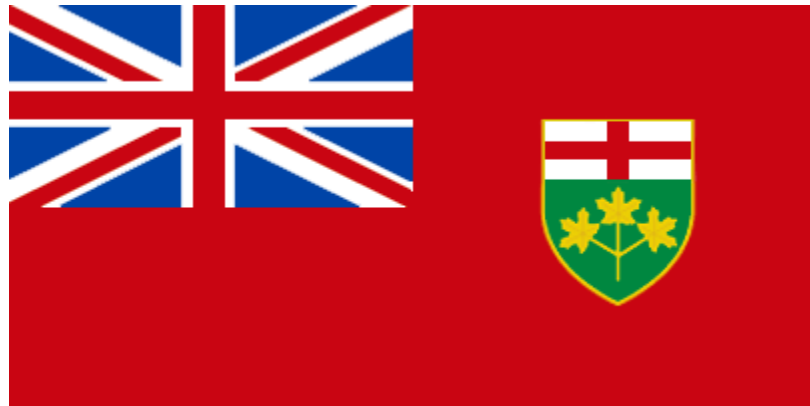


# Teacher Identities and Professionalism Research

## Ontario



### Headline Findings

#### System governed through working in partnership

- ✗ A range of provincial and local organisations hold responsibility for different aspects of the education system, overseen by the Ministry of Education.
- ✗ District school boards and school councils provide governance at a local level.
- ✗ All teachers in publicly funded Ontario schools are members of a teachers' union.

#### A desirable profession

- ✗ Teaching is a **highly regarded career path**, and new teachers are committed to their profession.
- ✗ Low attrition rates among teachers and an increase in graduates have led to an **oversupply of trained teachers**, resulting in a **competitive market**. Close to 1 in 3 teacher education graduates in 2010 were unemployed during their first year.

#### Commitment to supporting & building capacity for CPDL

- ✗ A **variety of professional development opportunities** are available, including additional qualifications, self-selected professional learning, and school- and/or system-directed professional development.
- ✗ There is also a **focus on collaboration and teacher leadership**; the Teacher Learning and Leadership Programme is one example of this.

Priorities and Organisation	Teacher Roles, Recruitment and Retention	Professional Development, Teaching and Learning	Leadership, Accountability and Assessment
<h3>System organisation, funding and governance</h3> <p>There are around 5,000 schools in Ontario, and the majority of students (95%) attend <b>one of the four publicly funded education systems</b>: English Public, English Catholic, French Public and French Catholic.</p> <p>From the ages of 6-18, children are required to stay in school. The four phases of education are primary (grades K-3), junior (grades 4-6), intermediate (grades 7-10) and senior (grades 11-12). Full-day kindergarten is also provided.</p> <p>The governance of the Ontario education system incorporates a range of provincial and local organisations working in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ The <b>Ministry of Education</b> oversees all aspects of the public education system, under the Education Act, including the development of policies and guidelines; allocating funding; establishing the provincial curriculum; and creating lists of approved textbooks and other resources.</li> <li>✗ <b>District school boards (60 English and 12 French)</b> provide local governance for the implementation of Ministry policies, including decisions on how to spend funds; promoting student achievement and wellbeing; developing structures to promote educational goals and monitoring their effectiveness; and establishing a school council at each school. School boards are headed by a Director of Education, and governed by a board of trustees, including students elected by the student body.</li> <li>✗ <b>School councils</b> are local advisory boards made up of students, parents and other community members and school staff. All schools must elect a council at the beginning of the academic year to provide recommendations on school programmes and operations.</li> </ul>	<h3>Teacher Status and Autonomy</h3> <p>According to a public opinion survey conducted every 3 years by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the <b>teaching profession is highly regarded</b> in Ontario. Among parents, satisfaction rates for teacher quality are shown to be close to 80%, and entering into <b>teaching remains a desirable career</b>.</p> <p>All teachers in Ontario's publicly funded schools are required to be members of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF). The core objectives of the OTF are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ to promote and advance the cause of education;</li> <li>✗ to raise the status of the teaching profession;</li> <li>✗ to promote and advance the interests of teachers and to secure conditions that will make possible the best professional service;</li> <li>✗ to arouse and increase public interest in educational affairs;</li> <li>✗ to cooperate with other teachers' organizations throughout the world; and</li> <li>✗ to represent all members of the pension plan.</li> </ul> <p>Members of OTF also become a member of one of four affiliate teacher organizations (unions), depending on the education system in which they are working or affiliated: L'Association des enseignants et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). These organizations represent teachers' voice in educational policy and negotiate working conditions and terms of employment between teachers, the province's 72 school boards and government.</p>	<h3>Professional development and Learning</h3> <p>A key element of Ontario's education strategy and theory of action is a <b>focus on supporting continuing professional learning</b> for new and experienced teachers, and <b>building capacity</b> to do so. The Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group study (2014) indicates that of those surveyed, 40.3% reported taking part in at least 1 professional learning activity during working hours in the last 12 months; close to 50% reported taking part in 2 or more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ A Working Table on Teacher Development, formed in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the teachers' federations, recommended the following guiding principles for the provision of teacher professional learning Coherent</li> <li>✗ Attentive to adult learning styles</li> <li>✗ Goal-orientated</li> <li>✗ Sustainable</li> <li>✗ Evidence-informed</li> </ul> <p>There is a wide <b>variety of professional development opportunities</b> and avenues for support for teachers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Formal additional qualifications (AQs)</li> <li>✗ Provincial learning initiatives and resources</li> <li>✗ Learning led by education organisations, including teachers' unions</li> <li>✗ School board and school-level learning</li> <li>✗ Teacher-directed individual and collaborative professional learning experiences to advance their skills, knowledge and practice</li> </ul> <p>First year teachers in permanent and long term occasional (97+ days) positions are required to participate in the <b>New Teacher Induction Programme (NTIP)</b>: an initiative funded by the Ministry of Education to provide support for new teachers.</p> <p>The NTIP is made up of 3 components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ <b>Orientation</b> to the school and school board</li> <li>✗ A wide array of <b>professional learning opportunities and options</b></li> <li>✗ Ongoing <b>mentoring by experienced teachers</b>. Schools may choose from a range of mentoring models including one-to-one mentoring and small or large group mentoring. The mentoring relationship is intended to be supportive rather than evaluative, and sculpted to suit the needs of the individual teacher. The NTIP provides <b>shared release time</b> for mentors and new teachers, which can be used for co-planning, classroom observation and collaborative assessment of work</li> </ul>	<h3>Collaboration and leadership</h3> <p>The education system in Ontario aims to provide a range of <b>opportunities for collaboration and teacher leadership</b>. In light of perceived concerns about initiative overload, the government and professional associations have co-developed a new policy on ways of working together – <b>Collaborative Professionalism</b> – which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ values all voices and is consistent with our shared responsibility to transform culture and provide equitable access to learning for all;</li> <li>✗ takes place in and fosters a trusting environment that promotes professional learning;</li> <li>✗ involves sharing ideas to achieve a common vision of learning, development and success for all;</li> <li>✗ supports and recognizes formal and informal leadership and learning;</li> <li>✗ includes opportunities for collaboration at provincial, district and school levels;</li> <li>✗ leverages exemplary practices through the communication and sharing of ideas to achieve a common vision.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Teacher Learning and Leadership Programme (TLLP)</b> was launched in 2007, in partnership between the Ministry and OTF, with shared goals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Support teachers who undertake <b>self-directed advanced professional development</b></li> <li>✗ <b>Develop teachers' leadership skills</b> for sharing learning and practice</li> <li>✗ <b>Facilitate knowledge exchange</b> for sustainable development.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers can apply to conduct a TLLP project. Around 100 projects per year are funded; successful applicants receive <b>training and support to implement their professional learning projects</b>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ 'Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers' training</li> <li>✗ Access to 'TeachOntario', an online community for discussion and sharing resources</li> <li>✗ The 'Sharing the Learning Summit' at the end of the project year</li> </ul>
<h3>National Priorities, Cultures and Contexts</h3> <p>Ontario is Canada's <b>most populous province</b>, with a population of over 13.5m. According to the 2011 census, 28.5% of the population were born outside of Canada. English is the official language; French language rights have been extended to legal and educational systems.</p> <p>The student population of Ontario is <b>diverse</b>; around 27% were born outside of Canada. According to the 2011 Census, the 6 languages most commonly spoken at home for 15-19 year olds are English, French, Punjabi, Urdu, Spanish &amp; Arabic.</p> <p>Ontario is recognised as having <b>high levels of both academic achievement and equity</b>. In PISA 2012, Ontario's results were considerably above the OECD average, and displayed a lower than average impact of socioeconomic status on educational outcomes.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education's <b>vision for Achieving Excellence</b> has four priority goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ <b>Achieving Excellence</b></li> <li>✗ <b>Ensuring Equity</b></li> <li>✗ <b>Promoting Well-Being</b></li> <li>✗ <b>Enhancing Public Confidence</b></li> </ul>	<h3>Training, employment and retention</h3> <p>In 2015, significant changes to initial teacher education were implemented, including <b>the introduction of a lengthened, four semester programme</b> and an <b>increased practicum of 80 days</b>.</p> <p>Over the past 10 years, a <b>decline in enrolment numbers</b> combined with an increase in the number of graduates from initial teacher education programmes led to an <b>oversupply of qualified teachers</b>, particularly in elementary schools. However, changes in policy of Initial Teacher Education, supply and places for teachers is resulting in more of a balance between retirements, newly qualified teachers and available places. The Ontario College of Teaching's 2016 Transition to Teaching Survey reported that 52% of first year teachers were in full employment, compared to 28% in 2013. School board hiring practices can be <b>highly selective</b>. In 2012, the government introduced Regulation 274/12 which requires school boards to prioritize seniority in appointment processes. In 2015, only one in five newly qualified teachers secured permanent positions in their first year of teaching.</p> <p>Teachers' salaries in Ontario are calculated using a salary scale system, including factors for <b>educational qualifications</b> and <b>years of teaching experience</b>. In 2016-2017, salaries for Ontario teachers with 5 years of university education <b>ranged from approximately \$48,000 per annum</b> (initial year experience with a degree and</p>	<h3>Pedagogy, Curriculum and Classroom Culture</h3> <p>Responsibility for the <b>development of the standardized Ontario curriculum</b> lies with the <b>Ministry of Education</b>. The Ministry provides <b>curriculum documents</b>, available by phase and subject, which indicate the standard for the <b>knowledge and skills students are expected to develop</b> in each subject at each grade level; there are also a range of supporting resources and materials. The <b>Curriculum Council</b>, comprising community leaders and education experts, provides <b>strategic policy advice</b> to the Ministry.</p> <p>In Ontario, teaching time is required to be <b>no less than 5 hours a day</b>. In primary and junior schools, this is generally <b>divided into blocks</b> depending on subject matter; students</p>	<h3>Accountability and Assessment</h3> <p>Established in 1997, the <b>Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)</b> is responsible for regulating the teaching profession. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Establishing and maintaining <b>Professional Standards of Practice</b>. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Commitment to students and student learning</li> <li>✗ Professional knowledge</li> <li>✗ Professional practice</li> <li>✗ Leadership in learning communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>✗ <b>Ensuring students are taught by skilled teachers</b> who adhere to these standards</li> <li>✗ <b>Accrediting teacher education programmes &amp; courses</b></li> <li>✗ <b>Issuing teaching certificates</b> – it also has the power to suspend or revoke them.</li> <li>✗ <b>Maintaining a register</b> of qualified teachers</li> <li>✗ <b>Investigating complaints</b> against teachers</li> </ul> <p>Also established in 1997, the <b>Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)</b> administers student assessments to every student in Grade 3 and 6 for reading, writing and mathematics, Grade 9 mathematics, and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in Grade 10.</p>

teaching certificate) **to \$96,000 per annum** (10 years' experience with additional qualification courses). In addition to their salary, teachers can also receive allowances for holding additional responsibilities or credentials, such as being a head of subject department.

**Working conditions and teacher workload are areas of concern**, in spite of additional financial and human resources which have been allocated to the education system in recent years in an attempt to allay this. According to a large scale study by the Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group in 2014, of 3,000 teachers surveyed, the average teacher dedicates close to **25 hours to non-teaching tasks per week**, in addition to their 25 hours of classroom teaching.

take a range of subjects throughout the school year, including maths, language, arts, science, social studies, music, French and health and physical education. By comparison, many **intermediate and secondary schools are semesterised**; students take one block of four subjects in the first half of the school year, and another block of four for the second half.

The **Teacher Performance Appraisal system (TPA)** was introduced as a legislative requirement in 2002, and revised in 2007. It is intended to provide teachers with **meaningful appraisals** which **encourage professional growth** and **identify opportunities for additional support** where required. The key components of the TPA are:

- ✗ Classroom observation
- ✗ Pre- and post-observation meetings
- ✗ A summative report

School principals are responsible for the appraisals of their staff, which take place twice in the first year for new teachers and then once every five years for experienced teachers. Teachers are also required to produce an **annual learning plan**, to outline their plans for professional growth.

## Ontario Education System Overview