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MATH PROFICIENCY TEST RUSHED, FLAWED AND POSSIBLY UNLAWFUL, TEACHING CANDIDATES SAY

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Math proficiency test rushed, flawed and possibly unlawful, teaching candidates say

14.02.2020 Jessica Smith Cross 0

Ontario teaching candidates are preparing to take the **Doug Ford** government to court over the new requirement that they pass a math proficiency test before being granted a teaching licence.

At a press conference at Queen's Park on Friday they alleged the testing rollout has been rushed and flawed and announced they intend to try to fight the requirement with a court

application they expect will be filed later this month.

The government passed a regulation last August that requires new teachers to pass a Math Proficiency Test (MPT) and it applies to this year's cohort of about 4,500 candidates, with the first administration of the test promised sometime this the spring. (A preliminary "field test" of the test will be open to some teaching students starting next week and those who receive a passing grade will have their test requirement fulfilled.)

But the Ontario Teaching Candidates' Council (OTCC) said they've been unable to adequately prepare for the test as they've been given no formal test preparation materials and still have inadequate information about its administration, including the testing dates.

"The OTCC believes the absence of dates and information regarding the administration of the test is unacceptable and puts (teaching candidates) in an alarming and potentially damaging situation for accreditation and professional development," said **Brittney Vandersel**, president of the OTCC.

Information about the test administration may not be available because the government is still seeking a third-party vendor for the work, according to a tender posted in late January that closes next week.

The teaching candidates also raised the concern the government is planning to make the test mandatory for all teachers, based on an email a staff member in PC MPP **Dave Smith's** constituency office wrote in October.

The staffer wrote that students were failing standardized math tests because "our broken system is failing our students."

"That's also why it makes sense to consider requiring all current teachers within Ontario's education system to receive mandatory, annual certification in math. It makes sense to ensure they have the tools to prepare our students for an increasingly competitive workforce," the staffer wrote. "We understand the difficult job teachers have. What we won't do is allow another generation of students to get left behind when it comes to math skills that are critical for the tech and STEM jobs of the future."

Ford has also mused about expanding the testing to all teachers, including in a Question Period debate last spring. The Canadian Press [reported](#), based on government sources, that annual mandatory math testing for all teachers was being considered.

A spokesperson for Education Minister **Stephen Lecce** didn't answer *QP Briefing's* question about the potential to expand testing to current teachers.

"The latest EQAO results show that less than half of Ontario's Grade 6 students are meeting the provincial standard for math. A strong foundation in math is critical for success. Many of the careers of today and tomorrow require mathematical skills and knowledge," said **Alexandra Adamo** in a statement. "We stand behind the Mathematics Proficiency Test as a method to ensure teacher candidates meet a basic standard in knowledge of math concepts. It is not unreasonable to expect our teachers to be comfortable in key concepts. Parents expect their children to have the best-educated and most knowledgeable teachers. Our students deserve no less."

Adamo also did not respond to a question about the expected cost of the testing.

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