

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Toronto ON M7A 1L2**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Sous-ministre

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Memorandum To: Directors of Education

From: George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Date: December 18, 2015

Subject: 2015-16 Additional Professional Activity Day and School Year Calendar

I am writing to you with an update on the addition of a Professional Activity (PA) day to the number of PA days that must be designated by a board. You will recall that I wrote to you on October 8, 2015 on this issue and I indicated that I would provide further information once Ontario Regulation 304 had been amended.

Ontario Regulation 304, "School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days", made under the *Education Act*, sets out the requirements for school boards when planning school year calendars. At the commencement of the 2015-16 school year, the regulation required that school boards designate two PA days per school year and permitted boards to designate up to four additional PA days per school year. Any school days not designated as PA days are instructional days.

A key term of the settlements that were negotiated recently with the four teachers' federations is the provision of an additional PA day each school year. Regulation 304 has now been amended to implement this commitment. The amendments to Regulation 304 are set out in Ontario Regulation 364/15, and came into force on November 30, 2015, the date the regulation was filed. Regulation 304, as amended, now requires school boards to designate three PA days. The authority for boards to designate up to an additional four PA days per school year remains unchanged, thus increasing the total maximum number of possible PA days per school year from six to seven. The requirement for every school year to include a minimum of 194 school days remains unchanged. As a result, the minimum number of instructional days per school year is reduced by one.

As a required designated PA day, professional activities on this day must be devoted to provincial education priorities identified by the Minister. Boards are urged to consider designing collaborative professional learning opportunities in which teachers with shared subject areas/groups of students would be learning together.

The topics for this additional PA day are as follows:

For **OSSTF**:

- All teachers: Topic to be aligned with ministry priorities, such as mathematics (as appropriate) and/or equity*.

For **ETFO**:

- All teachers:
 - ½ PA day: Occupational health and safety training.
 - ½ PA day: Topic to be aligned with ministry priorities, specifically mathematics.
- Education Workers: Role-specific training or professional development for permanent employees.

For **AEFO**:

- Grades 1 – 8 teachers: Topic to be aligned with ministry priorities, specifically mathematics.
- Grades 9 – 12 teachers: Topic to be decided by board/federation PD committees (where possible) and be aligned with ministry priorities, such as mathematics, science or technology or equity*.

For **OECTA**:

- All teachers: ½ PA day - Occupational health & safety training.
- FDK teachers/ECE teams: ½ PA day – Inquiry-based learning and pedagogical assessment documentation strategies for FDK teacher/ECE teams.
- Grades 1 – 12 teachers: ½ PA day – Topic to be decided by board/federation PD committees and be aligned with ministry priorities, such as mathematics, inquiry-based/experiential learning and/or assessment documentation and/or equity*

* Ensuring equity is one of the four goals of Ontario's renewed vision for education. The aim of this goal is to ensure that everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstance – feels engaged, included and is given the opportunity to succeed. Boards and schools are urged to focus teacher professional learning on supports for students at risk of not succeeding in school. This may include Aboriginal students, children and youth in care, children and students with special education needs, recent immigrants and/or children from families experiencing poverty.

The requirement for an additional mandatory PA day is effective immediately and, as such, applies to the current school year. The amendment to O. Reg. 304 also includes the requirement for boards to make transitional mid-year changes to 2015-2016 school year calendars to address the additional PA day, and to also notify the Minister and parents of these calendar revisions. In this instance only, Minister's approval of your board's calendar revisions is not required.

In order to ensure that this additional PA day is a meaningful professional learning opportunity for everyone, boards are urged to schedule the additional day on or before April 15, 2016. As with any other designated PA day, teachers are required to participate in this PA day.

To simplify the process of notifying the Minister of your board's revised 2015-16 calendars, I am providing a template memo and chart to be completed and submitted to the ministry regional office for the board no later than January 16, 2016. In this documentation, the board is required to indicate the date the additional PA day has been scheduled and the general outline of the professional activities for each calendar. Please ensure that parents, pupils, and the school community are made aware of the board's updated 2015-16 school year calendars, via the board and/or school web sites or by any other means, immediately following submission of the calendar revisions to the Ministry.

A copy of O. Reg. 364/15 is attached for your reference. This regulation and Regulation 304 (as amended by O. Reg. 364/15) may be found on the e-laws website at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

If you have any questions, please contact your regional office. A list of regional offices is attached.



George Zegarac

c: Demetra Saldaris, Assistant Deputy Minister (Acting)
Leadership and Learning Environment Division

Steven Reid, Director
Field Services Branch

Regional Office Managers

Teacher Federations

Attachments

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