



OTF Position on the
Right to Read Report of
the Ontario
Human Rights
Commission (OHRC)

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The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF):



Recognizes that every student has the right to read.



Recognizes that minorities protected under the OHRC are disproportionately represented in difficulties accessing this right.



Continues to advocate for the use of a variety of approaches that have been successful for students. Ontario educators need to receive training in an array of approaches to the teaching of reading so they can effectively meet the diverse individual needs of students. A myopic, one-size-fits-all approach will not be effective.



Emphasizes the critical importance of educator professional judgment in the teaching and assessment of reading.



Stresses the importance of providing educators with both pre- and in-service training that is rich in a variety of methodological/pedagogical approaches. To this end:

- i. OTF agrees that teacher candidates at faculties of education should receive instruction in their pre-service programs on the full array of techniques for teaching reading.

- ii. OTF agrees that improved funding and supports are needed so that educators can access job-embedded professional learning on the teaching of reading.



Agrees that there is an urgent need for better funding from the Ministry of Education to support students with reading disabilities, such as dyslexia. Special education is woefully underfunded and under supported, and reading disabilities are part of this. Improved funding and staffing are specifically needed for screening, appropriate intervention and accommodation.



Agrees that the current wait time for students to be assessed and to access appropriate intervention is not acceptable. The Federation will continue to advocate for this to be urgently addressed. A review of the processes currently in place and improved funding from the Ministry to support a more responsive system are required to address the current shortfall.



Continues to advocate for the inclusion of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP). Schools need funding to increase access to books and learning materials in which students from diverse backgrounds can see themselves reflected.

OTF recommends:

1. Ensuring that a variety of proven pedagogical approaches to the teaching of reading are encouraged and that no single approach is mandated.
2. Safeguarding against aligning too closely to any single approach to the teaching of reading. Every student's learning needs are different and teachers need to use multiple reading techniques and strategies to meet these diverse needs.
3. Paying particular attention to the importance of class sizes and teacher-student ratio. Real improvements to the capacity of the system to address the needs of students with reading disabilities will require attention to support services and staffing requirements.
4. Taking care not to undermine policy and program memoranda that have been negotiated through legal collective bargaining processes.
5. Respecting educator professional judgment by refraining from imposing a revised curriculum in the absence of educator input, as well as standardizing assessments, screeners, data collection and reporting.
6. Protecting the importance of teaching a love of reading. Methods that "drill and kill" and messages to students that they are failures or are not reaching the expected level can destroy forever any love students feel about reading.
7. Recognizing and honouring the important role of community partnerships and supports in the teaching of reading and cultivating a lifelong love of reading.
8. Proceeding carefully with implementing any large-scale curriculum changes, making sure to pay appropriate attention to systemic processes as outlined in the [Auditor General's Report on Curriculum Reform](#).

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the advocate for the teaching profession in Ontario and for its 160,000 teachers. OTF members are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all the publicly funded schools in the province—elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and francophone.



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