

Bill 98, *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*, 2023



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

The bill proposes changes to the *Education Act* including:

- “set(ting) provincial education priorities on student achievement” and requiring school boards to create multi-year plans to meet those priorities. Parents will need to be consulted on the development of their local school board’s plan twice per year and receive progress reports;
- requiring school board trustees and senior officials to undergo provincially mandated training to make sure they have the “skills and competencies” to deliver on the government’s priorities;
- standardizing performance assessments for directors of education;
- establishing a new “impartial integrity commissioner-led process” for Code of Conduct complaints about school board trustees;
- creating a new, faster process for declaring school board land as surplus, and giving the minister the power to direct the sale of surplus land; and
- working with municipalities to help implement the province’s subsidized childcare agreement with the federal government.

OPSBA RECOMMENDS

Local boards are always best equipped to make sound, sustainable, and fiscally responsible local decisions in service of students and the community. This is why we are concerned about the areas of the bill that provide the minister with powers that more appropriately belong at the local level.

Following the passage of the legislation, the minister and ministry must work closely with school boards when developing provincial priorities. With respect to the power of the minister to direct the sale of school board property, as well as the power to intervene in the performance assessment of the Director of Education, the minister must be encouraged to only exercise these powers sparingly, if at all.

Many sections of Bill 98 will require new regulations before coming into force. **OPSBA must be meaningfully consulted early and often during the regulation writing process.** OPSBA will continue to be a collaborative and constructive partner to ensure that together we continually improve Ontario’s world-class education system.

Other areas of Bill 98 that modernize the legislation to reflect practices that are already in place within our member boards are welcome and OPSBA is grateful to the minister for acknowledging the innovation in our boards in areas such as joint use of schools, planning partnerships with municipalities, and protocols for parent and student communications.

OPSBA and our member boards support initiatives that improve student achievement and well-being, that lead to increased public confidence in our world-class public education system. Local school boards play the most direct role in supporting students’ achievement and well-being. Strong local governance, with students at the forefront, is a key part of our 31 member boards’ ongoing success.

QUESTIONS?

- What are some potential local impacts of Bill 98?
- How can school boards and the government work together to improve student success and well-being?



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The Ontario Public School Boards’ Association represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the English public school system in Ontario.