

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
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de l'Ontario

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Bill 123

**An Act to amend the Education Act to provide for
a maximum indoor temperature and other measures to fight extreme heat**

Co-sponsors:

Ms C. Pasma
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Private Members' Bill

1st Reading May 26, 2026

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill amends the *Education Act* to require school boards to take certain steps with respect to fighting extreme heat levels in school settings. One of the requirements is for boards to develop a heat mitigation strategy for each school, in consultation with the applicable Joint Health and Safety Committees. The Bill requires the Minister of Education to review the boards' heat mitigation strategies at least once every three years and publish reports with respect to the reviews.

An Act to amend the Education Act to provide for a maximum indoor temperature and other measures to fight extreme heat

Preamble

Ontario is experiencing increasingly frequent and intense heat events during the school year, driven by the accelerating impacts of climate change. Many school buildings across the province are not equipped to handle extreme temperatures, putting students, teachers and education workers at risk. High indoor temperatures — often exceeding 30° Celsius — are becoming more and more common, with serious consequences for health, safety and learning. Children are especially vulnerable to heat-related illness as they lack the ability to regulate their body temperatures, and those with underlying health conditions or special education needs are at even greater risk.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association's reports, "Failing the Future: Extreme Heat in Schools" and "Failing the Future: Extreme Heat in Child-Care Settings", released on April 24, 2025, document how indoor temperatures above 26° Celsius impair cognitive function, jeopardize physical health and disproportionately impact communities in lower-income, older and Indigenous school facilities. These conditions are not only unsafe; they also significantly impair students' ability to concentrate and educators' ability to teach.

Students, teachers and education workers deserve better and safer environments that protect their health and learning conditions.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

1 Subsection 170 (1) of the *Education Act* is amended by adding the following paragraphs:

maximum temperature in school buildings

8.0.1 ensure that each building at each school of the board is maintained at a temperature of no higher than 26° Celsius throughout any period in which students, teachers, education workers or other workers are present in the building;

maximum temperature in school bus

8.0.2 ensure that school buses used as transportation under section 190 are operated at a temperature in the bus of no higher than 26° Celsius;

heat mitigation strategy

8.0.3 develop, in consultation with the applicable Joint Health and Safety Committees, and update annually, a heat mitigation strategy for each school of the board that includes the installation and maintenance of mechanical cooling systems, adaptations for buildings and exterior spaces, options for passive cooling methods and guidance for teachers, staff, parents and guardians on identifying signs of heat stress and on appropriate mitigation actions for heat stress;

extreme temperature emergency plan

8.0.4 develop, and update from time to time, an emergency plan for actions to be taken at each school of the board when extreme temperatures occur, including a communications protocol and an evacuation plan for students, teachers, education workers and other workers;

2 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

EXTREME HEAT

Minister's review of heat mitigation strategies

322 (1) The Minister shall review the heat mitigation strategies developed by boards under paragraph 8.0.3 of subsection 170 (1).

Recommendations

(2) The Minister may provide recommendations to boards with respect to their heat mitigation strategies.

Gaps, inequities

(3) As part of their review, the Minister shall identify any gaps in the heat mitigation strategies and assess any inequities among boards.

Report

(4) At least once every three years, the Minister shall prepare a report respecting the outcome of their review, shall publish the report on a website of the Government of Ontario and shall lay the report before the Assembly.

Same

(5) The report shall include, at minimum,

- (a) a description of each board's progress toward staying below the maximum temperatures mentioned in paragraphs 8.0.1 and 8.0.2 of subsection 170 (1);
- (b) a description of any gaps or inequities identified under subsection (3); and
- (c) an assessment of each board's capacity and each board's needs with respect to protecting students from extreme heat.

Commencement

3 This Act comes into force on the first anniversary of the day this Act receives Royal Assent.

Short title

4 The short title of this Act is the *Fighting Extreme Heat in Schools Act, 2026*.