



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE Report No. 18-108

17 October 2018

Consultations on Education Reform in Ontario

Key Contact: Michèle Giroux, Executive Officer, Corporate Services, 613-596-8211 ext. 8310

PURPOSE:

1. To provide a status update to PIC members of the provincial consultations on education reform in Ontario and discuss how the Committee might advise the Board on this issue and any possible contribution to the consultation by PIC.

CONTEXT:

2. In July 2018, Premier Doug Ford promised to consult parents in Ontario on a number of education issues, including changes to the health and physical education curriculum. The consultation, launched on 28 September 2018, asks for participants' input on the following seven key areas:
 1. Improving Ontario students' performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM);
 2. Preparing students with job skills, including skilled trades or fields, such as coding;
 3. Graduating students with life skills like financial literacy;
 4. Providing age-appropriate health and physical education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sex-education, and legalization of cannabis
 5. Improving standardized testing;
 6. Banning cellphone use in the classroom; and
 7. Developing a parents' bill of rights.

The OCDSB wants to ensure parents are aware of the consultation and have opportunity to participate and has therefore made information on the consultation available through the following channels:

- School Council Newsletter, sent weekly to all school councils;
- Keeping You Connected, sent to all parents;
- District website;
- Staff portal;
- Schools websites; and

- Social media.

Guiding Question: Are there other mechanisms or strategies that the District could use to support or encourage OCDSB parent engagement in this process?

CONSIDERATIONS:

Online Submissions

3. Parents can make a submission until 15 December 2018. While there are three means to make a submission (i.e., an online submission form, an online survey, and telephone town halls), the only available means as of 10 October 2018 is the Ministry's online submission form (Appendix A). The form has a prescribed format and includes the following questions:
 - Are you a... [Please select all that apply]
 - Parent or guardian
 - Adult with no children
 - Student attending an elementary (K-8) or secondary (9-12) school
 - Educator, early childhood educator, principal, vice principal
 - Employer
 - Other
 - Are you a parent with school-age children?
 - Are you a student currently attending an elementary (K-8) or secondary school (9-12)?
 - What are the first 3 characters of your postal code?
 - If you are a member of a stakeholder group interested in Ontario's education system, please describe: (maximum 500 words)
 - How should we improve student performance in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)? (maximum 500 words)
 - How should our schools prepare students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding? (maximum 500 words)
 - What measures can be taken to improve provincial standardized testing? (maximum 500 words)
 - What more can be done to ensure students graduate high school with important life skills, including financial literacy? (maximum 500 words)
 - What steps could schools take to ban cellphone use in the classroom? (maximum 500 words)
 - How can we build a new age-appropriate health and physical education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis? (maximum 500 words)
 - What elements should be included in a Ministry of Education parents' bill of rights? (maximum 500 words)
 - Do you have any other feedback or ideas? (maximum 500 words)

Parents may also email a written submission to fortheparents@ontario.ca.

Guiding Question: Does PIC want to make a submission to the Ministry? While all questions might be of interest, this Committee may be best positioned to discuss in detail the elements of a Parents' Bill of Rights.

Health and Physical Education Curriculum

The Ministry of Education released an interim elementary Health and Physical Education Curriculum to be taught in 2018-2019 school year until a revised curriculum based on the consultations is issued. The interim curriculum was last taught in 2014 and it includes content for all strands and topics, including mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis, with the exception of the Growth and Development component of the Healthy Living strand, which is taken from the 1998 curriculum. Secondary students will continue to learn the 2015 curriculum.

While gender identity and sexual orientation are no longer explicit in the interim elementary curriculum, the District strives to maintain a safe and caring environment for all students regardless of their sexual orientation or sexual identity and will continue to celebrate the diversity of its student population. Schools will continue to support the development of trans-inclusive student alliances and actions that create awareness about and seek to end, transphobia, gender stereotypes, and gender-based violence.

The Board of Trustees' 26 July 2018 letter to the Minister of Education is attached as Appendix B.

Parents' Bill of Rights

The Government has described the development of parents' bill of rights as a mechanism "to ensure that the rights of parents are respected throughout and following the education reform process". The Minister of Education announced that she intends to use her authority under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* to strike a Public Interest Committee that will help inform the creation of the parents' bill of rights to ensure curriculum-based misconduct issues are fairly dealt with at the Ontario College of Teachers.

Currently, there are three mechanisms that are already in place to report and resolve complaints regarding teacher conduct: the OCDSB Complaints Resolution Policy; the Ontario Ombudsman's Office; and the Ontario college of Teachers. The new Government has recently created a fourth mechanism, Fortheparents.ca, where parents can anonymously report concerns against College members, and is asking parents to contribute to the consultation process and provide insights on what should be included in the parents' bill of rights.

Guiding Question: How can we optimize existing infrastructure and/or opportunities to encourage parents to participate in this process?

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

4. The guiding questions proposed herein aim at eliciting ideas from PIC members on how the Committee can put its purpose and mandate to practice with respect to the government consultation. According to Ontario Regulation 330/10 and PIC By-Laws and Standing Rules, the Committee shall encourage and enhance parent engagement through advising the Board on strategies that could be used

to effectively communicate with the parents of the District. As this provincial consultation has been undertaken by the Ontario Government, neither PIC nor the OCDSB are positioned to consult with parents and make a submission on their behalf. Rather, PIC could make a submission solely on behalf of its members, or seek other options to influence this process which may best meet the needs and nature of the Committee.

Guiding Question: Considering the time of the Committee, does PIC prefer making a submission or sending a direct letter to the Minister?

Guiding Question: Does PIC prefer sending a letter on behalf of its members or requesting the Board to send a letter on its behalf and providing some guidance on elements to include in the letter?

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5. The provincial consultation on education reform in Ontario does not have any resource implications on PIC's annual budget.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. PIC's contribution in this process, whether through a submission, a letter to the Minister, or through encouraging parents' participation in the process, leverages an engagement culture whereby parents can have direct input into their children's education and well-being in support of the OCDSB's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

Michèle Giroux
Executive Officer,
Corporate Services

Jennifer Adams
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Ministry of Education Online Submission Form
Appendix B: The Board of Trustees' Letter to the Minister of Education

Open Submission: Education in Ontario

Please share your thoughts on all or some of our consultation themes by completing and submitting this form.

Closing date: December 15, 2018

First, tell us about yourself

Are you a... [Please select all that apply]

- ☐ Parent or guardian
- ☐ Adult with no children
- ☐ Student attending an elementary (K-8) or secondary (9-12) school
- ☐ Educator, early childhood educator, principal, vice principal
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Other

Are you a parent with school-age children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Are you a student currently attending an elementary (K-8) or secondary school (9-12)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

What are the first 3 characters of your postal code?

If you are a member of a stakeholder group interested in Ontario's education system, please describe: (maximum 500 words)

How should we improve student performance in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)? (maximum 500 words)

How should our schools prepare students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding? (maximum 500 words)

What measures can be taken to improve provincial standardized testing? (maximum 500 words)

What more can be done to ensure students graduate high school with important life skills, including financial literacy? (maximum 500 words)

What steps could schools take to ban cellphone use in the classroom? (maximum 500 words)

How can we build a new age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis? (maximum 500 words)

What elements should be included in a Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights? (maximum 500 words)

Do you have any other feedback or ideas? (maximum 500 words)



Your privacy matters

By participating in the consultation through the online survey, the open submission form, the education feedback form or by email to fortheparents@ontario.ca you may be sharing personal information with the Ministry of Education (Ministry).

The Ministry of Education is collecting your personal information under the authority of paragraphs 2, 3, and 5 of subsection 8.1(1) of the *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2.

The Ministry may use any personal information that you submit through the online survey, the open submission form, the education feedback form or by email to fortheparents@ontario.ca, including, but not limited to, your personal opinions and views, name, email address, and IP address, for the purpose of education policy development including curriculum development, program and service planning, evaluation, and resource allocation as well as research and statistical activity related to education. The Ministry may also use your personal information to contact you to clarify your answers, to ask for further information or to inform you of additional opportunities to participate in consultation on the development of education policy. The Ministry will not disclose your personal information for any purpose, unless required by law.

If you have questions about the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information please contact:

Director, Incubation and Design Branch
Ministry of Education
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2
Email: publiceducation@ontario.ca

For more information on protecting your personal information, please visit our [privacy statement](#).

Submit

Updated: October 9, 2018



Office of the Chair of the Board

26 July 2018

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson:

Across Ontario, there is considerable confusion regarding provincial direction on the Health and Physical Education curriculum. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has been actively monitoring this issue while affording the new government time to clarify its position. However, the time for clarity is now.

In response to community concerns, our trustees and staff have reinforced that the OCDSB remains very strongly committed to equity and providing classrooms that are a welcoming environment for all students, including LGBTQ+ students. Our priorities have not changed in terms of ensuring the voices and perspectives of *ALL* students and parents are heard and respected. We believe that the 2015 curriculum provides important learning opportunities for students about healthy relationships, consent, online safety, and mental health – issues that are quite different in today's society than in 1998.

We urge the government to clarify curriculum expectations for September 2018. Our students deserve a curriculum that meets current learning needs and is supported by appropriate and responsive learning materials in support of student health and wellness. Our teachers need time to plan with the curriculum for the school year. Our parents need to understand how this will be managed at school so that they can make decisions about how they can best support their child's learning on these topics at home.

Your government has indicated that further consultation will be undertaken in this area. We urge you to initiate that consultation immediately so that Ontarians can be heard and multiple curriculum changes can be avoided. We would be happy to share the details of your consultation with our community so that parents, students, staff or any member of the City of Ottawa can participate and/or share their perspective on this important issue with their Member of Provincial Parliament or the Minister of Education.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Shirley Seward,
Chair, Board of Trustees
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

c.c. Hon. Lisa McLeod, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nepean
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Member of Provincial Parliament, Kanata-Carleton
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Member of Provincial Parliament, Ottawa-Vanier
Marie-France Lalonde, Member of Provincial Parliament, Orleans
Jeremy Roberts, Member of Provincial Parliament, Ottawa West – Nepean
Goldie Ghamari, Member of Provincial Parliament, Carleton
Joel Harden, Member of Provincial Parliament, Ottawa-Centre
John Fraser, Member of Provincial Parliament, Ottawa South
Amanda Simard, Member of Provincial Parliament, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell