

On the road to the privatization of publicly funded education

It's time for a U-turn

Remember when the Ford government proposed four mandatory online credits for secondary graduation, then amidst the furor and outcry, it backtracked to two? Following on the heels of that decision, in its omnibus Bill 196, the Ford government coyly expanded the mandate of the respected public broadcasters, TVO and Groupe Média TFO to develop online courses. Yes, they're public institutions charged with serving the publicly funded education system. That's what's insidiously strategic.

Ford is using public institutions as camouflage to chip away at the publicly funded education system. Similarly, couched as a way to

Online learning



address emergency (read "temporary") remote distance learning during the pandemic, TVO launched its TVOLearn platform, a warehouse of virtual courses for all grades for the 2020-2021 school year. Meanwhile, this fall and winter, the government's in-name-only arms-length agency, the EQAO, issued tenders for private, for-profit vendors to develop the next generation of its digital assessment platforms.

Any one of the government's or public agencies' forays might be concerning. Taken together, all these policies and initiatives are alarming and appear to point to a concerted effort to whittle away at publicly funded education and undermine public confidence in its effectiveness. Why try to diminish Ontario's world recognized reputation for a vigorous publicly funded education system unless it is busy paving a new road that ends with private education.

It's time for a full stop and U-turn!

