



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

Memo

Date: February 10, 2020
To: Members of Council
From: Paul Picard, OCT
Interim Deputy Registrar
Subject: Communicating Information on College Mandate

At the December 5-6, 2019 meeting, Council referred the following motion to the Registrar for further study and report back to the next Council meeting:

That Council recommend to the Minister of Education that the Education Act be amended to require all district school boards, school authorities, private schools and the Provincial Schools Authority to provide information regarding the role and mandate of the Ontario College of Teachers to parents/guardians at the start of each school year, or when students register mid-year.

At the request of Council members, the attached paper offers an overview of the College's communication and outreach efforts to parents and the public, in support of College Object #3 and the College's strategic priorities.

Paul Picard, OCT

Outreach to Parents Report to Council

March 5, 2020

EVOLVING HOW WE COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC

This report was developed as part of a decision Council made in its December 2019 meeting. The purpose is to review the College’s outreach efforts to parents and determine whether or not to:

“...recommend to the Minister of Education that the Education Act be amended to require all district school boards, school authorities, private schools and the Provincial Schools Authority to provide information regarding the role and mandate of the Ontario College of Teachers to parents/guardians at the start of each school year, or when students register mid-year.”

This recommendation aligns directly with the College’s strategic priority to improve stakeholder engagement.

AS LAID OUT IN STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3	HOW?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifying and better communicating the privilege and benefits of self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By having schools provide important information directly to parents about the College’s role in safeguarding students.• By providing this information when parents are actively engaged, that is, at the start of the school year or during student registration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancing the effectiveness of collaboration with government, constituent organizations and other regulators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By opening new, direct and ongoing lines of communication with all of Ontario’s district school boards, school authorities, private schools and the Provincial Schools Authority.

While the idea of making it mandatory for key education stakeholders to distribute College information is recent, the idea of legislating and continually improving to whom and how we communicate with them is not.

“To communicate with the public on behalf of the members of the College” is one of our legislated objects in the Ontario College of Teachers Act and dates back to 1996.

In his 2011 assessment of the College’s discipline processes, former Ontario Chief Justice Patrick LeSage’s first recommendation urged the College to develop a communication strategy to increase public awareness of the College.

And, in 2014, Council's strategic plan for the College included the development of "a comprehensive, long-term communication plan that includes other regulators and leverages the College's website and other communication vehicles to:

- inform the public about the objectives and processes of self-regulation
- develop, amongst the public, an appreciation of the value of self-regulation
- improve the transparency of the College.

This evolved into our current priority to improve stakeholder engagement.

Over the years, the College has, and continues, to provide important information directly to Ontario's parents by:

1. Building partnerships with key education stakeholders who have a direct connection to students and parents, including:
 - Representatives from Ontario's district school boards, including directors of education and trustees
 - Parent involvement committees (PICs).
2. Exploring paid opportunities to reach parents, including:
 - Staffing information booths at public events sponsored by education stakeholders
 - Exhibiting at consumer events frequented by parents
 - Running advertising in traditional and social media outlets most frequented by parents.
3. Making information available through our digital media channels, including:
 - Posting the information on our website
 - Distributing information via social media
 - Including information in our quarterly e-newsletter - *The Standard* - designed specifically for a parent audience.

The College's outreach through paid media opportunities and self-distribution have been largely successful. Unfortunately, we have, to date, been unsuccessful in building any sort of meaningful and ongoing partnerships with representatives (PIC or otherwise) from any of the school boards. Further, in focus groups, conducted annually with randomly selected parents, awareness of the College is low to non-existent and the sessions are as much about familiarizing parents with the role and mandate of the College as they are about obtaining first-hand knowledge of the organization.

Parents are consistently quoted as saying:

"It's all about letting us know. I want to know what's going on in the school, where I can go, how I can learn about disciplinary actions."

- London parent, 2013 focus group session

"You could provide information about teacher's role and how it affects my child's success through schools."

- Ottawa parent, 2014 focus group session

“I’m surprised that schools and school boards never share any information with parents on how to access their kids’ teachers’ qualifications or any disciplinary activity. It should be more widely known that you can look up teachers, education and qualifications; would be helpful in making decisions with teacher choices.”

- Kingston parent, 2016 focus group session

“The easiest way to get us information is getting schools to distribute information to us in schoolbags and agendas. “ (Almost 80 per cent of parents felt this way)

- St. Catharine’s parent, 2017 focus group session

“I’d like to know where can the College help when there are roadblocks in school – when there is a problem with a teacher / principal? ... because schools do not talk about the College.”

- Ottawa parent, 2018 focus group session

“You should send pamphlets and information documents home with students or during teacher/parent meetings.”

- Toronto parent, 2019 focus group session

Year over year, parents have told us that the easiest way to reach them is by the information included in welcome packages distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Over time, the College has pursued this suggestion with parent involvement committees, trustees and senior board officials without success.

Our goal is to provide three, simple pieces of information:

1. Who we are
2. What we do to safeguard Ontario students
3. How to contact us

These efforts have taken the form, most recently, in a brochure for the public titled “How We Support Ontario Students.” As well, the College has created a “Who Does What in Education” infographic poster that is also available in brochure format.

Included in this report is a detailed overview of our outreach efforts dating back to 2014.

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH EFFORTS

Name:	Public outreach				
Description:	Our public awareness initiative (PAI) was a comprehensive paid advertising effort that reached parents through print media, television, radio, online ads and influencer blogs. Materials were developed in 2013 and the initiative roll-out started in 2014.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget: \$1 million • Ads ran in more than 72 outlets across Ontario, including CP24, Parents Canada and 680 News. • Ads also ran over a 7-day period in movie theatres during the March break. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget: \$500,000. ! Budget reduced and media effort was re-targeted. • Digital ads continued as they were cost-efficient • 15 sponsored blog posts also ran on influencer web sites • Ads ran over a 14-day period in movie theatres playing family movies during the Christmas holiday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Budget: \$22,000 ! Further budget reduction and re-targeted media efforts • Strategic partnership formed with TFO to provide information to French-language parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Budget: None • Continued: strategic partnership with TFO to provide information to French-language parents ! Public awareness initiative ends 		
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness of the College's role reached increased from 4 per cent in 2012 to 10 per cent in 2014¹ • In 2017, this number reached 18 per cent 				

¹ The Ontario College of Teachers Annual Public Awareness Survey, as conducted by The Listening Post, November 4, 2014

Name:		School board outreach				
Description:		<p>As part of the PAI, College staff met with various representatives from school boards across Ontario, including directors of education and trustees.</p> <p>Trustees and PIC members were provided with an opportunity to sign up for The Standard at the conclusion of each session. They were also surveyed about the presentation they had received.</p> <p>During and after these meetings, staff provided information about the College. We also asked board representatives to help us distribute information to parents (through schools).</p>				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 school boards met with us • At the end of 2014, we embarked on a pilot project with 12 school boards to distribute written information on the College (either electronically or physically) to parents. • Four agreed to distribute materials, but only three did: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conseil scolaire de district catholique Franco-Nord 2. Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six school boards met with us • School boards were also asked to include a link to the College's web site on a page dedicated to information for parents on the board web site or to include an e-flyer formulated for parents in their electronic communications. • As of November 2015, 95.2% of respondents, including boards and PICs indicated they supported other opportunities for the College to make presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One school board met with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One school board met with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Efforts redirected to where we have been successful reaching parents directly such as consumer events. ! Discussions held with the Toronto DSB to distribute brochures to parents for a fee. The initiative did not proceed when it was determined there was no guarantee the materials would reach parents as the decision to distribute was left to the discretion of each individual teacher. 		

<p>3. Conseil scolaire Viamonde</p> <p>4. **York Region District School Board agreed but the plan to distribute fell through (see note)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 boards either posted the e-flyer or added a link to the College's web site (it is unclear if this content is still available) 	<p>and/or distribute materials to parents in their communities.</p>				
<p>Observations/Notes:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the College was able to secure meetings with representatives from many school boards, senior board leadership did not allow their boards to distribute information on our behalf. <p>**Note: The York Region District School Board agreed to distribute materials, however, the federations felt this information went beyond the College's mandate and had the Ministry of Education stop our activities.</p>				

Name:	Parent involvement committees (PIC) outreach				
Description:	<p>The College also met with numerous PICs over the course of the PAI.</p> <p>During and after these meetings, staff provided information about the College. We also asked PIC representatives from the different boards to help us distribute information to parents (through schools).</p>				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 PIC groups met with us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 PIC groups met with us • As of November 2015, 95.2% of respondents, including boards and PICs indicated they supported other opportunities for the College to make presentations and/or distribute materials to parents in their communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One PIC group met with us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three PIC groups met with us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Efforts redirected to where we have been successful reaching parents directly such as consumer events 	
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All PIC business and outreach require permission from school board administrators. While the boards provided permission to meet with the College, they did not provide PICs with the go-ahead to distribute the College's information – even though many of the PICs expressed interest in doing so. • College leadership agreed to route all communications through each board's director of education instead of through PICs AND trustees. 				

Name:	Attending events sponsored by education stakeholders					
Description:	As part of the PAI, the College held exhibits and information displays at events sponsored by education stakeholders including non-PIC parent groups, and university fairs. While the PAI ended in 2017, our outreach at these events continues.					
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at 16 stakeholder events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at 11 stakeholder events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at four stakeholder events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at 10 stakeholder events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at 22 stakeholder events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information display at 12 stakeholder events 	
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will be ongoing through 2020 as the College continues to successfully distribute information at these events. 					

Name:	Attending consumer events					
Description:	As part of the PAI, the College also held exhibits and information displays at consumer events frequented by parents. While the PAI ended in 2017, our outreach at these events continues.					
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 10 consumer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 11 consumer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 9 consumer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 16 consumer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 13 consumer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits at 14 consumer events 	
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will be ongoing through 2020 as the College continues to successfully distribute information at these events. 					

Name:	Brochure: <i>Who does what?</i>				
Description:	An infographic explaining the roles of various education stakeholders, including the College.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed on hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posted on oct.ca Distributed at all stakeholder meetings and consumer events / shows 	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated to reflect brand refresh
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This poster/brochure is distributed at all events where the public and parents are in attendance. 				

Name:	Brochure: <i>Quiz for parents</i>				
Description:	Created in 2013, a brochure that asks parents what they know of the College and how we protect the public interest.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed at all stakeholder meetings and consumer events / shows 	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retired product; replaced by <i>How we support Ontario students</i>
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This product was distributed at all events where the public and parents were in attendance. 				

Name:	Brochure: <i>How we support Ontario students</i>				
Description:	A comprehensive brochure that explains the College's role in education, the services we offer and the resources we provide.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaced the brochure, <i>Quiz for parents</i> Posted on oct.ca Translated into different languages, including: Hindi, Tagalog, Simplified Chinese, Arabic and Anishinaabemowin

					(available online only)
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed at meetings and events
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2019, this product has – and will continue to be – distributed at all events where the public including parents are in attendance. 				

Name:	Partnership: Parents Engaged in Education (PEIE) newsletter				
Description:	Since 2016, the College has run ads in PEIE’s parent newsletter. The ads provide different information about the College’s role.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ads run ten times a year in monthly e-newsletter (except for July and August, when there is no newsletter) 	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This partnership will continue through 2020. 				

Name:	E-newsletter: <i>The Standard</i> (formerly, <i>In the Public Interest</i>)				
Description:	Created in October 2007, our e-newsletter for the public delivers education news and trends to parents digitally and directly; the newsletter was rebranded in 2013 to coincide with our public awareness initiative.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebranded as <i>The Standard</i> Distributed quarterly to those who have signed up to receive it 	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	→ → → → → → → →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated to reflect brand refresh 	→ → → → → → → →
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The distribution list has grown significantly since September 2013, from less than 500 recipients to nearly 30,000 (as of January 2020). The increase can be attributed to our External Relations team encouraging sign-up at various events. 				

Name:	Parents tab on OCT.CA				
Description:	Communications staff updated the website to include a navigation tab that contains information parents are most likely to search for.				
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created in 2019
Observations/Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information will be updated as needed. 				

What are other regulators doing?

In preparing this report, the College asked other regulatory bodies about their communications efforts, and whether they have partnerships in place with existing institutions to distribute their information publicly. For example, health regulators were asked whether hospitals shared regulatory information with their patients.

While numerous requests and attempts have been made, all 16 of the regulatory bodies that responded confirmed that relationships like this do not formally exist, as practitioners are reluctant to share information about their regulator. While some institutions do accept information, there is no way to confirm distribution as it is not mandatory for this information to be shared with the public. It is important to note that nearly all regulators do some kind of consumer outreach.

As such, regulators have needed to find other ways to provide information to the public they are protecting, with varying degrees of success.

APPENDIX 2: HOW OTHER REGULATORS REACH THEIR PUBLIC

REGULATOR	OUTREACH ATTEMPTED / DONE?	WHAT THEY DO, IN THEIR WORDS
Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials are shared through paid partnerships only.
Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not apply
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No large-scale efforts, though distribution requests have been made to the Ontario Medical Association (on occasion) and patient advocacy groups Paid partnerships, including: Canadian Association of Retired Persons, Zoomer, public libraries, student bodies, and other groups who may have interest in learning more about who regulates Ontario's doctors. In 2016, CPSO's sexual abuse brochure, published back in 2016, shared in the offices and centres of the various community resources who helped develop its content, including: Ontario Network of Sexual Assault Care & Treatment Centres, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, the Assaulted Women's Helpline, and others.
Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only time information is distributed is from Georgian College, which administers OMVIC's certification course. The OMVIC Academy Car-Buying Guide was developed for consumers and is distributed through some driving schools.

REGULATOR	OUTREACH ATTEMPTED / DONE?	WHAT THEY DO, IN THEIR WORDS
Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCWSSW)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information shared with employers via email and direct mail (no official partnership; also, unsure if information is provided to the public). Paid partnerships, continuing through 2020: medical TV and digital poster screens located in waiting rooms and medical clinics across the province. Information provided raises awareness about the college, its mandate and directing them to the online register.
College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (CECE)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal partnerships. In the past, the CECE sent posters / postcards to daycares about its mandate, though it is unclear if this information was shared with the public.
College of Massage Therapists Ontario	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests have been made to the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario, as they have a regional mechanism in place. The association has agreed to distribute materials in the past, but there is no way to track.
College of Dietitians of Ontario	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid partnership through: IDS Canada, a company that provides information to waiting areas in clinics and hospitals (they can choose what to display). Partnership with 26 health regulators in Ontario to advertise and create the Ontario Health Regulators website: https://ontariohealthregulators.ca/
Ontario Securities Commission	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community partnerships and associations: this includes events and also information distribution.
College of Physiotherapists of Ontario	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past outreach to physiotherapists, but it did not work well. Paid distribution through services such as IDS Canada to manage and distribute brochures in hospital and clinic waiting rooms.
Real Estate Council of Ontario	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An online kit of co-brandable materials were created for real estate agents, though there is no measurement available on how successful the program was.
Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TICO's travel logo was made available to registered travel agents as a means of letting consumers know they are certified. Tracking is unavailable. Currently, there are plans to create materials for distribution.
The College of Psychologists of Ontario	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not apply

REGULATOR	OUTREACH ATTEMPTED / DONE?	WHAT THEY DO, IN THEIR WORDS
College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness is the first goal in CASLPO's strategic plan, specifically: "increase the public's awareness of the College and its members." • Paid partnerships: direct distribution to the public. • Outreach to doctors: materials have been distributed to doctors' offices, though there has been no way to track success.
College of Naturopaths of Ontario	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not apply
Ontario College of Pharmacists	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All registered pharmacies in Ontario are required to display the point of care symbol (a sticker). • There is discussion to ask pharmacies to display a table tent around expanded scope of practice.