



**Ontario College of Teachers**

**Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario**

May 1, 2003

The Honourable Elizabeth Witmer  
Minister of Education and Deputy Premier  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Dear Ms Witmer,

**Re: Throne Speech reference to “expert instructors”**

I am writing with respect to the statement in the Throne Speech of April 30 that the government “will allow athletes, musicians, artists and tradespeople to act as expert instructors or volunteers” in Ontario schools. As the regulating body of the teaching profession in Ontario, the Ontario College of Teachers has an interest in knowing how the expertise of such instructors would be ascertained. On behalf of the College, I would ask that you clarify whether the intent of the government is to permit persons uncertified by the College to supervise students.

As you know, there is currently no legal or regulatory impediment that would prevent a member of the College who is a classroom teacher from inviting an athlete, musician, artist or tradesperson to join the teacher in the classroom and augment students’ learning experiences. However, if the government envisions a change from the status quo that would put uncertified people alone in a classroom with Ontario students, the College has a responsibility in law to comment on whether such a policy change would in fact serve and protect the public interest.

The government has previously proposed similar legislative changes. In 1997, at the time of the consideration by the Legislature of Bill 160, the *Education Quality Improvement Act*, the College presented a brief to the Standing Committee on the Administration of Justice. In it the College argued that it would not serve the public interest for students to be supervised by persons uncertified by the College. The government agreed with the College on this issue and amended the bill accordingly to remove the relevant provisions.

There were several references in the Throne Speech to consultation. There has been no consultation by the government on this issue. The College is very concerned about the accountability measures that your government envisions for “expert instructors”.

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If the College does not certify “expert instructors”, such persons are not bound by the standards of practice or ethical standards of the teaching profession. They would not have been trained in an accredited Ontario faculty of education or equivalent institution. They would not be obliged to take part in ongoing professional learning. They are not subject to the public complaints, investigation and disciplinary process of the College. They would not appear on the College’s public register of certified and qualified teachers. As a result the public cannot be assured that such individuals are qualified and competent to be entrusted with our children, nor can the public have confidence that such persons are accountable for their conduct in the same way that members of the teaching profession are.

I look forward to receiving clarifying information and to reviewing the details of your legislative intent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Douglas Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. Douglas Wilson  
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Copy    Suzanne Herbert  
            Council Members

DW/PA/cs-admin