



Setting the Standard for Great Teaching  
Fixer la norme pour un enseignement de qualité

October 20, 2020

Dear Mr. Robinson:

**Re: addressing Ontario's teacher shortage**

It was a pleasure to meet you on August 26. Thank you for sharing your concerns. I think it might be useful to clarify our mandate. The College inspires public confidence by protecting the public interest. We do this through licensing, accreditation and discipline, and we are accountable and transparent to the public. Our [strategic priorities](#) guide the direction in maintaining focus on our mandate.

As part of our work, the College annually publishes a well-regarded longitudinal study focused on the issue of teacher supply and demand in Ontario. You can find our latest *Transition to Teaching* survey on the College's website.

In late September, the College addressed the province's teacher shortage in both virtual and physical classrooms. We sent 132,000 emails to three groups of teachers, including:

- members in Good Standing in non-teaching assignments
- retirees and those suspended for non-payment of fees, and
- recent Ontario graduates.

The encouragement was simple: "If you want to help and can, here's how: It starts with keeping your license up to date."

As you know, the first step in returning to the classroom, either virtually or in person, is to have a valid teaching license.

So far, over 1,000 teachers reached out to the College with questions about the status of their license and hundreds of teachers have voluntarily reinstated their membership, including retirees. The choice is made by the individual Ontario Certified Teacher.

As part of our regulatory focus, the College is committed to the public interest. As such, we want to assure that only qualified teachers are assigned to Ontario classrooms wherever possible and that the use of Letters of Permission or the emergency provisions under the Education Act are limited to the extent possible. This is not only protecting the public interest, but working with stakeholders during this emergency situation to help streamline their processes by doing what we can that is within our purview.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have further questions on how and why we communicate with our membership or if you have any other questions about the College's mandate. I appreciate our ongoing communication and look forward to meeting again in future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole van Woudenberg". The script is cursive and fluid, with a prominent initial 'N'.

Nicole van Woudenberg, OCT  
Council Chair



October 8, 2020

Nicole van Woudenberg, Chair of Council  
Ontario College of Teachers  
101 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON M5S 0A1

Dear Nicole van Woudenberg:

It was a pleasure to meet with you (virtually) on August 26. I appreciated your willingness to listen to some of OTF's concerns (anti-Black Racism, AQs, removal of admonishments from the Public Register and fee increases) and your commitment to take those concerns back to the appropriate staff and committees. I trust that we will continue to meet on a regular basis and discuss issues of mutual interest.

I was also pleased that you shared with us that the College Council has reviewed its mandate and reset its strategic priorities: accredit faculties, license teachers, receive complaints, and adjudicate complaints. I agreed that the College should not be sponsoring golf tournaments or promotional activities which have been viewed by our members as mandate creep. Unfortunately, I was very concerned to see the College's letter of September 24, encouraging members to return to the province's classrooms. As teacher recruitment is not part of the College mandate, I would appreciate an explanation of the rationale for the College's decision to publish this letter.

OTF is also very concerned that the College is encouraging retired members to put their health and the health of their families at risk by returning to schools which have not been able to implement the health and safety standards recommended in the Sick Kids' Report. The College is meant to be an arm's length organization but, by aligning with the government's speaking points, the College loses the public trust and negatively impacts its integrity.

I look forward to your response. I am available to speak with you if you would like to discuss this matter more fully.

Yours truly,

Parker Robinson  
President