

June 17, 2026

OPSBA Submission Regarding the Proposed Regulation under the Education Act Prescribing Qualifications for the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Education Officer

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed regulation establishing qualifications for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Education Officer (CEdO) positions arising from amendments made through the Putting Student Achievement First Act.

OPSBA previously provided comments on the legislative framework and has subsequently sought input from member boards regarding the proposed regulatory requirements.

OPSBA supports the government's objective of strengthening accountability and leadership within Ontario's publicly funded education system. We are pleased that elected trustees retain the role of hiring the Chief Executive Officer and that current Directors of Education will transition into the CEO role, providing continuity and stability across the sector.

Productive, professional, and respectful relationships between trustees and senior administration are foundational to strong governance. Trustees are responsible for both setting strategic direction and ensuring accountability to their communities, while senior leaders are responsible for implementing board priorities in the day-to-day management of the organization. This partnership is fundamental to student success, system improvement, and public confidence in Ontario's education system.

As boards recruit senior leaders, they seek individuals whose skills, experience, and leadership attributes align with local priorities, strategic objectives, and community needs. The appointment of a Chief Executive Officer is among the most significant decisions a board makes and should continue to reflect both provincial expectations and local accountability.

Chief Executive Officer Qualifications

OPSBA supports the establishment of formalized qualifications for the CEO position. The qualification framework should recognize that effective executive leadership is demonstrated through a combination of education, experience, and competencies rather than through narrowly prescribed requirements.

Leading public-sector organizations typically assess executive candidates based on demonstrated leadership capacity, strategic judgment, governance experience, financial oversight, organizational leadership, and the ability to achieve results in complex, public-facing environments.

Recommendations:

- 1) Boards should have flexibility to evaluate candidates based on their overall qualifications, competencies, and demonstrated system-level achievements.
- 2) Executive experience requirements should be framed as demonstrated competencies rather than mandatory experience in every listed area. Requiring candidates to satisfy every qualification may unnecessarily restrict the candidate pool, particularly in rural and northern communities where succession planning challenges are already significant.

- 3) The intended scope of key executive competencies, including budget stewardship, capital infrastructure management, and conflict resolution should be clear and consistent with executive-level accountability and strategic oversight rather than requiring specialized technical expertise or professional accreditation in each area.
- 4) Minimum qualifications should be complemented with the ability of boards to identify additional competencies that reflect local needs and strategic priorities. Boards may reasonably seek additional experience related to governance, board relations, public engagement, Indigenous and community partnerships, organizational culture, change management, and people leadership.

Transition and Implementation Considerations

OPSBA supports the continuation of incumbent Directors of Education in the new CEO role. To support leadership continuity, the regulation could include appropriate transition provisions for individuals whose contracts may be renewed following implementation of the new requirements.

Recommendations:

- 1) Prescribe timelines to allow incumbent leaders to either obtain any newly required qualifications through professional learning, executive development programs, or formal coursework or allow the requirements to be adjusted in exceptional circumstances. Such an approach would minimize disruption to board operations while supporting the government's long-term objectives.
- 2) Provide implementation support to boards and CEOs to ensure a smooth transition and shared knowledge among boards of trustees, CEOs and other senior administrative positions in school boards. Any impact on traditional organizational design for senior administration would benefit from transparency and precision around role definition.

Chief Education Officer Qualifications

OPSBA supports the establishment of qualifications that reflect the educational leadership responsibilities assigned to the CEEdO.

The CEEdO will play a critical role in advancing student achievement and well-being, supporting system improvement, overseeing curriculum implementation, and fostering inclusive learning environments. As such, the position should require significant educational leadership experience and a significant, demonstrated understanding of Ontario's public education system and delivery of K-12 education.

Recommendations:

- 1) The CEEdO should be a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, in good standing. The competencies developed through teaching, school leadership, and system-level educational administration are distinct from those typically acquired in other sectors and are essential to fulfilling the responsibilities of the role.
- 2) The CEO-led recruitment processes for CEEdO's should formally include meaningful participation from individuals with educational leadership expertise to ensure that pedagogical knowledge and student-centred leadership remain central considerations during candidate assessment.

Recruitment and Retention

The proposed leadership model may increase competition for candidates with executive leadership, governance, financial management, and organizational transformation experience from other sectors.

Recommendation:

- 1) Ensure appropriate financial supports are provided to boards to ensure they are able to recruit and retain highly qualified leaders. This is particularly important for boards operating in rural, remote, and northern communities where recruitment challenges are often more pronounced.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountability

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will continue to serve as a visible leader within the broader community and should possess strong communication, relationship-building, and public engagement skills. Effective leadership requires an understanding of local communities, including, but not limited to, Indigenous communities, equity-deserving groups, municipal partners, families, and other education stakeholders.

At the same time, the Chief Education Officer (CEdO) will be responsible for providing educational leadership that advances student achievement and well-being. The effectiveness of the proposed model will depend upon a strong collaborative relationship between these two positions, a shared commitment to board priorities and student success, and clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures.

Recommendations:

- 1) With respect to the positions of CEO and CEdO, provide guidance to boards outlining responsibility and accountability for:
 - Strategic planning and implementation
 - Monitoring and reporting on board performance and outcomes
 - Leadership development and succession planning
 - Student achievement and well-being
 - Equity, inclusion, and safe and supportive learning environments
 - Community engagement and partnership development
 - Organizational culture and workforce leadership
- 2) Although we understand that the position of CEdO reports to the CEO, it is worthwhile to identify areas where responsibility may be shared and provide clarity around decision-making authority.

Conclusion

OPSBA recognizes the government's objective of strengthening leadership and accountability through the delineation of executive and educational leadership functions. To be successful, the new model will require clearly defined roles and responsibilities, strong accountability structures, thoughtful implementation planning, and sufficient flexibility to support recruitment and succession planning across Ontario's diverse school boards.

Above all, governance and leadership structures must continue to place student achievement and well-being at the centre of decision-making. The regulatory framework should enable boards to attract and retain highly qualified leaders with the skills, experience, and judgment necessary to advance educational excellence while responding to the unique needs of their communities.

Furthermore, a robust Ontario educational leadership framework co-developed with system leaders across the sector would assist in a shared understanding of the vision for educational leadership and help drive change more efficiently and effectively across the whole province.



OPSBA's decades of experience in working with local communities to help advance the province's accountability for a world-class public education system has consistently validated that public confidence in Ontario's educational system is highly dependent upon positive and open local public engagement processes with visible democratic accountability where checks and balances are understood and communicated.

OPSBA welcomes opportunities for continued engagement with the Ministry of Education in the finalization of the regulation and its implementation.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve nearly 1.4 million public elementary and secondary students. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on for input and advice on the local impact of government policy directions.