

MEDIA RELEASE

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OSSTF/FEESO calls for student supports and professional judgement to remain at the centre of education policy

TORONTO, ON — The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) believes that Ontario's students deserve the supports, staffing, and learning conditions they need to succeed. Unfortunately, today's announcement suggests that student success is best pursued through increased screen time and standardization rather than through improvements in the supports and classroom conditions that have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

"Teachers welcome tools that help support student learning, but student success depends on much more than a digital platform," said OSSTF/FEESO President Martha Hradowy. "Students need access to qualified teachers, education workers, timely supports, safe learning environments, and the individual attention that helps them succeed."

Today's announcement raises questions about the government's continued expansion of digital learning initiatives while maintaining mandatory e-learning requirements for secondary students.

"If the government is concerned about student engagement, attendance, and reducing distractions, it must recognize the contradiction in continuing to require students to complete online courses," said Hradowy. "Online learning should remain an option for students who choose it, but mandatory e-learning continues to move students away from the classroom and increases time spent on screens."

OSSTF/FEESO is also concerned about new mandatory assessment and grading requirements for Grades 9 to 12, which establish more prescriptive provincewide rules around student assessment, evaluation, and final grades. Ontario students are not all the same, and effective teaching cannot be reduced to a one-size-fits-all provincial template. Meaningful assessment must provide students with equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning and allow educators the flexibility to respond to diverse student needs.

"Teachers are highly trained professionals who assess student learning every day," said Hradowy. "While consistency is important, decisions about assessment and evaluation should reflect the professional judgement of educators who know their students and understand their learning needs. Consistency should never come at the expense of the flexibility educators need to support students with different strengths, challenges, and learning needs."

OSSTF/FEESO is also concerned that increasingly prescriptive assessment requirements may create new barriers for some students and limit educators' ability to use assessment methods that are appropriate for different courses, learning styles, and student circumstances.

It is troubling that significant changes to classroom resources, assessments, and evaluation are being announced just days before the end of the school year, with little time for consultation, training, or implementation before students return to classrooms in September.

The government has increasingly relied on provincewide directives, standardized requirements, and centralized approaches to education policy. OSSTF/FEESO believes strongly that improving student achievement requires meaningful investments in student supports, smaller class sizes, safer schools, and the professional expertise of teachers and education workers.

“Student success is built through relationships, supports, and professional expertise,” concluded Hradowy. “Technology can be a useful tool, but it cannot replace the conditions students need to learn and thrive.”

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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