

Ministry of Education

LEGISLATION PASSES TO BOOST STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Revitalized College of Teachers, Respect for Trustees, Better Teacher Training

QUEEN'S PARK, June 1 - Improved student performance is one step closer with the passage of the McGuinty government's student performance legislation, Education Minister Sandra Pupatello said today.

The legislation promotes educational peace and stability, fosters teaching excellence, removes barriers to greater student achievement and supports responsible and accountable governance.

"We are on the side of hard working Ontario families who want the best public education for their children," said Pupatello. "This legislation is a significant tune-up that will modernize education by creating the conditions to improve student performance."

Introduced in March 2006, the act contains several limited but substantive amendments to the Education Act and the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, to support improved student performance, partnership within education based on respect and openness to the public.

The act provides the legal support needed to enable provincial education goals:

Improved Student Performance:

- Ability to set clear provincial education outcomes, after consultation with school boards and other stakeholders, and the ability for the ministry to require school boards to meet those outcomes
- Formal on-the-job learning, including mentoring, as part of the New Teacher Induction Program - the second step in new teachers' professional development
- Meaningful assessment of beginning teachers' teaching practice through a streamlined teacher performance appraisal process
- Ability to add additional professional activity days for teacher training
- Authorizing e-learning as a recognized instructional method
- Ability to change maximum class size in regulation
- Ability to enable long-term teacher collective agreements.

Partnership in Education Based on Respect:

- Ability to provide realistic supports for trustees, including increased honoraria
- Removing excessive personal penalties in the Education Act related to trustee compliance
- Empowerment and recognition of student trustees through new honoraria, non-binding votes, new procedural rights and assured resources
- A revitalized Ontario College of Teachers that respects teachers as

professionals, has the confidence of its members and the public and is de-politicized in carrying out its mandate.

Openness to the Public:

- Requirements for public reporting
- Increasing access for community use of schools.

Backgrounder

STUDENT PERFORMANCE BILL

Improved student performance is one step closer with the passage of the McGuinty government's student performance legislation. The legislation promotes educational peace and stability, fosters teaching excellence, removes barriers to greater student achievement and supports responsible and accountable governance - ultimately resulting in improved student performance. The act contains several limited but substantive amendments to the Education Act and the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 to support improved student performance; partnership within education based on respect; and openness to the public.

IMPROVED STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Teaching Excellence Initiatives

There are a wide range of factors that influence the effectiveness of teaching. Increasing student performance means supporting leadership in the school, the availability of resources, the quality of the curriculum and strategies being used by the school and the system. It also means providing the support and recognition for what teachers and educators do on behalf of students every day. The government recognizes the need to strengthen the skills and abilities of teachers, as well as improve these other factors which are vital to ensuring overall teaching excellence and increasing student success.

Replacing Pencil and Paper Tests with Meaningful Assessments

The old pencil and paper Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT) was criticized in terms of its relevance and the fact that it did not evaluate actual classroom experience.

In November 2004, the ministry announced that it would no longer administer the qualifying test and would replace it with a new, more relevant assessment mechanism and support system for beginning teachers. In March 2005, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) established a provisional certificate for all teacher graduates as an interim solution to allow new graduates to teach while consultations to develop a new assessment took place.

Once the section of the act addressing the OTQT is proclaimed in force, the requirement for teacher candidates to pass the OTQT as a condition of teacher certification will be revoked, and through a regulatory amendment, the provisional designation will automatically be removed by the OCT. The act also establishes a mandatory New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Once the NTIP

and performance appraisal sections of the act are proclaimed in force, NTIP will be put in place in all publicly funded schools in the province. The NTIP supports are already underway in Ontario boards.

Second Professional Step for New Teachers

Effective mentoring programs over the beginning years of a teacher's career are vital to improve new teacher retention and development for beginning teachers. The NTIP is designed as a positive "second step" for new teachers, giving them valuable in-class support during their challenging first year of practice. It will now complement their formal one-year of pre-service education with another full year of supports, resulting in better prepared and more confident teachers.

The program will replace the qualifying test with a more meaningful assessment of actual teaching practice, focusing on teacher success through feedback on performance and growth. Successful completion of the NTIP will require two satisfactory ratings on teacher performance appraisals. In addition, successful completion of the NTIP will be noted on a teacher's certificate and the OCT public register.

The NTIP will provide a variety of supports for new teachers, including:

- Orientation for all new teachers by the school, school board and provincial school authority
- Mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers
- Professional development and training in areas such as literacy and numeracy, student success and safe schools; classroom management; planning, assessment and evaluation; communication with parents; instruction strategies that address the learning and culture of students with special needs and other diverse learners; and Politique d'aménagement linguistique at French-language school boards.

Professional Activity (PA) Days for Greater Student Achievement

In 1997, the previous government reduced the number of professional activity days from nine to four. In other provinces, the average number of PA days is 9.

Most teacher development already happens on a teacher's own time - either after school hours or over the summer. Effectively, four days out of 194 in the school year do not allow principals and teachers enough opportunity to engage in shared problem solving, team learning and learning the latest teaching techniques to improve student achievement. Development is not just acquiring knowledge or teaching skills, but sustaining motivation and innovation as well.

Provisions that restrict the number of PA days to a maximum of four per school year are now to be repealed. The government intends to add two more PA days through regulation, bringing the total to six annually. The government has the authority to determine the purpose of PA days. This will be established in regulation on the basis of the government's education priorities.

The government is continuing to invest in teachers' ongoing professional

development with summer institutes and training programs throughout the year focused on literacy, numeracy and student success in high school.

New Board and Ministry Responsibilities

To support the government's ability to ensure confidence in public education, the ministry has identified areas of key provincial interest, such as class size, fiscal responsibility, improvements in literacy and numeracy and safe schools.

The legislation, now passed, permits regulations to clarify ministry and board responsibility related to those goals, particularly concerning student performance. It enables the ministry to set provincial outcomes and require boards to meet those outcomes. Specific outcomes may be set in regulation after significant consultation between the ministry and school boards.

This legislation enables clear setting of ministry expectations and provides school boards with flexibility when implementing provincial initiatives.

The government has the authority to act when a board makes a decision that might raise concerns about its financial management, or involves the violation or potential violation of a board's obligation regarding matters of key provincial interest that are prescribed in regulation. Previously established arbitrary and punitive measures that personally penalized trustees who failed to comply with directions, orders or decisions of the Minister are repealed.

The government intends to establish a Standing Committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of provincial funding.

Learning for More Students Through Virtual Technology

The act gives school boards the authority to provide instruction by electronic means to students not present in the classroom.

Delete Statutory Workload Minimums for Teachers

The act removes teacher workload minimums from legislation and provides authority to address the issue in regulation, working to enhance student achievement and address teacher workload issues.

Term of Teacher Collective Agreements

The Education Amendment Act, 2005, repealed previous legislation and provided for the negotiation of two- or four-year teacher collective agreements. The government also announced measures to encourage longer-term contracts, including salary increases, investments to support student success and provincial dialogues on workload issues. The act allows the extension of teacher collective agreements beginning September 1, 2004, from two-year to four-year terms.

Class Size

The act also repeals sections of the Education Act relating to class size limits and replaces it with the authority to make regulations governing class

size that support phased implementation of the government's primary class size initiative and other measures.

Partnership in Education Based on Respect

The Ontario College of Teachers as a True Professional Body

The McGuinty government believes it is time to revitalize and depoliticize the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) as a true professional body. Teachers deserve the privilege of self-regulation. The benefits of a successful College to Ontario students should be obvious: highly skilled, motivated teachers who are held in high regard by the public at large.

The amendments to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, change the governance structure of the OCT to depoliticize the College and, along with complementary amendments to the College regulations, have a majority of classroom teachers on its council. In return for teachers having the privilege and responsibility of self-regulation, we are strengthening the College's duty to serve the public interest.

Changes resulting from the amendments to the Act and the regulations include:

- Adding six elected teacher positions to the OCT's Council - normalizing the College by having self-regulation by the professionals it represents
- Ensuring that all teacher representatives on the Council are working classroom teachers
- Establishing provisions that would prohibit Council membership for representatives of specific organizations
- Creating a new Public Interest Committee of non-OCT members to advise the College Council on matters relating to the Council's duty to serve the public interest
- Every Council member having a duty to serve and protect the public interest, and before taking up office, swear an oath
- Reducing the maximum number of years that a member can serve on Council from ten to seven consecutive years, increasing turnover and bringing new and different ideas and perspectives
- Ensuring an open, fair and transparent elections process that will increase voter participation and encourage teachers to play an active part in the governance and regulation of their profession
- Affirming the College's duty to ensure its registration process is fair and transparent.

These measures are among the strongest conflict of interest provisions of any professional college in Ontario and none of them existed under the previous government.

Under the previous government, the College of Teachers was unduly politicized - with negative results. In the last College election, a mere four per cent of teachers bothered to cast a vote, the second consecutive decline in voter turnout, indicating a profound loss of confidence by teachers themselves in the College.

These amendments support the government's "Excellence for All" commitment to "turn the Ontario College of Teachers into a professional body that sets

the highest standards for the profession and earns the respect of teachers and parents."

Empowering Student Trustees

As a first step in ongoing student trustee development, the student trustee section of the act, when proclaimed in force, will provide student trustees with a variety of rights, including an honorarium, equal access to all board resources and the same right to attend trustee training opportunities as board members. This supports the government's commitment to address the Ontario Student Trustees' Association recommendation to empower student representatives on school boards.

The government is also making a new proposal for discussion on Student Engagement, touching on character education and citizenship values, the ability for students to influence their school environment and new models for student trustees. Several options on how to achieve more relevance for student trustees will be provided, including potential future voting privileges.

Increasing Trustee Remuneration

Trustees' hard work and contribution towards increased student success has resulted in a productive environment of peace and stability, and school progress through improved student achievement and improved services. Trustees' capacity to undertake their role is an important ingredient in successful education improvement.

When proclaimed in force, the trustee remuneration provisions in the act will:

- Permit school boards to set trustee compensation up to provincial limits that will be set in regulation, in line with school boards elsewhere in Canada
- Grant authority for regulations to provide a retroactive increase to trustees' honoraria for the current school year and permit the government to require a process to assist boards to set compensation
- Eliminate paternalistic and arbitrary personal penalties for trustees enacted by the previous government.

Openness to the Public

Public Reporting

The act also gives the ministry the ability to require school boards to publish reports respecting their compliance with specific operational requirements that will be set out in regulation, fostering greater public accountability and openness in education.

Community Use of Schools

The act expands the minister's authority to make ministry grants to enhance community use of schools.