

**Ministry of Education**

Minister

315 Front Street West  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Ministre

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**Memorandum to:** Chairs of District School Boards  
Directors of Education  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

**From:** Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education

**Subject:** **Strengthening Academic Achievement and Transparency**

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I am writing to provide direction on a new policy to enhance transparency and communication with parents regarding guest speakers and materials shared in schools. Moreover, I am outlining the topics for the ministry's three mandatory Professional Activity (PA) Days for the 2024-25 school year. It is my expectation that school boards will fully follow the provincial priorities specified in O. Reg. 224/23 to improve student achievement to boost reading, writing, math and STEM skills.

**Guest Speakers in Schools**

Effective at the start of the 2024-25 school year, to support increased transparency for parents and guardians, the ministry will require schools to provide detailed notice in advance to parents and guardians whenever guest speakers are invited into their schools, along with sharing details of any handout materials, give-aways, or literature. This policy is designed to respond to parents who feel that communication between schools and homes is not robust enough, with information often being shared with families only after parents inquire. The government believes strongly that all guest speakers must directly connect with the Ontario curriculum. Boards must comply with the Education Act as the government insists upon the return to student academic achievement with a 'back to basics' emphasis.

This will provide more information to parents and guardians as to what their children are learning and experiencing during the regular school day including connections to the curriculum and/or purpose of the activity. Additional details on the requirements can be found in the attached communication Parent Accountability and Transparency: Communication Requirements for Guest (Third Party) Speakers and Presentations in Ontario Schools. This is foundational to strengthening public confidence in schools and enhancing transparency for parents.

## **PA Day Topics**

The mandatory PA Day topics, as well as guidance on guest speakers in schools, have been designed to bring greater transparency and align with the following provincial priorities:

1. Achievement of learning outcomes in core academic skills.
2. Preparation of students for future success.
3. Student engagement and well-being.

The mandatory PA Day topics for the 2024-25 school year are intended to support educators so that they are prepared to address the province's priorities through the following learning objectives (see attachment 2 for detailed descriptions on the mandatory PA Day topics):

<b>Provincial Priorities on Student Achievement</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<b>Mandatory PA Day Topics</b>
Achievement of learning outcomes in core academic skills	Support educators to be able to prepare all students to succeed in core academic skills, focusing on reading, writing and math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy</li><li>• Mathematics</li></ul>
Preparation of students for future success	Ensure educators understand key curriculum expectations with a focus on STEM and guidance counsellors remain current on career education so they can provide all students with the skills needed to succeed in life, including in the skilled trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curriculum implementation with an emphasis on literacy and STEM</li><li>• Guidance and career education</li></ul>
Student engagement and well-being	Ensure educators have the skills needed to support all students, with emphasis on classroom management to remove distractions, increase student well-being and to ensure learning leads to higher graduation rates, higher learning and improved employment rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mental health</li><li>• Cell phones and vaping</li><li>• Bullying and school safety</li></ul>

PA Day activities/learning from staff must also consider how to support all students in connection with the provincial priorities and the three mandatory PA Days.

These days should be scheduled in compliance with and reflect commitments agreed to in collective agreements (both central and local terms). Attachment 3 provides a summary of the PA Day terms of the 2022-26 central terms with teacher federations and education workers (EW) unions and its alignment with provincial priorities on student achievement.

As a reminder, school boards are required to submit a general outline of their PA Day activities through the [OSYC application](#) no later than August 15, 2024. School boards are also required to publicly post and submit to the ministry a detailed summary of PA Day activities at least 14 days in advance of each PA Day in accordance with amendments to *Regulation 304, School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days* – along with changes consistent with the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act* to increase transparency. The detailed summary must include the date, timing, topic and format of the activities, the name of the individual or organization facilitating the activities, learning and delivery methods, content, presenter(s), and titles and publication information of any resources that will be used as part of the activities. Further direction will be provided before the start of the 2024-25 school year regarding the revised process to submit detailed summaries to the Ministry through the OSYC application.

Training and professional activity days are designed to elevate learning in an intentional and constructive tone. School boards are required to scrutinize the facilitators and all learning materials used on PA Days, so that boards have certainty on how the learning activities and the actual facilitator's expertise is directly linked to the Ontario curriculum, ensuring it meets transparency measures in line with the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*. School boards must also ensure they respect intellectual diversity and open dialogue of staff, designed to create school environments that advance freedom of expression, respect for our differences, and the safety of every child from every walk of life.

The ministry will continue to work with school boards and education partners to provide ongoing support that responds to needs that arise as the school year progresses. Before the end of the 2023-24 school year, [PPM 151: Professional Activity Days Devoted to Provincial Education Priorities](#), will be updated to reflect the 2024-25 mandatory PA Day topics.

Your collaboration will enhance the confidence of the families we represent, and greater transparency to parents and guardians.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education

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Attachment 1 - Parent Accountability and Transparency: Communication Requirements for Guest (Third Party) Speakers and Presentations in Ontario Schools

Attachment 2 - Mandatory PA Day Topics for 2024-25 with Detailed Descriptions

Attachment 3 - 2022-26 Central Terms with Teacher Federations and Education Workers Unions

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Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)  
President, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)  
Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)  
President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)  
Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)  
President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)  
Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)  
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)  
President, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)  
Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)  
President, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)  
Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)  
President of OSBCU, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)  
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Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)  
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