

Synopsis of the Ministry of Education Consultation Paper on Provincial Interest Regulations

Have your say by Aug. 31st deadline

Ministry of Education consultations on new standards for school boards were announced at the end of June, they're happening over the summer, and they have no public component. But anyone can answer the Ministry questions in the consultation documents. [Just click here to read the whole document.](#)

Among other things, new regulations will give any Minister of Education the right to intervene or even take over a school board if it doesn't live up to a prescribed set of educational responsibilities.

The consultation (which started on June 30 and ends August 31st) covers two main areas: School Board progress as described in what will now be mandatory Annual Reports, and the Minister's right to intervene.

SCHOOL BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS

The document suggests school boards should use the following indicators to report on progress in their annual reports:

- **Student outcomes** – EQAO results in Grade 3, 6 and 9; credit accumulation in Grades 9 and 10; and, beginning in 2011, graduation rates
- **Student well-being** – measured by suspension rates, truancy, bullying, evidence of student engagement, results of school climate surveys etc.
- **Effective stewardship** – balanced budget, appropriate allocation of resources to support student achievement (*where does that leave the arts and phys ed, one wonders, ed.*) compliance with trustee code of conduct (as set out in Bill 177), ability to meet the capital plan, collaborative relationship with coterminous boards etc.
- **Effective and appropriate education programs**– including specialized high school majors, co-op, dual credit and the level of enrolment in them, success rates in special education and ESL
- **Encouragement of students to pursue educational goals** – a description of educational supports and the level of usage of the supports (e.g. guidance)
- **Communication** – circulation of multi-year plans, meetings with Parent Involvement Committee, relations with staff groups, grievances etc.
- **Encourage parent involvement** – communications with school councils, parents and the public; board response to recommendations from school councils; and Parent Involvement Committee activities
- **Promote health of students** – policies and practices on healthy schools; Daily Physical Activity etc.
- **Promote the safety of board students and staff** - rate of suspensions etc.; compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Act

QUESTIONS:

- Are these the right factors for the annual reports to address, and are there issues left out?
- Are the indicators the Ministry provides sufficient for an assessment of each of the goals?
- Should boards be required to report on all indicators in each annual report?
- Should the Ministry of Education be required to provide support in areas where boards have difficulty meeting goals (*e.g. specialty high school programs, physical education, provision of guidance counsellors*)?
- Will boards be required to produce these reports along with all the other reports for the Ministry, or will the reporting requirements be combined?

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MINISTRY INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOL BOARDS

The Ministry document suggests a set of "triggers" that would lead to an intervention or takeover of a school board.

The suggested triggers:

- A board fails to develop and make public an annual report which includes all the information prescribed by the Ministry of Education.
- A board fails to meet its goals for student success as outlined in their multi-year plan.
- A board has 40% or more of its schools in the bottom 20% of the schools in the province based on EQAO Grades 3 and 6 scores in reading, writing and math.
- A board has 40% or more of schools with 35% or more students that earned less than 8 credits in Grade 9, and 40% or more of schools with 35% or more student that earned less than 8 credits in Grade 10. *(it's important to note here that currently across the province, 33% of students have fewer than 16 credits by the end of grade 10, so this could be a very easily triggered event – particularly in schools with a high number of student taking Applied courses, which have a much higher failure rate. Ed.)*

QUESTIONS:

- Are these appropriate triggers?
- Are there other triggers that could be used to identify problems in a board?
- Student success is defined solely by EQAO results in reading, writing and math in Grade 3, 6 and 9; and by credit accumulation in grades 9 and 10. Is this an appropriate definition? Are there other indicators of student success?

The steps for intervention include:

1. The Ministry writes to the board with specific concerns.
2. The Ministry meets with the board
3. The Ministry recommends a course of action, which may include recommendations for things like a new multi-year plan, an external review of the board, the appointment of an "assistance team", the appointment of an investigator, the supervision of the board (which gives the Minister full power over the board).
4. The Minister of Education appoints a supervisor for the board and the board is no longer independent.

QUESTIONS:

- Is the proposed graduated mechanism of interventions reasonable and appropriate?
- Are there other steps that should be considered?

HAVE YOUR SAY

Other organizations have already expressed grave concerns about the Bill and about the regulations. It's important that the Minister and the Ministry of Education hear from a broad cross-section of people. We know lots of people aren't thinking about education in the summer, but the deadline is August 31st to have your voice heard on the issue.

Submit your responses by August 31st to:

Margot Trevelyan, Director, Labour Relations and Governance Branch,
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block, M7A 1L2 or email Margot.Trevelyan@ontario.ca

Please send us a copy of your response info@peopleforeducation.com