

For immediate release

## A formula for systemic failure: Ontario's Math Proficiency Test marked with serious flaws

**TORONTO, May 4, 2026**—Through a *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) request, the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) recently obtained, from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), the results of the first four test administration windows (fall 2024, and winter, spring and fall 2025) of the Math Proficiency Test (MPT).

The MPT became a mandatory certification requirement for all teachers who graduate from a pre-service teacher education program in Ontario as of February 1, 2025. The MPT requires all prospective teachers to pass both a mathematics knowledge portion and a pedagogy (teaching) portion.

Results to date are alarming, most notably because of the clear disparities in success rates based on the *language, race* and *age* of test takers. Research has repeatedly shown that large-scale, high-stakes standardized testing discriminates against people from diverse backgrounds, a fact substantiated by the MPT results. Teacher candidates from equity-deserving and minority language groups are disproportionately disadvantaged by this test. It cannot be overemphasized that the MPT results do not in any way represent the true competencies of Ontario's teacher candidates. The results are a clear indictment of the flawed testing instrument, not the test takers.

**Language:** French-language test takers were far less likely to pass than English-language test takers on the first attempt (71% vs. 44%) and on subsequent attempts (88% vs. 71% on the fourth attempt). In essence, the MPT disproportionately delays and obstructs the hiring of French-language teachers at a time when Ontario needs more French-language educators.

**Race:** The MPT results show substantial and troubling racial disparities. White candidates passed on the first attempt at nearly double the rate of Black candidates. After three attempts, 92% of white candidates passed, whereas only 64% of Black candidates did. Moreover, fewer than 10 Black candidates opted to attempt the MPT for a fourth or fifth time. In addition, Black candidates were nearly three times as likely as white candidates to be unsuccessful on the pedagogy component of the test. There is also significant disparity between the success rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous test takers.

**Age:** The results also show a strong age-related bias. Candidates aged 40 and older had a first attempt pass rate a full 31 percentage points lower than candidates under 25. In addition, there is an 11% gap in success rates among those aged 30–34 compared to those under 25 years old. The MPT disproportionately burdens mature candidates and second-career teachers, a group who could help address recruitment and retention issues in areas such as Technological Education and Business Studies.

“The data emerging from the MPT results simply confirms our worst fears from 2019 when the Ford government floated this new testing regime,” states OTF President Chris Cowley. “The MPT represents a serious education policy misstep that unnecessarily blocks the doorway to the teaching profession.”

In its 2019 paper, [A Recipe for Failure: The Math Proficiency Test for Beginning Teachers](#), OTF and its Affiliates advanced an evidence-based rationale for why the MPT should be abandoned. In addition, a literature review by the province’s own testing agency revealed a weak link between teacher testing and student outcomes. Furthermore, the Ontario Divisional Court ruled, during a 2021 court challenge, that the MPT was discriminatory and, therefore, unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the government of Ontario elected to appeal the lower court’s decision and pursued implementation of the MPT.

“The Ford government deliberately doubled down on a test it knew would likely have disproportionate impacts and lead to uneven outcomes,” asserts Cowley.

The MPT represents one more unnecessary barrier delaying teacher certification at a time when Ontario’s publicly funded education system is already struggling with a teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Instead of a flawed test, tomorrow’s teachers would be best served by authentic learning opportunities about effective mathematics pedagogy during their pre-service programs, an approach that many Faculties of Education already had in place before the MPT was ever conceived.

*The Ontario Teachers’ Federation is the advocate for the teaching profession in Ontario and for its 160,000+ teachers. OTF members are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all publicly funded schools in the province—elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and the French-language system.*

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