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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

SP-8

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Safe and Supportive
Classrooms Act, 2019

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Monday 25 February 2019

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2019 pour des écoles
sûres et axées
sur le soutien

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Lundi 25 février 2019

Chair: Nina Tangri
Clerk: Eric Rennie

Présidente : Nina Tangri
Greffier : Eric Rennie

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE**

Monday 25 February 2019

Lundi 25 février 2019

The committee met at 1400 in room 151.

**SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
CLASSROOMS ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 POUR DES ÉCOLES SÛRES
ET AXÉES SUR LE SOUTIEN**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care / Projet de loi 48, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Good afternoon, everyone. Today we are meeting for public hearings on Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated February 21, 2019, each witness will receive up to six minutes for their presentation, followed with 14 minutes of questioning from the committee, divided equally amongst the recognized parties.

Are there any questions before we begin? Seeing none, we'll start right away.

**ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS' FEDERATION**

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, please. If you could please introduce yourself. You have six minutes.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Thanks. I'm Harvey Bischof. I'm president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. With me is Dave Barrowclough; he's a member of our professional staff. We represent 60,000 members, including the public secondary teachers that are referenced in our name, but over 20,000 of our members are education support staff, working as early childhood educators, up through the ranks up to and including support staff at six universities in the province. You will note that we've provided you with a written submission as well, which will provide additional detail for some of the reasoning that you'll see in the recommendations that we're making.

I'll start off by saying explicitly that we welcome the new restrictions on the definition of "sexual abuse" as outlined in the bill. We take no issue with prescribed sexual acts prohibited under the Criminal Code resulting

in mandatory revocation. It's important, though, to understand that members must be provided with a fair and affordable process to defend themselves when facing allegations. We also have to discuss our members' concerns about proposed changes to the governance structure of the Ontario College of Teachers and to the proposed math test in the bill.

With regard to the members' right to defend at college tribunals, professional colleges probably need some guidance in doing their due diligence in conducting a fair and thorough investigation when dealing with mandatory revocation. Allegations of sexual abuse, as with any allegations, need to be thoroughly investigated. Cases that involve medical considerations must continue to be directed to the fitness to practise committee, or a mandatory revocation could become the subject of a judicial review.

A member's current ability to defend themselves against false allegations, based on the recent egregious actions of the College of Early Childhood Educators, is a cause for extreme concern amongst my membership. A recent Superior Court of Justice ruling upheld a decision by the College of ECEs to assess over \$257,000 in hearing costs against a member who did not act unreasonably, in bad faith or in a vexatious manner during his hearing, during which time he was defending himself. The court's decision highlighted concerns about the adverse effect this would have, essentially a chilling effect, on a member's ability to defend himself or herself in front of either of those colleges to which my members belong. The court further wrote that these concerns should be brought to the legislators, so here we are today doing exactly that. If such onerous costs continue to be assessed when members present a reasonable defence, the threat and fear of financially debilitating cost awards will cause members to plead guilty, and thereby not be afforded a fair hearing. This is not just, and goes against the notion of a fair process.

We have several recommendations that arise out of that:

—that mandatory revocation only apply in situations where allegations of sexual abuse are proven to a higher standard than a balance of probabilities, given the significance of the outcome of that sort of finding;

—we recommend that when members are accused of remarks or behaviour of a sexual nature, revocation is only applied where intent can be fully established; and

—finally, we recommend amending both the College of ECEs act and the College of Teachers act to limit the

assessment of costs of hearings to occasions when a member has acted unreasonably, in bad faith or in a vexatious manner during their defence.

With regard to the governance changes to the College of Teachers, restructuring the ratios of appointed and elected members could lead to the OCT no longer being a self-governing body, as it was originally created to be. The bill includes removal of provisions that prescribe the specific number of council members on the committee and their panels. This is a concern that those who serve the college in these roles should have a teacher's experience and perspective.

We recommend establishing within the College of Teachers act provisions that maintain a majority of elected members over appointed members on the council, committees and panels. We recommend maintaining the teaching profession as a self-regulated profession under the College of Teachers act.

Finally, with regard to the mandatory math test for new applicants to the College of Teachers, we believe that the drop in math scores can be attributed to two main factors: first, the insistence by the ministry and school boards that math teachers use methods of teaching such as discovery learning that are not proven to be effective in secondary curriculum delivery. I'm restricting my remarks to secondary curriculum here, where my members teach. Training to implement these methods resulted in teachers being removed from their classrooms for considerable periods of time, and there isn't an empirical, evidentiary basis for the approaches that were being required of my members.

Second, the amount of time squandered teaching students how to take standardized tests rather than focusing on increasing their math skills is a problem.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Thank you.

In the bill's introduction, there is reference made to Australia, England and New York that have these qualifying math tests. In each case, Ontario scores higher on PISA than those other jurisdictions, so I'm not sure what problem it is that we're trying to solve.

A math test won't increase math scores; it will introduce additional costs. We recommend that instead of a math test, the ministry review the curriculum. We recommend that, should the math test remain as part of the bill, it be limited to applicants who don't begin teaching while already holding math qualifications. My members who are math teachers are math-qualified teachers. To subject them to a math test when they come out of university with an undergraduate degree or potentially a graduate degree in mathematics seems to be not terribly sensible. We recommend replacing EQAO census testing with random testing using questions from the current curriculum, which would result in a considerable reduction in costs.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for your time. I will begin questions with the official opposition. Who would like to ask the first question? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: First of all, thank you very much for appearing here. I believe there might be a couple of other

items, if you'd like to take this time to continue with anything that you missed in your presentation.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Yes, six minutes is brief.

We did make recommendations around the policy regarding service animals. We have concern that school boards may not have the capacity to write policies that are going to be effective. As it's written right now, the bill would allow for a school board to write a policy that simply says, "There shall be no service animals." I don't think that's the intent of the bill. Or it could go wrong in a variety of other ways where inappropriate people are tasked with supporting children with service animals. So we just think that there has to be considerably more guidance than, "School boards will write policy."

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. Thank you.

You talked a bit about math performance and what I think were some very interesting observations about current barriers. I wondered—I guess a couple of things. One is, what do teachers right now—I'm speaking specifically of teachers here, but maybe you can also comment on others—do currently to upgrade their skills? Are there any programs in place that help them with that? If not, what would you like to see?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Bearing in mind that those of my members who teach math are math-qualified in some fashion in virtually every case—they come in with math skills already. They will come in with higher skills in mathematics. The upgrading they do—after that, it's not a matter of knowing the math; it's knowing the pedagogy: How, particularly, do you teach these aspects of mathematics? They do get that, of course, as they are getting their bachelor of education. They will almost always take the—what is the—

Mr. Dave Barrowclough: ABQ.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: The Additional Basic Qualifications, the one that moves you into—

Mr. Dave Barrowclough: Honours specialist.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: The honours specialist. So typically, after two years of teaching, a teacher is eligible to take an honours specialist course. I, and virtually every teacher in OSSTF, will have taken that to upgrade. Then there is just an endless series of PD opportunities to remain current in the pedagogy, as opposed to the mathematical foundation.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Did the government, though, cut the support for the ABQ?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Indeed, to our surprise, given the concern around math scores. They had been providing funding that would assist teachers in taking math-teaching upgrading courses. There are a number of teachers who expected to be able to access that funding, and it was cut off.

1410

Ms. Marit Stiles: Right. It seems a bit at odds with an interest in improving our math.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: It absolutely does. There was an opportunity to learn, which is the way to improve math instruction, as opposed to a test. We'll go back to the old adage that you don't fatten up the pig by weighing it more

frequently; you've got to feed it. That's the equivalent of a curriculum. A test does nothing to make a teacher better at teaching.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You mentioned as well some concerns about the changes to the Ontario College of Teachers governance structure. I appreciate the interest in teachers having their own self-regulating body. We've seen some appointments—quite a few appointments, actually—coming through from the government which all, or mainly, seem to be former Conservative Party candidates, including the new chair of the EQAO, which I believe is now a full-time position at \$140,000 a year, which one thinks probably could have been used elsewhere. Do you have any comments or concerns about, maybe, the potential politicization, as well, of some of these bodies?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: You know, it was determined by a previous government, with support of the other parties, is my recollection, going back to the late 1990s, that teaching should be a self-governing profession. I think that's appropriate and lines it up with other parallel types of professions, and that's reasonable.

To make the College of Teachers a body that simply imposes punishments on teachers, sometimes under appropriate circumstances no doubt, but that teachers pay for, moves away from the entire idea of self-governance. It diminishes the professionalism of the members who are part of that body.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just have another big, rather open-ended question, but I'm interested in—this bill is called Safe and Supportive Classrooms. Certainly there are some things in here that I think nobody would disagree are important measures, but I feel like there's a lot missing here. We've certainly struggled, especially with some of the situations we know that are currently in our schools, whether you're talking about capital repairs and issues like that or actual physical safety in spaces, but I wondered if you wouldn't mind commenting on some of the things that you think would contribute to more safe and supportive classrooms.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: It's the supportive part that would make them safe. It's absolutely clear and has been for some time that with increasing inclusion in our classrooms, which is—there is a discussion to be had there, but we want, wherever possible, to have kids included in classroom settings—that there have not been sufficient supports to assist with keeping those classrooms safe and healthy.

We see escalating incidents of violence in classrooms, very frequently cases in which the student himself or herself is not culpable. These are students acting out on the basis of a disability or something. It's not a matter of culpability of the student, but it is a matter of having the appropriate, trained adults in those classrooms who can ensure that the students themselves, the other students in the classrooms and the educators in those classrooms are kept safe. At the moment, we're not close to that circumstance, with, frankly, a deep fear from my members about what will happen—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 30 seconds to conclude, please.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: —on April 1, when a bunch of students who are currently in alternative therapy settings, kids on the autism spectrum, are in many cases going to return back to classrooms without an appropriate transition and with insufficient support in those classes. My members are worried for the kids who are going to be returning, but in many cases they're worried about their own safety as well.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We've certainly heard that from parents of children with ASD, repeatedly—concerns about their own children's safety heading into the classroom. I think families are really in a bit of a crisis right now, trying to envision how to protect them.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): The time is up. Thank you very much.

Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Harvey and David, for taking the time to come before the committee this afternoon and bring forward the perspective of your organization. Of course, the membership that you represent is an important stakeholder in this discussion and an important contributor to education in the province of Ontario. On behalf of the Minister of Education, I want to extend my thanks, also, for all of the work that your members do in classrooms across Ontario and in those important roles.

I did want to touch on a couple of different things today. I appreciate the substantive brief that you brought forward, and I apologize that you weren't able to get to all of it in the time that you had. If there were a couple of other points that you wanted to bring forward, I'm happy to let you share those as well.

I did want to also share my questioning, following my questioning, with the member for Kitchener South-Hespeler, who would like to ask a couple of questions around the service animal policies.

We were very pleased to see this piece of legislation pass unanimously at second reading in the Legislature. I'm happy to be able to come to this place in the discussion around having conversations about particular amendments that might come forward, and particular discussions from the members of the opposition parties, as well as stakeholders such as yourselves. Thank you for being very candid and open with us about what you feel regarding this piece of legislation.

I wanted to touch on, specifically, the mandatory math test. This is something that we have heard from a lot of different parents who have expressed a lot of support for this. We have heard from people within the educational sector who say that this a great step in the right direction as well.

I was wondering if you could touch on, though—in your brief you said, “The first contributor to declining math scores is the insistence by the Ministry of Education and school boards that math teachers use methods of teaching, such as discovery learning, that are not proven to be effective in secondary curriculum” development. “These methods were implemented with significant training that removed teachers from their classrooms for considerable periods of time.”

Could you speak to that and flesh that out a little bit more, what that looked like under the former government, and how you feel that impacted the test results on this issue?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I have a concern in mathematics, and elsewhere in the curriculum, that the pedagogical approaches that are being required by school boards and by the ministry just don't have an empirical foundation to demonstrate that they are effective.

There is a lot of good research being done in the education world that demonstrates which approaches actually result in student achievement, and there is a lot of, frankly, snake oil in education where people have the opportunity to promote ideas that will appeal to a certain kind of feeling about how we wish kids learned but that haven't been demonstrated to work. That has been the case with discovery approaches to learning, which may be entirely appropriate with younger children. But, speaking just to the secondary curriculum, when you take a look at things like the PISA testing that has been done, or other international math tests, where kids are provided with direct instruction as opposed to discovery methods, where it's unclear whether or not they have the mathematical foundation to move on, those countries do better than countries that do discovery, project-based kinds of approaches to learning.

So, if you take math teachers out of the class and bring them into one-day or multi-day PD sessions where they're taught these kinds of exploratory approaches to math instruction, you're losing their presence in the class—which is occasionally necessary—but if that was offset by the fact that they were getting excellent pedagogical instruction, then you would say that that's a cost worth paying.

In this case, given the kinds of instruction they have too frequently gotten, what you've simply lost is the expert in the classroom, without that expert coming back with a greater ability to engage in that math instruction.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: So I wanted—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you. Ms. Triantafilopoulos, would you like—

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I just wanted to get in the queue to ask a question.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Okay. Mr. Oosterhoff, go ahead.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Perfect. I'll pass on mine, and I'll pass it along to MPP Fee.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mrs. Fee, go ahead.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you both for being here today. I've been a strong advocate for service dogs being used in classrooms for quite some time, after meeting with families across the province who have struggled to get their child's service dog into the classroom, as well as service dog providers.

I'm very happy to see that you mentioned competing rights. That, to me, is something that always needs to be considered.

In other provinces where they do have, I guess we would say, more wholesome legislation around service

dogs being used in classrooms, they do talk about the competing rights and making sure that the animal behaves in the classroom, and that sort of thing, as a reason for why the dog may not be welcomed in the school.

What can be different, though, that I've found with families in Ontario is, they're struggling with school board administrators who are saying whether or not the child needs the animal in the classroom with them.

When a child is given a service dog, they first have to have a medical recommendation for that service dog. Then, the second step is that the service dog provider will see the child and try to determine if what the medical expert is saying—if the dog will actually be able to support, in that role, what that deficit might be.

1420

I'm just wondering, from your perspective, if you think that a school board administrator does have that expertise to overrule a medical professional for what a child might need to be able to support themselves in the classroom.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I can't think of a circumstance, off the top of my head, where it strikes me as appropriate that a school board administrator would overrule a medical opinion any more in those circumstances than where they try to overrule medical notes that my members bring when they require an absence due to illness.

Our concern here is that there be considerable consultation around this, because the difficulty here is in the details. I think it's appropriate to give all consideration to the sort of supports that different sorts of students need, but my members who particularly work closely with these students and understand the potential conflicts and so forth that would arise out of having a service animal there need to be consulted, through us, in order to come to policies that we can ultimately support.

I would say with regard to service animals, as with regard to everything in the education space, that OSSTF can be as committed to being productive partners in creating policy. If we are consulted with on the matter of service animals, we will bring our expertise to that, our concerns, and we'll come to a conclusion that all sides can live with. I'm firmly convinced of that. But we need to have the opportunity to consult.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. I appreciate you coming out and presenting to us today.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Thanks.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, please. Please introduce yourselves and your organization. Thank you.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Good afternoon. I'm Liz Stuart, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and with me today I have David Church, our deputy general secretary. I know you also have a copy of our written submission.

Thank you to the committee for allowing me to speak on Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, on behalf of the more than 45,000 Catholic teachers across Ontario.

It's difficult to offer an overall or general comment on Bill 48 because the various aspects of the bill are so different from one another. Ensuring that students have a safe and healthy environment in which to learn is of critical importance to every teacher in Ontario. In terms of discipline, much of what's in Bill 48 was already proposed by the previous government, which worked with teacher affiliates to draft legislation that dealt swiftly and effectively with accusations of misconduct and that ensured due process was maintained. The association has and will support measures that ensure student safety.

Teaching is one of the most transparent and regulated professions in Ontario, and our members strive every day to create safe, healthy and welcoming learning environments for our students.

Therefore, this afternoon I will focus on a different aspect of Bill 48, one that many people have never heard of but that is of primary concern to our members.

When this legislation was introduced, the Minister of Education talked about teacher discipline and a math proficiency test for teacher candidates. The ministry's press release made the exact same points. Nowhere was there a single mention of the third section of Bill 48—a section that proposes to give the government broad and sweeping powers to fundamentally alter the structure and governance of the Ontario College of Teachers.

Since the creation of the Ontario College of Teachers in 1996, teaching has been a self-regulated profession. This ensures that the college's regulatory functions are guided by those with the specialized knowledge necessary to do the job. The rationale for self-regulation is perfectly captured in the following quote: "By giving teachers the power to regulate their own profession, we are putting the responsibility for excellent teaching in the hands of those who are best qualified to know what a teacher should and must be today and in the future." These words were spoken in 1996 by the Progressive Conservative Minister of Education, John Snobelen.

Looking at this section of Bill 48, there are several concerning features that, if passed, will open the possibility of deprofessionalizing teaching. We are particularly concerned by proposals to remove the number of members on the OCT governing council and committees. This may seem minor. However, in effect, it would allow the government to eliminate the principle of self-regulation by making the majority of council members appointed by government rather than elected democratically by teachers.

Another proposed amendment to the OCT Act would authorize cabinet to appoint the chair of the council and define their duties. By giving itself the authority to make changes by a regulation rather than legislation, the government will essentially have carte blanche to enforce changes without any transparency, oversight or legislative debate. It could allow a government to stack the college

with appointed members who serve the government's interests.

Although later I will be taking your questions, right now I would like to pose some questions of my own to this committee. First, what policy problem is the government trying to solve with this section of Bill 48? It took the Minister of Education 18 days to publicly acknowledge this part of the bill. When she did, she claimed the government needed these powers to respond to the governance review quietly being conducted by the OCT. With all due respect, this justification makes no sense. If the point is to respond to a governance review, why wouldn't the government wait until that review was completed and discussed by the college before proposing any changes?

It's worth noting that the OCT council still hasn't debated the recommendation in its governance review, which brings me to my second question: What policies does the government intend to implement? Can the government confirm that it would not eliminate the democratic election of OCT councillors? Will the government assure everyone today that teaching will remain a self-regulated profession, like John Snobelen demanded it should be more than 20 years ago?

Legislation is designed to provide answers, yet this section of Bill 48 leaves us with questions. The legislation would appear to be a solution in search of a problem. It's worth recalling the conclusion of the Royal Commission on Learning, which originally proposed a College of Teachers.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Our conviction is that teaching should be a self-governing profession with greater responsibility and greater autonomy for teachers. This section of Bill 48 strikes at the heart of this claim and undermines the very foundation of the College of Teachers and the professionalism of teaching. It has what I hope is an unintended consequence. It sent a clear message to every teacher in Ontario that this government does not respect the teaching profession as a profession.

We urge the committee to think about these issues and consequences. We urge the government to remove from the bill all aspects dealing with the governance and structure of the Ontario College of Teachers. Developing policy without meaningful consultation and in isolation from teacher affiliates and other education stakeholders breeds misunderstanding and weakens legislation. To continue improving our already world-renowned system, education policy should be developed collaboratively. I firmly—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Time is up.

I'll begin with the government side: Mr. Oosterhoff, please.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much, Liz. Is it all right if I call you that?

Ms. Liz Stuart: Absolutely.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Welcome to the committee. Thank you so much for taking the time to come and present this afternoon. As I mentioned to the OSSTF as

well, the Minister of Education, the Premier and our entire caucus very much appreciate the work that your members do in classrooms across Ontario on behalf the students, parents and, really, the future of our province. Thank you very much for that, first of all.

Thank you for your presentation before the committee. I listened with great interest to your particular concerns around the changes to the Ontario College of Teachers. I did have a few questions. First of all, I wanted to give you a little more time to say what you thought—if you have any thoughts about the rest of the bill. Secondly, perhaps as an addition, what are your thoughts on the governance review that was launched by the college? If there was no need to make any changes in the governance of the college, then why have they launched their own review, beginning last May?

Ms. Liz Stuart: I'll start with that. I think it's prudent for any organization. We certainly did it ourselves—conduct governance reviews. Our concern with the college governance review would be the process behind it. I know, certainly, as a stakeholder organization, we ourselves weren't consulted until very close to the end of the review, and that was after we had requested if we could provide consultation.

I think the additional piece is, when you look at the feedback received, it was by very few stakeholders. But more importantly, I think, we have this document; we've certainly given our input to the college based on that governance review. I know the Ontario Teachers' Federation has done the same thing. But the key piece is those—I think they meet later this week to start their deliberations on the governance review, and therefore that is why we're here saying it would seem at this time that it would be better to sever this piece from the bill and let the college conduct its business and complete its review, and then, once they have completed that, let's start talking about best next step forward to make sure that the teaching profession remains as a teaching profession that is a self-regulatory body.

1430

You want me to touch on other aspects that we wanted to—and as you know, you have before you a written copy of our submission on the standing committees, and certainly I will echo some of the comments made by my esteemed colleague from OSSTF, Harvey.

One of our major concerns—well, one of the things we would like to say on the proposed amendments surrounding discipline for teachers is that there be a due process and natural justice. We would want to see that continue. But we absolutely agree we need to make sure that there is safety in schools and that we have safe and secure schools. We speak on behalf of all of our members when we say that.

When we talk about the math testing, as a classroom teacher—I'm a primary classroom teacher. That's what I do when I'm not doing this job. As a primary classroom teacher, I am reasonably competent, and I'm sure I'll be fine when it comes to teaching math. The key is continual development, because while I might be able to pass a math test, there's a difference between being able to do that and

being able to stand in front of a classroom and teach others how to learn math.

I think what we've had in the past is, we had AQ courses in place. There used to be funding in place that teachers could access. I think allowing teachers that professional development and an opportunity to give input when it comes to curriculum changes—teachers are always looking to have a voice in those pieces. But for us, the key piece when it comes to math is allowing teachers to develop professionally as educators, not in testing that I understand math. It's testing that I'm able to then—there is no test that can be given as to how I can impart that information.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm going to have to interrupt you just because I know my colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler really wanted to get in a comment. So sorry.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mrs. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you. And thank you for being here, as well, today.

My question is very similar to what you heard me ask OSSTF. I really want to highlight around this part of the bill, around the service dog issue. It is so critical that we make sure we get this right, that we do make sure that those competing rights are there, that if a dog is not properly behaving—because they are dogs, and sometimes, even if they are certified service animals, there can be issues that arise—there are provisions, as I've seen in other jurisdictions in the country, to allow a school board to step in and say that the dogs cannot attend. What I've been personally advocating for is around that need piece, and not allowing a school board to determine the need for a service animal in the classroom, because the dogs come recommended by a medical professional.

I'm just wondering if, in your expertise as a teacher and also with the union, you think there could be an incident where a school board administrator could overrule a medical professional, just based on that need piece.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Could they? I think they do, on occasion, on a variety of different pieces. I think having clear, consistent policies will assist moving forward, because sometimes some of the confusion lies in, if there is no policy or if there is no clear direction, then that decision is made on an individual basis—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Ms. Liz Stuart: —and each individual has to rely on their own thoughts at that point in time. I think it's having clear policies where all stakeholders get that opportunity to give input, and also allowing for some local variances, because each jurisdiction is slightly different, and, quite frankly, each classroom is a little bit different. So it's having policies in place that are consistent, but also allowing for some local variances which may need to take place.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I think we have probably maybe 30 seconds or so.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Yes, indeed.

Mrs. Amy Fee: OSSTF mentioned discovery math and the fact that they don't like it. I'm just wondering if you have a quick, 10-second comment on discovery math.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Ten seconds? Wow.

What I will tell you is that as a classroom teacher, there's no one magic silver bullet; there's no one pedagogical piece. I think the most important piece is having professionals in the classroom and giving them input when it comes to what works best in any given classroom with any given group of students, because in every single classroom across this province it is different.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to go to the opposition. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you so much for coming in and for that excellent presentation. I have a few comments first and then some questions. I know my colleagues have some questions, as well.

I want to thank you for raising the issue of the failure to consult. When questions like the member opposite just asked about—your opinion and the opinion of OECTA on discovery math is not a question to answer in seven minutes. I think these are the kinds of questions that needed to be addressed before we had legislation before us. We have, I think, less than eight hours in total of consultations on this bill, which is, as you pointed out—it's an omnibus bill. It has many, many parts. I would say that each one of them is very significant. The idea that OECTA and other teachers' unions like OSSTF and others have not really been properly consulted before this was introduced back in October is astonishing.

You mentioned, as well, the Ontario College of Teachers, and I thought that was a very important point to make. In fact, it's my understanding that their board will not be meeting until February 28 to review the recommendations, which means the recommendations or decisions won't be posted any time—well, certainly until then, and even then, we are meeting next week, on Monday and Tuesday, to go through line by line. It's beyond me how the government would expect to be able to include anything that comes out of that and also then be able to go back to the teachers' unions, for example, to find out what their thoughts are.

I did have one question. Bill 48 dissolves the public interest committee. I know it's something else that really hasn't gotten a lot of attention. The government already said in a press release last summer, I believe, that it was going to constitute a "new public interest committee"—it actually used that language—that would help inform the creation of some kind of a parent bill of rights. This is something we keep hearing about. What impact would that have on teachers? Have you heard anything more about the parent interest committee? It is odd that it was cancelled in this legislation.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Let's talk about the relationship between parents and teachers. I know that there has been talk about the parent bill of rights. Again, I'll go back to my roots as a primary classroom teacher. The most important relationship, apart from the relationship I have with my students, is the relationship I have with their parents. That's an ongoing, open dialogue that takes place in every classroom across this province every day. We're always in communication, be it through those little agenda books

that we sign back and forth or be it calls home or be it emails or however it is that we're communicating. That's how we assist our students to succeed.

When we talk about a parents bill of rights, I would say that parents have a lot of rights, as they should—but as should the students in our classrooms. I think for us the concern would be that if we structure it in such a way that it could become oppositional, that it becomes—I'm communicating with a parent because their bill of rights says I have to, as opposed to the fact that it's because I'm a caring professional and that's my role. Our concern would be that it could damage relationships that are already ongoing all across this province every day.

When it comes to the public interest committee, it is a little surprising that there was a call to disband that and then a call to reconstitute it in some other venue—and again, one that we don't clearly understand ourselves and that seems like a solution in search of a problem.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think my colleagues may have a question.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Ms. Stuart, for coming today. You mentioned that one of the successes we look at in the past is based on how policy-makers and educators have worked together to bring in any regulations. I know you've been in the teaching profession for many, many years now. I see the nod.

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Ms. Liz Stuart: Longer than I care to think about, but yes.

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is very simple. We're changing the governance structure through this bill. This government is proposing that—people who have been elected for just a few months. In your opinion, do you think that people who have been in this profession for many, many years—that the governing body from that is less equipped than these legislators who have been in the House for just a few months to make a rule like that and to be able to appoint people for the sake of our children's education? What would be your opinion?

Ms. Liz Stuart: When it comes to the College of Teachers, when it comes to anything, I think it's always best in terms of a profession if people who are within the profession and doing it every day get to give their input and get to be part of the solution, part of the collective in moving things forward. It's always far better when it comes from the grassroots, when it comes from teachers in classrooms. That's who our College of Teachers reps are. Many of those—in fact, I think just about all of them—are active in classrooms.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: In my 20 seconds that I have left, I'd just ask you to—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Actually, you have one minute in total.

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a minute? Oh, fantastic. Great.

I just wanted you to comment on something that was mentioned earlier about violence in the classroom. I was

astounded to read a report from the union noting that 89% of your membership had either experienced or had witnessed significant violence in the classroom. As I have attempted to do some research from the perspective of people with disabilities and families with children with disabilities, I am concerned that that problem could get worse because we're not prepared. Do you have any thoughts you wanted to share with us?

Ms. Liz Stuart: My initial thought is: Absolutely. It has been a concern of ours for quite some time. Quite frankly, it's increasing, in terms of our concern levels. We have students who already are not receiving adequate service. Our real concern is that that's going to escalate, because we have students who act out in classrooms because they're frustrated and they are in crisis. We don't have the resources now to be able to assist those students. As things change, and certainly with the changes to the autism piece, we have real concerns that that's going to absolutely inflate issues that are already within our schools and our classrooms.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Thank you for coming and presenting to us today.

Ms. Liz Stuart: Thank you.

COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the College of Early Childhood Educators, please. Just a reminder: You have six minutes to present, followed by seven minutes of questioning by each of the official recognized parties. Thank you very much. Go ahead. Please introduce yourselves.

Ms. Darlene Edgar: Thank you. I'm Darlene Edgar. I'm a registered early childhood educator and the president of the council of the College of Early Childhood Educators. With me is Beth Deazeley, who is the registrar and CEO of the college. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Since our time is limited, we will use the acronym RECE to talk about registered early childhood educators. There are more than 53,000 of us in Ontario educating and caring for children in settings including licensed and unlicensed child care and community programs in schools, including full-day kindergarten. The college's role is to regulate the profession of early childhood education in the public interest under the Early Childhood Educators Act, and we are accountable to the Ministry of Education.

We are pleased to see that the government is serious about protecting children through the introduction of Bill 48. Our comments are restricted to schedule 1, which amends the ECE Act.

The college welcomes amendments that will strengthen our ability to protect children from sexual abuse. The changes mean that all acts of sexual abuse, not just a specific list, would lead to mandatory revocation of a member's certificate of registration. We've previously advocated for these changes. The vast majority of Ontario's RECEs are caring professionals who uphold the

ethical standards of the profession and devote themselves to the well-being and the development of children. There is no place in this profession for individuals who abuse their position of trust.

In those very rare cases involving sexual abuse, the college has always said that mandatory revocation is the only appropriate response. The amendments in Bill 48 send a message to members and to the public that the safety and well-being of children is paramount, and we commend the government for bringing them forward.

Together with Bill 48, the government proclaimed provisions of the ECE Act which require the college to establish a program to fund therapy and counselling for children. This was added to the act in May 2018 but was not proclaimed. The college recognizes the need to facilitate access to therapy for children who have been sexually abused by members. We support proclamation of those provisions and are preparing for implementation.

By these changes, the government has shown that it is willing and able to move quickly to close loopholes and finish work left incomplete, in order to protect children. We urge you to continue in that vein.

Ms. Beth Deazeley: Thank you for allowing us to address you today.

We want to raise two additional matters, and we hope that the committee will take this opportunity to further protect Ontario's children.

First, we request that the government proclaim another provision in the act which is also not in force. Found in section 31, it's critical to the college's ability to protect children in cases involving the incapacity of members. This important step would protect children and support the health and well-being of RECEs.

The college's fitness to practise committee can restrict or suspend the right to practise if an RECE is found to have a physical or mental disorder which affects their ability to safely care for children. This is a power that nearly all professions in Ontario have. This process protects the public and also supports RECEs in obtaining a diagnosis, professional recommendations for safe return to work and a long-term solution, all of that in a way that respects the member's privacy. However, this can only occur based on appropriate medical evidence, and until the authority in section 31 is proclaimed, our college cannot obtain that evidence. This creates an ongoing risk that members who are suffering from a condition that makes them unsafe to practise could still be caring for children, with the potential for tragic consequences. This is an opportunity to finish work that was left undone, to ensure the safety and well-being of children. We strongly urge the government to proclaim these provisions.

Finally, we ask the committee to consider one further amendment to the act to address a governance risk. The ECE Act sets out a very simple governance structure for the College of Early Childhood Educators: a council composed of 14 RECEs and 10 public members who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Public members are a vital source of diversity on council, and they bring skills and experience which complement the

perspective of professional members. Full participation of public members is a hallmark of effective regulation. However, the risk is that vacancies in public member appointments can delay critical governance and regulatory functions, particularly the complaints and discipline committees, which cannot act to protect the public without public members on them.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Ms. Beth Deazeley: Thank you. To address the risk of delays in appointments, the college requests an amendment to the act which would allow that public members stay in their positions until successors are appointed. This has been added to the legislation of at least one other profession to address exactly that problem. It would enable the critical public protection functions of the college to continue without interruption when public appointments may be delayed.

Ms. Darlene Edgar: In conclusion, we are pleased that the government shares our commitment to the safety and well-being of children and has taken action. This is an important start, but there is more work to be done. We urge you to take this opportunity and include these two additional measures to further protect children and families.

We look forward to continuing our work with you in this shared area of responsibility.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much—exactly six minutes to the second.

Who would like to begin? Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Beth and Darlene. It's wonderful to see you both here.

It sounds like you actually have a solution to the problem that you mentioned. Right now, it's a very punitive solution: members are sent to the disciplinary committee. I just want to give you the opportunity to talk about the solution that you have and what you would propose exactly for us to do and to elaborate on that.

Ms. Beth Deazeley: The solution with respect to the fitness to practise process is a solution that is actually already in the act. It's already in the legislation. If you look at our legislation online, it's one of those sections that's still there in grey. So it's a process that allows us, rather than going through the punitive process of a discipline hearing, which is held in public, to go by fitness to practise, which assists members who may be facing physical or mental issues which are impacting their ability to practise to obtain an appropriate diagnosis and provide advice with respect to the provisions necessary for a safe return to practise in a way that is not exposing all of that to a public hearing. All of that has been built in. The procedure is there in the act already. We are simply asking that that be proclaimed so that we can move forward with it.

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Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much. And it sounds like it's twofold: It would help children, but it would also help educators who, for example, lose their licence because the current system doesn't support them. Am I correct?

Ms. Beth Deazeley: Absolutely. It will protect children; it would also support the health and well-being of RECES.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles? No questions? You're done? Thank you very much.

The government side: Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so very much for taking the time to come before the committee. Welcome. We really appreciate all the work that both you and your members do in this regard and the work that the early childhood educators across the province do. Thank you for that.

I was wondering if you would be able to go a little bit more into—I think the message this sends, and I know it's a message that the minister is very passionate about, is that there is zero tolerance for sexual abuse of children. Do you think this bill goes far enough in that regard in sending that message, or is there more that we could do to make sure that we're sending a strong message that there is no tolerance for sexual abuse?

Ms. Beth Deazeley: I think that the provisions that have been put into the act reflect what this college had requested in the past, which means that all acts of sexual abuse, not just a specific list which is currently in the act, would lead to mandatory revocation—of course, the mandatory revocation only occurring after a full hearing where members have the right to be represented by council and make a full defence; it's only after that finding. What it does is do away with the need to argue the issue of mandatory revocation. It sends a very clear message that there is no circumstance in which an individual can sexually abuse a child and retain their right to practise this profession.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. Thank you. The member from—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Triantafilopoulos.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Hello, and thank you very much for being here. Could you share with us how many instances in the past when there have been complaints of sexual abuse in your industry?

Ms. Beth Deazeley: This college has been in existence for around 10 years, so the number of instances is relatively low. I don't have an actual number, but it's probably around 10. It wouldn't be more than that. In every one of those cases, the college has always sought and has always obtained revocation. There are no instances in which an early childhood educator has ever been found guilty of sexually abusing a child and has retained the ability to practise.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: One of the other presenters earlier, if I understood exactly what was said, spoke to the need for a higher standard and not a balance of probabilities when it comes to mandatory revocation. Would you have any comments or opinions on that?

Ms. Beth Deazeley: I think that's probably an issue that's best dealt with by lawyers. There is certainly a great

deal of case law around the balance of proof in administrative law, and the Supreme Court of Canada has been very clear with respect to what that standard should be.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: And would there be any behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature from an ECE toward a child that should not result in mandatory revocation, in your view?

Ms. Beth Deazeley: Absolutely not.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any other questions? No?

Thank you very much for coming out to present to us today.

Ms. Beth Deazeley: Thank you.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We are a little ahead of time. Do we have the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, here? Please introduce yourself. You have six minutes to present, followed by seven minutes from each of the recognized parties. Go ahead.

Dr. Mary Reid: My name is Mary Reid. I'm an assistant professor at OISE, University of Toronto. I want to thank you so much for the opportunity to share my ideas regarding Bill 48, specifically the math proficiency test for teacher certification.

For the past 11 years, I've been teaching math curriculum courses to elementary teacher candidates. My research examines the math content knowledge of elementary teacher candidates and how this is connected to math anxiety and efficacy. Based on my experiences as well as my research, I believe there is room to improve math education across Ontario classrooms.

I encourage the government to consider what faculties of education such as OISE have implemented to ensure math proficiency in teacher candidates. At OISE, we recognize that candidates needed to improve their math content knowledge based on four years of math test data.

After reviewing our research results, our response was a mandatory math content course called Math Plus for all elementary candidates. Math Plus was implemented for the first time this year in the fall of 2018. The course focuses on grades 7 and 8 and the beginning of grade 9 numeracy concepts. Math Plus is comprised of face-to-face lessons which focus on learning math in deep conceptual ways, weekly quizzes and weekly homework modules. This course is a degree requirement with a minimum pass rate of 75%.

We were awarded a federal grant last June to measure the efficacy of this course, and thus far, our preliminary results show that Math Plus has had a positive impact on our teacher candidates' content knowledge. Anecdotally, we've observed a culture of mathematicians develop here at OISE where teacher candidates are investigating math problems collaboratively, even during their spare moments between classes. We plan to publish the full findings of Math Plus over the next year.

Other faculties of education may have developed their own strategies for ensuring that their graduates have an appropriate level of math content knowledge. Local solutions like Math Plus are cost-effective and allow for progressive instruction and a system of formative assessments rather than a one-time, high-stakes proficiency test. I encourage the government to conduct a thorough scan of existing approaches and to learn from their successes.

With Bill 48 passing and the move to a math certification test on the horizon, I do want to share with you some of my ideas on the test. As you know, we must ensure the validity of the test. If we're intending to measure math proficiency, the test items must be based on Ontario math curriculum expectations up to grade 8 and some grade 9 numeracy concepts. The items should take a variety of forms, including open-ended questions, so candidates can demonstrate their reasoning through models, drawings and diagrams.

A question that has been and will continue to be discussed is the timing of the test. The test should not be taken at the very end of the degree program, nor should it occur at the very beginning of the degree program. I suggest that the test be taken about eight months into the program so that TCs have the opportunity to access resources offered by their university and to delve deeply into the math curriculum. If candidates don't pass the test at that point, they need to set goals for improvement and be permitted to retake the test as often as required, similar to a driver's licence. There shouldn't be any limits.

We know there is contention about whether a math proficiency test should also include intermediate-senior candidates. Candidates at this level are certified to teach grades 7 to 12. Although most intermediate-senior candidates will only teach their teachable subjects in a high school setting, there are instances where intermediate-senior candidates are offered grade 7 and 8 core classrooms. In this case, the math proficiency test would be applicable.

In any case, I believe that there must be a change in the landscape and narrative in Ontario and beyond to one in which all teachers require competency in math, as do all citizens.

The development of test items is critical. Test items must pass bias and sensitivity screening. We must continually focus on diversifying the teaching population in Ontario. Research from various US states, as well as England, gives evidence that teacher certification tests may discourage marginalized groups from even entering the profession. Please refer to the research citations that I've offered you in the handout. The literature highlights some of the issues which stem from teacher certification tests.

I also question whether third-party test providers truly understand the context of Ontario's math curriculum and regulations. With this in mind, I would suggest a consortium of education faculties creating the math proficiency test.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Dr. Mary Reid: This would require a university to take the lead or chair the consortium.

With passion, I want to state that math content knowledge does not equal excellence in pedagogy, although it is a necessary part of math knowledge for teaching.

Lastly, I want to make clear that teachers see their largest gains in professional productivity during the early years of their career—their first five to eight years. Therefore, math professional development must continue when candidates transition into full-time in-service teachers.

The passing of a math proficiency test is not a certification that states that math learning has come to an end; it's only begun. The true solution requires a multifaceted approach with continued capacity-building based on empirical math education research.

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The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government side. Who would like to speak first? Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so very much, Dr. Reid, for coming before the committee today and for your passion for the subject. I can tell it's something you're very, very engaged with, and obviously, from the research you provided, I see your name is here a fair bit, so I know you've done a lot of work in this regard. I want to thank you for that and for taking the time out of your busy schedule to also come before the committee and bring forward your perspective.

I have a few different questions. First, I wanted to ask you—you mention you don't think it should be at the end or the beginning; it should be in the middle. Could you give me a little more understanding of that?

Dr. Mary Reid: Yes. We test our candidates—a diagnostic assessment—before they even begin classes. They don't do that well because they don't know how much they don't know now. When they start taking the math methods course—and this year they're taking the Math Plus course—they're realizing that there's a huge learning curve and their learning is very, very deep. Now that it's February, they've got two more classes of Math Plus, and they're ready for this test. I have no doubt that my candidates are going to pass this kind of test. I think you're going to get a lot of false negatives when it comes to the very beginning.

If you wait until the very end, there's research from the UK—England—which shows that it's not good to do it at the end, because what ends up happening is that you're going to get some failures and some people who are feeling that they've wasted two years of their lives trying to become a teacher. They can't pass the test and then they just fall into this downward spiral.

It's really important that the timing is critical. It has to be at a time when they're ready, and I believe they're ready around six to eight months into the program.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. Another thing I was very curious about—and we've had a lot of discussions around this, around the pedagogy versus content learning. Could you speak to me a little more about that and what you see the situation being in teachers' programs across the province right now?

Dr. Mary Reid: Currently, before Math Plus was ever implemented, our teacher candidates had a math methods

course and the math methods course was solely devoted to the pedagogy. It was about instructional strategies and the research that really drives excellence in mathematics teaching.

What I found as a teacher of math curriculum courses is that I was spending more time on teaching them why two negatives make a positive; what is Pythagoras's theorem; why does it work? As a result, based on the four years of diagnostic data that I have of math test results, we felt that the content knowledge needed to occur.

This Math Plus has nothing to do with pedagogy. It's all about cracking open grade 7 and 8 math textbooks and a little bit of grade 9 and really learning those concepts in a deep way, not cramming through memorization, but really understanding why those algorithms work and how it relates to real-life, everyday math. That is of utmost importance.

One of the byproducts of that is that it has actually positively impacted their math knowledge for teaching. Obviously you can't teach math unless you know the content quite well. So math knowledge for teaching and pedagogy involves—part of the key ingredients is having a deep conceptual knowledge of the expectations in the math curriculum.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. Last for myself—and I'm sure my colleagues also have questions—I wanted to ask you about the role that you see yourself and OISE playing in the development and implementation of a math content knowledge test, what you feel would be best for that.

Dr. Mary Reid: I think what would be best is the local solutions. However, if we have to have a test, then I think it needs to fall upon faculties of education, as well as teachers. I'm very reluctant to give it to a third-party provider. It's very costly. The costs are going to be downloaded onto candidates who are very poor already, especially with OSAP not being available to them. It's really important that the faculties of education need to come together, because we know the needs of our candidates best.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Could you talk to me a little bit about—I'm sorry—just real quick about Lakehead, their program there and what they have in place? Do you think that's a fairly effective model? What are your thoughts?

Dr. Mary Reid: We do a diagnostic test, too, but our diagnostic test is used to inform our Math Plus. They do a diagnostic test—or they do a test as an exit requirement. So far, I think, not only do we have to give the test; we also have to give them source support and resources so that they can access that support. We have a few candidates who were struggling in math class, but we gave them additional support where the interventions were one-on-one math tutorings, and they are passing now. They're actually doing really well.

We're talking about a lot of trauma that our teacher candidates have faced in high school math. Math is not this neutral discipline. It has got a lot of sociocultural aspects to math, social capital. It's important that we see math through this sociocultural lens. It's not just a matter of memorizing some facts.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Do any of my colleagues have a question?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mrs. Fee?

Mrs. Amy Fee: I just want to get your expertise. We heard earlier from OSSTF talking about discovery math and saying that it wasn't working at the secondary level, and I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on discovery math.

Dr. Mary Reid: I believe that discovery math is kind of a misnomer. Real, good math is a balanced approach. We don't want this dichotomous perspective that it's either traditional rote learning or that it's just inquiry and then there's no computational fluency. We need computational fluency. We need proficiency in operational skills. That is of utmost importance. That's going to be foundational, and then that will support you when you get into deep problem-solving. So it's a balanced approach.

Sometimes, based on my own experiences, I have seen the pendulum swing—only in some instances—but in the majority of the cases that I've walked into in the field, there has been a really good balanced approach. I believe that the new curriculum should really reflect that balanced approach.

As far as the secondary—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thirty seconds.

Dr. Mary Reid:—I feel that as long as there is that balanced approach, there should be excellence in secondary mathematics.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. The opposition: Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you so much, Dr. Reid, for joining us today. I just want to start by saying thank you for being here, because your expertise is pretty renowned and we really appreciate you being here. Just for those who may not already know, you have many years of teaching experience, I understand, as well as being a professor. You've been involved in much research, as you've provided here today.

I feel like, if I may just say this, it's so important that we have somebody with your level of knowledge and expertise here before us. I feel like this has been possibly something that has been missing up until now in this process. I really appreciate your shedding some light on where things are currently at in terms of the math class program, the efforts that have been going on among educators and faculty, and how important it is that we work together to get things right.

Dr. Mary Reid: Absolutely.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I really appreciate you demystifying a little bit the concept of discovery math as being this just evil concept when it's really about this balanced approach, which is what, certainly, I know most folks who are educators and in the education field have been saying for a long time.

By the way, just before I go on, I really also want to say thank you so much for the work that you do, particularly on gender and race in STEM. I think it has been really ground-breaking. Just a nod to thank you for your work on that.

You talked a bit about this concept of, "They'll continue to work together." One of the things that has really alarmed me, frankly, in the mention of the math proficiency test in this legislation is that we have no information—

Dr. Mary Reid: That's right.

Ms. Marit Stiles:—about what it's going to look like, how it's going to be developed, or who is going to develop it. I appreciate that you may not have all the answers, but I wouldn't mind if you reflected a bit more on that.

Then just one other point: When we first met after this was introduced back in October with the deputy minister and the assistant deputy ministers and asked them, and the political staff of the minister's office too, "Where has this been successful? Show us a jurisdiction. Explain to us how this is going to unfold," there was nothing. And that is, again, very alarming. So if you wouldn't mind expanding a little bit if you have concerns or suggestions, that would be much appreciated.

Dr. Mary Reid: The research is mixed as far as math certification tests. There's a lot of research that actually shows that there is little empirical evidence that there is a link between high certification test scores and high student achievement. That could be, probably, because the test itself is invalid. But we do know that content knowledge is important—so, not denying that. That's what it shows in the jurisdictions.

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I've given you the list of all of those research citations. It's important that you look at North Carolina. They've done a lot of big data studies.

What I am most concerned about is the marginalization of certain underrepresented groups that may not want to enter the teaching profession. There's very strong evidence from the United States that shows that. As well, there's some qualitative evidence from England that shows that people who have English as their second language or are plurilingual don't do as well on a math test. Math has a lot of language. It has a lot of socio-cultural factors that are involved. If they don't understand because they don't understand the norms of the particular problem, then they're not going to do well. It may not mean that they don't have the mathematical ability. That's going to be really important.

Like I said, I prefer local solutions. I think OISE is doing an amazing job—the master of teaching program. I know that all of our candidates are going to be graduating with proficiency that will enable them to be excellent math teachers.

The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, which is the ICP, just released a paper in the fall. Their number one recommendation to support the proficiency of candidates is to have a consistent course amongst all faculties of education. A course will ensure that the supports are in place; a test does not.

There are also issues of math anxiety. There are issues of money. Our candidates are very poor. I know that in the States, it's anywhere between \$100 to \$300 that they have to pay for this test. We have to learn from England, where

they implemented this test in the year 2000. They did it fast and furiously, and there were so many grave errors and systematic issues that we really need to learn from.

If you can't get access to those articles, I will give you those PDF documents, because that research literature evidence is of utmost importance to review before we do this. This has never happened in Canada. We are going to be the first province, if this does happen.

Once again, I prefer the course, because the course allows for interventions, it's equitable and it ensures that students can overcome barriers of math anxiety and math efficacy, and they will be able to build their competencies in a much more equitable space and place.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Dr. Reid. It's really eye-opening to listen to all of this. I wanted to ask: Were you consulted—has the ministry asked you—

Dr. Mary Reid: No, not at all. But my dean knows that I'm so passionate about this. The first thing he said when he was invited was, "Would you like to speak?" I immediately responded and said yes, with two exclamation marks.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute left.

Ms. Doly Begum: We're very glad to have you here.

One of the things you mentioned was that there's a right time to the test. There is also a right method to the test. English is my second language. I was the best student in math class because it was something I understood. We had teachers who also had English as a second language as well. Do you think there's a risk of losing potential teachers, as well, through this bill and the tunnel vision of this bill, in terms of just doing tests that way?

Dr. Mary Reid: Absolutely. We need to ensure that we read the North Carolina studies. There have been two or three studies done by Dan Goldhaber, I believe is the name. We need to read through those thoroughly. It's quantitative big-data sets which show that cut-off scores are of utmost importance. Cut-off scores vary across the United States, which is ridiculous. If you go to one state, you may pass the test; if you go to another state, you may not pass the test. So how are these cut-off scores going to be determined? Who is going to determine them? What does it really mean as far as your teaching ability?

Like I said, there's little empirical research that shows that test results impact student achievement. But that doesn't mean that content knowledge is not important; it's still important.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Time is up. We'd like to thank you for coming out and presenting to us today.

We are slightly ahead of time, so we're going to take a little bit of a break until 3:20. We'll begin right away at 3:20.

I just want to remind everyone that the deadline to send a written submission to the Clerk of the Committee is 6 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26. Thank you very much.

The committee recessed from 1516 to 1520.

ASSOCIATION DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS FRANCO- ONTARIENS

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Good afternoon. We'll begin the next presentation. I'd like to call the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens to the table. Please introduce yourself. You have six minutes to speak, followed by seven minutes each from each of the recognized parties. Thank you very much.

M. Rémi Sabourin: Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente. Donc, Rémi Sabourin, président de l'AEFO, et avec moi, Pierre Léonard, directeur général. Je vais vous donner du temps pour pouvoir mettre vos appareils.

1520

L'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens est un syndicat qui représente plus de 10 500 membres du personnel enseignant, administratif, professionnel et de soutien qui travaillent au sein des conseils scolaires de langue française et pour d'autres employeurs francophones en Ontario.

Vous retrouverez les recommandations en français à la page 6, and on page 7 you will see all the recommendations written in English.

Donc, tout d'abord, l'AEFO tient à applaudir certaines des modifications qui s'appliquent à la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, ainsi que la loi sur l'ordre des enseignantes et enseignants. L'AEFO apprécie que le gouvernement ait voulu préciser que les atouchements ou les comportements qui sont nécessaires dans le cadre des responsabilités professionnelles d'une enseignante ou d'un enseignant, ou d'une éducatrice ou d'un éducateur de la petite enfance, et les remarques qui sont appropriées dans un cadre pédagogique ne font pas partie de la définition de mauvais traitement d'ordre sexuel.

Au niveau du fonctionnement des ordres, l'AEFO rappelle régulièrement à ses membres qu'ils doivent avoir un comportement professionnel et éthique dans l'accomplissement de leurs tâches. Bien qu'une infime partie des cas d'abus sexuel ou d'inconduite sexuelle soit attribuable à des enseignantes et des enseignants ou des éducatrices et des éducateurs, l'AEFO croit qu'un cas de ce genre est un cas de trop.

Le gouvernement cherche à obtenir une révocation obligatoire du certificat d'un membre lorsque le comité de discipline conclut qu'une faute professionnelle de mauvais traitements d'ordre sexuel infligés à un enfant a été commise. Cependant, une révocation obligatoire enlèverait toute place aux facteurs atténuants—par exemple, des problèmes de santé mentale ou physique—qui peuvent parfois contribuer à des comportements inappropriés et sur lesquels un comité de discipline devrait pouvoir se pencher avant d'infliger une sanction. La révocation obligatoire exclut également toute nuance ou facteurs atténuants dans les degrés de sévérité des gestes reprochés, ce qui limite l'analyse qu'on pourrait faire du cas individuel selon son bien-fondé.

Donc, les deux ordres font bien leur travail. Ils ne prennent jamais à la légère les allégations de faute

professionnelle qui sont liées aux allégations de mauvais traitements d'ordre sexuel et n'hésitent pas à utiliser leur pouvoir discrétionnaire pour révoquer un certificat.

Tout en tenant compte de l'élément primordial de la sécurité, l'AEFO tient à soumettre les recommandations suivantes que vous trouverez là, notamment dans la perspective de justice naturelle, de respect des droits des individus, du processus juridique équitable et de la transparence.

Maintenant, par rapport à la composition du conseil et des comités de l'ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants, les modifications qui sont apportées, proposées par le gouvernement, donneraient beaucoup de pouvoir de modifier la composition du conseil et s'ingérer dans le choix de la présidence dudit conseil.

Le gouvernement veut aussi modifier la composition des comités d'enquête, de discipline et d'aptitude professionnelle. La loi prescrit un nombre minimum de membres. Les modifications à la loi donneraient au gouvernement le pouvoir de prescrire le nombre de membres. De plus, en ce moment, chacun de ces comités doit comprendre au moins deux membres nommés. Cette exigence serait également éliminée. Étant donné qu'une des responsabilités de l'ordre est l'autoréglementation, pour nous il est primordial qu'il y ait plus de membres élus afin d'assurer que les comités aient une meilleure expertise du domaine de l'éducation.

De plus, nous recommandons de maintenir les trois postes francophones qui sont désignés.

Lorsqu'on parle de la modification pour l'obtention d'un certificat de qualification et d'inscription, on sait que le gouvernement souhaite ajouter une exigence à l'obtention d'un certificat d'inscription : la réussite d'un examen en mathématiques. L'AEFO est d'avis que pour toute matière, ce ne sont pas les connaissances de base qui déterminent de manière exclusive l'efficacité de l'enseignement. Le succès de nos élèves dépend aussi d'une pédagogie qui met l'accent sur les stratégies d'apprentissage et le développement de l'enfant.

Par le passé, les gouvernements au pouvoir, qu'ils soient conservateurs ou libéraux, ont toujours eu recours à des experts pour les aviser dans le domaine de l'éducation, et on vient d'en écouter une, l'experte M^{me} la D^{re} Reid. Pourquoi ne pas mettre en place un groupe de travail provincial composé d'intervenantes et d'intervenants variés, dont l'AEFO, et pouvant aviser le gouvernement sur le fonctionnement des mathématiques, afin de tenter de cerner le vrai problème—problème qui, selon nous, ne peut pas être résolu par un simple test de compétences. Ce n'est pas un test de compétences qui détermine exclusivement si une enseignante ou un enseignant est en mesure de bien enseigner les mathématiques.

De plus, il ne faut pas oublier que le nombre d'étudiantes et d'étudiants qui graduent à chaque année de la faculté d'éducation est quand même un petit nombre. Si on veut vraiment régler le problème, il faut trouver d'autres façons, soit par la formation en cours d'emplois offerte par les employeurs—mais ce n'est pas à compte-gouttes, 10, 100, 200 ou 300 nouveaux enseignants par année, qu'on va régler la problématique.

Donc, vous retrouvez les recommandations, comme j'ai mentionné, à la page 6 et également à la page 7 en anglais. Je suis prêt à prendre des questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Merci. Thank you very much.

I'd like to begin with the opposition. Who would like to speak first? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Merci. Thank you very much for being here today. I just have a couple of questions, which I will attempt to ask in français.

Premièrement, sur les recommandations 3 à 11—l'AEFO a plusieurs recommandations. Le sujet des élèves qui ont besoin, en particulier, d'un animal d'assistance : quel est le principe de base pour vous, pour votre position?

M. Rémi Sabourin: Un des principes de base pour nous, c'est tout d'abord qu'il y ait des fonds qui soient disponibles et mis en place pour permettre à toutes les familles d'y avoir accès. Je ne pense pas que ça devrait seulement s'appliquer à certaines personnes. De plus, pour nous, ce qui est très important, c'est que s'il est pour avoir des animaux d'assistance dans les lieux de travail, il doit y avoir un programme de formation mis en place, un programme de sensibilisation qui doit être mis en place pour le personnel et les élèves. On ne peut pas amener des animaux dans une école et s'attendre à ce que tout se fasse naturellement de façon organique. Il va falloir qu'il y ait des règles, des politiques mises en place pour s'assurer que le tout se fait bien.

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Est-ce que vous avez des « concernes » à propos des enfants avec autisme, particulièrement quand leurs services sont annulés? Maintenant, il n'y a pas assez de services pour ces élèves. Quand le programme est annulé, il n'y a pas, là aussi, de services. Est-ce que vous avez des « concernes »?

M. Rémi Sabourin: Définitivement. Des services, ça va ajouter énormément dans les écoles aux besoins qui sont déjà criants partout dans les écoles. Donc, je pense qu'encore une fois, c'est important qu'avant qu'on fasse des changements qui touchent directement la salle de classe, il faut consulter les enseignants en salle de classe à travers leur représentant ou même directement avec les enseignantes et enseignants. C'est primordial de s'assurer—on ne peut pas juste dire, « Voici, on va mettre ceci en place », et penser que le tout va se faire. Il faut s'assurer d'avoir en place des politiques, soit à travers le conseil scolaire ou le gouvernement, dans ce cas-ci, avec les changements à la loi.

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Merci.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Harden.

M. Joel Harden: Merci, monsieur Sabourin et monsieur Léonard. Vraiment, aujourd'hui, on parle beaucoup des questions de violence dans les classes. Nos amis, les enseignants catholiques et aussi les personnes qui travaillent au secteur secondaire, dans les écoles secondaires, disent que c'est une question pertinente. Il y a une étude qui dit que pour vraiment proche de 87 % de nos membres, c'est bien visible, les situations de violence ou qu'ils ont même été affectés par des situations de violence.

Pour moi, quand je regarde ce projet de loi ici, je dis, est-ce qu'on est prêt pour faire face à cette situation? Avez-vous des idées?

M. Rémi Sabourin: Si on est prêt? Je peux vous dire qu'il y a du travail qui a été fait l'année dernière. Il y a un groupe provincial sur la santé et la sécurité qui a été mis sur place. Il y a des recommandations qui ont été faites. Il y a un guide qui circule maintenant dans les écoles, mais il y a encore énormément à faire. On a besoin, dans les salles de classe, de plus de ressources. On a besoin d'avoir le réflexe de protéger les employés qui sont dans les écoles. On est tous là pour les élèves. Ça, ce n'est pas contesté, et on est tous là pour leur sécurité, mais il ne faut pas également oublier la sécurité des employés, qu'ils soient membres de l'AEFO ou non.

1530

Donc, tout dans tout le secteur de l'éducation—et s'assurer aussi que les gens se sentent à l'aise de rapporter des incidents. Et on sait, dans les recherches, qu'une majorité des gens ne rapporte pas les incidents. Donc, ça a affaire avec le climat de l'école. Comment est-ce qu'on peut avoir un climat d'école qui va faire en sorte que je me sens à l'aise de rapporter des incidents? Encore une fois, je peux vous garantir que, pour les enseignantes et enseignants, c'est toujours difficile de rapporter des incidents. Mais il faut le faire. Pourquoi? Pour améliorer la salle de classe—et c'est ça le but. Donc, je pense que c'est important.

M. Joel Harden: Donc, pour nos membres qui sont touchés par des incidents comme ça, qu'est-ce que vous avez entendu de vos membres? Est-ce qu'il y a des situations qu'on est prêt à adresser en ce moment? Comme ma collègue a déjà dit, les enfants avec l'autisme qui manqueront de services le 1^{er} avril, est-ce qu'on est prêt pour ça?

M. Rémi Sabourin: Je ne peux pas parler de façon spécifique, mais je pourrais vous dire que, en ce moment, le système est quand même presque à capacité. Donc, si on y ajoute, je peux voir que ça pourrait être extrêmement difficile de gérer la situation.

M. Pierre Léonard: J'ajouterais qu'il faut aussi la regarder avec la lentille de l'apprentissage des élèves. Lorsqu'on ne peut pas contrôler la violence, lorsqu'on ne peut pas aider les élèves qui ont besoin d'aide, qu'ils soient dans le spectre de l'autisme ou autre, ça dérange la salle de classe, ça dérange les élèves et ça perturbe le programme d'apprentissage. En bout de ligne, les élèves souffrent à cause du manque de services et du manque d'investissements pour aider les élèves qui ont le plus grand besoin.

M. Joel Harden: Merci.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles?

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Sur la question des mathématiques et la modification du certificat de qualifications, pourquoi n'est-ce pas une bonne idée?

M. Rémi Sabourin: Ce n'est pas une bonne idée—puis je pense que la D^{re} Reid l'a très bien expliqué tantôt. Premièrement, ça ne devrait pas faire partie d'une attribution de l'ordre des enseignants. Je pense que les

facultés d'éducation sont celles qui sont les mieux placées pour faire ce travail-là. Je pense que ça peut se faire par l'approche d'un cours, comme madame a expliqué. Il ne faut pas oublier, également, que la carrière d'un enseignant est sur une longue durée, et qu'une fois qu'un enseignant ou une enseignante est embauché par un conseil scolaire, il y a de la formation continue qui se donne également. Les employeurs donnent de la formation et ainsi de suite. Il ne faut pas voir ça—parce que en ce moment, ce que je vois dans le projet de loi c'est que nous allons seulement former 5 % par année en mathématiques qui auront les capacités selon ce qu'on cherche. Si on croit vraiment qu'il y a des lacunes en mathématiques, il faut attaquer le problème globalement. Je pense qu'on peut attaquer ce problème-là en rejoignant beaucoup plus d'enseignantes et d'enseignants. Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire avec les enseignants et enseignantes qui ont 10 ans, 15 ans ou 20 ans d'expérience?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Merci. I have to stop you there and go on to Monsieur Oosterhoff.

M. Sam Oosterhoff: Merci et bienvenue à Queen's Park aujourd'hui. C'est un grand plaisir de vous rencontrer encore. Merci aussi pour le travail de vos membres dans la province de l'Ontario. C'est très important pour l'avenir de notre province et pour la réussite des élèves dans toute la province. Merci beaucoup.

J'ai juste quelques questions et peut-être aussi que ma collègue a une autre question. S'il vous plaît, expliquez un peu les besoins du système scolaire francophone, avec le focus particulier de ce projet de loi.

M. Rémi Sabourin: Une des particularités pour les francophones, c'est au niveau de l'ordre des enseignants et la composition du conseil de l'ordre. En ce moment, il y a trois postes désignés pour les francophones. Ici, dans le projet de loi, on ne parle pas d'abolir ni de maintenir, donc on veut s'assurer qu'on maintienne les trois postes francophones désignés. Il y a des particularités—je dis souvent que le système francophone n'est pas meilleur, mais il est différent. Je pense que c'est important que cette voix-là se fasse entendre.

De plus, il ne faut pas oublier que l'ordre des enseignants a été créé comme un organisme d'autoréglementation et, pour ce faire, il faut qu'il y ait des gens de la salle de classe qui connaissent l'éducation, qui vont pouvoir siéger sur les différents comités. Donc, on doit s'assurer qu'il y a des francophones qui sont là, et également sur les différents comités—vous savez, il y a des comités de discipline; il y a différents comités—pour pouvoir traiter avec une certaine rapidité et pour que les personnes qui doivent passer devant l'ordre puissent avoir des services en français, puissent avoir des collègues francophones qui seront devant eux. Donc, je pense que c'est important de garder les postes désignés francophone.

M. Sam Oosterhoff: Notre dernière députation a expliqué beaucoup sa position sur le sujet de l'examen prescrit pour les compétences en mathématiques. Expliquez pour moi un peu les différences entre votre position et sa position. Par exemple, si tu préfères leur recommandation 17 au lieu de leur recommandation 16.

M. Rémi Sabourin: Donc, un peu comme la D^{re} Reid a expliqué, on pense que c'est vraiment important que les facultés prennent charge des mathématiques et de l'enseignement et la préparation pour les mathématiques et que ça soit fait dans un cours, donc dans des leçons, et non dans un test où on va, comme la D^{re} Reid a mentionné, régurgiter de l'information pour passer un test avec des réponses à choix multiples. C'est important d'avoir une connaissance de base qui serait enseignée dans les cours, mais également qu'on puisse attacher la pédagogie qui va avec ça. C'est important.

Donc, je pense qu'on a une chance de faire quelque chose de bien ici en Ontario avec les mathématiques. Je ne suis pas contre le fait qu'on met une lentille sur les mathématiques—je pense que c'est important—mais il faut bien le faire. On a une chance de bien le faire, et c'est pour ça qu'on recommande également que différents groupes—qu'il y ait un comité qui soit formé, qu'on ait des débats, qu'on puisse entendre des choses comme ce que la D^{re} Reid a à dire et certainement aussi d'autres chercheurs qui vont peut-être contredire ce que la D^{re} Reid a dit, et aussi avoir certainement la voix des enseignants à ces comités-là.

Comme j'ai dit, je pense que c'est important, les mathématiques. Il faut trouver une solution. On voit qu'il y a des faits; qu'il y a des résultats qui sont à la baisse. Mais trouvons des solutions qui vont fonctionner à long terme et qui vont fonctionner pour l'ensemble, et non seulement les jeunes enseignants, parce que là on ne touche pas aux enseignants chevronnés.

M. Sam Oosterhoff: Merci beaucoup. Aussi, je pense que ma collègue a une autre question, en anglais.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Merci. Madame Fee?

Mrs. Amy Fee: I do apologize right off the top. I am sorry, but I cannot ask the question in French.

Mr. Rémi Sabourin: That's okay.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I want to look at the service dog side of the recommendations here. You may not be aware, but I have been long advocating for the use of service animals in schools for children with disabilities. One of the key pieces is definitely to look at that competing rights piece as well. You do mention that in there. That does, in my view, need to be taken into consideration: the allergies and the phobias of staff as well as students.

One thing I did want to mention: You had talked about making sure that the school and the teachers were informed about the service dogs. I have done extensive work with my own child's service dog with the Lions Foundation as well as National Service Dogs, which is located in the riding of Cambridge, MPP Karahalios's riding. They do presentations for the schools. They go out and support staff as much as they can. They are charities, so they are short on staff at times, but they do go out and they meet with staff, and students as well. Then if issues come up after the dog has been in the school, they do go back and they work with staff, and they do check-ins and make sure that things are going well. I just wanted to let you know, from at least those two organizations that I do know, what they do to support schools.

My question for you is around determination of need. When a service dog is recommended, a medical professional has to recommend the dog. Usually a service dog provider will then assess the situation as well, to see if a service dog is best for the type of situation that the medical professional is looking to support.

I'm just wondering, from your perspective, if there has ever been an incident that you can think of where a school board administrator could overrule, or should be able to overrule, the medical professional who says that the student needs the service animal in the classroom.

1540

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 45 seconds to please reply.

M. Pierre Léonard: Si j'ai bien compris la question, c'est est-ce que des autorités médicales ont eu présence sur d'autres autorités médicales qui disaient qu'il devrait y avoir un animal de compagnie dans l'école? C'est difficile à répondre parce que l'école, la direction d'école, le surintendant doivent tenir compte du bien-être de l'ensemble des élèves. C'est possible qu'il y aurait des accommodements à faire, soit pour les élèves qui ont des allergies, soit pour l'élève qui a besoin de l'animal de compagnie. Donc ça fait partie, on pense, de l'éducation qui doit être faite au préalable pour permettre à l'élève qui a besoin de l'animal de compagnie de s'intégrer avec son animal et aussi pour l'ensemble de l'école—non pas seulement la classe—d'être capable d'accueillir ce besoin important.

Donc, ce n'est pas d'avoir présence sur un plutôt que l'autre. On pense que le système scolaire doit accueillir. Il faut qu'il y ait des règles. Ça ne peut pas juste simplement être une autorité médicale qui dit oui et quelqu'un d'autre qui dit non parce que les experts ne sont pas souvent d'accord. Il faut tenir compte de l'ensemble des besoins de l'ensemble des élèves et aussi des travailleurs et travailleuses, des éducateurs dans l'école.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much for joining us here today. We look forward to hearing more.

Mr. Rémi Sabourin: Thank you. Merci.

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the faculty of education, University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I'd just like to remind you that you have six minutes to present, followed by seven minutes each from the recognized parties for questions. Please introduce yourselves.

Dr. Ann LeSage: Hi, I'm Dr. Ann LeSage, associate professor at UOIT.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: And I'm Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen, associate teaching professor at UOIT.

Honourable MPPs, members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy: All squares are rectangles. I see that some of you appear to be puzzled by what I just said. Don't

worry; we are used to it. Our students often give us the same look when they hear that statement for the first time.

“All squares are rectangles” is an absolutely true mathematical statement. Yet our students have learned implicitly through their schooling that a square is a square and a rectangle is a rectangle and never the two should meet. When our students encounter this new idea, they start with surprise and then they progress to upset and anger. Why had they not learned this knowledge when they were in school? It seems so simple.

But what is this knowledge? This is the knowledge needed to teach mathematics in Ontario. It is the knowledge that squares are rectangles, and that quadrilaterals are categorized according to their properties. Do our students begin their education programs with this knowledge? Perhaps some of the knowledge, but some of the mathematics they have learned has to be unlearned in order to teach, like “squares are squares and rectangles are rectangles,” and some of their knowledge has to be expanded, and still some mathematics they learn is new for them.

This is because the teaching of mathematics requires a significantly different type of mathematical knowledge than does the doing of mathematics. What do faculties of education do to nurture this knowledge? We have just moved to a new four-semester extended teacher education program in the province of Ontario. Many faculties have created new math content courses with the intention of teaching this content knowledge required for teaching elementary mathematics. Specifically at UOIT, we have implemented a mandatory mathematics content course for all our teacher-candidates. We are just beginning to explore the impact of these innovative program changes on the growth of mathematical content knowledge for our recent graduates and their future students.

Dr. Ann LeSage: Bill 48, subsection 18(1)(c) of the Education Act, is proposing that a certificate of qualification and registration only be issued to persons who successfully complete a prescribed examination relating to proficiency in mathematics. Any one-time, one-shot assessment measures knowledge at an instant in time. One-time assessments assume that knowledge is stagnant and that teachers cannot continue to grow and learn throughout their careers.

As we begin to think about proficiency in mathematics, we wonder: How do we measure the complexity of proficiency in mathematics? What exactly does “proficiency in mathematics” mean? How do we define it? Is the same mathematical proficiency required to teach kindergarten as to teach grade 6? Will a one-time assessment limit access or present barriers to individuals who have the potential to be great mathematics teachers, especially those from underrepresented communities? Doesn’t it behoove us to ensure that we provide access to those with the potential to be great mathematics teachers and role models for Ontario students?

We agree with the inclusion of professional standards for teaching mathematics, but it should be a standard that supports access to more than those who are good test-

takers. Instead, we believe that an assessment of mathematical content knowledge should be part of a broader approach.

We’re proposing a three-pronged approach. If you see in our coloured handout that little Venn diagram—I’m going to talk about that three-pronged approach. Our suggestion is that we involve multiple stakeholders—faculties of education, school boards, professional organizations and government agencies—and that we work collaboratively to improve the mathematical content knowledge of teachers.

First of the three prongs would be our faculties of education. We should include mathematics content knowledge courses specific to the knowledge required to teach K-to-6 mathematics. We’re already doing that at U of T; we’ve been doing that for a very long time.

Second, the mathematical content knowledge assessment should act formatively, which means it’s not an end-of-the-year knowledge test. As such, it should be used to inform teachers’ next steps in their development of knowing mathematics. To create this test, we require a committee of multiple stakeholders that would work together to co-develop an assessment tool, and that assessment tool should be based on research. The assessment data that we collect—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Dr. Ann LeSage: —should be used to provide us with trajectories for professional development.

Third, we should have university-school partnerships established to support and nurture mathematical growth for teaching.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: UOIT is a STEM university. We already have programs in place to support the first and the third prongs. Since the inception of the extended teacher education program, we have developed and implemented the 36-hour mandatory mathematical content course required by all teacher candidates in the program. The course supports the development of mathematical knowledge specifically for teaching.

Additionally, we are working on collaborative research projects to develop professional development for our own students and teachers within the system.

Dr. Ann LeSage: I’ve been working in teacher education—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Your time is up.

We’re going to begin with the government side: Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so very much for coming before the committee today. Thank you also for bringing forward the three-pronged approach. It’s very, very interesting. We, of course, wanted to hear from people like yourselves who are experts in the field and have done a lot of work in this regard. That’s one of the most wonderful parts of these types of committees: hearing from people like yourselves who do work in this space.

I’m just wondering if you could speak a little bit more about the faculties portion of this, around what has been

done at Lakehead and at other universities, those testing mechanisms and what that can look like.

Dr. Ann LeSage: Within the province of Ontario, Lakehead has been doing an assessment for some time. So I'm not going to speak to what Lakehead does, but I can speak to what we have done at UOIT.

We started our elementary teacher education program in 2006. Starting in about 2009, I worked on developing an assessment test. I have publications that speak to the validity of that test, but we ran that assessment as a diagnostic tool. What we did is, we ran that assessment. It focused on rational number understanding: fractions and decimals. There's a lot of research that will support that that understanding is central to the core of K-to-6 mathematics. It's an area that teachers struggle with.

What we did at the time was, before we had the new extended program, we offered a math content knowledge course that was an elective course. If our student teachers didn't do well on the math assessment, we strongly recommended that they take an elective course.

At that time, we also offered math camps, which ran for an entire week before we started our program. It focused, again, on mathematics content knowledge.

Since then, we've evolved into an extended program, and now all teacher candidates are required—it's no longer an elective course; it's now a mandatory content knowledge course. We no longer do the assessment because all teacher candidates have to take the course, so there's no reason to give them the data that says, "You might want to get some extra content knowledge," because all of our teacher candidates—whether they're primary or junior or they're high school math and English teachers—still have to take the math content course.

1550

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Earlier, we heard from Dr. Reid from OISE, who spoke about some of the differences between the math content courses and, of course, pedagogy courses. I was wondering if you could dig a little more into that and some of the differences there and what we can be doing to perhaps incentivize more participation in the content and not just the pedagogy side of things.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: Content is extremely important. Knowing mathematics is extremely important. There has been a ton of research on the differences—not much agreement on what that mathematics is, and the field is still in the process of discussing what it means to know mathematics for teaching. We have separated it out into three different areas: into content knowledge—knowledge of mathematics—knowledge of mathematics for teaching and knowledge of how the student learns mathematics. We can put it on a nice little graph and show it all separate, but in practice it all intertwines together. It's an important thing to note. So even though we will teach a separate content course and we'll teach a separate methodology course, at some point they have to meet so that we understand how that mathematics supports the teacher's teaching and supports the learner's learning. In the end, the consensus is, that's really important right now while we're discussing what that content is.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I don't know if my colleagues had any questions—yes. Then I'll pass it over—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mrs. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Kind of playing off that last answer, but going into the actual schools themselves: Earlier, we heard from OSSTF, talking about discovery math at the secondary level really not working for them. I'm just wondering if I can get your thoughts on discovery math, the basics, rote math and what you're looking at. We're hearing that maybe there needs to be a balance. OSSTF was sort of saying no to discovery math. You have the expertise and I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that curriculum piece in the schools.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: Discovery math is a very interesting area. It's very ill-defined. There are two schools of thought. There's a school of thought, "Let's just let the kids go and do math," and there's a school of thought, "Let's let the kids go, but put parameters around them so they experience math as mathematicians do." If you're going to define "discovery"—although it shouldn't be just confined to discovery math—that works. The kind where we just let people go doesn't work. So it gets confused a lot of the times because the labels are the same, but they shouldn't be.

If we give children the opportunity to experience math like mathematicians, with deep problem-solving, working on something, working on a problem, supported—it's always supported by fluency; fluency is extremely important—then it works really well, but if we define it as something that's like a free-for-all, it does not work very well.

Dr. Ann LeSage: And I think you need to be really careful about tossing around terms like "discovery" when nobody—and I'm not saying you in particular; I mean, in general, our teaching group—because there is no definition. Even the terms "problem-solving" or "problem-based learning"—it's nebulous.

I don't think anybody would say that you throw the baby out with the bathwater. There's a fluency that students need. They need the fluency in order to be able to operate as mathematicians in a problem-solving context. It's a matter of how we balance that, what does that actually look like, and how we support teachers so they can balance that within their classrooms, whether they're in secondary school or elementary school.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: There's an important point to this, that—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thirty seconds.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: —mathematical content knowledge is actually key to being able to support it. So it really all works together in one big loop.

Interjection: Could you just define fluency—

Interjections.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: Fluency is being able to have calculations—but also being able to understand which type of calculation to use. So it's fluency and flexibility which is really important.

Dr. Ann LeSage: Not just memorizing.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. I'd like to go to the opposition. Who would like to ask a question? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you so much for coming here today. As you may know, we have less than eight hours in total to review this legislation and to receive comment from stakeholders and other interested parties. When you consider that there's everything from service animals in schools to math tests to completely rethinking the College of Teachers, it's a lot. It's so important to have this opportunity, and we were urging the members opposite to allow for much more consultation and discussion around this. Anyway, we're just so happy you're here.

You raised many important issues, some similar to the ones that Dr. Reid mentioned earlier today. You talked a bit about the limitations, I think, of just testing. If you could sum it up—I know this was your approach; I like a diagram, so I'm thrilled with this.

Actually, maybe I'll take a different approach. Dr. Reid talked about some of the barriers that student teachers will experience with tests. I have to admit that when I was going to school I was terrified of tests. I've learned to get through that a little bit, but it became a huge barrier for me. Even when I was going to university, I was trying to avoid courses that had that kind of testing. We know that some students actually do have barriers. If you add language to that or other issues like that—those are all barriers that don't really give you a great read, as well, of how good a teacher you're getting at the end of it. Could you comment on some of that?

Dr. Ann LeSage: That's an awfully big question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry. I know. And we only have eight hours.

Dr. Ann LeSage: I'm just going to reiterate: You want a comment on the idea of using a one-time assessment tool. Is that what you're asking?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, please, because that is what is being proposed by this government.

Dr. Ann LeSage: Right. We are struggling with that, because any type of assessment measures the knowledge that you have at an instant in time, and you could be having a great day or a bad day. So we've got to be really careful about what that looks like. We don't want it to be a summative assessment, meaning that it's not a measure, a gatekeeper, for whether you get into the profession. We're suggesting that it's some level of formative assessment, meaning that we are to use that knowledge to help teachers decide which PD and how they move forward in their career, not to stop them from moving forward in their career.

It's a discussion I don't think that you can have by saying, "Yes, we're going to do this assessment," without thinking about the complexity of what that professional development looks like. If we're going to do a test, then how do we support teachers who don't do well on that test? And what is the content of the test, is a really big question. As they move forward in their career, it's really about their trajectories and how they move forward, and then how we work as a team to support them at faculties, at OCT, in the schools.

Ms. Marit Stiles: This government has done away with some of the supports that teachers counted on to be able to continue their education, particularly in areas like math, additional qualifications. We talk about all of these concepts like math tests and such, and to me, they seem like they're perhaps just ideas that have been floated because they're catchy, slick slogans, but they have big potential impacts on how we do our work.

We don't have any information in here at all about how this test will be developed. I wondered if you could comment. If they are going to move forward with this ill-advised idea, what would you advise in terms of who should be developing a test like this? Is that an impossible question?

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: The first thing I want to say about this test is, if teachers view themselves as learners, students will view themselves as learners. So whatever this test does, it needs—as the end result, teachers need to feel that they have potential for growth, and so that they could eventually convey that to their students. The people who are in the field—the faculties of education, the OCT, the school boards, the teachers—are the people who know what's going on and know how to support their teachers, and they really need to be part of that development.

1600

Ms. Marit Stiles: Have you ever been consulted by the government at all on this, since this new government was elected?

Dr. Ann LeSage: We had a meeting last week, online, with the Ministry of Education, all of the faculties of education representatives and OCT on this. We had an online meeting for—three hours?

Ms. Marit Stiles: And was there a consensus in that meeting, or was there support for the test?

Dr. Ann LeSage: It was a lot of discussion, and it was just more question-raising than anything: "What is this test going to look like? What do we?"—

Ms. Marit Stiles: And they didn't have specifics to provide to you yet?

Dr. Ann LeSage: No, it was data collection. It was a big discussion: "What are we thinking about? In what direction might faculties go? What research do we already have? What have we already been doing?" It was actually quite interesting because all 13 were there.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. Do you guys have any questions?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you so much to both of you for coming in today and doing this. You mentioned the learning curve that happens in terms of what we learn here earlier on—a square is a square, a rectangle is a rectangle—and then later on, and I'm sure there are teachers who have different methods and different ways of teaching as well.

Recently, there was a cancellation of the math skill improvement for teachers, that you might have heard.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Ms. Doly Begum: The government cancelled the development that takes place for teachers to enhance their learning so they can come to the classrooms and teach their students.

While this government is demanding a test for teachers, would you say this bill needs to include aspects of development of teachers that are ongoing, so that things like this training that was cancelled needs to be put in place so that teachers are getting the ongoing development they need so that they can keep up with teaching their students?

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: If we go back, teachers have to be considered as learners. Every country that has not considered their teachers as learners is not doing very well right now in the area of math, to put it nicely, but it's way worse than I said. They need a place to grow.

Again, we can't view math as a gatekeeper for them. It can't. It feeds into the fear of math that way.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming out to present to us today.

Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon Sharon Gabison, please. Is Sharon here?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Oh sorry, my apologies. I'm jumping ahead here.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): The Ontario Public School Boards' Association: I'd like to remind you that you have six minutes to present and seven minutes from each of the recognized parties. Please introduce yourselves.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: Thank you very much. My name is Cathy Abraham. I am president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and have been a part of OPSBA's executive for seven years. I am also a public school board trustee with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and have been a trustee for 15 years.

Joining me today is our executive director, Rusty Hick, who has over 30 years of experience as an educator through his previous roles as a teacher, principal, superintendent and director of education. We thank you for this opportunity to address the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

OPSBA represents 31 English public district school boards and 10 school authorities across Ontario. Together, we serve more than 70% of the elementary and secondary students in this province. We advocate on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. We are here today to share our thoughts with you about some of the proposed legislative changes in Bill 48.

School boards have a responsibility to promote student achievement and well-being. We all want safe and supportive classrooms for children. As local trustees who are on the ground, we hear first-hand about the needs of our students, their families and school communities. That is

why it was important for us to appear before you today to speak about the proposed amendments.

We strongly believe students with special needs and their families deserve to have the supports and resources that allow them to engage in their classrooms and school activities. School boards across the province have noted an increase in the number of requests for the accommodation of service animals due to the proven benefit they can have for some students with disabilities or special needs. Service dogs, for instance, can help lower a student's anxiety and stress level, teach behaviour management or modification skills, and foster a sense of responsibility, which all help to create the best conditions for a student to fully participate in their learning.

Many of our board members already have a service animal policy or procedure in place, while others review on a case-by-case basis. At the same time, we must also keep in mind the rights of students and staff who may have a fear of animals, cultural sensitivities, or physical or medical realities of their own.

At my home board, we have a comprehensive service animal protocol in place. The protocol outlines the procedures necessary for bringing a service animal into a school or board site, identifies potential concerns and offers practical strategies to support access. The protocol also promotes confidence in our schools and board sites by recognizing and meeting the special needs of diverse student, staff and community populations. But I know there is an inconsistent approach for requesting the use of service animals across the province that can be confusing and frustrating for parents who are seeking support for their children.

OPSBA supports the development of a consistent provincial service animal policy with minimum requirements that boards can adapt locally. School boards are also looking for consistency in the certification and mandatory training of service animals. In addition, school boards need a clearly defined, common understanding of the use of emotional support or therapy animals for which there is no current legislation or provincial certification. This continues to be a grey area.

As a publicly funded school system, we welcome the opportunity to participate in any discussions and provide our input. We recommend that any stakeholder engagement on this issue be done as soon as possible, as policy implementation is anticipated for the start of the upcoming 2019-20 school year.

At this time, we feel we would be remiss if we didn't mention the ongoing underfunding of special education and supports for mental health in this context. OPSBA continues to advocate for increased opportunities, supports and coordinated services for students with mental health and special needs. Both of these issues represent significant cost pressures for our school boards and impact student achievement and well-being. These issues were outlined in our recent funding submission to the Ministry of Education and are part of regular conversations with ministry staff.

We just had an OPSBA board of directors meeting this past weekend at which every member board had a

representative in attendance. One of the major discussion topics was the recent announcement about changes to autism services. Our member boards expressed concern about the lack of detailed information, given the April 1 deadline, and what this will actually mean at the local level. They have questions as to how many students will now be in schools full-time who were previously off-site and receiving therapy and whether or not there will be enough qualified staff to support them. OPSBA will be asking the Ministry of Education for information and will connect further with its member boards.

I would like to ask Rusty to speak now to some of our other observations on the proposed legislative changes—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): One minute left.

Mr. Rusty Hick: Thank you. We're certainly aware of and appreciate the government's commitment to increasing student performance in mathematics. We recognize that there have been steps taken to this point, including the development of a teacher's guide, a parent fact sheet and some reallocation of funding for teacher professional development. We certainly support that and ongoing learning for our teachers.

The proposed amendment requiring teachers to complete a math test to obtain a certificate of teaching raises a number of questions for our member boards, including:

- will it lead to other tests in other areas of proficiency;
- will this apply to all student teachers at all panels from junior, intermediate, senior and so on; and
- how will the public consultations that have recently concluded affect or will they in any way affect recommendations about a test?

We would like to see all stakeholders involved in the implementation of any tests, including, of course, schools and school boards, where we see our teachers do great things every day.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the opposition. Who would like to start? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much for your presentation and for being here with us today. As I mentioned to previous presenters, we have very limited opportunity for consultation on this really important and far-reaching legislation. I think it's so important that our school boards are represented through the association.

I just had a couple of follow-up questions on some of the points you made. You mentioned something that I don't want to get lost here. I had noticed that Bill 48 proclaims some provisions that were already existing in previous legislation that was I think introduced back in May. They would have to set up this fund for counselling and therapy for victims of abuse or harassment—that the Ontario College of Teachers would have to do that. What really boggled my mind since this was introduced in October was that the colleges have been aware that they had to set up these therapy and counselling funding programs since last spring. My understanding is that they're ready to go. So what I cannot for the life of me

understand is why this government is forcing victims to wait until January 2020. I think that is what you might have been referring to in your presentation. I wondered if you have any further comments on that.

1610

Mr. Rusty Hick: Thank you for the question. What I would say is that we certainly support the funding for counselling for victims of any abuse and we certainly support the revocation of member certificates for those who would engage in anything like that. And then what I would ask is that, when this implemented or if this implemented, consideration be given to past victims that we have and that a grandparenting of this be considered.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, certainly—within at least this period, because we're talking about a pretty significant delay for those supports to get to victims and survivors of abuse, which is buried within a bill that purports to be hopefully toughening things up. Anyway, that's just an aside, really.

I am also very concerned about some of the issues you mentioned in terms of what it takes to make a school truly safe and supportive. I wondered if you wouldn't mind perhaps expanding a little bit on what you think this bill is missing or rather where the government is failing, perhaps, to adequately address—you know, where there are other areas for support and safety considerations.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: We don't have a lot of time.

You know, our biggest issue is always about consultation. When issues come up, we always want to have the opportunity to share with you our expertise, because certainly school board trustees across this province are more aware of what's happening in their own schools in their own communities than almost anyone else. We are the people on the ground, as I indicated, and that's a pretty big blanket statement, because I will tell you that the challenges that you may have in Rainy River are not the same as the ones in Toronto, or the ones that you have in Ottawa are not the same ones you have in Limestone.

Trustees work very, very hard and our school boards work very, very hard to meet all the needs as they come through the door. So what are the biggest challenges? For us, certainly in this context and because it would fall under this context, it is about funding for special needs. I have said, and we always have been saying in a consistent manner, that there is never enough funding for special needs. There is not a single school board in this province that doesn't already spend over the provincial allocation for special needs, and it depends on how big your budget is how much you're spending over, but it's a significant percentage across this province.

So whether it be Bill 48 or whether it be any other bill that impacts our students with special needs, we need the support from this ministry to be able to continue to offer adequate supports for our kids, because that's our job and we're good at it, but we need supports from our ministry for that, to adequately fund those things.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I apologize. Mr. Harden?

Mr. Joel Harden: That's fine, thank you.

You mentioned in your comments about getting ready for April 1. Given what you just said, I'm curious to know if you've had any communication with the government about the Ontario Autism Program and what you're being asked to be ready for by way of preparations for April 1.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Rusty Hick: No, I think the issue for us is realizing what it looks like on the ground. We have a big-picture idea of what's happening in terms of funding. We know that some parents will have a little bit of support that haven't had it in the past, those who have been sitting on a wait-list, and others will have less support. We're looking to see how that is going to impact individual schools. It will, of course, vary school by school. So, again, until you get drilled down right to the school level—that's where you're going to get some of the best answers about this in terms of the individual impacts.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: But I would reiterate that no matter who shows up at our door, we will serve them to our best ability.

Mr. Joel Harden: Of course, of course. But I'm quite concerned that you've not heard anything. I think that should make us all pay attention, because as advocates for people with disabilities, which I am assuming we all are in this room, the notion that a major change in the education of students with special needs is forthcoming within weeks, and no school board, just so I understand you correctly, has been consulted on—

Ms. Cathy Abraham: We have not been advised.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. So I guess what I would ask you to comment on briefly in the time we have left is this. A number of educators, educational assistants, folks who work in schools, have contacted me personally, shown me pictures of injuries they had sustained in the classroom, talked lovingly about the children who have helped them sustain those injuries—not as adversaries, but as a tragic situation. Who are we to assign blame, then, if we allow this particular situation to get worse? I'm not asking that in a partisan way. I want to know where the breakdown has happened here.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: I'm going to refer this to the educator.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 30 seconds.

Mr. Rusty Hick: I think most educators will tell you that students today are coming in with more complex needs than perhaps they've seen in their careers. At the same time, there are limited supports, regardless. There is always going to be an incident where something happens where no one expected it. Those challenges do arise. We're not in the business of blaming. We think the best solution is to bring all stakeholders to the table and talk about what's best for kids, focus with the student at the centre and do what we absolutely can. No matter what background people are coming from, they have the best interests of the kids at heart, and they'll work to the best solution. But there's no magic cure here.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to go to the government side. Mrs. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you to both of you for being here today. I am a former trustee, but with the Catholic

board. Thank you so much for taking the time to come and bring your stories and your thoughts to this committee.

I wanted to touch on the service dog piece. I have long been an advocate for students who have service animals to be able to bring them to their classrooms, and I think the public boards have done a great job on that competing-rights piece. Many of the families I have spoken with, as well as service dog providers, have talked about how school boards have been working with families to look at, maybe, the placement of an animal in the classroom versus a child who has an allergy. If the school is large enough, maybe the child with the service animal moves to another classroom—obviously, the same grade, where they actually have another classroom available. Looking at those competing rights has been done very well, I think, according to the service dog providers I've talked to regarding a lot of public boards in the province. So I want to thank you for that.

Also, I did notice during my time as a trustee that public trustees were speaking up and saying that they felt that there did need to be provincial policy around this.

One of the things that I have been long advocating for is, while taking those competing rights into consideration, though, that if none are brought up and a dog is recommended by a medical professional for that child—if a medical professional makes that determination—then a service dog provider has to determine whether or not the service animal can support the child in the ways that the medical professional is asking for support to be covered.

Do you think that there is a time when a school board official, an administrator, should be able to overrule that medical professional and say the child does not need the dog, even if there are no competing rights at play?

Ms. Cathy Abraham: What I would say is that it's not just one simple question. That's never going to happen unless there's a concern in the school. So then it's a matter of communicating; it's a matter of everybody meeting and meeting the best needs of that student. It's not a black-or-white, yes-or-no question, and it's not a black-or-white, yes-or-no determination by anyone; it's a team effort for the best needs of that student. I can only speak for my own board: That's what the protocol says. You gather the folks who are around that kid, like the parents. Obviously, you're involved, the medical professionals, your professionals at the school—and the best needs of the school, and coming up with the best needs for everyone. But certainly, they're the medical professionals.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any other questions from the government side? Mrs. Martin.

Mrs. Robin Martin: How do you think we can ensure that all members of the teaching profession, including principals and senior school board administrators, have a voice in the new governance structure that's being discussed? Do you have any suggestions as to how we can make sure everybody gets their say?

Mr. Rusty Hick: You're referring to the College of Teachers and the makeup of that?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Yes. You had very little in your submissions.

Mr. Rusty Hick: You're right. We weren't really coming to comment on that directly. We felt that it's a governance structure that's outside of what we wanted to comment on directly, quite frankly.

Mrs. Robin Martin: So you have nothing else to add in that regard?

Mr. Rusty Hick: We think that regulation of the teaching profession is a really good thing.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any further questions? Mr. Oosterhoff.

1620

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Sorry, I just had a question myself—a different question. I don't think you can answer that one.

My question is around the governance piece as well. I'm just wondering about—here, it says seven and seven. I'm just wondering where you felt that number came from and what the review that's ongoing and wrapping up now—what that looks like and what accommodations are happening on the school board level about that review.

Mr. Rusty Hick: You're talking about the governance composition of the College of Teachers?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes.

Mr. Rusty Hick: What I would I say is that it has probably been an evolving institution. In the lifespan of institutions, it's relatively young, I would suggest. So reviewing and understanding the makeup of the governance based on what has happened to this date I think is a good idea. No one would probably argue with that. I'm a certified teacher myself. Having been a member of the College of Teachers, I certainly see the benefits that it provides.

The governance structure is important, and we've seen some, I would say, arguably unfortunate circumstances with respect to disciplinary actions over the past. But I think that has tightened up over time. Whether the governance structure could help to support tightening that up in the future is something that the committee needs to consider.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. That's all.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you for coming to present to us today.

Ms. Cathy Abraham: Thank you.

Mr. Rusty Hick: Thank you.

DR. SHARON GABISON

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call Sharon Gabison, please. Sharon will be giving us a PowerPoint presentation. She's just setting up.

When you're ready, if you could please introduce yourself.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Hi. The display is not working. That's fine; you have your handouts—oh, yes, it is, and now I have to figure out what I'm going to do here.

Okay, let me just introduce myself. My name is Sharon Gabison. I'm a parent of a 22-year-old son with autism and a developmental disability. I've also been a very strong

advocate in the community for the past 15 years, when my son was first diagnosed with autism at the age of five.

I'm here today on behalf of other parents such as myself, who have had children who have aged out of the system and with respect to school-aged children who are no longer in the school system. I've had the opportunity to actually reflect back and see how we can make the system work better for our children by harnessing the current funding that's in the educational system in order to provide services for children with autism and improve their educational experiences.

Just as a point: I was not aware that my son was not going to be graduating with a high school diploma until he was early in his high school career, which was very disheartening to me. Had I known this information ahead of time, I probably would have advocated much more strongly. But in the meantime, we try to choose the battles that we can manage.

There are two messages that I'm trying to get you guys to think about before I leave today. The first message is the picture on the screen: basically, sweating the money to the child. I'm just going to talk about that.

In real life, this is what is supposed to happen. You have a child who's registered for school. It's usually identified quite early on in the system that they will need some sort of support. They undergo an IPRC, which you're well aware of, and then they also undergo an individual education plan. That's implemented, and what are the outcomes? They're very different, depending on each individual child. Some children are no longer able to attend school because of their extreme behaviours. Many children don't get the proper educational experience because they're not necessarily taught in the best way that they can learn. Despite PPM 140, the ABA-based strategies are not necessarily effective in trying to educate our children.

I've been through three governments in my lifetime, all with trying to advocate for children with autism and now adults with developmental disabilities and autism. In 2011, the TDSB had a demonstration classroom—the cost of that demonstration classroom was approximately \$300,000 a year—which was able to provide ABA intervention to provide a proper educational experience for three individuals with autism. This classroom went on for several years; I encourage you to go back to previous Minister Coteau, who will be able to probably give you some information about that.

As you know, there was an ABA pilot classroom in 2017-18, and it is still ongoing. I've been trying to get the external report of the evaluation but I haven't been able to. We also know that there is a connections program to help with transitions, which has more of a consultative basis and has no long-term benefit for transitioning children from community-based programs to school-age programs.

Sorry about the very small handwriting. I can't see it—I'm over 40; I'm almost 50—I don't know about you guys. You have your handouts. You can see that there is a lot of money in the education system. Based on my first slide, you can see that the estimated was approximately \$3

billion in special education funding. The problem is, that funding doesn't necessarily reach that child.

So what does proper ABA in the classroom look like? It's really based on an intentional tiered delivery model system in which there is a one-to-one educational intervention for a child with autism which can actually be tapered as the child's skills improve over time. When I talk about a tiered delivery model, this is not necessarily training educational assistants for delivery of ABA. This needs to be done by properly trained professionals who have not necessarily just taken the 40-hour RBT course but have actually physically demonstrated their competency to deliver ABA. There is a board-certified behaviour analyst involved in the program as well as oversight from clinical psychologists, and there are other requirements.

We're not just talking about training educational assistants. We need proper oversight. We need proper program planning. Data collection must be taken. There needs to be a curriculum decision-based model. It has to be individualized for the provision for children with complex needs who will need curriculum modifications in order for them to develop the foundational skills that allow them to learn.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: I'm going to make four recommendations. As I said, the first one is for the educational money to be sweated to the child so that children with autism and others with developmental disabilities can learn. To also deliver proper ABA in the classroom—for those individuals to be properly trained. It can begin early in the teachers' educational training. If the school boards are not able to do that, let them contract the services out, as they would do—for example, send children off to charter schools. In the long term, there is no oversight. That's the biggest problem that many families face, that there is no oversight in the delivery of their child's education in terms of learning the essential educational skills that they want. Most importantly, in order for this to happen, there really needs to be a huge attitudinal shift within the school boards to allow this model of educational delivery in the classroom.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government side. Mrs. Amy Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Hi, Sharon.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Hi.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you for being here today. I just want to talk to you a bit about the bill and bring us back into the section about service animals. You know that I've been a long-time advocate for this and for the need, for students, especially with autism. But it's not just students with autism who have had struggles getting service animals into their schools. I'm just wondering if you personally have talked to any families about either the benefits that they've seen having a service animal in the classroom or struggles they may have faced trying to get the dog into the classroom.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Thanks, Amy, for the question. I can actually speak from my own personal experience. My son did have his service animal in the classroom.

There was a huge struggle to try to get the service animal in the classroom. It took us about eight months. I'm going to be completely honest with you; it wasn't until I appeared on a TV talk show with the school board, the superintendent of special education—I received a phone call the following day that allowed me to bring my son's service dog to school. Coincidentally, that was quite interesting.

With the behaviours that have been—the service dog for my son has been used in the classroom to help him with transitions within the classroom, to help regulate his behaviours. I know that there were some issues with respect to transportation. I was told that the bus driver was allergic to the dog and the dog could not attend on the regular school bus and therefore the school board ended up spending a lot of money transporting my son to school by taxi twice a day, to and from his school. I think that's a huge waste of money, to be honest with you, but it has definitely helped my son in terms of helping him focus during his transitional periods and to keep him calm.

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Other families, I know, have had experiences of trying to bring their children's service dog to school, and there is so much inconsistency within the school boards. Even within the same school board there are a lot of inconsistencies among schools.

Mrs. Amy Fee: When I've looked through different boards' policies, they can be very wide-ranging. Some have even gone as far as to say that, for the purposes of that policy, if the child is unable to handle the dog—they are actually using that term incorrectly when they're saying that—they won't consider the dog to be a certified service dog for that actual procedure.

I'm wondering if there is anything that you think should be included in a PPM around the use of service animals or, on the other side, should not be included in a PPM.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: I think when you're dealing with a child with autism, sometimes they can't necessarily be considered the handler, and there need to be some supports. So I think within PPM 140, there do need to be some accommodations. If it has been medically recommended that a service dog would be beneficial for the child, I think that should be the end of the conversation and accommodations should be made.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Oosterhoff?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so very much for appearing before the committee today. My question is, really, what would you want to see in this type of policy? What particular directives do you think should be included?

Dr. Sharon Gabison: I would like, for a parent who enrolls their child in a school, once they're identified and they have had even an early identification, not necessarily just the IPRC, that they have the option of pulling their child out of school and sending them off to an ABA-based educational setting which is funded by educational dollars. Period.

If ABA can be provided in the classroom, then it should be provided properly, and there has to be a proper alternative. It can't be educational assistants who have received 40 hours of training in ABA-based strategies, because if it's not delivered properly, the child can actually regress and there could be a lot of repercussions that are undesirable.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you for sharing.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Anyone else? Any other questions from the government side? Mrs. Martin?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Just on the service dogs again, because you had this experience yourself, were there any particular things that would have made it easier for you? I think you talked a little bit about inconsistency and stuff like that. I know you had one experience, but what kinds of directions would be helpful for someone going through it?

I have a daughter, as well, who has autism. We never went the service dog route, but we had a dog at home, which was very helpful as far as calming the child. So I do understand the implications of that for a child. My daughter is around the same age as your son, and we didn't get as far as having the service dog in the school.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Yes. I think I've spoken with you on the phone before.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Oh, okay.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: There needs to be a transparent, consistent policy across the different school boards with respect to allowing service dogs in schools. I don't think it should be something that is a question; it should be allowed. It's an extra tool that's used. Some would argue that it's the same as an assistive device like a wheelchair or a walker. You're not going to not let the person inside the classroom because there is an allergy. I could be allergic to metal; I could be allergic to plastic. Are you going to tell me I can't bring a wheelchair into the school? So there needs to be a transparent policy that's across all the boards, and it shouldn't even be a question of being allowed. It should be allowed; it should be accommodated. The parents should not have to jump through hoops to get their child's service animal in the classroom.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll move to the opposition. Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you very much for coming today. I have an anecdote to share, and I would like your reaction. I have a very good friend whose partner just got a teaching job at Rutgers University in the United States. They moved from Toronto. Their son had been on the wait-list for the Ontario Autism Program and they were thinking about how to integrate their son into the school system in a safe and supportive environment, but they had been there for two and a half years. They left for New Jersey in June. In July their son was assessed, and in September their son was enrolled in a five-student ABA-supportive classroom that was integrated into the full classroom by the afternoon—in the New Jersey public school system.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: It wasn't Alpine, was it?

Mr. Joel Harden: No, this is in the public school system in a middle-class neighbourhood not far from Rutgers University. Why can't we do it here?

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Exactly. There are a lot of barriers. I'm going to tell you, I've heard anecdotal information from other parents, such as myself, that there have been—even with the best intentions, in 2011, when the demonstration classroom was in existence, it fell apart because not everybody who was the front-line staff—teachers, educational assistants—was completely supportive of it. That's where I say that there really needs to be an attitudinal shift among many different stakeholders, including the teachers, the principals and school boards, the unions and the parents, where everybody is working towards educating the child. It all should be about educating the child.

What you describe with your friends who have gone down to New Jersey—if that was my option, I would have done it without even thinking for 30 seconds. It would have been my dream.

I'm going to give you an anecdotal example: My son graduated from high school—and I'm going to put "graduated" in quotations; it means different things to different people—but he did not get a secondary school or high school diploma. He could not really read more than four letters together. We had to put our dog down at the end of December. We did it at home. The palliative care doctor came over and put the dog down and left us all of this material to read. My son picked up the book, and I kid you not, he read "grieving" and "children."

Now, he has been attending a day program. Since September, he has been getting literacy training. They're using an evidence-based program. I can tell you that he did not learn how to read "grieving" in school. He was doing things in his high school that he learned when he was five years old in his ABA program: cutting and pasting and colouring by numbers. That is unacceptable for an adult.

Mr. Joel Harden: I totally hear you. Good news for you, Sharon: Before you came, there were a number of presenters representing teachers and education workers. The attitude is absolutely open to wanting to accommodate them. But the fear, the very ever-present fear—and I feel it in my role as the critic for people with disabilities—is that we're nowhere near ready. The government hasn't done enough consultation with people who are going to be on the front lines, receiving what would appear to me to be a very untenable situation for everybody in the public school system, given existing levels of violence that we have—that I'm not going to blame on any one party. It's a difficult situation.

I guess my question for you is, when we think about a safe and supportive environment in the classroom, do you think autism supports should be afforded to students and their families on their income or on their age?

Dr. Sharon Gabison: No, it should be afforded to all. It should be based on need. We're talking about the autism program. I'm a postdoctoral fellow, I have a PhD in medical sciences and I'm a physical therapist in my career

life. I'm well versed in disability and health. If you're going to talk about that comparison, and while I have my opportunity here—what the government has done with the current autism program is basically tell everybody who needs a bypass that they're only going to bypass two vessels in the heart. When you show up to the hospital, if you need a quadruple bypass, you're only going to get a double bypass. And by the way, if you make over \$55,000, you have to pay for the second one. That's really what they've done.

This is not a social service; this is education. This is a basic human right. It should not be income-tested and it should not be age-tested. It should be based on need. You don't show up to a hospital and they turn you away because you make more than \$55,000 a year.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm not sure how much time I have left, Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have two minutes.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. I just want to say something I'd like you to react to, too: I want to congratulate you, because I've met so many parents like you, who have helped their kids get through very difficult situations. You've supported the public school system. You've not just done it as a parent; you've done it as a researcher. What I want to invite you to consider is, we're in this moment now where we have an opportunity to convince our friends in government to figure out a way to reallocate funds so that we actually have an autism program that works for kids, that works for autistic adults, that works for our public education system.

The minister responsible for the file is a friend of mine. We're both from Ottawa. I actually see this government as having enormous compassion towards people with disabilities, and I believe that. But we have an issue over how much we need to allocate to make sure that students with autism and teachers working with them have the resources they need.

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The case I've put forward privately and publicly here is that we have a situation in which—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Mr. Joel Harden:—corporate leaders in Ottawa have approached me. All kinds of different people have approached me to say, "We would be willing to think about forgoing a planned corporate income tax cut to us," because that money could be reallocated very successfully to enable and empower students with disabilities and their teachers. What do you think about that as an idea?

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Well, I think that it's being socially responsible, in living with the sort of culture that we have to look after our most vulnerable members in society and ensuring that we provide the best opportunities for them to lead a meaningful, dignified life. So I commend those corporate people. We don't want to be seeing our children as a burden to the system at all, but the reality is that we are either going to pay now or pay later, and that's really what it's all about. You can decide when you want to spend that money, but that money is going to

be spent, and you're probably going to be spending a lot more money in 20 years when these kids are adults and they need to be supervised 24/7 because they haven't learned the basic skills of how to go to the washroom or how to read or how to count their money.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for coming and presenting to us today.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks very much for coming.

Dr. Sharon Gabison: Thank you.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. I'd like to remind you that you have six minutes to present, followed by seven minutes each from the recognized parties. Please introduce yourselves.

Mr. Sam Hammond: My name is Sam Hammond. I'm president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. I'm here with Jerry DeQuetteville and Federico Carvajal.

I'd like to start by thanking the committee—actually start by thanking that parent for making the heartfelt presentation that she did—but take the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of Ontario's 83,000 public elementary teachers and education professionals.

Our submission covers several areas of Bill 48 where we believe amendments need to be made.

As you know, the Ontario College of Teachers was established in 1996 following Ontario's Royal Commission on Learning, which recognized that the teaching profession should be self-regulated. The royal commission stated in one of its recommendations, "Professional educators should form a majority of the college, with substantial representation of non-educators from the community at large."

The current composition of the council of the Ontario College of Teachers achieves this balance between the self-regulation of the profession and community representation. The changes proposed under Bill 48 would pave the way for the government to not only change the composition of the council but also of the committees of the college, resulting in unprecedented government interference and effectively ending self-regulation of the profession.

The tens of thousands of teachers represented by ETFO are extremely concerned by this government overreach and perceive this as an attack on their profession. We urge the government and the opposition to amend Bill 48 so that the current composition of the Ontario College of Teachers is maintained.

Ontario has an internationally recognized education system and consistently performs well in reading, mathematics and science when compared to other OECD jurisdictions. The government is operating and perpetuating a misconception that Ontario's math instruction is in crisis. The slight decline in standardized test results reflected in limited data sources like EQAO does not

provide, in any way, a complete picture of math instruction in the province.

Much controversy has been created over discovery math. The reality is that discovery math is not part of the curriculum. While the current curriculum already includes math fundamentals at its core, ETFO believes there is some room for improvement. We have made suggestions on this to the government consultation that was held in the fall.

Requiring teacher candidates to complete a mandatory math test prior to receiving teacher certification is neither necessary nor helpful. In fact, we can't find any link between teacher candidates taking a math test compared to the pedagogy and results of EQAO standardized testing. Instead, the government should focus on providing support for professional learning accompanied by appropriate resources to assist educators in the classroom.

ETFO is committed to eradicating sexual misconduct and sexual abuse of students and children. We acknowledge the important responsibility of the College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators in investigating and addressing allegations of this nature. It is through this lens that we are looking at some of the changes brought forward in Bill 48.

Both colleges already have the ability to revoke the certificates of members who engage in sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or any other professional misconduct. ETFO believes that sections of Bill 48 place additional and unnecessary restrictions on the discretion of disciplinary committees of the colleges, and that this may have some unintended negative consequences on sexual abuse survivors in how they engage in a disciplinary process.

There is currently a lack of consistency, as we've heard, in the education sector regarding the regulation of service animals in schools. While some school boards have existing policies or guidelines on the issue, others do not. ETFO welcomes the government's intention to address the gap in the policy framework. There are competing human interests as well as various legal obligations that school boards need to fulfill, including the Human Rights Code, the Education Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

We urge the government to consult with stakeholder organizations, including ETFO, prior to drafting any policy regarding service animals in schools.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Mr. Sam Hammond: I thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering any of your questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the opposition. Who would like to start? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you so much for your presentation, and for coming here today and sharing with us some of the perspectives of your members, who are, of course, really the heart of our education system, along with, of course, our students.

I really appreciate the amendments that you've provided—the recommendations. One of the themes that I think we've seen emerge today from various presenters—in

fact, I think there has not been one presenter who has said something different, really—is a lack of time and consultation and input into some of these really important measures.

Also, I think it's fair to say, this omnibus bill includes so many disparate elements that really should be considered separately, because they're very important and they have significant impact.

One of the things that I am very concerned about—I think we are very concerned about—is how this math test will evolve. I wonder if you've been asked at all for the opinion of your association, your union, about the math test, or what your members think, or if you have any information from the government about how it's going to evolve.

Mr. Sam Hammond: We have not had a direct sit-down consultation with this government with regard to the math test. When I met with the minister, I was very clear, based on ETFO's position and, in fact, what the vast, overwhelming majority of our members are saying—as well as experts and researchers, I might add—as I suggested: that the math test in no way links to, or is a bridge to, somehow correcting the concerns that the government might have now with math instruction or math scores in the classroom.

From what I've sat through and heard, I agree: There has been a consistent echoing of a lack of consultation from this government with stakeholders on a number of different issues, and that would be one of them. There's such value in it. Even if stakeholders don't agree on particular positions, there's a lot of value in broad consultation, and not simply a link through a website, but a sit-down conversation with stakeholders.

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That happened, for example, when Mike Harris was in office. He actually brought people in and actually consulted with them; agree or disagree with the direction they took, that did happen. Through those consultations, there were amendments that took place through some of the processes—the amalgamation of boards, for example.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I know my colleague has a question as well, but I just want to touch again on your comments about the Ontario College of Teachers and the makeup of that organization, which, again, I want to point out—this came up very early on today. The college had not completed their review when this legislation was introduced in October and, in fact, haven't even met yet to consider what their recommendations might be. So it seems incredibly pre-emptive and, in fact, premature. In fact, we are supposed to go through this legislation line-by-line on Monday and Tuesday next week, and I'm not even sure how the college will have input, so it seems extraordinarily premature. I'm certainly going to move that they carve out all of these pieces so that we can deal with them separately.

Do you have any other comments? Obviously we have political concerns around potential political interference as well, and what we've just seen with the government putting many of the former candidates for the Conservative Party in positions of authority in education, like the new EQAO chair: full-time now, \$140,000.

Any comments on your concerns around political interference, potentially?

Mr. Sam Hammond: It is concerning to us when we see that the college is meeting later this week for the council to consider the review and the recommendations in that review, and well prior to that, the government is putting forward changes to that body, as opposed to allowing that process, as you suggested, to work its way through. Let it go to the college, that the college deal with their review and that they deal with what they think are reviews.

If the government feels that there need to be changes, I would suggest they should be letting that play out and providing input to the college at an appropriate time, and not prior to. When I went through and read the recommendations from the college and I look at what's in the bill, it is concerning that all of what's being put forward in the bill has been put forward when it has, as opposed to waiting for that process to play out. We've seen that a number of times in a number of different situations.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I defer to my colleague.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you to all of you for coming in today and for the specific recommendations. You have actually gone through and provided specific recommendations on each one of the items.

One of the things I wanted to follow up on was, there has been cancellation on the teachers' skill development programs for math skills, just earlier on, done by this government. Meanwhile, they're demanding that teachers now take a test to qualify. We heard from previous presenters that this kind of method can actually discourage teachers from becoming teachers. Some might actually become disheartened. What are your thoughts on that? How do you think we can amend this bill so that this government can actually have a bill that focuses on teachers as well as students?

Mr. Sam Hammond: Well, it's a very broad question.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Mr. Sam Hammond: I would amend it by deleting the section around that math test and I would continue, for example, with the funds and the supports that have been put forward in the past through the Ontario Teachers' Federation for teachers to provide them additional learning opportunities related to math and how it applies in the classroom.

And I ask this: Why just a test on math? I'm not advocating this to anyone, but why not a test on English-language skills, literacy skills, social studies skills? I'm not sure what the connect is.

I would amend it to delete it and continue to provide the supports and the resources that were there in the past through the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll move on to the government side. Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much, Mr. Hammond, Jerry and Federico, for taking the time to come before the committee today. On behalf of the Minister of Education, I also want to thank your membership for the

work that they do every day in our schools across the province and, really, the excellent supports that they provide to the future of our province. Thank you.

I did have a couple of different questions in a couple of areas, and I know my colleague does as well, so I won't take too long. I did want to ask: Do you have any concerns with the existing governance model of the OCT?

Mr. Sam Hammond: My response to that is that I think this is the third time in 20 years that the governance model has been reviewed. I think, in all fairness, that we should allow that process to play out internally at the council this week, and let them make decisions based on the information that's before them.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: So you don't have any current concerns, or you do, or you just want to see it all turn out, how they do it? Could you explain that a little more?

Mr. Sam Hammond: I'm not sure what you mean by "concerns."

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm just curious: Do you think everything is fine right now, then, the way it is?

Mr. Sam Hammond: I don't sit on the council, so I can't give you an internal "I think everything is running smoothly." I don't, quite frankly, on a day-to-day basis, follow the College of Teachers and the structure there. But I would suggest that your government internally, or ETFO internally, needs to look at and address issues that they think are of concern to them.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thanks. You mention here that we're operating under "a misconception that Ontario's math instruction is in crisis."

We earlier heard from the OSSTF, who expressed a lot of concern around discovery math as being one of the major reasons for what they thought also is a decline in these scores. I was wondering if you'd be able to talk about that. Because here you say, "Much controversy has been created over 'discovery math.'" They say that discovery math is one of the reasons for the decline. You say that discovery math isn't being taught. I'm just wondering if you could jibe those two.

Mr. Sam Hammond: Who suggested that—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The OSSTF. They called it "snake oil."

Mr. Sam Hammond: I'll let Jerry answer your question.

Mr. Jerry DeQuetteville: If you look at the math curriculum, there's nothing in there around discovery math. I can't speak to what our friends in OSSTF were talking about.

One of the challenges has always been the balance between the focus on fundamentals—kids learning the multiplication facts, and that sort of thing—and problem-solving, being able to explain how you got where you got and so on. One of the difficulties that I think we had in the elementary panel was, when there was a significant focus on literacy and numeracy, there were a lot of resources placed on literacy—a lot of resources placed on literacy—and I don't think there was as much on the numeracy as there could be or should be. That was one of the reasons

why, as an organization, we have been advocating for professional learning for our members on numeracy.

I think there are some difficulties with how it was rolled out in different school boards. In some school boards, teachers were told, “You’re not allowed to use textbooks anymore”; in other school boards, they’re still using them. So, there were a lot of mixed messages.

Those are the sorts of things that we think need to be clarified before we go down a particular road that has no evidence of having any impact.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: So you would say that there is no impact right now, that there is no problem with current math instruction?

Mr. Jerry DeQuetteville: You look at the fact that Ontario is in the top 10 of math performance in the world. That’s not something we should be ashamed of; it’s something we should be proud of. But we should always be looking at how we can work to do better.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. I’m just trying to understand it, because it says that we’re operating under a misconception that Ontario’s current math instruction is in crisis. That’s your wording. So I’m just wondering: ETFO’s position would be that everything is fine in math?

Mr. Jerry DeQuetteville: Our position would be that our math instruction is not in crisis, and that as a system we’re doing well, but there are areas to improve, and we would certainly be more than happy to work with our partners, as we’ve always done, to improve.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so much. One last question—I’m sorry, but I’m just really curious about the discretion piece in the sexual abuse component. We want to make sure that there’s mandatory revocation. I’m sure you would agree that, of course, there can be zero toleration for sexual abuse. I’m just wondering what that discretion would look like—if there is a remark or behaviour of a sexual nature from a teacher toward a student that would not or should not result in mandatory revocation.

Mr. Sam Hammond: I think our position is that they all need to be dealt with on an individual basis. Off the top of my head, Sam—great name, by the way—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. I was going to give you a compliment.

Mr. Sam Hammond: I couldn’t give you a definitive answer on “This is acceptable, and that’s not.” When we’re talking about this kind of issue, none of it is acceptable. But I think what we’re saying here throughout the whole process is that each incident needs to be dealt with on an individual basis, based on all of the facts.

1700

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. Just one more question.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mrs. Karahalios: just over a minute.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you, gentlemen, for coming in today. My question is around mandatory math testing. Speaking with parents, a lot of them are frustrated with the math, the way in which it’s taught at schools, and the retention of math knowledge of their children. A lot of them are paying for tutoring, whether that’s through

Kumon or whatever the case is, in order to bring them up to the level that is acceptable so that they can obtain a passing mark.

On page 7 you have: “Requiring teacher candidates to complete a mandatory math test”—you don’t believe that will “lead to improvement in math instruction or math outcomes.” What are your concerns about the mandatory test? Are you concerned about the pass rate for the teachers? Will it hinder people from wanting to get into the teaching profession? What exactly is your concern around that?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Sam Hammond: I think it’s a number of different things, but I’m not sure—at the very core of our opposition to it—what the purpose of it is when you’re talking about pedagogy. If you want to improve teacher instruction, then put the resources and the funding in to help teachers do that. Having them write a test in May, and them not getting a position in teaching, let’s say, a year and a half or two years later—what is the connection in terms of how that’s going to improve instruction in the classroom, as opposed to ongoing professional development with numeracy?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming out today.

Mr. Sam Hammond: Thank you.

MS. DEANNA ALLAIN

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I’d like to call upon Deanna Allain. I apologize if I mispronounced that.

Deanna, you have six minutes to present, and there will be questions for seven minutes from each of the recognized parties. Please introduce yourself.

Ms. Deanna Allain: Do I just go now?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Go ahead, please, yes.

Ms. Deanna Allain: Hello; my name is Deanna Allain. Many of you here today likely know me quite well from my frequent visits to the Legislature. With me today is Lily, a one-year-old golden doodle who is in training with me to become an autism service dog. I’ve spent the last eight years working with service dogs in training in Ontario. I spent the past few years successfully advocating for improved access policy and standards in school boards, among service providers, with my local city of Hamilton and, of course, here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I have also spent the last few years studying the legislation in other provinces in Canada and engaging with a wide variety of people from the service dog community in Ontario.

Over the last two years, I visited Queen’s Park several times and lobbied dozens of MPPs and ministers in both the previous and current governments. In May of last year, MPP Monique Taylor presented a private member’s bill with a clear and well-supported direction to take to improve service dog accessibility in Ontario. I am speaking before you today as Bill 48 has a very brief section discussing service dog accessibility. Having never been contacted or consulted on this bill, despite even speaking with the Minister of Education about working

together the day before it was originally tabled, I had no idea the government was even interested in moving forward with service dog accessibility legislation.

That said, I would like to begin by offering some context to service dog accessibility and specifically what I know needs to take place for any changes to be successfully implemented in Ontario.

The service dog community in Ontario is comprised of a variety of different service dog teams. Under the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards, it is identified that service animals in Ontario are identified by any of the professionals listed under item 80.45. That is the only qualification for a service animal in Ontario. This means that any discussion currently about being required to have a “certified” service dog is complete misinformation. The only instance in which there is an exception for this is for guide dogs servicing the visually impaired, which must come from specific organizations listed under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act and also receive an identification card from the Attorney General’s office. All other service animal legislation is governed by the minister of accessibility.

As I said before, I do want to address my specific concerns and cautions respecting schedule 2 of Bill 48. It states in full that the minister may establish policies and guidelines respecting service animals in schools and require boards to (a) comply with policies and guidelines and (b) develop policies in accordance with those policies and guidelines.

First and foremost, I want to make myself absolutely clear: I am calling on this committee to remove schedule 2 in its entirety and move that the minister of accessibility launch a public consultation, including any and all stakeholders in service dog accessibility. The minister of accessibility can then pass legislation governing service dog accessibility across the entire province, not just exclusive to schools and facilities under the Ministry of Education.

It is my opinion that this proposed amendment really isn’t a change at all. The ministry is not making any changes for better or worse respecting service dog accessibility in schools in Ontario. I have been deeply frustrated by the misinformation being spread about this item, in that this in no way solves any issue or concern respecting service dog accessibility.

This—today—is the first time anyone has taken part in any public consultation respecting schedule 2 of Bill 48, and as you all should know, policies and guidelines are only suggestions that school boards may choose to follow.

School boards in Ontario comply by their procedures, which are specifically adapted to meet the needs of given communities. The Ministry of Education should not force a procedure to be implemented, which I have heard is a concern based on the way in which the bill is being discussed.

As I have been clearly advocating to MPPs like yourselves, I know that a thorough and public consultation engaging with any and all stakeholders in the service dog community, and those impacted by accessibility standard

changes, is the only way to successfully move forward with provincial service dog legislation. I continue to call on the ministry of accessibility to engage with myself and others on this matter so that we may address concerns respecting accessibility into schools, access rights for service dogs in training handled by able people, and confusion or misinformation respecting the status and standards of service dogs.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): To the government side, MPP Amy.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Hi, Deanna.

Ms. Deanna Allain: Hi.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you for coming in today and talking about this, and bringing Lily with you. It’s the first time I’ve got to see Lily, so that’s pretty amazing.

I know you’ve been a long-time advocate for service dogs here at Queen’s Park. I have as well, and I have heard what you said today. But I want to bring it back to this bill and get your thoughts on, if a PPM does go forward, what you would like to see in that PPM, and what you think school boards need to have in that directive.

Ms. Deanna Allain: I think as far as what the ministry can do right now, because there hasn’t been a consultation reaching out to engage with people who are impacted by service dog use or service dog training or having service dogs in the facility specifically—they haven’t been sought out. They haven’t been necessarily directly invited. I know I was directly invited to be here today to speak, and that’s why I’m here, but otherwise I might not have seen this taking place and I wouldn’t have had the chance to speak.

So I think the first step in the right direction is to actually engage with all of these people to find out what are those barriers that—in particular, in rural communities, allergies is a common issue that pops up, or people who have very severe PTSD and fears respecting service dogs in schools.

I know you brought up before the dialogue about whether or not a service dog has to be handled by the person with a disability, because that’s the only way we identify service dogs in Ontario. The question then becomes: So who would handle that service dog? Then, are we questioning the undue hardship? Are we engaging with unions then about what that would look like as far as what an employee having to handle a service dog while working to support a student in the classroom might look like? What happens if that employee is absent for the day? What if you have a substitute who has some kind of an accommodation that they cannot work with a service dog and they didn’t know that was entailed in the job description? There are a lot of levels to being able to engage with a very thorough service dog policy and recommendations.

I think the point is, with the Ministry of Education, all they can really do is advise with recommendations because every school board is so unique, and the needs of each school community are so unique.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I’m wondering if you can talk about students in your role and what you have experienced trying to access schools with a service dog that’s in training.

Ms. Deanna Allain: As of right now, there are no school boards anywhere in Ontario that permit service

dogs in training handled by able people—period. There is no policy respecting it because they also don't exist under Ontario legislation.

Everywhere that I go in public, I have absolutely no rights. Technically, I could be denied on the transit trying to get here today or trying to get here into the building itself. Every time that someone who is an able person training a service dog goes out in public they accept that risk: that by training a service dog, they might not be able to get where they need to go at any given moment.

That said, my local school board in Hamilton, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, did permit me, but they didn't have a policy in place. We're actually working together right now to open some more dialogues on starting to become the first school board in Ontario to create that policy and procedure in place to support service dogs in training in the schools.

The important thing about that—having that precedent in place before a ministry were to go forward with accessibility is really important. But having ministry support in having a board go forward with something like that is also very important because if the ministry is on board, it encourages more boards to be open to that kind of an idea.

Mrs. Amy Fee: One other thing that I've been talking a lot about today is school boards and determining need. I'm sure you're well aware that, for a child to get a service dog, it has to be medically recommended. Then, a service dog trainer will work with that family and work with that child to see if a service dog can in fact support the child in the way the medical professional is hoping to see that support.

1710

I'm wondering your thoughts on school boards determining need and what that should look like in a PPM. So, taking away all the competing rights, and maybe that's already gone through and has been checked off—the dog is fine; the behaviour is good with the dog—what does that look like at the school board level? Should they have that right, do you think, to be able to say that a child needs that dog in the classroom?

Ms. Deanna Allain: This is where my point comes in: that this should actually be dealt with in the ministry of accessibility. Also, I want to reiterate that trainers do not have a role, as far as legality goes, of a service dog being in place. Even with a child with autism—I know people who have trained their own service dog to mitigate a variety of different kinds of disabilities, including autism. I don't know what they've done as far as gaining access in schools, but they should also have the exact same rights, because that's the only standard for a service dog: having that note from some kind of a medical professional to say that that dog mitigates their disability, the point being that already, under the ministry of accessibility, as I'm sure you know, under—I believe it's their first schedule—one of the first organizations that is listed as having to be in compliance with all of their standards is school boards.

There's a lot of confusion there. I think school boards consider themselves to be private property. I hear that

quite a bit, and because of that, they feel they can use their own discretion as to whether or not to permit service dogs. I believe there has to be a procedure in place because of various instances of competing interests, but that, in the end, as much as possible, all of the access rights for a person using a service dog or potentially a person training a service dog should be met.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you, Deanna.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Any further questions? Okay. We move to the NDP side. MPP Doly, please.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Deanna, for being here today. I know that when we met, you were very excited about the government showing interest in terms of what you had to ask of the government as well. Just briefly, how long have you been training and how long have you been advocating for this?

Ms. Deanna Allain: As you know, I'm quite young; I'm 18. Not to age myself too much, but I actually started working with these service dog agencies when I was at the age of 10. I met somebody and I started going out to their training classes. They used to hold them out in Cambridge; then they held them out in Guelph. So I would go and volunteer, and I would support them in their training on a weekly basis. Then, when I was about 14, my folks finally caved and let me start raising service dogs on a full-time basis.

What that entails is, I get a puppy at a young age and I take them everywhere with me. I'm responsible for their care, their training and for their development until they go into advanced training and potentially become service dogs.

I did that from 2014 until just this past year, and then Carlin, as I'm sure most people are familiar with, left me and has actually been placed. He's under the ownership of a couple of priests at a church. He goes and visits schools and provides really great support through that.

With Lily now, I'm working with another agency, so I work on a case-by-case basis supporting families through a board-and-train kind of fashion, but in the midst of all of this, I'm also engaging on a very regular basis with a number of people across the province who have access issues. If they're having issues, say, with their school or with various different service providers, they reach out to me. Whether they're in Ottawa or if they're even further than that, I'm assisting them over Facebook Messenger and things like that so that they know how to advocate for themselves properly and gain those access rights that they actually have.

Ms. Doly Begum: So not only have you been advocating for service dogs, but you've been training for quite a number of years. You've also been connected with a lot of different agencies and organizations, as well as us. It sounds to me like you've done more consultation on this section than the government itself has done on this entire section, which is unfortunate because I know you came to Queen's Park to advocate for this, but the fact that you weren't consulted really concerns me. The fact that a lot of people who know about this weren't consulted really concerns me.

We're talking about doctors versus teachers and who has a better say. Would you say that this section doesn't really go in depth in terms of what the needs are of kids with special needs, as well as individuals in general with special needs and how they will need service dogs in different ways in life and in the province and how we haven't really done enough—going back to your request that this needs to be an accessibility ministry issue versus just focusing on one thing?

Ms. Deanna Allain: If I'm not mistaken, the actual section is only about five lines long. The words of that section say that the minister may take action; the minister may create policies or guidelines. As I said before, the only way that actual action, in a very tactile way, takes place in a school board is through a procedure. So, policies and guidelines are what, say, the school board trustees will put forward, which are great. They advise the board, but the board can always choose not to do any of that. It doesn't even stipulate that the minister is interested in improving that service dog accessibility—which means that, in theory, based on this legislation, the minister could present a policy that says, "No more service dogs in schools. That's my recommendation." That's how specific this legislation is.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Any other questions?

Thank you very much.

Ms. Deanna Allain: Thank you.

ONTARIO AUTISM COALITION

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Ontario Autism Coalition, please. You have six minutes to present, and we'll have discussion—seven minutes for the government side and seven minutes for the opposition. You can proceed. Please introduce yourself.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity. My name is Laura Kirby-McIntosh. I'm the proud mother of two teenagers on the autism spectrum and am a high school teacher with 25 years' experience in the classroom. I also have the honour of serving as the current president of the Ontario Autism Coalition.

The OAC's mission is to ensure that publicly funded services for individuals with autism and their families are accessible, ethical, evidence-based and comprehensive. Yes, we protest a lot. But more importantly, we've presented our proposed solutions to countless government officials—including many of you here—over the years. We will meet with anyone from any party if they are interested in helping the autism community.

In my remarks today, I'll begin by sharing my thoughts about service dogs in schools. Next, I'll speak to the current problems which contribute to unsafe and unsupportive classrooms in Ontario. Lastly, I'll talk about the impact of the changes to the Ontario Autism Program on the school system.

Let me begin by sharing a photo with you. It's a photo that truly embodies the expression "a picture is worth a

thousand words." In the centre of the photo is disability rights advocate David Lepofsky, chair of the AODA Alliance, whom I'm proud to call my friend. Standing next to him—this tall guy—is my son Clifford, along with his loyal autism service dog, Basil. On the other side of David stands Kenner Fee—yes, that Fee—and his service dog at the time, Ivy. Although the two boys in the photo look very different, their dogs look like they're practically twins. They're both black labs, they both are wearing vests from the Lions Club Autism Assistance Dog Guides program, and both dogs received exactly the same training and successfully passed the public access test.

The reason we took the photo that day was to highlight the inequity experienced by our boys. At that time, only our son's dog, Basil, was permitted to attend school regularly. Kenner's family, meanwhile, had to bring an entire case before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal because their school board refused to admit service dogs. The OAC supported Kenner's family by protesting outside the school board in Kitchener and sharing this photo far and wide. It's a photo that illustrates how inconsistent policies from one school board to another can serve to create accessibility barriers within our province.

It was a bit of a disappointment to the OAC, then, to see the vague language contained in this act about service animals. We had hoped for something much stronger and more detailed. Many boards, as you know, already have policies respecting service dogs, but there is no requirement that these policies be consistent. This is a human rights issue. We've seen many cases where school boards have decided that a student is doing just fine without their service dog present, without any effort to test whether the outcomes would improve with the dog present.

Finally, the act says nothing about how policies will be enforced. The reality today is that the ability of the student to have the support of their service dog in school depends far more on their postal code than it does on their level of need. To be blunt, this act is far less than the autism community had been hoping for.

As much as I wholeheartedly support the admission of autism service dogs into Ontario classrooms, I must add one thing before I move on: Service dogs are not trained to intervene during an autistic meltdown. They cannot respond to a child who has become aggressive or violent. I would remind members of this committee, therefore, that service dogs are no substitute for trained, experienced and compassionate education workers or for the delivery of meaningful ABA in classrooms.

1720

Secondly, I want to talk about unsafe and unsupportive classrooms. Unfortunately, in my opinion, this bill shies away from addressing many of the issues that make Ontario's classrooms less that safe and supportive. To be specific, the OAC is deeply concerned that this bill ignores several crucial issues that affect the safety of all students with disabilities, not just those with autism.

The bill says nothing about the overuse of suspensions, exclusions and expulsions against students with

exceptionalities. The bill ignores the excessive use of physical restraint in Ontario schools, the use of segregation and isolation rooms, and the devastating impact that these measures have on the mental health of children with disabilities. It's silent on the broken funding formula that funds exceptional students not according to their needs but on an outdated hypothetical statistical model. It says nothing about the urgent need to hire more education assistants to help students with disabilities, and it's silent on the lack of adequate training provided to those EAs to help them deal with the very students they are tasked with supporting.

The bill does nothing to strengthen PPM 140 or to bring in more rigorous training and supervision to support the use of applied behavioural analysis in classrooms. It contains no provisions to provide direct classroom support to exceptional students from behaviour, speech, physical or occupational therapists. It says nothing about the impact of class size on the safety of all students—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): One minute left.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I'll speak lastly about the impact of the recently announced changes to the Ontario Autism Program. The OAC knew back in 2017 that students with disabilities, including autism, were already in crisis. As a result of the recent changes announced by Lisa MacLeod, thousands of kids will lose access to intensive ABA therapy by mid- to late April this year. Children who were receiving two, three or even four days a week of intensive therapy are now going to be eligible for only a fraction of that and, in a matter of months, are going to be dumped into Ontario schools that are woefully unprepared to support them.

I'm here today to sound an alarm bell—not because I want to be melodramatic but because I want the OAC to be on the record on this. We are warning this government that if Lisa MacLeod does not rethink her decision on this disastrous autism program, you will be responsible for what happens next.

I want to end my remarks, and I'll ask for some grace with time, by telling you—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Six minutes now; thank you. The NDP: Please go ahead.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Actually, if you don't mind, you can use some of my time to just continue on.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Thank you very much.

I want to tell you what has been keeping me up at night since the OAP announcement. Everything in my head, everything in my experience and everything in my heart both as a mother and as a teacher tells me that the following things are true.

Somewhere in Ontario this spring, a child with autism will experience sensory overload. Their brain will tell them to run as fast as they can in any direction they can. That child will run out of their classroom, out of the school and out into a busy street, or into the woods, or down into a river.

Somewhere in Ontario this spring, a child will be seriously injured after being improperly restrained by staff

who have not received the necessary training on how to do it. The physical and emotional trauma to the child will last a lifetime.

Somewhere in Ontario this spring, an education worker will be seriously injured at work, not because they lack compassion for students with exceptionalities, but because they don't have the necessary resources to support them. That worker will be out of the classroom for weeks or months and will wonder why the system didn't do more to protect them.

And somewhere in Ontario this spring, students without disabilities will be traumatized as they watch this unfold. They won't understand what they're seeing, nor will they understand the systemic issues at play that will cause these events to take place. They will come home from school and they will ask their parents questions that do not have good answers.

But make no mistake: These events will take place because the Ford government—for reasons I cannot begin to fathom—has chosen to manufacture a wait-list crisis and then implement a solution that makes intensive ABA inaccessible to thousands of children in Ontario who need it. These are choices that will make classrooms across the province much less safe and supportive for all who spend time in them. As a teacher, as a mother and as an advocate, I say this: You will be held responsible for your choices.

Those are my prepared remarks.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. I'm glad we gave you an opportunity to complete your comments.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I appreciate it.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you so much for being here. I appreciate how difficult this is, actually. I also appreciate what I think is a deep sense of betrayal from many in the community.

My question was, what's next and what are your fears, which you've just started to answer. But I thought I would just start instead with one of the things that we have heard—and we've heard this come up again and again and again today in the presentations about this bill. My suspicion is that government intended to introduce this bill back in October and then rushed it so that we deal with it immediately, to try to distract from what's actually happening and what's coming. But that's just my suspicion.

We heard today, actually—we asked the folks from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association if school boards have received any communication from the Ministry of Education—or anyone else, I guess, in this government—about what is coming and whether there are going to be additional supports, how they're supposed to deal with it—nothing, nada, crickets.

What are you hearing out there? I'm starting to hear families preparing to get their children into schools and stuff. Can you comment on that?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I know that parents are starting to contact their local schools to say this transition is coming, to try to start making arrangements. I have reached out to the Minister of Education to ask for a meeting, even before the OAP changes were announced, to talk about the problems with exclusions. I've met with

Sam Oosterhoff on the issue of exclusions. There's a lot to talk about. I was hopeful, when we heard comments from Minister MacLeod, that dialogue had been opened between her ministry and the Ministry of Education, but as of yet I know nothing about any details of that.

My concern is that these kids are going to flood into the system—and it's literally thousands of them—come April. There are no provisions being made, no accommodations being made, no money or supports being allocated to support those kids. That's why I'm so scared.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Mr. Joel, go ahead.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you so much for coming. I guess my question, as much for everybody in this committee as it is for you: What has to happen in order for us to start getting this right? We've had a number of people today say there's no silver bullet. But clearly, rushing something which, from my inboxes, seems to not be pleasing anybody isn't the right choice. Could you sketch for us a better trajectory in the next two months?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I have a variety of thoughts on that. I think all good government policy begins with data. For starters, we actually don't have an accurate count of how many people with autism there are in this province. We are extrapolating from the national data of one in 66. We don't know how many kids are being excluded and for what reasons and if those reasons are related to their disability.

But to your question, I think, really, what needs to happen in order to address all of the complex issues that I'm sure your committee has been hearing all afternoon—and I appreciate how long these meetings must be for you.

There are two things that are in short supply in government, in my humble opinion. One is long-term thinking, thinking that goes beyond the next election: "What do I have to do to get re-elected in my riding?" The second—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): One minute left.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: If there is a silver bullet, it's this: interministerial collaboration. What we need is for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to partner with the Ministry of Education, with the Ministry of Health—because autism is a health issue—and possibly also with other ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and the ministry of justice, because sometimes our kids get caught up in the justice system.

What we need is to look at autism—and it's interesting, because when I think back to a meeting that I had with some of the members here, Jeremy Roberts pointed this out: What we need is a comprehensive plan that looks at the lifespan of a person with autism.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I would urge this government to consider moving away from what your Liberal predecessors did in terms of working in silos, break those barriers down and get all of the ministries

together at the table. Gather good data. Good decisions, good policy, will follow.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Thank you very much.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Government side: Mr. Sam, go ahead.

1730

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: "Mr. Sam."

How are you today, Laura? Thank you for—

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I'm exhausted but okay, thanks.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, thank you for taking the time to come and speak before the committee. Thank you for all the work that you've done on behalf of the autism community and their families and being a strong advocate for not just your family, but so many others. So, first of all, thank you for that and making your voice heard.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I appreciate that.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an important part of our democracy. I think we've all protested at other times and in different situations, so I understand that.

I wanted to ask about the particular elements of this piece of legislation that we're dealing with today before our committee. I wanted to ask about what a PPM should look like on this issue. What are you hearing within the coalition around what elements need to be contained in a PPM with this particular legislation? The final policies haven't been implemented, right?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Right.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: And we want to have those consultations and hear from people about what should be included in that. I guess my question to you is: What should that look like? What is your membership saying about what a service animal directive should look like?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I wasn't sure whether you referring to PPM 140—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: —or a new PPM to be created around service dogs. I think, to speak for my members, what we're looking to see is something that, frankly, I don't think the Ministry of Education is very good at, which is issuing a directive and enforcing it consistently across all 72 school boards.

My experience as an educator is that when you use words like "may" or "might" with school boards—for example, in PPM 140—they say, "Thank you very much," and, "We'll interpret that however we like, thank you very much." If there is a PPM to be created on this issue, it needs to be specific, it needs to be enforceable and it needs to stay away from that legal wiggly words that lawyers like so much.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: So more teeth?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Yes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. From your membership, what would they say some of the benefits would be for having service animals in school?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Ability to cope with the sensory chaos that is an elementary school classroom. I'm

a high school teacher, and there's this weird thing that elementary school teachers and high school teachers do with each other where we both sort of look at each other and go, "I don't know how you do what you do, because it's crazy." But the noise in elementary schools is overwhelming to me. One of the primary supports that an autism assistance dog brings is some consistency, so there's one thing in the child's day that never changes, no matter where they go. Whether they're at home, in the community, at school or at a restaurant, that dog is always there.

For people with autism that have difficulty with transitions, that lowers their anxiety significantly. We saw that with our son once he got him. The dog can help redirect and de-escalate a child as they're starting to get agitated in a classroom, and they can help with de-escalation after an episode. Often, my son, after a meltdown, will just sort of collapse on the dog, cry it out, let the dog lick his face and then sort of come back to himself. It was really beautiful. I'm hoping he's going to make it here today so you guys can meet him, if you want.

The other thing too is the safety feature. I don't know whether—I'll pass this around if you want to see the picture. But there's a clip on the dog's vest that allows—Deanna, I don't know if you can help me illustrate—but you can tether the dog on one side and have the child attached on the other. So I can hold the leash on one side, and then the child is attached either around the waist—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Can you please stay close to the microphone so that they can pick it up?

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I'm so sorry. But yes, there's a safety feature that assists children who may be runners or elopers. The dogs are trained that if the child starts to bolt, they lie down and they ground the child.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I just want to make sure that Amy gets a chance to speak as well: the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): MPP Amy, go ahead.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you. Hi Laura, thank you for being here today and for all that you do, especially on the service dog issue. One of the questions that I've been talking a lot about today—obviously, we know we need to look at the competing rights piece and making sure that we support children with allergies and phobias, as well as staff. But once that has been considered and a school board realizes that there aren't competing rights to deal with in a particular case, a service animal is recommended by a medical professional and then they are trained by the service dog provider, who will also look at the child and see if the dog can support that child the way the medical professional would like. So in a sense, that medical professional determines the need for that service dog in all aspects of that child's life.

What I'd like to know is what your coalition's thoughts are on what happens if the school board administrator tries to step in and overrule the medical professional and say whether or not the child needs the service animal with them in the classroom.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: I would say, quite strongly, that I don't think it's the place of a school board to override the clinical determination of a qualified professional. If a child was taking medication on a regular basis and was required to take it at school, I wouldn't want the principal to be able to say, "I don't think so." If the child had another medical condition that required some kind of intervention at school—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): One minute left.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: —I wouldn't want school boards to be able to pick and choose whether or not they thought that was appropriate.

Again, as I said earlier, to me this is a human rights issue. Yes, we do have to consider competing rights and balancing rights, but I believe that a PPM can be written in a way that's effective and balances those rights.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): Any other questions from the government side? Thank you very much.

Ms. Laura Kirby-McIntosh: Thank you.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

The Acting Chair (Mr. Sheref Sabawy): I'm calling the Ontario College of Teachers, please. You have six minutes to present. Please introduce yourself to the committee.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: Thank you, and good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity for us to present here today. My name is Nicole van Woudenberg, and I am the chair of the council at the Ontario College of Teachers. With me today is our registrar and chief executive officer, Dr. Michael Salvatori.

The college licenses more than 236,000 teachers to work in Ontario. As the regulator for the teaching profession in Ontario, we set the standards for teaching professionals and thereby help to protect society's most vulnerable members: our children.

In April 2018, when we were last here, we addressed a need to make the law clearer and the penalties for sexual misconduct against students tougher. For example, we asked that the government strengthen the definition of sexual abuse in the Ontario College of Teachers Act. Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, does that. Our council is fully supportive of the expanded definitions. It helps to protect students knowing that there are no grey areas when it comes to defining sexual abuse and understanding what constitutes professional misconduct. Bill 48 also enables victims of sexual abuse to receive therapy and counselling. We welcome the direction and clarity these proposed changes represent.

Our council believes that victims should be entitled to up to \$15,000 in therapy and/or counselling services, consistent with provisions in place for other Ontario regulators. Furthermore, we are committed to working closely with government representatives to iron out the details in regulation that acknowledge our financial risk as

an organization and determine how the funds can be distributed and the costs recovered.

We are strong advocates of legislation that keeps students safe. We are also in favour of laws that support teacher development and maintain the high level of standards the college requires for licensure. We know the importance of numerate individuals to a thriving economy.

Our college works hard to ensure that Ontario-certified teachers receive initial and ongoing teacher education to prepare them to support students in all areas, including mathematics.

The Ontario-certified teachers who are licensed to work in Ontario meet the province's high standards for professional certification. Our accreditation of teacher education programs, which were reviewed and enhanced in 2015, ensures that new teachers acquire knowledge, understanding and skills of the Ontario curriculum.

Beyond accrediting programs, the college has developed additional qualification courses to enhance and deepen their knowledge and skills in teaching math to students at all levels.

Bill 48 includes the government's stated intention to require college applicants to pass a math content test before they can be certified to teach. Our council firmly believes that we should not develop, fund, or implement that test. But we think the college should have the regulatory authority to impose it as a condition of certification, and the authority to deem equivalence.

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We do not want to create additional or unnecessary obstacles for people who come to Ontario from other provinces under labour mobility agreements, nor do we want to block internationally educated teachers from applying to work in Ontario whose diversity, experience and perspectives enrich learning for all students. We prefer to work closely with government representatives to establish measures that continue to promote the high standards for entry into the teaching profession and enhance teacher competency in all areas of curriculum delivery.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

Consulting is an organizational tenet at the Ontario College of Teachers. Before the college acts on anything, we speak with stakeholders: those who are affected, influenced and benefit from our services. That includes members of the public, parents and Ontario-certified teachers.

Self-examination and independent reviews are also fundamental to our work and key to how we improve what we do to serve the public interest.

Long before the government signalled its intention to review our governance structure, we commissioned an independent, external review. We asked David Brown of Governance Solutions Inc. to study the size, scope and effectiveness of the college's council and its 14 committees. Considering many variables, he has examined the role of the chair, how council members are elected and appointed to serve, how council's committees work, and

what length of service is optimal. We released his report publicly.

He has consulted with members of the public and the teaching profession and its stakeholders to inform the 37 recommendations, which reflect trends in the regulatory environment and align with the government's direction outlined in Bill 48.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: Our council was briefed on the report on December 6 and will meet again later this week to consider each of the report's recommendations.

As in the past—most notably with the review of our disciplinary processes by former Ontario Justice Patrick LeSage—our council will consider the report and act on recommendations in the public interest, given its authority.

We recognize that self-regulation is a privilege. It recognizes the maturity of the profession, honours its unique skills, knowledge and experience, and trusts it to protect students and serve the public interest. We trust that any discussion about how the college is governed will benefit from the results of our review, and that the standing committee will consider amendments to the bill that may arise from our governing council's deliberations later this week.

We want to continually improve, and we appreciate the comment made by the minister during second reading of this bill, which indicated: "We're also going to allow for the government to respond to the governance review under way by the Ontario College of Teachers.... Based on the outcome of the review, we will entertain amendments relating to the council which could allow the government to introduce changes that could better serve"—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Thanks for presenting to us.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Dr. Salvatori, thank you very much for taking the time to come before our committee. Nicole, correct?

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: Yes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Woudenberg.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: Very good, excellent pronunciation.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I know. I don't know if they're related to you, but there's a whole whack of van Woudenbergs down in my neck of the woods—good people, I promise.

Thank you very much for taking the time and being willing to provide some perspective from the OCT's point of view. I did want to ask a couple of quick questions around the legislative changes surrounding sexual abuse and the mandatory revocation. Do you think this goes far enough? What will your members think about this and what is the college's position on this, if you could elaborate a little more?

Dr. Michael Salvatori: We are pleased with the changes. As you may know, we had advocated, with the previous bill, for expanding the definition of "sexual abuse" and not limiting it to the touching of particular body parts, but rather a broader definition of what

constitutes abuse, and then aligning revocation with each of those instances in which the allegations were made. We do believe that that does serve to protect the public interest.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Secondly, what role could the OCT play in the implementation and the inclusion of service animals in the classroom?

Dr. Michael Salvatori: One of the roles the college plays is providing advice to members. As you may know, we released an advisory on supporting students' mental health recently. I can see a connection also in supporting students with unique learning needs and perhaps expanding that to include therapy animals. That could be one possibility. I don't think our council, or us as staff, have had the chance to think about that deeply, but we do make sure that our practices, our advice to members and our publications reflect contemporary practices, and I think there's room for the college to communicate with that about effective practices.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: What role do you see the OCT taking in the implementation of a math knowledge test?

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: We've stated that, because we've enhanced the pre-service education 2015, there were a lot of considerations through the consultation process to ensure that all teachers going through the initial program would be well versed in the methodology and the pedagogy of all curriculum subjects. We see them as entering into the teaching profession and licensed through the Ontario College of Teachers, being very well trained, having met the equivalency if they're trained outside Ontario. We are to the point where we have voiced that, if that does become a requirement, we are capable of ensuring that that requirement is met or conditions applied—or deem equivalency. It is not, in our view, that we are responsible for creating the test, implementing the test or anything along those lines.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: To go to the self-regulating piece, and understanding of course that desire, I'm just curious to go into the governance bit as well, how you feel the governance model is working currently and what led to that desire to undergo the governance review in the first place.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: I can start off and then pass it off to Michael. I was fortunate enough to be a council member during seventh council. The governance committee deemed it necessary to review our effectiveness of how we function as a council and its 14 committees—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Was there something that led to that? Sorry to interrupt.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: In sixth council, we had a nomination and election committee. Seventh council changed that to a governance committee to really review the governance structure as we're maturing into our 22nd year. Then they determined that it would be wise to have a review. It was the committee that determined that it was a timely manner to review the effectiveness of our governance structures and the committees.

I don't know if you want to add anything.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: Just add to that, it's part of our practice to commission independent reviews of all of our

functions. Previously we had an independent review of our investigations and hearings function and of our registration practices and certification. This represents looking further at our mandate.

I think it's also occurring at a time when a lot of regulatory bodies are looking at contemporary professional regulation and considering some of those changes, so it fits in with what's happening in the regulatory landscape.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much for coming here today. I do have a few questions. Thank you very much for your nice, condensed presentation. I'm looking forward to eating up this great big report later.

I wanted to ask you a little bit about the timing issue, because we have been very confused by this. The government introduces legislation back in October; we barely heard a word—a little bit of debate, not much—then suddenly it lands and it's like rush, rush, rush.

We know, and you've reiterated it here, that this review will not actually be reviewed by the board until February 28. We are heading into line-by-line on Monday and Tuesday next week. I'm really baffled by, frankly, why the government is rushing so much right now when they've waited since October, but that's beside the point.

I'm just wondering if you could comment on that process, because it seems to me that we should be waiting to hear what the review says, what the recommendations are, and then have opportunities to discuss that.

Interjection.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: I can begin. Thank you. We do have an interest in ensuring that the council's deliberations on the report—we have the report and its recommendations; what we don't know yet is what the council view of those is. And we do have an interest in ensuring that the council's view of its governance is communicated and that the committee has a chance to take into consideration those changes.

You've highlighted the challenge of timing. We've also had discussions with our ministry staff about other vehicles after—if it's not possible to have those amendments considered at this time, are there vehicles that would allow us to make changes beyond that time?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Absolutely. I just note the quote that you provided here from the minister from second reading—I'm sure I was in the room—where she indicates that there will be time; there will be opportunities. I find that kind of at odds with this, so I appreciate you raising that here. I hope that the members opposite hear.

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We have also been advocating that, really, this bill should be divided out. There are some pieces here that require a great deal of consideration and others that can move forward more quickly.

My other question to you—and you also refer to it a bit in this brief. You mentioned council members expressing concern about certain elements; for example, the notion of the government having authority to directly appoint the chair and determine the duties of that position. We have

found, lately in particular, a large number of appointments are former candidates of the Conservative Party. They're very political appointments. We've seen the doubling, tripling—I don't know—100-times increase of a salary in one case. And I think there was some talk here about the chair being made part-time. I'm wondering if you could comment on that, on how your council is feeling about some of that.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: The independent review report was received by council on December 6. It was then directed by council that the report be reviewed by the governance committee. The governance committee has subsequently had several meetings to determine dispositions on the 37 recommendations, and those dispositions are what are being discussed at our February 28 meeting. From there, whatever the dispositions of the council will be is where we would systematically look at an action plan moving forward.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Again, we have a ways to go here. It's a big process. It's an important process. It takes a while to get there, and the timing is a bit awkward, maybe, is a better way to put it.

I know my colleague has a question as well, so I'm just going to leave it to her.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: I have so many questions, but we're very limited in time, which is unfortunate. I really appreciate this.

You've mentioned the mathematics condition. One thing this government talks about multiple times is removing red tape and making it easier etc., but it sounds to me like, the way you've looked at this, it actually creates red tape for teachers and for educators, because we're taking away the ability for them to be developed, to have skills. The government cancelled the ability for them to have the training that was scheduled. Instead, there's going to be a test that they have to take.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: The college certainly has an interest in ensuring that all of our teachers are well prepared to facilitate students' numeracy skill development. As we've stated in the brief, we also don't want to see additional barriers erected. We want an effective entry-to-

practice for all candidates, including their preparation to teach mathematics.

That's one of the reasons that we're advocating for provisions, maybe through regulation, for the college to be able to deem equivalence in some cases or to put a condition on a certificate that would allow someone to be certified, begin teaching, and to take the test. We're thinking specifically of our populations of internationally educated teachers, who may arrive with no knowledge of the test as they're coming, and also to facilitate the continued labour mobility from other Canadian provinces and territories, which is a fairly seamless and rapid process.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: In the section where you were talking about providing funding for therapy and counselling, my understanding was that this fund for victim-survivors was already well under way and perhaps established. It's confusing to me that we are waiting now till January 2020 for victim-survivors to be able to benefit from that. Would you care to comment on where things are at?

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: Seventh council finished off with a vote with regard to that, and that was passed on to the government.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute.

Ms. Nicole van Woudenberg: The government then switched, and I think we're at a stage now where we are trying to figure out the details.

Dr. Michael Salvatori: I think at this point, there is approval of the program. It has not yet been implemented. The period of time up till 2020 is, I think, to give us and others a chance to look at what the parameters are for applying for it, what's eligible, how we would administer the program.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you for joining us here today.

I'd just like to remind everyone that the deadline to send a written submission to the Clerk of the Committee is 6 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26.

We will adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 26, at 9 a.m.

The committee adjourned at 1756.

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