

October 28, 2022

Memorandum to: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Subject: **O. Reg. 463/97 (Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance) – Physical Attendance Requirements**

Over the last several weeks, I have received several requests from Boards to extend or make permanent the suspension of the physical attendance requirements in [O. Reg. 463/97 – Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance](#). Our government acted responsibly and swiftly in putting these temporary measures in place to ensure that board and committee meetings could continue to convene safely as we collectively faced the enormous challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to thank you for sharing your experiences of convening fully electronic meetings during this time, and for bringing to my attention the impact of physical attendance requirements on geographically large, northern and rural boards. I will be directing the Ministry of Education to engage with key education partners and stakeholders to further hear their interest and concerns with respect to potential changes to these requirements. Until we have had that opportunity, please be advised that the physical attendance requirements in the regulation will again apply as of November 15, 2022.

As you know, the reinstated regulation requires that every board have a policy providing for the use of electronic means for holding board and committee meetings. The policy is subject to specific requirements for members of the board to be physically present in the meeting room of the board for at least three (3) regular meetings of the board during each 12-month period beginning November 15, 2022. There is provision in the regulation to permit the chair (or designate) to participate in meetings by electronic means if the distance from the chair's residence to the meeting is 200km or more, or if weather conditions or health-related issues do not permit attendance, as long as the chair is physically present for at least half of the meetings of the board for the year.

Open, accessible public meetings where members of the public, community partners and stakeholders can see, hear or otherwise engage in-person with their representatives is a fundamental part of how Ontario school boards demonstrate transparency and accountability as democratic institutions. We have supported students, families and communities to enable a return to a normal school experience for students, and so too should the requirements for public meetings return to normal while the implications for permanent changes are considered.

Boards are encouraged to review the requirements of the regulation, especially with newly elected trustees so that they are fully aware of their obligations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, once again, for your ongoing commitment and support of Ontario's students, families, educators and our education system.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

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- President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
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- Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)
- Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)
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