

## **Proposal 1: Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights**

### **Introduction**

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, and concerned citizens,

I stand before you today with a transformative initiative aimed at revolutionizing parental involvement in Ontario's educational landscape. The Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights seeks to formalize and respect the rights of parents in shaping their children's education. This initiative is rooted in the unwavering belief that parental engagement is essential for fostering trust, transparency, and collaboration within our education system.

### **Background**

In 2018, Ontario's Government for the People initiated unprecedented consultations into education reform, striving to respect and include parents' perspectives. Regrettably, this was the last significant opportunity for parental input. Since then, core subjects and physical education curriculums have been implemented without adequate parental consultation, leading to mistrust and a lack of transparency from the Boards and Ministry of Education. Parents have voiced concerns over their exclusion from decisions directly impacting their children's education.

### **Proposal:**

**To ensure the rights of parents are respected throughout and following the reform process, we propose the drafting of a Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights. This Bill of Rights will formalize the role of parents in educational decision-making, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights protected.**

### **Key Actions**

Creation of a Parent Interest Committee:

This committee will comprise diverse parent representatives from across Ontario, including various regions, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural communities, and special needs advocacy groups. The committee's mandate is to steer and assist in drafting the Parents' Bill of Rights and play a role in ongoing consultations and evaluations post-implementation.

Province-wide Consultation:

This will include online surveys to gather input from parents on elements they want included in the Bill of Rights, telephone town halls in every region to facilitate live discussions, and dedicated submission packages to allow parents to submit their suggestions and concerns through structured formats. Ensuring accessibility and broad participation will be crucial in this process.

Amending the Education Act:

This involves legislating the presence of elected parent representatives at the school, district, and provincial levels. These representatives will have clearly defined roles and powers to influence curriculum and policy decisions. To support their effectiveness, they will receive appropriate training and resources.

### **Desired Outcome**

The desired outcome of this initiative is twofold. First, the Parents' Bill of Rights will clearly define the rights and responsibilities of parents in their children's education and establish transparent communication channels between parents, schools, and the Ministry of Education. This will ensure regular updates on curriculum changes, policy decisions, and other relevant information.

Second, the amended governance model will include elected parent representatives with significant influence over curriculum and policy decisions. This model will foster an education system that respects and incorporates parental input, promoting trust and collaboration between parents and educational institutions.

### **Implementation Steps**

**Form the Parent Interest Committee:** Identify and invite diverse parent representatives and establish regular meetings with a clear mandate.

**Launch the Province-wide Consultation:** Develop and distribute surveys, schedule and promote town halls, and create and distribute submission packages.

**Draft the Parents' Bill of Rights:** Compile feedback from consultations, draft the Bill with the Parent Interest Committee, and review and refine with input from educators and policymakers.

**Propose Amendments to the Education Act:** Advocate for legislative support and approval through meetings with policymakers and public campaigns.

**Implement the New Governance Model:** Regularly review its effectiveness, establish feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement, and produce annual reports to ensure ongoing transparency and accountability.

### **Conclusion**

By respecting and integrating parental input through a formalized Parents' Bill of Rights and an amended governance model, Ontario's education system can achieve greater transparency, trust, and collaborative success. This approach ensures that the educational needs and concerns of students and their families are met, preparing students for a successful future in a supportive and inclusive environment.