



Welcome back message from Anne Vinet-Roy, OTF President



I hope you enjoyed a wonderful and well-deserved summer holiday and that you have had a successful start to the new school year. As a teacher myself, I always find the first weeks extremely busy and challenging, but also filled with excitement, optimism, and promise.

As always, teachers, and education in general, will face many challenges once again this year.

On our radar are the recent announcements concerning classroom cell phone usage and the somewhat revised Health and Physical Education curriculum. The government's new Code of Conduct for students provides some exceptions for cellphone use, rather than imposing an outright ban, and the revised Health and Physical Education curriculum mostly goes back to what was in place in 2015, with some exceptions and some additions.

On the assessment side of learning, the recent EQAO math results should not be addressed through knee-jerk reactions and ill-conceived policy decisions, such as a math competency test for new teachers. Evidence and research do not support the premise that a test for teachers either improves teachers' math competency or that it leads to better student outcomes in math.

One of the best ways for parents to seek insights about their children's progress has always been directly from their teachers, who are far better placed to assess student progress than a one-time, standardized test.

As we greet this new school year, it's worth reminding ourselves that the work of teachers and other educators has a profound impact on students' lives. With this in mind, we urge the government to commit to working with all stakeholders (parents, administrators, teachers and their federations) to ensure that we keep building on Ontario's earned reputation as one of the best publicly funded education systems in the world.

OTF will continue to work with our partners to champion what is best for teachers and students.