



July 6, 2026

The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Ontario College of Teachers, we are pleased to share that the Standards of Practice and Education Committee has approved a refreshed set of *Professional Standards* (Appendix A) for Ontario Certified Teachers, following extensive research, consultation, and engagement across the sector. These standards were presented to Council at its June 11, 2026 meeting.

The refreshed *Professional Standards* provide a modern, integrated framework to guide ethical decision-making, professional judgment, and practice. They reflect the values that underpin the profession, including integrity, respect, care, and a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, while supporting strong, collaborative relationships and ongoing professional growth in service of student success.

The standards are also closely connected to existing system processes, including the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA), which plays an important role in supporting reflection, dialogue, and continuous professional learning aligned with these expectations.

As these updated standards are introduced, the College welcomes the opportunity to work together with the Ministry to support alignment across policies and

practices and foster a consistent understanding across the education system, supporting educators in bringing these standards to life in their day-to-day practice.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to public education in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Joseph Fiorino". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Joseph Fiorino, JD, LLM
Chair of Council

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "L. Lacroix". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first initial being very large and stylized.

Linda Lacroix, OCT/EAO
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Preamble

The *Professional Standards* articulate the expectations to which Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) are accountable. Grounded in a shared commitment to students and student learning, the Standards form an integrated framework that guides OCTs' ethical decision-making, informs professional judgment in practice, and upholds the integrity of the profession in the public interest.

Foundational to the Standards are the core ethical principles of Care, Respect, Trust, Integrity, and a Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. Together, these commitments articulate the values that guide professional decision-making and orient OCTs' responses to the ethical, relational, and contextual complexities of teaching and learning. They provide the ethical foundation for all aspects of professional practice.

Ethical commitments are enacted through the Standards of professional practice, which describe how OCTs apply professional judgment in their daily work. By exercising professional competencies, drawing on knowledge-informed professional practice, and maintaining collaborative professional relationships, OCTs translate ethical commitments into action across diverse educational contexts. Professional practice is therefore not separate from ethics, but the means through which ethical responsibility is expressed and realized.

Commitment to students and student learning is at the core of the *Professional Standards*. This commitment anchors ethical decision-making and gives purpose to professional practice. It affirms that all professional responsibilities, ethical and practical, must advance equitable outcomes and serve the wellbeing, dignity, human rights, and learning of every student. Through this commitment, OCTs strive to create culturally safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments where students feel valued and supported.

The *Professional Standards* function as an integrated and interdependent framework. Each Standard must be understood in relation to the others, and none operates in isolation. Together, they reflect OCTs' ongoing obligation to act ethically, exercise informed professional judgment, engage in continuous learning, and foster collaborative professional relationships, always in the best interests of students and student learning.

Professional Standards and Your Position of Trust

Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) are accountable for upholding the *Professional Standards* at every stage of their careers and across the diverse roles they hold within Ontario's education system. This position of trust carries ethical and professional obligations articulated in the *Professional Standards*.

The *Professional Standards* also outline considerations for:

- **providers of accredited initial teacher education programs**, to inform program design and delivery,
- **teacher candidates**, to support their professional learning and development during initial teacher education,
- **providers of Additional Qualification courses**, to support ongoing professional learning,
- **members of the public**, to understand the role, obligations, and professional responsibilities of Ontario Certified Teachers, and
- **the Ontario College of Teachers**, to address instances of professional misconduct related to a failure to meet the *Professional Standards*.

Organization of the *Professional Standards*

The *Professional Standards* are presented as an integrated framework of nine commitments that guide ethical conduct, professional judgment, and accountability in professional practice for all Ontario Certified Teachers. Together, these Standards define what it means to teach with care, respect, integrity, trust, and a shared responsibility to advance Truth and Reconciliation, and explain how these commitments are enacted through professional learning, collaboration, and informed decision-making.

The Standards recognize that ethical responsibilities are integral to professional practice; they are expressed in how OCTs support students' learning and wellbeing, exercise professional judgment, work with others, and respond to diverse and changing educational contexts.

Development of the *Professional Standards (2026)*

The development of the *Professional Standards* involved extensive research, jurisdictional scans, and broad consultations with Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) from English, French, Public, and Catholic school systems; First Nations schools and provincial school authorities; parents and guardians; students; and education system partners, including members from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Ontario. These Standards respond to the evolving context and responsibilities of the teaching profession in Ontario.

The Professional Standards (2026)

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate Care	Ontario Certified Teachers show compassion, acceptance, interest, and insight into developing students' potential. They demonstrate care through a commitment to students' well-being and learning expressed in practice through positive influence, professional judgment, and empathy.
Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate Respect	Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate consideration and fair-mindedness. They honour human dignity, emotional wellness, and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy, and the environment.
Ontario Certified Teachers act with Integrity	Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate honesty, reliability, and ethical practice. Ongoing reflection helps them uphold integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.
Ontario Certified Teachers build Trust	Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate fairness, openness and honesty. Their professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians, and the public are based on trust.
Ontario Certified Teachers uphold a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation	Ontario Certified Teachers honour First Nations, Métis, and Inuit strengths, knowledge systems, languages, and Ways of Knowing by acknowledging the truths about how education continues to be shaped by the legacies of colonialism; deepening their understanding in relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities; and applying this knowledge through culturally informed and inclusive, strengths-based pedagogy, and responsive methodologies.

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
Ontario Certified Teachers are committed to students and student learning	Ontario Certified Teachers demonstrate their commitment to every student through professional practice informed by students' lived experiences, and grounded in care, dignity, and the upholding of human rights. They take actions to create culturally safe, accessible, and barrier-aware learning environments where students feel respected, supported, and empowered to learn.
Ontario Certified Teachers develop and demonstrate professional competencies	Ontario Certified Teachers develop knowledge, skills, and teaching practices through experience, collaboration, and ongoing, relevant learning, and apply these competencies to make informed professional decisions. They remain responsive to student needs, current research on effective teaching and assessment, and evolving educational contexts, including emerging technologies.
Ontario Certified Teachers exercise knowledge-informed professional practice	Ontario Certified Teachers build a current and comprehensive knowledge base that includes an understanding of student development, pedagogy, curriculum, content knowledge, and community-held knowledge systems, as well as relevant policies and legislation. They apply this knowledge with care, integrity, and contextual awareness to make decisions that improve students' learning and promote their wellbeing.
Ontario Certified Teachers foster collaborative professional relationships	Ontario Certified Teachers foster collegial relationships grounded in ethical and collaborative professionalism to strengthen students' support networks and create safe environments that promote students' learning and wellbeing. They recognize power dynamics within these relationships and work to interrupt inequitable patterns so that collaboration authentically centres students' strengths and needs.