



A Proposal for the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, Consultations

Written Submission from World Education Services (WES)
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About WES

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For nearly 50 years, WES has set the standard for international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change. Together with its partners, WES enables people to learn, work, and thrive in new places.

WES' international academic document authentication and evaluations are widely used by Ontario and other Canadian regulators, especially for applications, licensing, and certification of internationally educated teachers (IETs) and early childhood educators.

WES is pleased to provide input on the proposal for the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, because of its implications for IETs.

Underutilization of IET Skills

The public education system in Ontario has been facing a critical challenge regarding **teacher shortages** in recent years, with a scarcity of qualified candidates for both short- and long-term positions across the province.

Addressing obstacles facing IETs can help relieve the shortages and promote greater cultural diversity among teachers and school administrators. This effort will require removing structural barriers to the certification and inclusion of IETs in Ontario.

Currently the accreditation process for IETs is often **lengthy** and can take several years. IETs are also unemployed at higher rates compared with their Ontario-educated counterparts. According to the **Transition to Teaching 2021 report** by the Ontario College of Teachers, the unemployment rate for IETs was 37 percent, while the rate was only 4 percent for Ontario-educated teachers.

IETs also face challenges in the **hiring process**, such as difficulty in securing a permanent position, bias against credentials earned in another country, and racializing of immigrant teachers.

Our Recommendations

Addressing these barriers would contribute to the Act's proposal to “**meet the needs of students in the classrooms, including decreasing times to process applications to certify teachers.**”

Enhancing the effectiveness of the licensing process for IETs and providing them with commensurate employment opportunities would also promote equity in Ontario's education system. IETs have the potential for positively impacting students and communities across the province.

To this effect, WES recommends the following actions:

- Encourage the regulatory bodies to join the Corporation of the Council of Ministers of Education (CCMEC)'s initiative that creates a **centralized and independent body in Canada for evaluating the credentials and teaching certifications** of IETs, to support the licensing of IETs.
- Establish a **set timeline for the licensing process** and ensure a **streamlined assessment process** to avoid underutilization of IETs' skills and to address the teacher shortages in Ontario.
- Direct the school boards to ensure there is **no institutional or systemic discrimination** resulting in IETs disproportionately occupying nonpermanent positions.
- Work with the school boards to establish a **holistic, competency-informed approach to hiring** that will support and accelerate the recognition and utilization of IETs' talent. As part of this effort, school board hiring committees should take part in competency-informed training.