

## How School Staffing Changes Affect You

The Ontario Government recently made changes to O. Regulation 298 Operation of Schools regarding the assignment of teachers to teaching positions. The changes were introduced to remove barriers to teacher certification and qualification in Ontario and make qualification requirements consistent with those in other jurisdictions. The changes have implications for teachers teaching subjects for which they do not have the required qualifications.

The assignment of a teacher to teach a subject or division must be made: a) in accordance with the qualifications recorded on the teacher's certificate of qualification and registration and, b) with due regard for providing the best possible program and the safety and well-being of students. Both of these requirements must work together. They are both equally important and should not be seen as working independent of one another.

A principal may occasionally need to assign a teacher who does not have the required qualifications but whom the principal believes is competent to teach a subject or division. Such assignments can be made either by mutual agreement or with the granting of a Temporary Letter of Approval (TLA).

The following assignments may be made by mutual agreement between the principal and the teacher with the approval of the appropriate supervisory officer:

- A teacher who has qualifications in the primary or junior divisions or intermediate and senior divisions (general education subjects) may be assigned to teach in any division and in most general education subjects.
- A teacher who has technological education subject qualifications in any grade may be assigned to teach technological education in any other grade.

Teachers should have the qualification on their certificate, first and foremost. In circumstances where a teacher does not have the necessary qualifications, a TLA would need to be requested and granted by the Ministry of Education.

The following is a sample of instances for which a TLA would commonly be required.

### **A TLA is required if you:**

#### **do not have qualifications in:**

ANY division

ANY technological education

FSL

Any French-language

#### **but are assigned to teach in:**

Primary, junior, intermediate, senior divisions (general education subjects)

Technological education

FSL

Primary or junior where French is the language of instruction

Any English-language

Primary or junior where in division  
a English is the language of instruction

Special education

Special education

Deaf, hard of hearing, blind

Deaf, hard of hearing, or visually impaired  
blind or visually impaired

Principal's qualifications

Vice-principal or principal

For a complete list of instances which require a TLA, consult the Ministry of Education's Teacher Assignment in Ontario: A Resource Guide, on OECTA's website in the 'Teaching Resources' section. The guide provides plain language information on the regulatory requirements and effective practices that should be established to assist staffing committees and administrators in making teacher assignment decisions. Additionally, the guide outlines how apply for a TLA and some exemptions to the assignments rules noted above.

There is no doubt that these changes will cause some confusion. Teachers are advised to inform local OECTA staffing committees and their local OECTA Unit office concerning any issues that may arise from these changes.