



Independent and Private School Forum

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Ms. Shirley Kendrick
Assistant Deputy Minister of Education
Student Support and Field Services Division
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September 10, 2018

Are Parents and Students Being Treated Fairly by the MOE?

Dear Ms. Kendrick,

Preamble:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Independent and Private School Forum (IPSF), representing 40 Ontario private schools. Members of the Independent and Private School Forum are dedicated to providing excellence in educational opportunities to our students. Implicit in this is a commitment to ensuring that students and their parents have the maximum number of choices possible when it comes to choosing the education best suited to them. That's why the following situation has us very concerned.

Since June 13, 2018, we have attempted to resolve this issue through communication with Ms. Carol Telford, Manager, Private Schools and International Education Unit. To-date, we have not received a complete response to our request for clarification (other than acknowledgment of receipt of the emails), and our last correspondence has been totally ignored. In the recent past, however, we did receive a message from her previous coordinator, Ms. Hanca Chang, saying that a "meeting with us does not constitute good use of Ms. Telford's time." We find it unacceptable and unethical that a regulatory branch functionally ignores our requests for clarification of regulations they oversee, and is, apparently, unwilling to meet with the public they serve.

The issue requiring clarification:

The MOE policy document, *Ontario Schools* (section 4.3.1) states: "... The principal of the receiving school may award credit for work started in the previous school but completed in the receiving school..." This clearly articulates that parents and their children can choose to

complete a high-school credit in a different school from where they began, so long as that school is authorized to grant that credit. Then why does the private school resource manual, *Private Schools Policy and Procedures Manual*, 2013, contradict this for Ontario private school students, and by doing so **limit the options available** to a sub-section of Ontario parents and their children?

The PSIE resource manual states (page 109): “Can our school allow a student to finish a credit course that was started in a publicly-funded school? **No**. Private school inspectors have no authority to review work that may have been started in a publicly-funded school. Following the policies and programs outlined in Ontario Schools, inspectors may only inspect private schools regarding the delivery of full-credit or half-credit courses.”

This contradiction, which became practice under the previous Ontario Liberal Government, makes no sense to us. We asked the MOE Private Schools and International Education Unit to clarify this worrisome circumstance. Specifically, we asked the unit manager: “Is it the position of the Private Schools and International Education Unit that the Private Schools Policy and Procedures Manual, 2013, supersedes the authority of the policy document, *Ontario Schools*, has the approval of the Ontario Minister of Education, and, thus, confers authority in regards to this issue, to your office.”

While we began this correspondence with the MOE Private Schools and International Education Unit on June 13, 2018, to this date we have had no specific reference to our concerns other than a reply indicating that the practice is now “under review”.

The implications:

While IPSF is waiting for this review, Ontario parents and their children continue to have their educational options significantly constrained. **We have a new government in Ontario now.** We believe this government considers parents as the key stakeholders in educational decisions that impact their children.

IPSF’s request:

We believe now is our opportunity to request timely clarification of this specific issue by the Private Schools and International Education Unit, and a general change in treatment toward Ontario parents who choose to use their option of independent or private school education.

As we have begun a new academic year and have already waited three months for a resolution to this pressing issue, and facing the apparent unwillingness of Ms. Telford and her unit to meet with us, we respectfully request to meet with you, and any other staff you deem appropriate, to discuss the issue. It is our hope that your involvement will assist all Ontario students in taking advantage of all the academic options duly available to them through the MOE Policy Document, *Ontario Schools* (section 4.3.1).

In the meantime we further request that, as per our communication to the Private Schools and International Education Unit dated August 3, 2018, IPSF member schools be given authorization to follow the Policy Document, *Ontario Schools* (section 4.3.1) without censure.

We would be happy to accommodate your schedule for an urgent meeting.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Miller", written over a horizontal line.

Ronnie Miller, M. Ed.; Ph.D.
IPSF - Executive Director