

Despite objections, Minister Lecce goes ahead with Math Proficiency Test for beginning teachers

Statement by Parker Robinson, OTF President

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) is appalled by Minister Lecce's decision to require beginning teachers to write the ill-conceived and meaningless Math Proficiency Test (MPT).

Ontario's beginning teachers have rallied to answer the desperate cry of schools across the province to step up to the plate and help manage the current crisis faced by our students and parents. Despite this, Minister of Education Lecce has stubbornly pressed forward with requiring newly graduated teachers to write a meaningless math test.

For well over a year, OTF and other experts in education have pleaded with the Minister to step back from requiring our newest teachers to write the MPT. Even the province's own testing agency, the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), is on record as stating that there is no empirical evidence that such tests lead to improved student outcomes. Last year, the Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council (OTCC) launched a legal challenge against the MPT and the matter is currently before the courts. For its part, OTF has written repeatedly to the Minister, attesting to why the MPT is ill-conceived and should not be pursued—especially not at this critical juncture, when our beginning teachers should be supported in concentrating all their efforts on serving the needs of Ontario students. In November 2019, OTF provided the Minister with its position paper, *A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test for Beginning Teachers*,

offering a strong rationale for why the MPT should be abandoned, but to no avail. This Minister refuses to listen to reason.

What is most insulting about the announcement by Minister Lecce is his insistence that there is a teacher shortage in this province while, at the same time, creating a potential new barrier to alleviating that shortage. OTF estimates that as many as 5,700 to 6,700 beginning teachers are now being expected to take the test between May 10 and August 31, 2021 or they will not be permitted to teach. Of these, approximately 3,000 already hold teaching certificates and are currently teaching in our schools. Most beginning teachers in Ontario have six years of university education under their belts and the Deans of Education have attested to the Ontario College of Teachers that they have met the requirements to be licensed to teach. Who is the Minister to put this rigorous preparation of teachers in doubt?

OTF once again urges Minister Lecce to step back from the MPT. We cannot see how placing this additional burden on beginning teachers will serve the best interests of Ontario's students.