



October 30, 2020

Dear Colleague,

I wanted to provide you an update on the government's decision to revoke Regulation 274 and address claims made by the government that they are doing so in the interest of equity and diversity hiring.

It was a strange thing to hear the Minister of Education make this claim during his press conference on October 15, when this government has shown so little concern for equity since it came into office. In fact, among the first actions this government took when elected were funding cuts to the Anti-Racism Directorate; the cancelation of Indigenous curriculum writing sessions; and the suspension of a modernized health curriculum that sought to ensure our public schools are safe and welcoming spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ students and educators.

Premier Doug Ford has repeatedly refused to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism in Ontario and his government has provided nothing more than platitudes to address the very real experiences of discrimination and racism that Black, Indigenous and racialized communities face on a daily basis.

We know that marginalized communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and that those same communities also have lower in-class enrollment as a result of many systemic barriers. By defunding public education and the public services we rely on, and by failing to plan and appropriately fund a safe return to schools, this government has shown a complete disregard for equity and has deepened already existing gaps in our public education system.

ETFO has always been a strong advocate for equity and inclusion, in our public education system and society at large. We recognize that addressing equity in public education is a complex goal that involves actions at various levels and a commitment from those who participate in the public education system. It requires that we address streaming in public schools. It means recruiting Black and racialized students into education programs at Ontario's faculties of education. It includes creating predictable career paths that ensure that Black, Indigenous and other racialized teachers are provided with real opportunities to access secure employment.

**While Regulation 274 did not resolve all the equity concerns in hiring on its own, it was a strong starting point. We know that it is always better to have**

**formalized processes for hiring, so that we can advocate for change together, rather than leaving it up to each individual principal to make the right choices. We believe that the government's unilateral move to revoke Regulation 274 constitutes an unfair labour practice.**

The 2014-17 teacher/occasional teacher agreement and 2017-19 extension agreement ensured that Regulation 274 remained in force for the duration of the agreement. Many of our occasional teacher locals are still covered by that agreement. By revoking the Regulation, the government is unilaterally altering the terms of the central agreement in these locals. To formally express our concerns to the Minister of Education and the President of OPSBA, I sent a letter earlier this week; you can read the letter by clicking [here](#).

Later today, we will take further action on this matter. ETFO will file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) seeking a ruling against the government's actions and I will continue to update you as this action progresses.

ETFO locals are currently reviewing existing collective agreement language related to hiring procedures to determine the impact of the revocation of Regulation 274. Locals who are still involved in local bargaining will also be addressing this issue in their ongoing discussions at the bargaining table.

I want to reassure you that while we continue to challenge the government's decision to abolish Regulation 274, ETFO will do everything that we can to ensure school boards across the province adopt fair and transparent hiring policies; policies that value and recognize teacher experience and qualifications, that address equity and diversity in teacher recruitment and hiring, that provide a predictable career path for teachers both experienced and new.

**We need hiring practices that prevent nepotism and that foster an environment that attracts, retains and nurtures diverse talent in our teaching profession.**

Finally, I want to thank you for all that you do. Your commitment to your students and to maintaining high-quality publicly funded public education is admirable, and something that we can all be proud of.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Hammond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sam Hammond  
President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario