Minister of College and Universities

Hon. Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Hon. Doug Downey
Attorney General

Hon. Michael Kerzner
Solicitor General



Ontario's Teaching Regulator
L'organisme de réglementation
de l'enseignement en Ontario

April 24, 2023

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce,

RE: *Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*

We are writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated April 17, 2023, regarding new legislation introduced in the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*, including amendments to the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* previously requested by the College.

We applaud new legislation that will increase support for student safety and appreciate your plans to move forward with regulatory amendments that will strengthen the College's ability to better serve its mandate.

The College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of Ontario's more than 2 million students. We welcome the proposed amendments and work is already underway to review and provide feedback by May 16, 2023.

We also appreciated the update regarding the College's Action Plan from last fall and look forward to working more closely with the government to implement the regulatory components of the plan.

Sincerely,

Diana Miles
Chair of Council

Linda Lacroix, OCT/EAO
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Copy: Hon. Jill Dunlop
Minister of College and Universities

Hon. Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Hon. Doug Downey
Attorney General

Hon. Michael Kerzner
Solicitor General