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Monday 3 December 2001

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 3 décembre 2001

**Standing committee on
general government**

Quality in the Classroom
Act, 2001

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2001 sur la qualité
dans les salles de classe

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Monday 3 December 2001

Lundi 3 décembre 2001

The committee met at 1552 in room 151.

**QUALITY IN THE CLASSROOM
ACT, 2001**

**LOI DE 2001 SUR LA QUALITÉ
DANS LES SALLES DE CLASSE**

Consideration of Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom / Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir la qualité dans les salles de classe.

ONTARIO PARENT COUNCIL

The Chair (Mr Steve Gilchrist): I'll call the committee to order as we hold clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom. My apologies to the groups scheduled to start off. As you may be aware, under the rules of the Legislative Assembly we're not allowed to start until what are called routine proceedings have ended in the chamber.

That having just been completed, we'd be pleased to call forward as our first group the Ontario Parent Council. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. Just a reminder that we have 15 minutes for your presentation, for you to divide as you see fit between presentation and time for question and answer.

Mr Greg Reid: Thank you very much, Mr Chair and members of the committee. My name is Greg Reid. I'm the chair of the Ontario Parent Council. We are very pleased today to have the opportunity to speak to this committee regarding the Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001. We've provided the clerk with copies of our speaking notes for today.

In the time allotted to me today, I hope to provide some insight as to why parents are solidly behind the government in its efforts to ensure that both parents and our most precious resource, our children, benefit by the components of this proposed legislation.

Our understanding of the proposed bill is that it contains two key components: the qualifying test and the performance appraisal system. First, let me speak to the qualifying test.

Information we have received indicates that some 8,000 to 9,000 candidates, comprised of both new graduates of Ontario teaching colleges and teachers trained in other jurisdictions, will take the test each year. Given that there is a tremendous demand for teachers

throughout the publicly funded education system, it only makes sense that there be a common standard, the qualifying test, for teachers entering the system throughout the province. Parents would be reassured to know that no matter where their son's or daughter's teacher received their education, be it in Ontario or in another jurisdiction, there would be a consistent and meaningful evaluation of the teacher's education, which would reassure us that our children are receiving the best possible education. That's the one area where parents across the province can agree: they want the best for their children.

Parents want that assurance that when their son or daughter enters a classroom for the first day, the teacher they will rely so heavily on for guidance, leadership and to prepare them for the next step in their education is fully capable of providing all of the necessary knowledge and skills required for everyone to benefit.

With regard to the performance appraisal component of the proposed bill, parents are pleased that once again this government has recognized that as the clients of the publicly funded education system, parents and students are deserving of an opportunity to contribute their input from experiences both in and out of the classroom in a meaningful way in terms of providing information that would form part of the appraisal process. The parental and pupil input aspects of this bill would provide the regulatory power for our input to be taken into account by a principal or supervisory officer as a formal part of the appraisal process. Of that we're tremendously supportive.

In addition, where a pupil or parent makes the request, words or names that would identify the parent or pupil would be required to be removed from the document prior to it's being provided to the teacher. This provision would ensure a higher rate of participation on the part of parents and students in the process by reassuring those who choose to participate that they would not be subject to retribution of any kind should their input be honest, but less than complimentary.

It became crystal clear in the last round of public consultation leading up to the creation of regulation 612, in December of last year, the new school council regulation that governs school councils across the province, which ensures that parents have meaningful input into education policy on a local level, that parents do not want to be the administrators of their sons' and daughters' schools. They clearly expressed their desire to leave administrative issues in the hands of professionals and

experts who are hired to perform these functions. They do not want to hire and fire administrators or teachers. What they do want is for their input with regard to the performance of these key individuals in the education system to be heard in a meaningful, formal and positive manner.

This bill would provide that balance, as it prescribes that parental or pupil input cannot be the sole factor in an unsatisfactory rating, or in the dismissal of a teacher. What it therefore would provide is an opportunity for honest client input into the services rendered, a critical component in any successful evaluation which is undertaken with the purpose of providing for opportunities for improvement.

In summary, we support the provisions of this bill, particularly those pertaining to standardization of the qualifying test, and the formal and meaningful input of parents and pupils in the performance appraisal system itself.

I'd just like to add that I'd like to say a special note of thanks to Barry Pervin, of the Ministry of Education, and all of the stakeholders who are working on the working groups surrounding the performance appraisal—the client consultations and the performance appraisal development itself—for providing an opportunity for us to be part of that stakeholder group. I think that's a classic example of where we can all work together—parents, administrators, teachers, the Ministry of Education itself—in looking out for the best interests of our kids.

Thanks very much. I'm open for questions.

The Chair: That affords us just over two and a half minutes per caucus for questions. We'll start with Mr Levac.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Mr Reid, I apologize for coming in at the very beginning of your session there, but I did catch the gist of your presentation.

I noticed on your presentation sheet that this letterhead appears to be that of the government, or is this the official letterhead of the Ontario Parent Council, set by the ministry?

Mr Reid: That's the official letterhead of the Ontario Parent Council. We're an advisory body appointed by the Minister of Education.

Mr Levac: My understanding is that's from the regions around the province, so there's representation from the council across the province?

Mr Reid: Yes. There are 20 members of the Ontario Parent Council: three are appointed by provincial federations, being Ontario home and school, Parents Partenaires en éducation and the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education Ontario; another six are regional representatives, who are elected at regional assemblies; and the remaining ones are appointed at large in order to reflect the diversity of the province.

Mr Levac: I am concerned, as a principal on leave, about some of the statements being made. Other than when you say that you clearly do not have a desire to administrate buildings, schools, teachers—fire, hire—

have you taken an official position as a parent council on those parents who do want to?

Mr Reid: No, we haven't taken an official position in that fashion. What we heard clearly from the last round of consultations leading up to the school council regulation in December of last year, what we heard clearly from parents across the province and what that last consultation led to was the clear definition—

Mr Levac: Delineation.

Mr Reid: Absolutely. The parents don't want to administrate the buildings. What they do want to have is an opportunity for meaningful input based on their experiences as stakeholders in the education system.

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Mr Levac: As a principal, I can assure you that, depending on each individual school and school board, parents always have had a say in schools to the best of my knowledge. I do have a very important question for you. How old do you think a student should be when they start making written submissions to this process?

Mr Reid: We're pleased with the fact that it says that it will be senior students. So, from an elementary standpoint, that would be students in grades 7 and 8 and beyond.

Mr Levac: So grades 7 and 8 students are old enough to make critical comment on teachers' professional performance?

Mr Reid: I'm certain they could make some input as to what they liked and what they didn't like about the way the teacher presented the caseload to them.

Mr Levac: OK, thank you. That's all for me, Mr Chairman.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Thank you, Mr Reid. Nice to see you again. You're a regular here.

Mr Reid: Getting to be, unfortunately.

Mr Marchese: The whole issue of parental input in the appraisal system: as I understand it, boards can seek anonymous opinions from parents and students about a teacher's evaluation, which could lead to abuses, in my view. Do you think they should be anonymous? Do you think they should be much more in the open, allowing teachers and everybody else to see those opinions, or what?

Mr Reid: No. Basically, I would take issue with saying that they are seeking anonymous input; it's not to be anonymous. Our understanding of the system is that there would be a name attached to each appraisal submitted by a pupil or a parent. The parent or the pupil, under the legislation, would have the right to request that their name be withheld from the teacher in order to prevent any opportunity or any possibility of retribution.

Mr Marchese: Which seems fair. On the other hand, how does one judge the fairness of an opinion, the validity of an opinion, and how does one rebut against such an opinion if indeed it could be an unfair one or a judgment on a teacher based on who knows what? How would you ensure, put into place, a system that somehow allows the teacher to rebut?

Mr Reid: This is, again, the provision that states that a single parent or a parent opinion expressed in the form of a submission could not be the sole mitigating factor in the dismissal of a teacher etc.

Mr Marchese: I understand that.

Mr Reid: So what that does provide for in our estimation is that there will be an opportunity for the teacher to respond to a specific submission. The only exclusion will be the parent's or pupil's name from that submission. I would hazard a guess to say that if one or two individuals came forward with condemnations of a particular teacher it might be taken in the context that, well, maybe these individuals have somewhat of an axe to grind.

Mr Marchese: And if a parent has the right to not put the name down in terms of an opinion, how do you fight that?

Mr Reid: Again, I'll take issue with the way you phrased that. The parents or the pupils will attach their names to each submission. They have the right to have that name withheld from the teacher seeing it in order that there not be any opportunity for retribution in terms of any pressure that the teacher may put on an individual.

Mr Marchese: They have the right to have their name withheld. So how do I, as a teacher, deal with that? I just deal with an opinion without attaching a name to it?

Mr Reid: The way we understand the bill is what the teacher will be dealing with is a formal process where anybody will have the right, any parent or senior pupil will have the right, to make a submission. That will become part of the performance appraisal process, but only one part of it.

Mr Marchese: I understand that. I didn't misunderstand that. I'm just alerting you to a possible problem that it causes, and I was wondering whether you're concerned in any way for a potential abuse or not. What I'm hearing from you is that someone will offer an opinion, the parent has the right to withhold the name, but it shouldn't be a problem because, as you argue, it's only a component or a small component of the evaluation process. So we shouldn't worry, is what you're saying.

Mr Reid: I'll give you a personal experience where I had an issue with a teacher of a nature that I felt was significant and made comment to the principal, who in turn made comment to the teacher and attached my name to it. I was subjected to numerous late night phone calls of a harassing nature, unidentifiable, and other issues of what I would consider to be somewhat harassing nature. That wouldn't have taken place had I had the opportunity for an open and honest performance appraisal component where I could make a submission that would be considered in that fashion.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's good to be here again today and, Greg, I want to thank you for making your presentation.

I want to say to you: as a fairly new organization I know you've got a Web site that's up and running and I believe you have some staff now as well to help with it. As far as things like your Web site and comments coming back from parents, students and any stakeholders

across the province, are you getting a lot of response to basically the formation of this committee or your organization as a council?

Mr Reid: In the last month since we launched a Web site—just about a month ago now—we've received more than a quarter of a million hits on our Web site. Over 36,000 of them were of a user nature where they used our Web site to find information through links. We have also identified that the most popular aspect of our Web site right now is the comments section—the feedback section—by far. I haven't got the numbers in front of me, but tens of thousands of people, parents across the province, who have accessed our Web site have provided feedback to us. So there's a tremendous response to our providing an opportunity for parents to have feedback in the system.

Mr Dunlop: Can I ask you very briefly: what are they saying about Bill 110?

Mr Reid: What they're saying in overwhelming numbers is that they believe that teacher testing and the concept of teacher testing is a good one and particularly that parents want the opportunity to have meaningful, clear and concise input into the system from a positive nature. As clients of the system they want to be able to provide their critique without any fear of retribution.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Reid, for appearing before us here this afternoon.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Mr Dunlop: Mr Chair.

The Chair: Forgive me. While you come forward, Mr Dunlop had indicated he had an issue.

Mr Dunlop: It's concerning the committee's schedule of the next little while. I just want to read out. I believe there is agreement among the House leaders for this committee to give clause-by-clause consideration to Bill 77, Ms Churley's private member's bill, this Wednesday, December 5, 2001. My understanding is the agreement is for up to 90 minutes of committee time to begin after consideration of Bill 110 and before the committee begins public hearings on Bill 122. Perhaps the committee could ensure that its schedule reflects this agreement at today's meeting. I understand that's coming from our House leader's office.

The Chair: If there's agreement to that effect, we don't need a motion?

Mr Marchese: I'm assuming that's an agreement that you had from our House leaders. Is that what you're saying?

Mr Dunlop: Yes, the three House leaders.

Mr Levac: Was that inclusive of the clause-by-clause for 110?

The Chair: That would be after 110.

Mr Dunlop: After 110, yes.

Mr Levac: Yes, in agreement.

The Chair: It's agreed? The schedule shall so reflect.

Thank you very much for your indulgence and welcome to the committee.

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Ms Ruth Baumann: My name is Ruth Baumann. I'm on the staff of the of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, and with me today is my colleague Kathleen Devlin.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation welcomes the opportunity to appear today before the committee. We want to offer the views of the organization on the amendments in Bill 110 pertaining to teacher performance appraisal and the qualifying test for entry to the profession. The federation represents 144,000 teachers in the publicly funded elementary and secondary schools of Ontario.

OTF supports the direction of the proposed legislation to demonstrate to the public that there are accountability measures in place to ensure the quality and effectiveness of teaching in Ontario. The Ontario Teachers' Federation believes that the expectation for accountability is compatible with the principles of justice and due process.

This afternoon, however, we want to comment on several key issues as they relate to the proposals.

OTF supports an effective teacher performance appraisal system to improve teaching performance and to provide a framework to encourage teacher professional growth for the benefit of students in our schools. We welcome the opportunity for teachers to work with principals on growth plans that will focus on individual teacher professional needs as well as on ministry, board and school needs.

We appreciate that the legislation outlines the necessity for clear communication regarding expectations, reasons and timelines for performance appraisal, and we are pleased that the legislation differentiates between the appraisal cycle for beginning teachers and the cycle for more experienced teachers.

We would like to suggest that in the implementation the performance appraisal programs have to distinguish between the different stages of different teachers' careers. As a colleague of ours is wont to say, "A beginning teacher is a beginning teacher." You can't expect somebody to come out of pre-service training knowing everything that somebody who has been there for 20 years knows; the expectations for people have to bear some resemblance to the kind of experience they've had. Similarly, the performance appraisal expectations must be adaptable to different contexts such as occur when a teacher is requested to teach outside of the area of certification or to take on a particularly challenging class.

One of the unintended consequences of not having some adaptability around those expectations for different contexts would be to discover that the teacher you very badly want to move from grade 2 to grade 6 because you need a grade 6 teacher isn't willing to go, because they're worried that they'll be going into a situation that they may not have taught in for a number of years and they're concerned about what will happen in the performance appraisal process.

For teachers under review, the time allotted for each step under the review process we think may be difficult

both for the evaluator and for the teacher being evaluated, particularly in a time of rapid administrative turnover. We understand that the people working on the performance appraisal process hope that it will be impervious to changes of the administrators, but I think any ongoing evaluation process is one that requires a high degree of consistency around communication and expectations. With some of the turnover we have right now, we can see people having to go backwards and start over or catch up with what previous administrators have done.

The legislation provides for rating a teacher on a scale that is to be determined under regulation. OTF would like to say today that most successful teacher performance appraisal models and systems make use of a satisfactory/unsatisfactory rating scale. There is little research evidence to support more detailed rating scales. Indeed, subtle differences in performance are much harder to assess objectively and tend to be more subjective on the part of the evaluator. Systems with multiple point scales therefore also tend to place onerous time demands on the evaluator.

We said earlier we're in a time of rapid change, particularly of teachers, but even more so of administrators in schools right now. That means that we have a very widely variable set of skills and experience among the people who will be charged with doing these performance appraisals. We would like to urge that wide variation in experience be taken into account and that appropriate in-service and in-school time be provided both to teachers and evaluators about the new process.

As the previous deputant has talked about, there is a proposal in the legislation for the inclusion of parent and student input. We believe that it's critical that any parent or student input is managed in such a way that it is able to inform teacher practice. The previous deputant talked about the possibility of retribution by the teacher. We would also like to urge that it be managed in such a way that it doesn't provide opportunities for retribution by students and parents in situations where there may have been some disagreement with the teacher. Should a decision be made to include information from anonymous surveys—and I understand from the previous exchange that's not what the people believe is there—we believe in either case it will be important to ensure that parent and student questionnaires themselves not be used for dismissal purposes; that the information gleaned from them may be the impetus for further investigation. We believe that any mandated use of parent or student input is likely to raise major concerns of confidentiality and due process and may in fact be counterproductive.

The government needs to recognize that the resources required to implement a new province-wide performance appraisal system are significant. We talked earlier about the need for in-service for teachers, principals and vice-principals. One of our concerns is the time required. In my teaching days, I taught in a school with 140 teachers. That school, in the last few years, has experienced anywhere between 15 and 20 new teachers a year in the

school as teachers have been retiring, and has probably seen a turnover of more than 50% of its administrative staff. For that school to evaluate in any one year upwards of 40 teachers who would qualify as new teachers in their first two years, as well as a third of the remaining 140, is going to be a major task given the resources that are there for in-school administration right now.

Unfortunately, what I would call the zero-sum feature of the present financing system means that the additional resources for in-school administration, if they are to be allocated, will come from other parts of the system such as the classroom, special education or transportation, to name a few. There is little flexibility in the current funding model for new demands, and the existing financial benchmarks are sadly out of date. We would urge that the government consider implementing the teacher performance appraisal program in stages as appropriate funding support is available.

The legislation requires that all students graduating from an Ontario faculty pass a qualifying test before being eligible to receive a certificate of qualification from the Ontario College of Teachers. The federation believes that Ontario's faculties have worked to ensure they are providing the best possible teacher preparation. Since the establishment of the college, the faculties have undergone extensive accreditation reviews to ensure that their pre-service programs are both appropriate and rigorous. The federation is not convinced that the introduction of a qualifying test will strengthen the calibre of teachers or of teaching in Ontario schools.

That said, and in view of the fact that the government has decided to proceed with the qualifying test, we would strongly urge that the first administration of the test be considered a pilot. This would allow the government to ensure that the test is both valid and reliable. It is important for the government to have full confidence that the test is valid, that it is not culturally biased and that there is no discrimination against minorities built into the test. Any questions of validity, reliability, bias or discrimination could bring an onslaught of legal challenges.

In addition, reasonable access to a wide range of test sites and test dates is essential both for pre-service students and for teachers from other provinces and countries so that the qualifying test does not become a deterrent to those interested in pursuing teaching careers in Ontario.

Finally, we think that introducing a consistent provincial performance appraisal process for teachers is a positive step. We note, however, that the process is limited to those teachers in the publicly funded schools and will not apply to teachers in the private schools. We believe the purpose of teacher performance appraisal is improved practice, that the main objective of any provincial model should be improved teaching, and that teacher performance appraisals should be directed by what is in the best educational interests of students.

The provincial policy that is adopted should make specific provision for human and material resources to support the improved practice. The responsibility for

improvement should not lie solely with the teacher, but equally with the other partners in the system. In this way, the policy should foster a culture of learning and support. The policy should reflect the complexity of teaching and should recognize that there is no single model of quality teaching.

In conclusion, the Ontario Teachers' Federation believes that good teaching is the essential ingredient of student success and achievement and must be a key building block for better schools.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That affords us time for a quick question from each caucus, about a minute and a half.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Ms Baumann, for your presentation. I agree with a number of things that you've talked about, including my concerns around the anonymous nature of parental input and the implications on teachers. I agree with the fact that resources are going to be needed. I was very concerned about the fact that most principals will spend their lives doing performance reviews, in addition to everything else they've got to do. I'm not sure how they're going to do it.

With respect to the qualifying test, I'm assuming, based on what you say, that you have no sense of what that test is going to look like, who's going to set it. I'm assuming the ministry hasn't talked to you or anybody else about how that would look or may look, and that it worries you as much as it worries me.

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Ms Baumann: There is a fair bit of public information about the qualifying test. There is a contract that has been let for the development of the test. My understanding is that the test will deal with the broad features of the Ontario curriculum. In its case study section, it will have some material that's geared to candidates who are in primary, junior, intermediate or senior divisions, but the test will not, for instance, test knowledge of the subject content for secondary school teachers. There is a fair bit of information that's out there about the test right now.

Mr Marchese: But you are worried about the fact that government needs to have full confidence that the test is valid and not culturally biased and that it does not discriminate against minorities. That's a worry for you.

Ms Baumann: It is our understanding that all of the organizations that have been involved in consultations have urged that the first administration be considered a pilot and that the company that has the contract for the test development has also urged that the first administration be a pilot, for all of those reasons.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Do you think it is important that parents and students have input into appraising teachers and commenting on the job that teachers are doing?

Ms Baumann: We think that input is something that many teachers already ask for and find useful in terms of responding to the way their work is perceived.

There are really serious concerns about how that process is handled. The fact that it is specifically built into the performance appraisal system, rather than being

set up as a separate feedback mechanism on its own, is the part that probably gives us the greatest concern. Often people don't know until two or three years later whether the experience was—we know what we think about it when we are in it, but many times it is two or three years later that we come at it with a much more objective assessment.

There are a number of those kinds of concerns. Teachers are very sensitive to the fact that they have to make decisions and evaluate the work of students every day. There is some legitimate concern that people will use an input process to say things that may not be appropriate.

Mr Miller: And I think—

The Chair: Sorry, Mr Miller. I'm afraid we're on a fairly tight timeline here. Mr Levac?

Mr Levac: I'll try to be quick as well.

Principals are good jugglers. Just to let Mr Marchese know that when you do have these tasks, most school boards in the province of Ontario, if not all school boards in the province of Ontario, did teacher evaluations and had a process in place that did first-year teachers, fifth-year teachers. Most of this stuff is not intrusive into what has happened in the teaching profession over the years.

Is it your opinion that the Ontario faculties of education, the Ontario College of Teachers, or even EQAO could handle this information instead of setting up a new government bureaucracy in terms of the testing? Right now the legislation, if I'm not mistaken, takes unto itself the setting of the tests and the marking of the tests. It goes right back to the ministry instead of any of the three functions.

Ms Baumann: At this point, I understand that the government has taken responsibility for the qualifying test, and the government has taken responsibility for the establishment of a generic provincial performance appraisal system. We certainly had no difficulty with the generic provincial performance appraisal system as a concept. One of the things that clearly was a problem before was that what was going on from board to board was very different. We thought it would be useful to be seen to be doing something that was consistent.

The question of who should administer the first qualifying test, whether that's the government's responsibility or the college's responsibility, is one that we have not had a lot of discussion about. We certainly would be concerned about the fact that if on an ongoing basis it was the college that was responsible for it, it would be the teachers who would be footing the entire bill. So there would be some concern there, I think.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming before us this afternoon. We appreciate your comments.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL
BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Ms Liz Sandals: Good afternoon. I'm Liz Sandals, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. With me are my colleagues Gerri Gershon, first vice-president; Rick Johnson, second vice-president; and Bob Williams, our director of labour relations. We're pleased to have the opportunity to address you this afternoon on Bill 110.

The association's mission is to promote and enhance public education for the benefit of all students and citizens in Ontario, and we believe Bill 110 will be helpful in that respect. We would like to focus our comments this afternoon on the performance appraisal section of the bill in particular.

OPSBA endorses the legislative changes proposed in Bill 110 that will result in a consistent approach to teacher and administrator performance appraisal, incorporating the exemplary practices which have existed in most public boards for many years. The three proposed amendments outlined below are intended to result in more effective implementation of the legislation by boards. We also make suggestions regarding the communication of the intent of this legislation to parents and students, and the need for comprehensive training of superintendents, principals and vice-principals. I would note that this report has been approved unanimously by our OPSBA board of directors.

First of all, the recommended amendments: with respect to the evaluation cycle, Bill 110 requires a three-year cycle for performance appraisals for experienced teachers. In the experience of most administrators in the boards represented by this association, the three-year cycle is unrealistic and unnecessary. We recommend a five-year cycle, with the provision that teachers' learning plans, as set out in the proposed legislation, be established and reviewed by an administrator on an annual basis. Principals would still have the ability to conduct more frequent appraisals if warranted in the opinion of the principal.

The performance appraisals described in the proposed legislation are very comprehensive and demand considerable administrator time. The number of school administrators has been substantially reduced by boards in recent years to comply with dollar allocations in the education funding formula. Many smaller schools have part-time or shared administrators, and many administrators carry part-time teaching responsibilities. It is feared that the requirement for a three-year cycle could lead to filling out the forms to meet the requirement, sacrificing quality of evaluation. We recommend that either a more realistic five-year cycle be established or that additional dollars be allocated so that all schools can have sufficient administrative time allocated to do the job effectively on a three-year cycle. We would rather see a longer time period in the interest of better quality of evaluation.

Secondly, with respect to the notice to the Ontario College of Teachers, Bill 110 would require boards where a teacher employed resigns while he or she is on review status to file a complaint with the Ontario College of Teachers regarding the reasons for the teacher having

been placed on review status. While we understand the intent of this provision, we are very concerned that most teachers who are on review would never resign knowing that this report was required and that they may have to publicly defend themselves at a hearing before the college.

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Currently, rather than terminate a teacher, boards will often accept a resignation by mutual agreement. This “counselling out” saves much time and substantial money that would otherwise be spent on legal bills in the termination and grievance and arbitration process, and it results in the departure of the teacher on review more quickly than is likely to be the case under the new legislation. In our opinion, boards will spend substantially more money on legal bills if the requirement to file a complaint with the Ontario College of Teachers is retained.

Under the legislation, boards will be required to obtain records of performance reviews of any teacher they might consider hiring who has received an unsatisfactory rating from another board. In our view, this requirement makes the provision to report to the College of Teachers unnecessary. We recommend that this provision be removed from the proposed legislation. Again, this is in the spirit of getting on with getting unsatisfactory teachers out of the classroom while at the same time being able to maintain track of unsatisfactory teachers so they don't pop up again somewhere else.

Finally, our third recommendation for amendment, the arbitration requirements: Bill 110 provides arbitrators with an open-ended scope for review of a case. Our experience suggests that such open-ended mandates are not helpful. We recommend that the scope be narrowed to state that the arbitrator should only determine whether there is a basis for the board to conclude that the teacher is not performing satisfactorily.

We have some other suggestions which don't necessarily lead to amendments.

First, with respect to the parent-pupil input we've been talking about in previous delegations, the proposed legislation provides for the possibility of parental and pupil input to the performance appraisal process. We have serious concerns that this provision will lead to a public expectation that a teacher could be terminated based on complaints by individual parents and students. We are also concerned that the collection of this information could prove to be very time-consuming for already overworked school administrators and that the anonymity of parents and students is fraught with potential legal and ethical issues which deserve complete discussion and careful scrutiny before a regulation is published under this clause. We suggest that our association and the other trustee, supervisory officer and principal associations, as well as the teachers' federations, of course, be consulted explicitly in the process to develop and approve regulations contemplated in the legislation under this section.

Training: experience in our boards over 25 years indicates that the key to the successful implementation of

a comprehensive performance appraisal system is the quality and intensity of the training provided for superintendents and principals and vice-principals. This need cannot be overemphasized. We suggest that the Ministry of Education provide the resources for and the necessary training prior to and during implementation. We suggest further that the training model be designed by a task group which would include expert practitioners from the boards. The training courses developed should be part of the required professional learning for administrators under the professional learning sections of teacher testing.

Finally, the qualifying test which has been mentioned by other delegates: we do support the teacher qualifying test, but we strongly recommend, as have others, that the first administration of this test be a pilot.

In conclusion, school boards across the province are extremely proud of the teaching and learning that occurs in our schools every day. Our administrators, teachers and support staff are exceptional, and we would match them against any other jurisdiction in the world. We believe that a consistent, timely performance appraisal process, together with an ongoing commitment to supervision and professional learning, are essential components in providing quality education. We will be pleased to co-operate with the Ministry of Education in the development of regulations and in the implementation of this important legislation.

Thank you once again, and I'd be pleased to take questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. This round we'll start with the government for questions, and we've got just under two minutes per caucus.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you very much, Ms Sandals, for coming today to speak to Bill 110.

A lot of professions do a performance appraisal on a yearly basis, and we're advocating in our case three years. Your suggestion today is to go for a five-year performance appraisal. Other than the financial end, do you not think it would be much more consistent across the province if we do the three-year cycle, that we'd be able to determine better quality all around for teachers if we did it on a three-year cycle as opposed to the five?

Ms Sandals: First of all, the three-year cycle or the five-year cycle, whichever it would be, isn't something that happens once every three years and then goes away. In fact, within that cycle there is an annual requirement for the teacher and the principal to sit down together, look at the professional learning requirements of the teacher, have a conversation about what the teacher's goals for the year need to be, what's happening with that teacher, whether those goals are completed for the year. So it's not as though the principal goes away and just drops in once every three or five years; it's that the formal review process only kicks in at the end of the process for experienced teachers.

I think, given the pressures that we've got around teacher shortage—we have high turnover of teachers at this point just because of demographics—we agree with

the observation that we must look very, very closely in the first two years of a teacher's experience with a board at that teacher's performance, but the concern we have is that if we shorten that cycle, we'll detract from the concentration on new teachers.

There is a facility within the bill, as within current performance appraisal policies, that when a concern is raised by parents or by the principals themselves in visiting classrooms, there's always the ability to kick into the more formal review process when there's a problem. So what we want to do is deal with the new teachers, deal with the problem teachers, and let the more experienced teachers have a lengthier cycle so that we can concentrate where concentration is needed.

Mr Levac: Thank you, Ms Sandals, for your presentation.

My first comment to you, and then a question, is that as a principal I always told my staff that I was coming in to catch them doing great things. Quite frankly, I was never disappointed. But in my first year as a principal, unfortunately and fortunately, I had to put a teacher on review and go through the whole process, which was done properly, with everyone participating in this process, and I found out that it wasn't such an onerous task after all, as long as it was done properly and we followed board policy. The reputation gained from removing a teacher who shouldn't have been in the classroom was one of bad guy, good guy. It was unbelievable how you went from one school to the next and found out that you'd better be up to snuff or else this guy's going to take a look at you. I could do that every day if I needed to as the principal, because that was given to me in the regulations, to allow me to supervise teachers if I needed to do so. So a five-year cycle/three-year cycle means very little.

I support you in your five-year cycle, because there's a tremendous number—the vast, vast majority of our teachers, and those particularly with senior experience—who quite frankly do not need that supervision. What they're asking for, if I'm not mistaken, and maybe this is where you can comment, is simply accountability.

Ms Sandals: I agree with you that we need to concentrate on beginning teachers, who need a lot of support. They are new to the profession, and we want to make sure they're supported. We certainly want our principals and supervisory officers to be doing a thorough documentation where there is a problem, and be a little bit more relaxed about those where there isn't a problem and we already know they are experienced. Good principals, as obviously you know, do drop in on teachers all the time. That's their job. They keep an eye on things, so they do tend to know when there's a problem. That's where we want them to focus in terms of a formal review.

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Mr Marchese: One of the things that bothers me about what this government is doing is how they have politicized so many issues. It would seem to me the purpose of having a College of Teachers is to look at

issues of performance reviews, or even, for that matter, qualifying tests. For the government to be so interventionist disturbs me a little bit. I'm not sure whether that disturbs you, but I find the nature of what the government is doing not just micromanaging, but intervening. The fact that they are at the moment assuming the responsibility for the qualifying tests—they may or may not assign it to the College of Teachers, but the fact that they are in control disturbs me too. What is the purpose of the College of Teachers if not to do these things? Does it worry you a little bit?

Ms Sandals: I think it's a fair observation that there seems to be some problem sorting out roles. From our point of view, the College of Teachers should be concerned with professional certification and with discipline with respect to removal of certificates, but with the professional life of the profession. Boards are the employers, and as the employers, we understand quite clearly that we are responsible for performance appraisal.

For example, when we were dealing with Bill 101, we supported the requirement to report to the College of Teachers, because there's an urgent need there to report to the College of Teachers where there is evidence of sexual or professional misconduct, and to make sure the person is immediately or quickly removed from the profession. We see this as a slightly different issue, where boards need to exercise their management employer functions through performance appraisals. So I think we need a little bit of role sorting here.

The Chair: Thank you for appearing before the committee today.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Ms Phyllis Benedict: My name is Phyllis Benedict. I'm president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation. I have with me today our general secretary, Gene Lewis, vice-president Ruth Behnke and executive assistant Susan Thede. Thank you for the opportunity to be placed on the agenda today.

Since the government announced its intent to implement teacher testing in Ontario, our federation has worked diligently to develop proposals that would provide real accountability and have a direct and positive impact on teacher competency and student achievement.

Two years ago, in our response to the teacher testing proposal, Ensuring High Professional Standards in Ontario Education, we proposed three key initiatives: enhanced teacher professional development, a mentoring program for new teachers and a standard provincial model for teacher evaluation and professional growth.

More recently, the federation has developed a school-based accountability model that builds upon our original proposals. Our alternative model provides a practical framework for ensuring teachers receive professional

development that relates directly to the learning needs of students, and ensures there are effective and transparent accountability measures in place. Our model also promotes a positive and effective accountability framework for teachers, based on ongoing professional development, professional growth and performance appraisal. We have brought copies of our alternative model for you to review, and I will speak to that in detail in a few more minutes.

The federation supports the principle of having one consistent province-wide performance appraisal framework for Ontario teachers. Unfortunately the model outlined in Bill 110 is not the positive model we advocate, and it presents a number of serious issues for teachers and for the school environment. With the rating scale, on which the government's proposed performance appraisal is based, the federation is concerned not only that such a framework suggests the complexity of teaching can be reduced to a single number or a single word, but also that the rating scale is yet to be defined by regulation and we are not in a position to determine whether or not it will be appropriate or not fair.

We are also concerned that a rating scale sets the stage for introducing merit pay, a concept that would prove extremely problematic and divisive for the profession, and based on examples from around the world, it doesn't work.

In regard to parental input, the federation believes parental and pupil involvement in the formal evaluation of teachers is inappropriate. While the government has indicated pupil involvement will be limited to grade 11 and 12 students, it has not closed the door to the process being opened to younger students.

The federation is particularly opposed to the provision that would allow parents and students to request that their comments about a teacher remain anonymous to the teacher. In such situations, teachers will be put in a position of not being able to adequately defend themselves against the complaint. Further, while the legislation stipulates that parental and pupil input will not be the sole factor in giving a teacher an unsatisfactory rating or in recommending termination, the bill is silent about exactly how much weight it will be given.

In regard to the under-review process, the federation believes the time frames governing the under-review process of teacher performance appraisal are too rigid. We believe the efforts of school administrators will be concentrated on meeting time frames, rather than what they do now, which is working with teachers to assist them with professional growth and positive change. This is particularly true of the provision that gives a principal and a supervisory officer the authority to waive a third appraisal during the under-review phase. This would allow school boards to terminate teachers on an extremely summary basis after only two evaluations that may follow closely one after the other.

The legislation also lacks the flexibility necessary to address the complexities of particular teaching situations. The legislation would prevent school boards from re-

instating a teacher on conditions or continuing the review process. Therefore, some teachers may be terminated and ultimately forced to abandon their profession when the issues leading to termination could have been resolved with more positive support, or were possibly based on personality conflicts or philosophical differences between the teacher and his or her evaluator.

In regard to the entry-into-the-profession test, we find it's basically fulfilling the Premier's promise that there will be a teacher test. No professional body in Ontario, including the College of Teachers, agreed with the concept of teacher testing, and the concerns that have been echoed by other presenters are also found within our federation. At a time when we're facing a teacher shortage, this is not making the profession of teaching any more attractive.

I would like to take a few minutes to briefly outline our alternative accountability model, to show that there is a better way to go.

Our integrated approach connects the performance goals to both the larger provincial framework and to the local school board and to that individual school reality. It involves professional service providers and teachers in developing plans, and provides for appropriate relations between teachers and their education partners—parents and district school boards. It makes important connections between learning and evaluation.

It establishes a larger framework by tying performance assessment to the provincial model that sets performance goals and expectations. It addresses local realities by connecting those performance goals to school action plans that are developed together by school administrators, teachers and parents.

Our model has the elements of a fair process for assessing teacher performance. It includes observation of teaching; identification and communication regarding behaviours and practices that require improvement; support and assistance to a teacher; and training for the evaluators to ensure consistency and fairness.

The ETFO model also includes consequences for failure to meet the expectations that are defined and communicated during the performance appraisal process. If teachers under review fail to meet expectations, their position with the school board may be terminated.

The best way to develop effective performance plans for growth and appraisal purposes is to directly involve the people whose performance is to be appraised. Our model for performance appraisal includes important input on the part of individual teachers, where they would develop and direct their own professional growth plan, which they would discuss with their principal at the beginning and end of the school year. They would also have input into any plan for improvement that is developed during the supervision stage of the performance appraisal process.

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In conclusion, the federation urges the government to respond to the issues addressed in this submission and to develop a fair and effective performance appraisal model

that supports the ongoing positive growth of teachers, and responds to both the professional needs of teachers and the important goal of ensuring students are taught by competent teachers. If the government does not respond to these issues, we predict the proposed performance appraisal model will result in an increase in grievances and needless energy spent on resolving time-consuming and costly management-labour conflict.

A teacher performance appraisal model can be designed to be supportive to teachers and at the same time recognize the needs and best interests of our students. The school climate will be a much more positive one for our students if teachers are provided with the appropriate professional development at the school board level and if the performance appraisal model in place focuses primarily on supporting teachers to continually improve their knowledge and their classroom practice.

We'd be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That affords us just under five minutes. We'll say a bit more than a minute and a half per caucus.

Mr Levac: Thank you very much, one and all, for the presentation and the professional work you've done to come up with an alternative. You're aware, I'm assuming, that in the bill it says that the third appraisal, if it is chosen, is done by the principal. The superintendent disappears and doesn't become a partner in this. The principal recommends directly to the board on the firing of a teacher. Do you support that model?

Ms Benedict: No.

Mr Levac: Thank you. All principals I've met—and who I've been aware of and through my association with them—have looked for years for models of a consistency of the nature we are having described here. My concern is one of training and support for that group of principals who have to do this particular model that's going to be very comprehensive. I'm now hearing that principals are being hired who have maybe five years of teaching experience, which is actually the recommendation we've had for the earliest that someone can even apply to become a principal. Now we are hiring them with five years' experience. Do you believe something desperately needs to be done by this government to support a five-year teaching principal, usually at that level with a twin situation or teaching responsibilities as well?

Ms Benedict: It's taking the people who are committed to education and brave enough to step forward into administrative positions in these very difficult times and putting them basically in an impossible situation. Like you, I too in another, former life, was a principal doing evaluations. Even at that time, the training was sorely lacking in the mentorship we should give to beginning administrators. I had the good fortune of being with a principal who was an excellent evaluator and I learned from him. Not everybody has that experience.

We are forgetting there's a key part in the learning, whether it is a beginning teacher—if they pass the entry-into-the-profession test, that's one thing, but where are the mentorship programs to assist them in their first two

years? I look at the same thing with someone who is stepping into the role of vice-principal or principal. Where are the support mechanisms for those individuals? As you just pointed out, many of them have had limited classroom experience, and yet we know how desperately we need those people in the leadership positions. We're putting our schools at risk. We're putting our schools in a crisis position like we have never seen before.

Mr Marchese: A quick question: I'm assuming that this is a model, that these are suggestions you made to the government prior to introducing 110. Of course now it is in the form of a much more public document that you're putting out. It seems to me that if you want to produce something that's effective—we always say that, at least—you need to have on board, by and large, those who are going to be directly affected by it. You said that. We've always said that. Certainly, when I was a trustee, I heard that from everybody. We always were a bit careful in terms of what we introduced to make sure we had some buy-in. Your model seems to be a fair one to me. What did you get by way of a reaction when you introduced your suggestions to either the minister or to anybody else who may have listened to that?

Ms Benedict: We had a guarantee, as a trade-off for something else, that we would have, as teacher unions, real dialogue and input in the whole concept of teacher testing and however that may unfold from the point it was first announced. Unfortunately, like many of the other types of—I hesitate to use the word "consultation" because consultation usually means the parties working together for a common solution. Many of the concepts we brought forward fell on deaf ears. The minister was right in saying that our federation supports a consistent form of teacher evaluation. But that's the end of the sentence, because nothing else we put there do you see proposed in Bill 110. I would hazard a guess we won't see them in the regulations either.

Mr Miller: I'm curious about one comment to do with parental and student input, saying you thought that was inappropriate. I recognize they are clients of the system. I don't come from an academic school background, but I've run a resort in the past. One thing we did in our business, on a weekly basis, was surveys of our guests. We would use those surveys to try to improve the quality of the resort and the services we were providing to people. We also would use them selectively. So if we had one complaint made by somebody that was never, ever made at any other time, we probably wouldn't act on it, but if it was consistently made, we would likely act on it and try to make a change to improve the quality of what we were doing. I wondered if you could comment on why you think it's inappropriate that parents and students have some input into their experience at the school.

Ms Benedict: What we said we are opposed to is the input on teacher evaluation. Many school communities do have a long-time standing practice of doing exactly what you pointed out, of going with surveys into the school community, with parents, and even beyond parents, to see how that school community can continue to improve, and to act upon that.

Accountability with parent input and student input is what a teacher faces on a daily basis—and have regular input in the appropriate fashion. When it is timed to evaluation, I just responded to a question about school administrators finding they need to have more training and more mentorship to be able to do effective evaluations. Then I would hazard to ask, do we do the same thing for parents? Not just anyone can step into teacher evaluation and do it in as fair and just a process as we require.

The Chair: That you for coming before us this afternoon.

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Principals' Council. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee.

Ms Martha Foster: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to allow us to present on behalf of the principals and vice-principals of the province. I am Martha Foster and I am the current president of the Ontario Principals' Council. I am also a practising principal who is seconded this year from the Thames Valley District School Board. I have with me Mike Benson, who is the council's executive director.

The Ontario Principals' Council is an ISO 9001 registered professional association that represents the principals and vice-principals in Ontario's publicly funded school system. Although our membership in the council is voluntary, we currently represent 5,000, which is about 95% of the practising school leaders in both elementary and secondary public schools across the province.

The Ontario Principals' Council supports the initiatives, any initiatives, that help to ensure the presence of high-quality teachers in our classrooms. As the instructional leader of the school, ensuring that all teachers for whom they are responsible are performing at the highest level of competence is one of the most important functions of the principal. Principals also assist teachers in areas where they need improvement so they may continue to grow professionally.

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The Ontario Principals' Council supports the introduction of a qualifying test for new teachers that will ensure all individuals entering the teaching profession have reached the minimum standard of knowledge required. In fact, the Ontario Principals' Council is directly involved in the test development and delivery, to ensure that the process involves Ontario educators and that the resulting test is a made-in-Ontario test and is truly valid for its intended purpose.

The requirement of the qualifying test for certification beginning in the 2001-02 school year, however, severely jeopardizes the validity of the test. Without a full cycle of the testing process, including the testing of all candidates at the end of their program, we run the risk of using a test that has not been properly validated for large-scale use,

with potentially devastating consequences for those education graduates who do not pass it.

We would propose that the test for the 2001-02 school year be a pilot test, that the requirement of passing the test by the candidates taking it be satisfied just by their writing the test and that it wouldn't be a requirement to pass or fail it.

The Ontario Principals' Council supports the intent of parental and student involvement in the performance appraisal of teachers, but we have serious concerns about the process. For example, in a school that would have approximately 100 teachers, a secondary school principal could be responsible for reviewing 40 teachers in any one year, and that is not an unreasonable estimation. Each of those teachers would be responsible for 75 or more students, which could result in 150 surveys for each teacher.

If you work out the math on all that, that could easily be—this is an underestimate—12,000 surveys to be analyzed, reviewed and shared with the teachers. This is clearly impractical. It would be impossible for principals and office staff, many of whom have been significantly reduced in the last few years, to manage a process involving thousands of surveys.

Our second recommendation, then, would be that an efficient process for the development, collection and analysis of parental and student input must be found or the administrative burden will make the exercise impractical.

In addition, any survey used in a teacher's performance appraisal must be credible, and it must be reliable. This can only be ensured if the surveys are not anonymous. Any survey given to a principal must be signed by the individual who completes it. This will provide the principal with a source to access if there are issues that he or she feels must be followed up.

Principals and vice-principals are on the front lines in the schools across this province. We have been working hard to introduce and implement the many reforms that have been imposed on the system during the past several years. We want to make sure that those reforms are in place and that they are working so that our students can learn, succeed and compete in today's demanding world.

We also request that the regulations, which will outline the procedures that will drive this act, be structured in such a way as to be manageable by the principals and vice-principals of Ontario. They will require time and training to properly implement any changes. School resources may also need to be reviewed, as the increased burden to an already taxed system may result in insufficient time for other necessary tasks to be performed.

That is a summary of our presentation. I would be glad to answer any questions from you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That affords us about two and a half minutes per caucus for questions.

Mr Marchese: Thank you for your presentation. It's very useful, obviously. You're very supportive of these initiatives by the government, quite clearly, and the minister knows this.

Ms Foster: We have had conversations with her.

Mr Marchese: Of course. You express reservations today that I'm assuming you've expressed in the past, while this was being developed, to the minister.

Ms Foster: Correct.

Mr Marchese: They know you're very supportive. It would seem to me that when you have a very supportive group like yourselves, they would also listen to you when you have some critical suggestions to make in order for this to be effective, obviously. So when you raised the concerns you have raised with us, particularly but not necessarily just with the qualifying test—you say, "Without a full cycle of the testing process, including the testing of all candidates at the end of their program, we run the risk of using a test that has not been properly validated for large-scale use." It's reasonable.

My question is, when you raised this issue with the minister, what did she say?

Ms Foster: She was very attentive and was very supportive of our stance.

Mr Marchese: I see.

Ms Foster: Mr Benson would like to add to that.

Mr Marchese: Yes, please.

Mr Mike Benson: I think also that many of the things we've talked about and that we are suggesting be done are not carved in stone. There is a way within the legislation, at least as I understand it, whereby the qualifying test could be a pilot in the first year. What we are doing is, we're taking one more try, if you like, to convince the government to take that particular path.

Mr Marchese: Right. They're being tough on the exterior with the public because they want to make sure the public understands this is a real test, right? But quite possibly what we have is a soft minister who really understands these things and then hopefully through regulation might do exactly what you're proposing—we're hoping.

Mr Benson: Yes. I don't think we have any idea of that really. I think we're just pressing to get to the things we need listened to and try and influence as we can.

Mr Marchese: No, I appreciate that.

Mr Miller: Thank you very much for coming before us today. Hopefully, part of this process, as you've outlined, is that there is still time for amendments on these bills. Good suggestions will probably be taken in by the government and amendments will likely occur.

I'm interested in your point about complaints—not complaints, but the comments from students should not be anonymous to principals. I happen to agree with that. I'm not sure that's not the way it is in the bill, but I certainly think that makes sense. The principals, as the managers of the system and with knowledge of the kids in their school, should have the names. I think that's a reasonable idea, from my perspective anyway.

You commented on the workload. A few other people commented that they thought the test should be a pilot project in the first year. That has been made by a few different groups.

Mr Dunlop: Could you just elaborate a little bit more on recommendation 2, please?

Ms Foster: Sure, if I find out which one that was. Oh, that's the concern with the surveys, with the number. All we know is there is to be a survey. The numbers I gave you were based on the fact that every survey goes home to every student of the teacher and every parent of the students of the teacher. There might be a way to facilitate parental input without having to send one home to every single parent of every student. In a secondary school, any one teacher in one year could interface easily with 150 to 180 different students. The numbers become astronomical. There might be another way of going about it—I haven't seen it; I don't know how it's going to happen—so that it doesn't have to go home to every student's parent and every student.

Mr Levac: Thank you for your presentation, Ms Foster and Mr Benson. What is OPC's stance on the one clause that says the third appraisal, if necessary, is without the superintendent, and the principal will make a recommendation directly to the board for firing?

Ms Foster: We believe it would make most principals a little nervous, that they are the one and the only input into the dismissal of a teacher. We would support the superintendent being involved, especially if you've gotten to the process where you are into the third appraisal.

Mr Levac: I would assume the superintendent might be the person who was elevated through the system and has even more expertise or has some type of background in making sure that the board's policies are felt.

Ms Foster: And the bill allows for it, that the superintendent is involved. As soon as you get into a situation where you have someone under review and they're going through their appraisals—

Mr Levac: Only second.

Ms Foster: Correct.

Mr Levac: Not the third. It mysteriously changed back to strictly just the principal and the principal making a recommendation directly to the board on firing, correct? That means, if I'm interpreting this right, and the language is used the way it is, the principal doesn't even inform the director of education that he's recommending that a teacher be fired.

Ms Foster: You normally wouldn't. You would normally go to the superintendent, whose responsibility would then be to the director.

Mr Levac: To the director, but in that case the superintendent doesn't know.

Ms Foster: Any principal in this province, their superintendent would know.

Mr Levac: Oh, absolutely, but it's not written that way.

Ms Foster: Correct.

Mr Levac: Thank you. Do I have a couple more seconds?

The Chair: Literally.

Mr Levac: I'll make this very quick. In terms of the appraisals, is it just the numbers you're concerned with? Are there any other concerns that senior students, as

earlier described by somebody else, could include grades 7 and 8 students?

Ms Foster: So your question to me is what?

Mr Levac: Do you have other concerns besides just the sheer numbers of students giving evaluation or parents giving evaluation on appraisals?

Ms Foster: That was our main concern. Whether it dropped down to grade 7 or 8, most grade 7 or 8 students would be capable, depending on how the survey is formatted—we haven't seen a survey, but the survey could be formatted in such a way where they would give you very reliable input into the performance of the teacher.

The Chair: Thank you both for coming before us here this afternoon. We appreciate your presentation.

1710

TAXPAYERS COALITION HALTON

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from Taxpayers Coalition Halton. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Mr Frank Gue: Good afternoon, Mr Chairman and ladies and gentlemen. I'm Frank Gue, education chair of the Taxpayers Coalition Halton Inc. Through many years in industrial management I was responsible for training and appraising personnel. I also taught for several years at the college and university levels, and I have a lot of sympathy for teachers in the public system. I don't think I could hack that.

Bill 110 is a step in the right direction. Our concern is with the regulations that will flow from it, particularly concerning performance appraisal of teachers.

We appraise teachers to help them to turn out a good product, that is, to help them to get results. You're going to hear that word "results" many times in the next couple of minutes. Can the children read easily out of grade 2? Can they do long division, write a coherent sentence with correct use of a verb and a noun? Some educators tend to regard such questions as simplistic, incapable of identifying creativity and critical thinking, but inability to test some things does not excuse us from testing anything, especially when the things we can test determine whether or not our students can do those other things.

We have all heard the disgraceful statistic that over a quarter of Canadian adults are functionally illiterate. A century ago, I was surprised to learn in a report, only 10% or 15% were. Our teacher appraisal system must address and improve this deplorable result. The system under development is not likely to do this. If we continue this way, after all your efforts to reform education, you will fade into history as still another government—with a respectful nod to the opposition members present—that failed to improve education.

A performance appraisal must ask what results are being realized by this employee that support the enterprise objectives? But in education one cannot find an objective in the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession, upon which the appraisal process is based. In

some faculties of education there is no definition of education and no statement of an objective for teacher training. Therefore, the teacher appraisal process is inevitably based upon process instead of results.

I don't care in the least what process General Motors uses to machine engine parts. I just want my engine to do its job. But in teacher performance appraisal we talk a lot about process and very little indeed, if at all, about the result, which is a student better educated leaving than entering.

Because of this emphasis on process, not results, there is no connection between teacher appraisal and the EQAO results that should drive board improvement programs. Those board programs should drive school improvement programs, and school improvement programs should control the individual performance improvement plans for which the teacher and the principal are responsible. Unfortunately, there is no such linkage that can be traced from EQAO results to teacher appraisals. Many of the board improvement plans I have seen, with a couple of shining exceptions like Hamilton-Wentworth's, are merely lists of nice, and expensive, things to do, with no connection to measurable results, such as raising the district's average in math performance by X per cent in Y years.

Now to our other concern, which is the fate that awaits the politicians' well-intended policies. Our performance appraisal system will add to the \$80 billion per year Canada spends complying with regulations. A principal or other appraiser will spend somewhere between—a wild guess—100 and 400 extra hours per year, not including several of Ms Foster's points of a moment ago, covering thousands of data items. Add in several times that for teacher time. That might be OK if aimed at improving the education results rather than merely embroidering the process. Speaking from experience, I can assure you that a process dictated from on high that causes unreasonable amounts of extra work for the front line troops will be ignored. If it can't be ignored, it will be shortcut, or if it's disliked intensely enough, it will be subverted and sabotaged. That's from experience.

Now consider policy and procedures. I am keenly aware of the difference. You, the politicians, have set policy in Bill 110. But I urge you, entirely aside from Bill 110 but certainly including Bill 110, to find some means of ensuring that the good policies that you put in place are not avoided, ignored, shortcut, subverted or sabotaged in the regulations. I am pointing no fingers and accusing no officials, but many of the good folk on whom you depend for implementation of your policies have grown up in an education environment that does not serve us as well as we should like. That's why we're sitting in this room. With the best of intentions, they are still convinced that we cannot effectively measure teacher performance by results. With increasing desperation, unions and others are denying the value of performance appraisal. Well meant but poorly informed, they are attempting frantically to serve two masters: your policies and their honest belief in a poorer model of education.

This poorer model has things like student self-esteem and a pleasant school experience as its objectives instead of genuine accomplishment and challenge, leading to a full and satisfying life as informed citizens.

But do take heart, for among you are educators—scores, perhaps thousands—who do know better. You must find them and fashion a new spearhead with which to create a system that will support your policies. For example, 33 hours ago Professor Mike Fullan, in a long CBC interview—he’s dean of OISE—explained how a pair of low-achieving Toronto core schools had made dramatic improvements in—guess what?—results. His success factors were, first, an emphasis on those results. Then he praised phonics; early testing; identification and correction of problems; constant comparison; teaching to get literacy, not teaching to the test; use of test results and appraisal to develop teacher improvement programs; and above all, the availability of inspiring, dedicated principals and teachers who can make it all happen. We must, Professor Fullan said, develop a continuous stream of such young teachers through the faculties of education.

Mr Marchese, I think you asked a question to the effect that “Should green people be promoted to principal?” I think I could point out that we had people at age 19, one of whom was my brother, flying Lancasters.

But in the meantime, we say there are scores of Michael Fullans in the system today working with their heads down, waiting for their time to come. This is the time and you can make it come.

In summary then, I am here on behalf of Taxpayers Coalition Halton to urge you, first, to direct your staff to insist that they appraise teachers to a small number of concrete results rather than a huge number of fuzzy activities and teaching habits. I have attached to my pass-out a sample of a performance appraisal typical of those used by the businesses and industries that pay the taxes that support you. It is simple, short, direct and aimed straight at results rather than activities. Please study it.

Secondly, please develop a policy about policies that will give you assurance that the good intentions you had when you wrote Bill 110, or any law, are not hopelessly diluted in the regulations that result.

Thank you for your time. I will answer any questions I can.

The Chair: That gives us about a minute and a half per caucus. This time we’ll start with the government benches.

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Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Thank you, Mr Gue. I appreciate your submission and like what you say about measuring for results. How do you introduce a performance appraisal system and establish results measurement, let’s say, in the first year? Or do you do it over a period of time in order to truly, accurately measure the results?

Mr Gue: Ms Mushinski, I would do that over a range of techniques. When I was teaching, I used what I called micro-testing: every 15 minutes, every half hour, “Mr Bevilacqua, give us a definition of the standard deviation

and why you should be using it.” That’s a micro-test. There should be clearly identifiable bars or hurdles that a student partway through or all the way through grade 1 should be able to pass. I won’t try to say what they are, but they can be identified. I identified a couple here. Clearly, to me, a student, unless severely disabled, should be reading quite well out of grade 2; that is the sort of thing. The more frequent these tests, the smaller they are and the quicker the feedback—behaviour management and behaviour reinforcement tell us: quick feedback, get the improvement right away. Three years? That’s too long.

Mr Levac: Thank you for your presentation. I think you’re describing something I learned maybe 20 years ago about mastery learning. The other terminology that I was taught to use was “behavioural objectives,” whereby the sentence would start with: “The students will be able to blah, blah, blah at the end of this particular lesson” and that evaluation was taking place almost at the end of every lesson. Is that what I’m catching, what you’re basically saying regarding teachers? If the students perform at such a level, the teachers should be able to have the students perform these tasks?

Mr Gue: Oh, I think so. Some of the tasks are extremely clear. Other tasks require a lot of teacher input by way of, can the student write a good paragraph? That is somewhat subjective but also largely objective. I think my answer to your question is largely yes.

Mr Levac: Yes. The one part that you mentioned tweaked me a little bit. I was a little concerned about self-esteem and some of the other—I think you referred to them as “fuzzies.” I would respectfully suggest to you that’s part and parcel of the students’ growth and development, to achieve some of the things that we’re talking about, which are the specifics of learning.

Mr Gue: Mr Levac, don’t connect those two words directly, please.

Mr Levac: Fair.

Mr Gue: Certainly self-esteem—boy, we’d better have it. I would suggest to you, however, that what is sometimes heard from the educational establishment, that development of self-esteem will result in better academic performance, is exactly backward. Better academic performance will result in self-esteem. School should be enjoyable, but not necessarily every minute fun.

Mr Levac: I agree with you.

Mr Marchese: Mr Gue, there is so much to talk about, but two quick questions if I can: one, you said, and I agree, that when the process is dictated from high above—more or less I think it’s what you said—

Mr Gue: Yes.

Mr Marchese: —it will either be ignored and/or subverted. You made the statement that’s something that you experienced and that’s a problem. That’s what this government is doing in relation to so many issues, but particularly these two of qualifying tests and the appraisal review.

What are you saying to the government members, that they made a mistake in terms of doing it top down, or

that “Yes, it’s a mistake but forge ahead and make sure the teachers follow it anyway,” even though from your experience, and mine, to do so is to risk the fact that teachers may not be willing participants because they are feeling hurt?”

Mr Gue: Well, Mr Marchese, I didn’t say it would happen; I did say it could happen. There are certain things that have to be dictated from on high: “Thou shalt follow these and those accounting practices, period.” There are no exceptions. Other things need much more consultation. The warning that I sound here is that if the procedures that develop from Bill 110 are made cumbersome or very hateable, they run a serious risk of being obstructed.

Mr Marchese: The Chair is allowing me some grace here, and I want to ask you another quick question. At some schools the performance, the results, are incredibly high; they probably have 80% or more. That’s by and large in well-to-do areas, where they’re either wealthy and/or professional.

My point is that in those areas they will do well, and not because they’re focused on results so much as if you come from a professional class of people, by and large it determines the kind of result you’re going to get. Are you saying we could accomplish the same thing in any working-class area where we have poverty or refugees or ESL needs, that we can do the same?

Mr Gue: Absolutely, yes.

Mr Marchese: We need you.

The Chair: Thank you for coming before us here this afternoon.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. Welcome to the committee.

Ms Sue Robertson: Thank you. The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, OFHSA, is a province-wide organization representing parents and children in the public school system. Since 1916, our members have been active partners with governments and educators in promoting the best for each student. Our members work with their home schools, with their district school boards and with various government ministries, advisory agencies and partner organizations to bring the input of our 14,000 members to the table. We are pleased today to offer the advice of our members regarding Bill 110, the Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001.

OFHSA members recognize the enormous impact that quality teaching has on the education of all students in Ontario, and we have supported quality pre-service and in-service programs for all teachers. Since 1978, it has been the policy of Ontario Federation of Home and School Association members that:

“A timely, effective and standard manner of evaluating teachers’ teaching abilities be developed, considering the following—representatives of all the affected

parties (students, parents, teachers and school boards) be included in the process; that standardized evaluative criteria be applied province-wide; that mandatory training in the use of evaluative techniques be given to all those involved; and that responsibility for setting and maintaining teachers’ standards be turned over to a professional body.”

When the minister first requested that the Ontario College of Teachers offer its advice on the design of a teacher testing program, OFHSA members were represented at those discussions. We offered our input to the draft documents prepared by the OCT, and we also sent the minister our input when the OCT’s final report was released. As well, in April 2000, our members set out recommendations about the process for developing a province-wide performance appraisal system that could be developed with the input of all groups affected by the plans, and offered input into the content of such a scheme.

Members called for a consistent, province-wide system that was based not on a paper-and-pencil test but on a review of a teacher’s performance in the classroom. We asked that all stakeholders—parents, students, educators, trustees and ministry staff—be involved in the process of designing such a system. We also asked that the ministry provide training and resources both to implement the system and to help support the improvement of teaching practice through mentoring and support programs in the school.

There is a great deal about Bill 110 that we support:

That the new appraisal system will be applied consistently across the province;

That there will be an expectation that every teacher will be evaluated on his or her classroom performance once every three years;

That teachers will be required to develop a professional learning plan that sets out their own goals for improving their teaching practice every year;

That there will be some vehicle for the input of parents and students to be part of the review system;

That a consistent review process for teachers found to be unsatisfactory, including specific written improvement plans, timelines for remediation and removal, if necessary, will be implemented across Ontario;

That performance appraisals will be part of a teacher’s file and will be required by school boards when hiring new staff;

That school boards will be required to file a record with the College of Teachers for any teachers who either have their employment terminated, or who resign while they are on review;

That all teachers new to Ontario will be required to complete a qualifying exam;

That all teachers new to Ontario will be evaluated two times in each of their first two years.

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The terms of the act also allow for detailed regulations that will support consistency of delivery for this program across the province, and will also provide the necessary

training and resources to evaluators to implement this program. Under the regulations, we support there being extensive training for all principals and vice-principals to carry out the appraisals; detailed criteria for every principal to use in assessing performance, including the five domain names and competency statements developed by the Ontario College of Teachers in consultation with other stakeholders; a standardized rating system; consistent guidelines with respect to teacher learning plans; consistent standards and timelines for evaluation; and a vehicle for parent and student feedback.

We also support the development, through ministry guidelines, of a list of indicators for each competency statement that will help evaluators recognize good practice; a series of “best practice” materials developed and shared with evaluators to help them complete this task—these could include how-to documents giving some direction to new principals and vice-principals about how to observe in the classroom—and a series of forms that can be used by all areas of the province to help maintain consistency.

The members of OFHSA support a great deal of what is in this legislation. We do, however, have some remaining concerns that need to be addressed in the implementation phase of the project.

First of all, the success of this initiative will depend on the kind of environment into which it is introduced. With Ontario’s teachers already feeling under attack and undervalued, this plan may look like more of the same. Its potential to raise the bar and encourage excellence in teaching practice will be lost unless we can somehow tone down the rhetoric coming from both sides that makes education an us-versus-them environment. Somehow, teachers must be made to see the potential for professional growth that is inherent in the annual learning plan. They must be convinced that a performance appraisal done by a professional colleague in their workplace can help them to grow in their profession. They must be willing participants in their own performance appraisal and any follow-up activities that are suggested. It will be necessary for principals and teachers to develop a relationship in which talk about improvement is not seen as a threat to the teacher but rather as a tool to improve teaching practice.

One way the ministry can help get this message across is to back off on some of the rhetoric and political hype that seems to be saying there are lots of poor teachers to weed out, and that we have to force teachers to do this appraisal because they won’t do it themselves. An important first step would be to stop using the term “teacher testing” for the project and replace it with something less confrontational. Both the client team and the design team working with staff on this project have suggested this change from the very beginning of the project.

The principals and vice-principals will need the same messaging. They will need training and support to feel comfortable that they are not just judging their colleagues, but setting up an environment that supports teaching excellence, an environment in which everyone

can improve. When the ministry sends out its implementation teams and runs training exercises, we hope the content of these sessions will reach beyond the nuts and bolts of what the indicators and rating systems look like, to how an administrator can support his or her staff to embrace this program as a way of building teaching excellence in themselves and their colleagues. Since we know that the number of teachers currently working in our system who may receive an “unsatisfactory” rating is quite small, we must emphasize in this rollout how the system can work in our schools to improve everyone’s teaching practice. We are hoping that this program will focus the attention of administrators and staff alike on ways to help develop the skills of all the staff members in a school.

One piece of this legislation that is of particular concern to the members of OFHSA is the parent and student survey. We have heard a great deal of concern expressed about this part of the legislation. What OFHSA members had requested right from the beginning was that parents and students have a part in designing the teacher appraisal system, to make sure that it addresses the concerns they might have. Through the design team and the client team process, both of these stakeholder groups have had representation in the development of the program. Our members have not asked to appraise their children’s teachers. We have also said that any parent survey must not lead to a teacher’s dismissal, nor should parents be asked to evaluate the teacher’s ability in areas where they have no expertise to do so.

During our meetings with the performance appraisal project team, we have consistently said that parents should only be allowed to comment on the things that they know something about, such as the teacher’s communication strategies with students and parents, and whether they feel their child is challenged in the classroom. We see that the legislation, as it is currently worded, sets up a system whereby a parent survey can be used in part to trigger an unsatisfactory performance appraisal of a teacher. OFHSA members have some concerns with implementing this practice.

First of all, all parents must be informed about the ways in which their survey forms can be used. They must know that their comments will be passed on to the teacher and that their comments may instigate an investigation of a teacher’s fitness to practise. They must also understand that if their comments form part of an action to dismiss a teacher, their confidentiality may have to be breached in order to meet a burden of proof in arbitration. Parents must understand that their participation in this survey is strictly voluntary, but that they must sign their responses and should only comment on areas in which they have first-hand knowledge. Parents should also be told the survey is also a vehicle to celebrate excellence that they have witnessed in a teacher’s performance.

The last issue we wish to raise is workload. You may think this is properly the concern of the principals and vice-principals rather than the parents, but our members

are active volunteers in schools across Ontario. We've seen the workload of school administrators rise significantly over the last few years. We want this system to work, and we know that will require time in the day dedicated to training, pre-observation conferencing, observation and post-observation conferencing. It will require meeting with all teachers to develop learning plans each year and checking that the activities spelled out in them are happening.

OFHSA members believe the most important job the principal has is to help develop and support the teachers in his or her school and thereby support student learning and achievement. It is through their improvement that the results for students also improve. We urge the ministry to look at the situation of school administrators and find ways to help them fulfill this mandate. With so many experienced principals retiring at the same time as the implementation of this new program, the need to provide support to new principals and vice-principals for this role is great. We also have many smaller schools that, under the current funding formula, do not qualify for a full-time principal. It's very difficult to be the instructional leader maintaining a culture of excellence when you're not even in the school half of the time.

The workload attached to the parent surveys alone is significant. In a secondary school, for example, the principal would be collecting one survey from each parent for each of the teachers that his or her children see every year. In a school of 1,400 students, that would amount to some 11,200 surveys to evaluate and collate every year. Any support the ministry can provide to schools and boards to deal with some of these issues in the form of training, the provision of software and funding support for administration could help the program be successful.

One last area we wish the ministry to examine is ways to tie the new mandatory professional learning program to the teacher performance appraisal system. When a teacher is evaluating his or her goals and growth plan, it only makes sense to us that they also look at professional learning programs that will help them meet these goals. The two programs properly go hand in hand.

Home and school members look forward to the passing of this legislation, but we also await the detailed implementation strategies that will make it work. We believe this program is important enough to spend the time and the resources necessary to a successful launch. The success of our students depends on it.

Thank you, and I'll be pleased to answer questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That leaves us a grand total of only about two minutes. As is our practice, we'll give all the time to the party next in rotation, and that would be Mr Levac.

Mr Levac: Thank you for your presentation. You made reference to concerns you have about the survey. You're aware, as has been pointed out in the last little while, that you do sign the survey and it does end up in someone's possession as a signed document, but the legislation then says it should be returned to the teacher unsigned or whited out or whatever you wish. Does that

satisfy your concerns yet, or are there are still deeper concerns beyond just the confidentiality?

Ms Robertson: I think if teachers are getting survey forms that have good comments, then it doesn't matter if they're signed or not. It's only when there's an issue raised. Our concern is if a form is not signed by the parent, and then at some point in the process it is used as part of an on-review process or part of a teacher's being removed or losing their job. What will happen to that evidence in court when it goes to arbitration if it's an unsigned piece of hearsay evidence?

The other thing is, if at some point the parent who filled out the form turned it in and it was going to be known who had signed the form, because the teacher has a right to face their accusers, then the confidentiality falls apart. Parents have concerns about what will happen with other teachers in a school where they have been personally involved in the removal of a teacher, and the way their students might be dealt with at a school.

Mr Levac: I personally would say I recommend strongly that you stay on the course of concerns for twin schools, no secretaries in school buildings for a long period of time. The things you're talking about are very instrumental for small schools and even large schools.

The Chair: Thank you for coming before us here this afternoon. We appreciate it.

1740

ORGANIZATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The Chair: Our next presentation will be from the Organization for Quality Education. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Mr John Bachmann: Good afternoon. My name is John Bachmann. I'm president of the Organization for Quality Education or OQE for short. We're a group of parents, teachers, school administrators and taxpayers who have been working for 10 years to improve the learning outcomes of all Ontario students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. OQE has also been part of the client group involved in the development of the teacher performance appraisal process that is at the heart of this act.

We think that Bill 110, the Quality in the Classroom Act, has a chance to live up to its name, but only if those tasked with drafting and implementing the regulations pertaining to the act remember the reasons why this legislation was necessary in the first place. Those reasons fall into two major areas: (1) the need to remove incompetent teachers more quickly from our schools, and (2) the need to improve student learning.

The standardized teacher performance appraisal system that is part of Bill 110 can bring worthwhile improvements to our publicly funded school systems. As things stand, each year thousands of Ontario students pay the price for our schools' long-standing inability to deal expeditiously with the incompetence of a small fraction of teachers. Transferring incompetent teachers from

school to school within a board when parental complaints become too loud or allowing them to move from board to board will become far less likely with the implementation of well-defined performance appraisals and record-keeping processes that should result from this bill.

We must, of course, ensure that teachers are not denied due process. Many marginally effective teachers can be remediated to competence and even proficiency, given early identification of problems and implementation of effective corrective actions by administrators and support staff. But for the small percentage of irretrievably incompetent and unmotivated teachers, OQE applauds Bill 110's intent to get these individuals out of our schools as quickly as possible to minimize the damage being caused to their students. This damage can be considerable and falls disproportionately on low-achieving and disadvantaged students. One recent study shows that one year of seriously incompetent teaching hinders top students by a quarter grade level, but low-achieving students by an alarming half grade level.

A common performance appraisal process can also have a positive impact on the second major reason for Bill 110, the improvement of student learning. Currently, teacher performance appraisals are done very inconsistently throughout the province. It is not unusual to hear of teachers who haven't been evaluated for five, even 10, years. In addition, the quality of appraisals varies widely between evaluators, schools and boards. For the vast majority of competent and accomplished teachers, this is not so much a problem as it is a missed opportunity, an opportunity for individual professional improvement that can positively affect student learning.

In current human resources parlance, the term "performance appraisal" is actually something of an anachronism; instead, modern organizations speak of "individual development" or "individual learning plans," which are tied as directly as possible to the organization's performance goals. This is where the common "performance appraisal" process launched by Bill 110 holds the most promise. OQE hopes that the upcoming regulations will clearly define the need for performance appraisals to review how effectively teachers have implemented their own annual individual improvement plans that have, in turn, been linked to their school's improvement plans.

For example, individual teachers at a given school that has a goal "to increase the number of grade 3 students achieving levels 3 or 4 on the EQAO mathematics tests from 60% to 70%" in the annual improvement plan, can be asked, "What can you do differently in your classroom this year to support that goal?" The answers to this question, which become actions in the teacher's annual improvement plan, may involve the use of alternative methodological approaches and may necessitate external training. OQE believes this student-learning-focused approach to identifying teacher learning needs will be far more effective in improving student learning than the arbitrary, mandated learning requirements in Bill 80. That is why we continue to lament the passage of that recertification legislation.

OQE fully supports the inclusion of parental and also, at the secondary level, student feedback. We believe any parental survey should be very simple, to facilitate translation into the many languages spoken in the homes of Ontario students. One of the survey questions must address parental perceptions of student learning. The question could be worded: "My child is learning to his/her full potential with this teacher. Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree." However, we do not believe that negative parental opinions should ever be the sole reason for the termination of a teacher.

OQE also hopes that as those running and working in our publicly funded school systems gain a more complete understanding of modern quality management—and I was certainly heartened to hear that the Ontario Principals' Council is ISO registered, because that's a very good first step in this direction—they will become open to using multi-year, value-added analyses of student test scores as part of the basis for the performance appraisals of individual teachers. We have tried to bring this into the client group, but we are still a minority opinion there.

OQE's concern for improved student learning also underpins our support for the requirement for a qualifying test for new teacher candidates. However, the effect on student learning will be minimal unless the right things are tested. For subject specialist teachers, the prime need must be to demonstrate mastery in the subjects they will teach. For primary teachers, the overriding need must be to demonstrate competence in the use of effective methodologies for the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. But this will be no easy matter. We have heard anecdotally from a number of school principals that graduates of Ontario, and indeed all Canadian, faculties of education are not being adequately prepared to teach these primary subjects.

We hope that a properly constructed qualifying test will identify these shortcomings in our faculties of education and cause them to respond by modifying their programs of studies appropriately. The results of such school-university collaboration can be quite gratifying. In El Paso, Texas, where school districts worked with a local teachers' college to address poor test results, over a five-year period the achievement of all students improved markedly. But even more significantly, the gap between white and Afro-American or Hispanic students was reduced by two thirds.

To conclude, the Organization for Quality Education supports Bill 110 and looks forward to the development and implementation of supporting regulations that will bring improved quality to Ontario classrooms.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That affords us just over two minutes per caucus for questions.

Mr Marchese: I was impressed with one of the objectives of your organization that speaks to "working for ... years to improve the learning outcomes of all Ontario students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds," because that's my concern.

What you point out is that there is a small fraction of teachers who are incompetent, and that if we could just

weed them out, outcomes would improve. So you're saying just a small fraction could cause these kinds of—

Mr Bachmann: No, that's not what we are saying. The small fraction has a dramatic effect on a minority of students, because there are so few incompetent teachers. That's not the issue. However, the performance appraisal process, by linking teacher appraisals to the school improvement plans, has tremendous potential for improving the student learning of all students, but particularly the disadvantaged.

Mr Marchese: Your point is like Mr Gue's. If you just have the right teaching methodology—because you talk about that—and possibly a good standardized appraisal system with a qualifying test, we are likely, at the end of this process, to achieve greater outcomes for all our students across Ontario. That's what you say.

Mr Bachmann: Those factors are contributory, but they're not all the factors that impact.

Mr Marchese: What else?

Mr Bachmann: Parental input, the parental involvement in the schools.

Mr Marchese: How do we fix that?

Mr Bachmann: How do you fix that? By making parents more welcome in the schools.

Mr Marchese: How do we do that?

Mr Bachmann: There are many ways. Principals do that very well already. But in some schools—

Mr Marchese: Shouldn't we standardize that, though?

Mr Bachmann: No, of course not. There has to be autonomy at the local level in how we deal with meeting the goals of the particular schools. These are professionals. They need professional discretion.

Mr Marchese: So if we have a—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese. Mr Dunlop.
1750

Mr Dunlop: One of the other presenters a little earlier talked about the performance appraisal being done on a five-year basis, and of course our time frame is to have it done on a three-year basis. I'm just wondering, do you support the three-year or the five-year, or do you have any comments on that?

Mr Bachmann: It really doesn't matter. Three years would be nice, but as a number of speakers have pointed out, there's a tremendous load being introduced here, especially if the performance appraisal tools are very cumbersome. It could be quite a challenge—

The division bells rang.

Mr Bachmann: Are you people heading for the chamber or something?

The Chair: We've got 10 minutes.

Mr Bachmann: Ten minutes? OK.

That's not as important as what happens every year as part of the process. You've got the school improvement

plans and you've got the individual teacher improvement plans. The review of how well those are meshing should occur within the performance appraisal process. If that occurs every three years or five years, it doesn't really matter that much, as long as it does happen consistently and regularly, whatever the time frame.

Mr Levac: Thank you for your presentation. I appreciate it very much, and it's straightforward.

Your inclusion of parental participation in the appraisal process—you're very clear that negative parental opinions should never be the sole reason for the termination of a teacher. Does that mean they would be accepted as long as they go hand in hand with the rest of the appraisal that's being done through the process?

Mr Bachmann: Yes. We've been told by a number of principals that they presently use parental feedback regarding teacher performance as what they call the red flag, something that starts the performance appraisal process that's already in place.

Mr Levac: Do you include students on top of that? It's been suggested today—

Mr Bachmann: For secondary students, we believe they have valuable things to contribute that should be taken into account.

Mr Levac: Just for the record, my questions in that area never negated the fact that I welcomed—as a principal, I always welcomed student participation and parental participation. As a matter of fact, I encouraged it before anything else. But where I drew the line was a concern when there was an agenda that appeared in my school, where somebody was out to get a teacher. Could I assume that this would be one of the areas in which you would be very concerned?

Mr Bachmann: Yes, but that is part of any situation where you're getting feedback from your clients, whether they're parents or customers, about how your company or your organization is doing. There are always going to be the outliers. There are always going to be people who can never be satisfied, who are unreasonable. As an administrator, as a principal, you have to realize that's a lone voice and it's not representative of the feedback you're getting from other people, so you discount it. So it's not an issue.

The Chair: Thank you for coming before us here this afternoon. We appreciate it.

One quick procedural matter, committee, if I could have your agreement. An oversight in the subcommittee report was the deadline for tabling amendments for the bill. I'm proposing it will be 1 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. Does that meet with the favour of the committee? It is agreed? Thank you.

Then this committee stands adjourned until 3:30 on Wednesday.

The committee adjourned at 1754.

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Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC)

Mr Dave Levac (Brant L)

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka PC)

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC)

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York ND)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina ND)

Clerk pro tem / Greffier par intérim

Mr Douglas Arnott

Staff /Personnel

Mr Larry Johnston, research officer,
Research and Information Services