

MEDIA BRIEFING

Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026

A person with long dark hair, seen from behind, is writing the equation '2 + 2 = 4' on a chalkboard. The person is wearing a dark blue top. The chalkboard is dark grey and has some faint, circular patterns drawn on it. The person's right hand is holding a piece of white chalk, and their left hand is resting on the board.

$2 + 2 = 4$

Ministry of Education

April 13, 2026

Ontario 

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1. Ontario's Investments in Education and Student Achievement

- The government continues to make **historic investments in education** to ensure success for every learner.
 - In 2025-26, Ontario is investing a record **\$30.3 billion** in Core Education Funding so schools can continue to deliver high-quality education that **supports student success and prepares them for the jobs of tomorrow.**
 - Since 2018, Ontario has provided more than **\$6.3 billion for major capital projects**, including **179 new schools, 126 permanent additions or renovations** to existing school buildings and over **9,800 new licensed child care spaces** in schools.
 - Ontario is **supporting teachers and educators with the resources** they need to deliver real results for students by:
 - Providing elementary school homeroom teachers with direct access to **\$750 in funding each school year for classroom supplies**
 - Investing **\$16.8 million over three years to support Associate Teachers**, recognizing their role in mentoring teacher candidates and expanding practicum opportunities
 - Ontario is also **taking action to keep schools and child care safe** by:
 - Investing **\$41 million to improve student safety and well-being** through school programs led by youth engagement officers
 - Providing a **\$20-million investment to help protect children and staff** in licensed community-based child care centres by installing concrete barriers to address urgent safety needs
- While record investments are being made in the education sector, financial mismanagement and governance dysfunction among trustees and school board leadership too often prevent resources from reaching students and teachers.
- That is why Ontario is introducing reforms to strengthen oversight and accountability, refocus school boards on student achievement and help ensure every dollar is directed to classrooms.

2. The Need for Action

- **The latest Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAQO) results** show that while there has been progress in reading, writing and math, there is still more work to be done.
 - **Reading and writing outcomes are at their highest levels** since the COVID-19 pandemic; however, test results are not improving fast enough, particularly in Grade 9 math.
 - These results have prompted the Ontario government to **appoint an expert advisory body to lead a comprehensive review of student achievement and assessment**.
 - The review will focus on examining math, reading and writing and closing achievement gaps, while looking at the root causes behind these results.
- **Eight school boards have been placed under supervision since 2025** due to financial mismanagement and governance concerns.

The proposed measures would build on the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025*, and move Ontario toward a more accountable and consistent model of high-quality education delivery across the province.

3. Overview: *Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026*

Through the *Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026*, if passed, Ontario would strengthen school board oversight and accountability to help ensure they deliver high-quality education, with every dollar spent focused on preparing students with practical skills for good-paying, stable careers.

Strengthening Governance and Accountability

Ontario would address ongoing dysfunction and financial mismanagement in school boards to get them back on track. The government would **strengthen oversight and accountability** to ensure trustee decisions are responsible and transparent. The government would also make sure that **school boards have the leadership and expertise needed to support continued student success and to direct funding where it matters most: the classroom.**

Ensuring More Consistent and Effective Learning Experiences

Ontario would **improve consistency and effectiveness in curriculum delivery** by giving teachers the tools they need to support student learning. The government would also **help improve student preparedness** for postsecondary pursuits and ensure consistent assessment practices for students in Grades 9 to 12.

Modernizing the Education System

Ontario would **modernize the education system and tools to better support students, teachers, parents and families across Ontario.** The government is also planning to make changes to **teacher education programs** to ensure a stable, high-quality teaching workforce, while saving students up to \$3,000 in tuition costs and reducing the time needed to launch a successful teaching career.

4. Strengthening Governance and Accountability

The government is taking decisive action to strengthen accountability and increase public confidence in the integrity of the education system, with a clear focus on improving student outcomes in every classroom. This includes:

- Holding School Board Trustees Accountable
- Equipping School Boards with Qualified Leadership
- Strengthening Budget Oversight and Accountability
- Professionalizing School Board Bargaining
- Enhancing Capital Projects Delivery
- Improving School Board Communications



Holding School Board Trustees Accountable – Current State

- For too long, too many school board trustees have consistently failed to act in the best interests of students, teachers and parents.
- Across multiple boards, trustees have run multimillion-dollar deficits and wasted public funds by spending on things other than core education services.
- The Toronto District School Board has an inefficient trustee governance model with 22 elected trustees, a size that has fostered conflict rather than serving students, parents and teachers.
- Serious mismanagement and governance dysfunction have forced the province to take direct control of an unprecedented eight school boards in less than a year.
- While school boards receive record funding to support students and teachers, some **trustees have diverted resources from the classrooms:**
- At the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic DSB, trustees spent nearly **\$190,000 of school board funds in expenses related to a trip to Italy to purchase art**, eat in fine-dining restaurants and enjoy high-end hotels.
- At the Toronto Catholic DSB, one trustee used **almost \$7,000 in public funds for personal electronics and accessories**, including an iPad, AirPods, a 4K projector and Europe SIM cards.
- **Hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees have been spent on disputes between trustees and school boards:**
 - York Catholic DSB – over \$340,000
 - Grand Erie DSB – at least \$300,000
 - Hastings and Prince Edward DSB - \$175,000
 - Bluewater DSB – over \$52,000

Holding School Board Trustees Accountable – Future State

- For all boards, proposed legislative changes, if passed, along with new regulations and policies, would:
 - Limit trustee discretionary expenses to prevent wasteful spending and reimbursements out of expense accounts for things such as personal electronics and accessories, membership fees in trustee associations, costs for unnecessary conferences or travel, meal and hospitality expenses.
 - Discretionary expenses within scope may include mileage or transportation costs incurred when significant travel is required to attend board meetings and essential supports for their role such as a phone or computer.
 - Limit trustee honorarium to a maximum of \$10,000
 - Prohibit school boards from paying certain external organization membership fees for trustees or costs to attend non-essential conferences
 - Set a smaller range of 5 to 12 elected trustees across district school boards. This would reduce the number of trustees at the Toronto DSB (currently 22) to 12, making it the only school board affected by the change and aligning it to the Toronto Catholic DSB
 - Improve transparency and oversight over school board subsidiaries, such as transportation groups, foundations and other temporary organizations and their use of public funds

Equipping School Boards with Qualified Leadership – Current State

- Despite established governance structures and controls, trustees have fallen short in providing adequate oversight and leadership, leading to infighting and governance dysfunction that undermine the quality of education and public trust.
- As a result, five English public and three English Catholic DSBs have been put under ministry supervision in less than a year.
- This highlights the need for school board leadership with the right expertise to help ensure boards operate effectively and address issues early on.

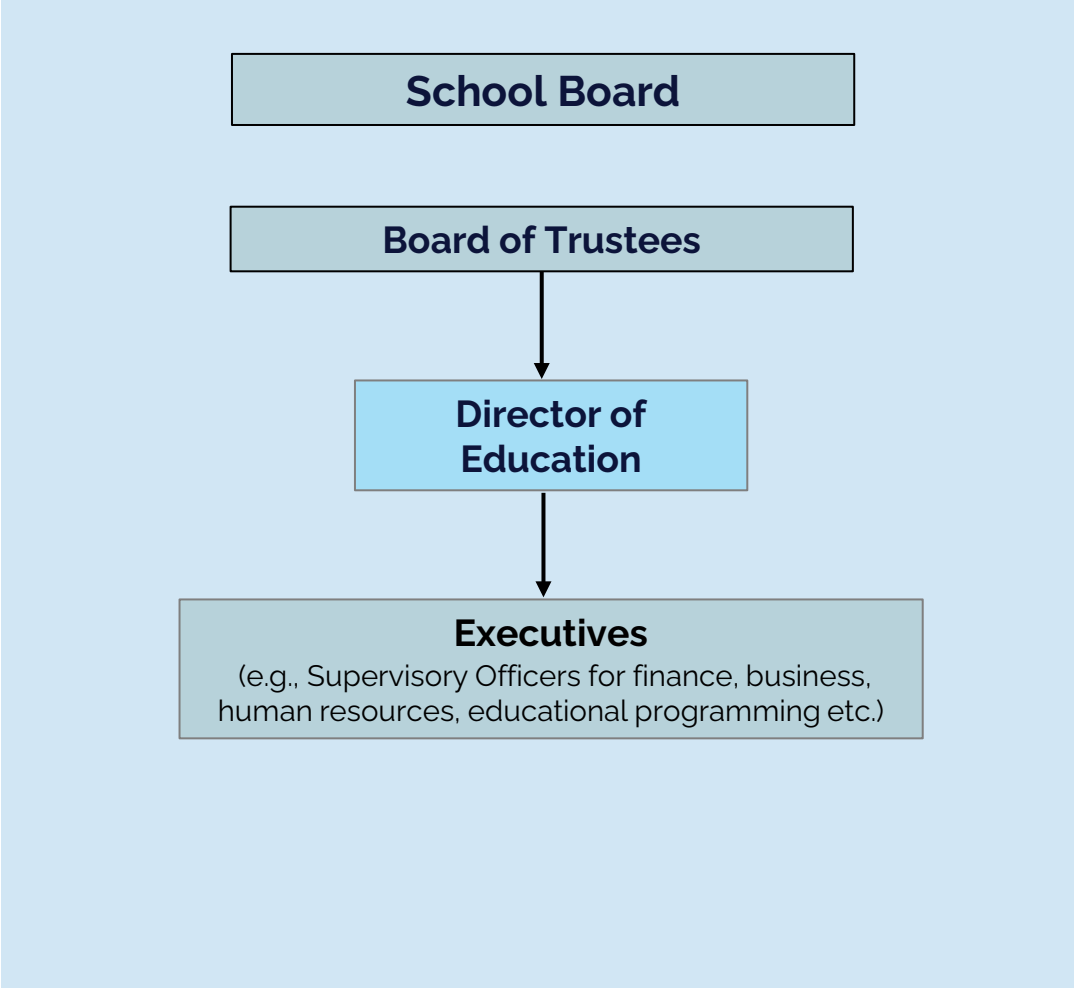
Equipping School Boards with Qualified Leadership – Future State

- If the proposed legislation is passed and related regulations are made, Ontario would address ongoing breakdowns in local decision-making and financial mismanagement in **English public and English Catholic DSBs*** by:
 - Strengthening accountability for school board finances and governance, including enhanced budget approval processes and reinforcing oversight of expenses, compliance with provincial budget expectations and operational decisions
 - Establishing new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** and **Chief Education Officer (CEdO)** roles:
 - The Director of Education would become known as the **CEO** and have required **business qualifications** to deliver on their responsibility for financial and operational oversight.
 - The **CEdO** would have required **pedagogical qualifications**, including membership in the Ontario College of Teachers (or equivalent), to focus on their responsibilities of advancing student achievement and success using their expertise in effective teaching practices.
 - Keeping the authority to hire the CEO with the board of trustees but requiring Ministerial approval for termination. This would help prevent trustee reprisals or dismissals of school board leadership while they are carrying out their responsibilities
 - Making the CEO responsible for hiring and appointing the CEdO
 - Allowing the CEO to serve as CEdO if qualified in both areas or appoint another qualified individual
 - Making the CEO the Secretary and a non-voting member of the governing board, and requiring the CEO to provide confirmation of certain trustee resolutions or motions, such as those with financial implications, in order for them to take effect
 - Working with school boards to support implementation

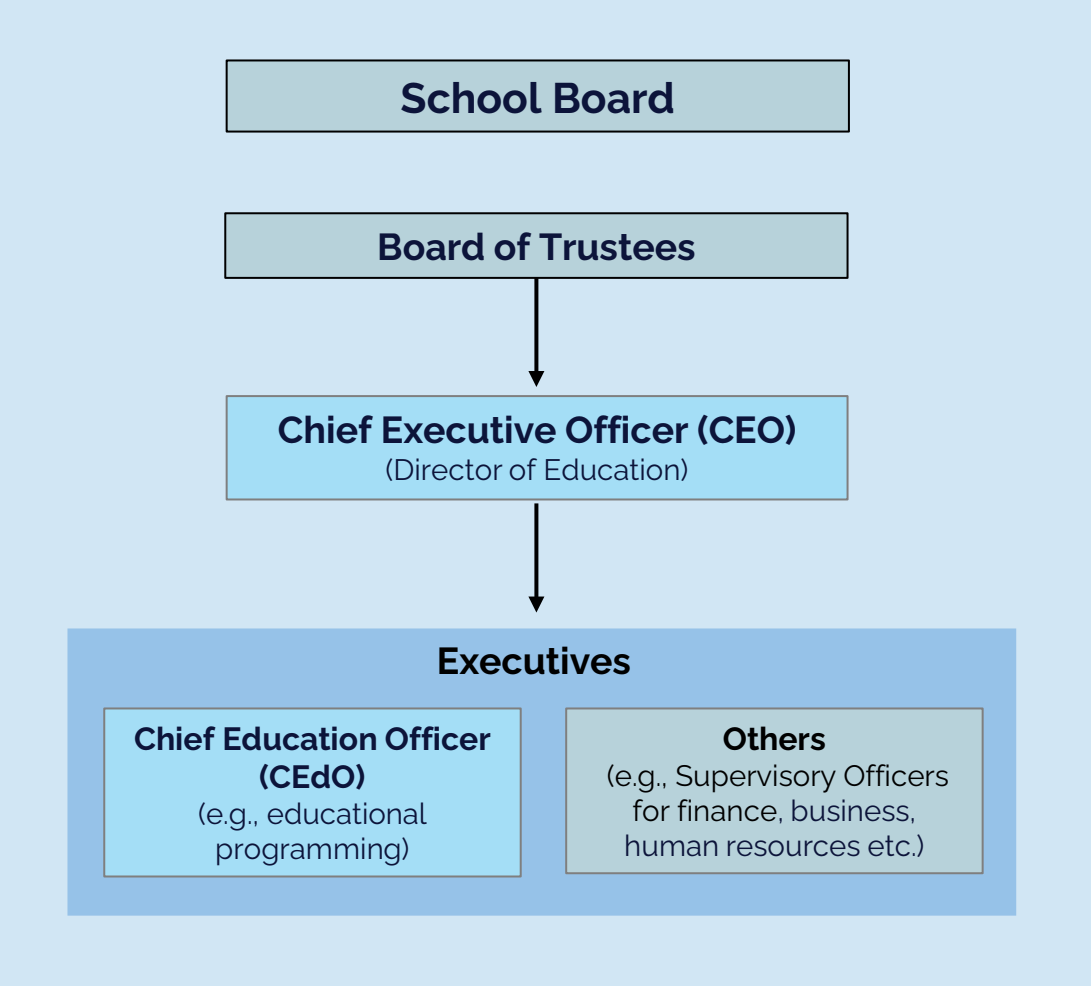
*The **French-language DSBs** remain out of scope of these reforms.

Strengthening Governance and Accountability

Current School Board Structure



Revised School Board Structure



Equipping School Boards with Qualified Leadership

Revised Roles and Responsibilities

Two specialized roles would be established: the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Education Officer (CEdO). Each would require qualifications to ensure balanced expertise in leadership for both financial and educational oversight.

	CEO	CEdO
Role	Oversee school board administration, finances and operations to ensure the organization is run effectively and that resources are used strategically.	Provide pedagogical leadership and expertise to advance student achievement, safety and well-being.
Future Qualifications	Financial, organizational and leadership expertise.	Pedagogical qualifications such as Ontario College of Teachers certification or equivalent.
Focus	Financial sustainability, effective resource allocation, corporate services oversight, effective implementation of policies, alignment with provincial direction.	Educational and academic programming, curriculum implementation, effective program delivery for all students.

The CEO may serve as CEdO if qualified in both areas or appoint another qualified individual.

Strengthening Budget Oversight and Accountability

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Strengthening Budget Oversight and Accountability	<p>Trustees are responsible for reviewing and approving budgets, but they often struggle to reach consensus. Trustee decisions can be delayed or inconsistent, slowing operations and creating uncertainty, while lack of clear oversight can lead to misalignment between operational needs and budget approvals.</p> <p>Many trustees have shown they cannot balance school board budgets or ensure taxpayer dollars are directed to the classroom.</p>	<p>The proposed changes would help strengthen how school board budgets are developed and approved, ensuring decisions are based on expertise, improving accountability and keeping operations running smoothly. If the proposed legislation is passed and subsequent regulations are made in English-language DSBs*, key changes would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget development led by the CEO, ensuring decisions are informed by operational expertise• Budget matters referred to the Minister for decision when trustees are unable to reach agreement <p>*The French-language DSBs remain out of scope of these reforms.</p>

Professionalizing School Board Bargaining – Current State

- Today, the four trustees' associations negotiate on behalf of school boards in provincewide labour talks. This means that trustees are the final decision-makers when it comes to provincial bargaining priorities for school boards.
- Staff who manage the day-to-day operations of school boards are involved in the process but are not the decision-makers. As a result, direct, on-the-ground knowledge of school board operations may not be fully considered at the central bargaining table.
- In addition, the four trustees' associations are focused primarily on representing the interests of their own school board trustees.
- The government is proposing amendments to bring a system-level approach to collective bargaining for English-language school boards, with less trustee governance of financial and operational matters and more professional leadership for labour relations.

Professionalizing School Board Bargaining – Future State

In central bargaining (Provincewide negotiations for central terms with teachers and education workers)

- Ontario would designate the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)* as the central employer bargaining agency for English public and English Catholic DSBs.
- In all English-language DSBs, CEOs would ratify central agreements.
- The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)** would be established as an observer to central bargaining to ensure denominational issues are only addressed locally.

In local bargaining (School board-level negotiations on local work arrangements)

- In English public DSBs, the CEOs would ratify local agreements.
- In English Catholic DSBs, local agreements would be ratified jointly by the CEOs and trustees.
- Denominational matters for English Catholic DSBs will be addressed through local bargaining.

- **This would ensure that collective bargaining is being led by professional school board staff who have expertise in school board operational matters.**
- It would also make bargaining more consistent across the whole education system with one employer representative for all 60 English-language boards.
- This proposal responds to calls from school board leaders and CODE for a more meaningful role in the bargaining process.
- Supervisors would help ensure an effective transition to the new model ahead of the upcoming round of provincial bargaining.
- French-language school boards will continue to be represented by the French public and French Catholic trustees' associations: Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario and Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques.

*CODE represents CEOs who manage and implement school system operations across Ontario.

**OCSTA represents English Catholic school board trustees.

Enhancing Capital Projects Delivery

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Enhancing Capital Projects Delivery	<p>Several school boards have had budget overruns, delays or have not followed procedures in the delivery of capital projects, requiring ministry intervention or even supervision.</p> <p>For instance, Near North DSB was placed under supervision after major delays in opening a new school for JK-12 students in Parry Sound, causing disruption for hundreds of students. High school students were left having to start the school year online before switching to a half-demolished high school, while hundreds of elementary students started at another school.</p>	<p>To support the responsible use of public funds and help ensure new schools, expansions and renovations are delivered efficiently across the province, legislative and future regulatory or policy changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen the Minister of Education's powers to oversee, redirect or cancel capital school projects where necessary• Allow the Minister to intervene by selecting a third party (person or entity) to take control of the management of a capital project, without having to supervise the whole board• Set processes that include consequences for non-compliance

Improving School Board Communications

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Improving School Board Communications	<p>Some school board officials and trustees are using their platform to discuss divisive political issues that are outside the scope of school operations - for example, weighing in on geo-political issues when their focus should be on celebrating student achievements, core education and operational matters. This has consumed board time and increased divisiveness in communities.</p>	<p>Ontario would help ensure consistency in how boards communicate with families and communities. The proposed changes would allow the Minister of Education to issue policies and guidelines to govern public communications made by board officials when communicating in the name of the board. Policy and guidelines would be developed to focus school board communications on important day-to-day functions.</p> <p>These policies would apply only when communicating as representatives of the school board. This could include the board's website, official emails, newsletters or the board's social media accounts. Anything shared from a personal account or said as a private individual, including trustees as elected officials, would not be covered by these rules.</p>

5. Ensuring More Consistent and Effective Learning Experiences

Ontario is introducing legislative changes to promote consistency and effectiveness in student learning experiences. This includes changes to enable:

- Mandating Consistent Learning Resources in Classrooms
- Mandating Exams and Assessment Standards for Secondary School Students
- Promoting Attendance and Participation for Secondary School Students
- Removing School Survey Requirements for School Boards



Ensuring More Consistent and Effective Learning Experiences

Initiative	Current State	Future State
<p>Mandating Consistent Learning Resources in Classrooms</p>	<p>A lack of available consistent, curriculum-aligned and easily accessible learning resources has forced educators to independently source teaching materials that are not always aligned with the curriculum. This has resulted in inconsistencies across classrooms and occasional instances of inappropriate content being shared with students.</p>	<p>Ontario would mandate the use of approved learning resources in classrooms across the province. Teachers would continue to have flexibility to use supplementary materials based on student needs.</p> <p>Ontario already provides a government-approved list of textbooks; extending this approach to classroom resources can help support greater consistency in delivering the new curriculum while making it easier for teachers to access high-quality materials. This approach can help support greater student achievement while helping ensure all students have an equal chance to succeed, regardless of where they live.</p> <p>The government is working on providing classroom resources to be available for the beginning of the 2026–27 school year through Supply Ontario. Teachers would be able to access these resources online and use them to support classroom instruction. These resources may include lesson plans, student materials, assessment tools, teacher guides and digital interactive learning tools such as games, videos, presentations and audio clips.</p>

Ensuring More Consistent and Effective Learning Experiences

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Mandating Exams and Assessment Standards for Secondary School Students	Inconsistent exam practices, such as format, scheduling and how final marks are calculated can create discrepancy in the determination of final marks affecting students' preparation for postsecondary examination practices and standards.	Ontario would help improve student preparedness for postsecondary pursuits and ensure consistent assessment practices for students in Grades 9 to 12 by enabling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of mandatory written exams on official exam days • Greater clarity in how students' final marks are calculated
Promoting Attendance and Participation for Secondary School Students	Student attendance in school is lower than pre-pandemic levels and research shows this has a negative impact on student achievement. Attendance and participation in class are currently not required elements of final course marks.	To encourage improved engagement, Ontario would enable policy to make participation and attendance worth 15 per cent of the final course mark for Grades 9 to 10 and 10 per cent for Grades 11 to 12. Students would not be negatively impacted for excused absences, such as illnesses and holy days.
Removing School Survey Requirements for School Boards	A school climate survey is used to gather school community feedback on how schools operate. However, there is inconsistency in the way boards determine survey questions and administer the survey. This has led to some parents raising concerns over survey content (age appropriateness) and potential divisiveness within school communities.	School boards would no longer be required to administer the school climate survey. Students and families can raise their concerns and receive the support they need through Student and Family Support Offices. The government will require all school boards to establish Student and Family Support Offices by September 1, 2026, to give parents and guardians a clear way to get help and resolve concerns beyond the teacher and principal.

6. Modernizing the Education System

The Ontario government is modernizing the education system and tools to support learning to focus on the evolving needs of students, teachers and families. This includes:

- Dissolving the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario
- Simplifying Child Care Registration and Improving Data Collection
- Modernizing Teacher Education
- Streamlining Postsecondary Education Accountability



Modernizing the Education System

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Dissolving the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario	<p>The Commission was established in 1974 to address concerns regarding language-of-instruction matters affecting English- and French-speaking minority communities. It was active in its early years, when French- and English-language schools were under a single school board. However, it has remained inactive since 1997, as the establishment of 12 French-language school boards in 1998 addressed the governance issues the Commission was created to resolve.</p>	<p>Ontario would modernize the process for addressing concerns and issues raised by French-language communities. The long-inactive Commission would be dissolved and replaced with a more efficient, effective and timely mediator-based mechanism.</p>
Simplifying Child Care Registration and Improving Data Collection	<p>The Ontario Education Number (OEN) is a unique student number given to every Ontario student so schools can manage their records as they move through elementary and secondary school. Schools manually assign OENs to children during kindergarten registration about 140,000 times annually, at a considerable administrative burden. Ontario currently receives fragmented child care data, hindering effective planning and federal reporting. Service System Managers collect much of the data through time-consuming manual processes.</p>	<p>Ontario is modernizing its child care and early years IT systems to make it easier for families to access the child care services they need. The government would provide families with the option to receive their OEN as part of ServiceOntario's newborn bundle. Changes would help build a more integrated, responsive child care system that supports the needs of Ontario families and reduces administrative burden across the education system. Once the new system is implemented, it would make it easier for families to find and register for child care. Using the OEN in child care would help create a seamless connection between early learning and the school system and make it easier for families to navigate services.</p>

Modernizing the Education System

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Modernizing Teacher Education Programs	<p>Teacher education programs are typically delivered over two years and four semesters. This means it takes longer for students to enter the workforce and results in higher costs for teacher candidates.</p> <p>Prior learning and relevant work experience such as early childhood education diplomas and youth work experience are not consistently recognized, limiting opportunities for students to apply this experience toward university credits.</p> <p>Practicums provide hands-on learning under the mentorship of Associate Teachers who supervise and evaluate student teachers. There is currently a limited number of Associate Teachers, which impacts students' access to meaningful placement opportunities, mentorship and coaching. Associate Teachers are also not compensated for mentorship responsibilities in a standardized, consistent way.</p>	<p>Proposed legislation and regulations would require a condensed 12-month Bachelor of Education program, completed over three consecutive semesters, enabling future teachers to enter classrooms sooner and saving students up to \$3,000 in tuition costs.</p> <p>The government would also explore advanced standing and recognition of prior learning and work experience, including for individuals with early childhood educator diplomas or youth work experience. The one-year program would prioritize in-classroom learning by establishing a minimum practicum length following sector consultation, so students graduate with the hands-on experience needed to thrive in the classroom. Ontario is providing \$16.8 million to increase the honorarium for Associate Teachers to help expand placement opportunities and recognize the important role these teachers play in training the next generation.</p>

Modernizing the Education System

Initiative	Current State	Future State
Streamlining Postsecondary Education Accountability	<p>The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) is a board-governed agency established in 2005 to provide performance oversight and sector outcomes for the postsecondary system and to produce supporting research. Since then, the government has implemented processes for sector oversight through Strategic Mandate Agreements and annual performance measures, among other mechanisms within the ministry, to track performance, quality and accountability, rendering the agency's function redundant. The agency's main function now is to provide research on the postsecondary sector and evaluation of colleges' and universities' free-speech policies.</p>	<p>The government will absorb the accountability and performance mandate of HEQCO and continue oversight of the sector within the ministry. Sector accountability and performance measures are built into the 2025-2030 Strategic Mandate Agreements, part of the government's new historic \$6.4-billion long-term funding model. The agreements ensure a portion of funding to institutions is tied to strong performance across a number of key measures, including graduate employment and economic impact. This accountability has been proven to successfully drive institutions to focus on their core mandate: equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in high-demand careers while continuing to find efficiencies. The ministry will also take on responsibility for evaluation of colleges' and universities' free-speech policies.</p>

7. Looking Ahead

Move Ontario toward a **more accountable, consistent and modern model of high-quality education delivery that better serves students, families and educators** across the province by:

- Improving school board operations and strengthening professional leadership to enhance focus on students
- Strengthening accountability of school boards in their use of public funds and delivery of capital projects
- Enhancing consistency in evaluation and assessment practices to support student achievement and engagement
- Providing educators with the resources to support high-quality, consistent classroom learning
- Increasing efficiency in teacher training and improved teacher retention, while ensuring a nimble, high-quality teaching workforce
- Streamlining postsecondary institution accountability so they can focus on their core mandate: equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in high-demand careers