

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT MATTERS



ETFO



FEEO

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants
de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario



As teachers, we have the education, training and experience that provide the expertise necessary to understand the needs of our classroom and of each individual student.

Over the past several years, Ministry of Education and school board policies have reduced our ability to use our “professional judgement” regarding how best to provide instruction, assess your child’s progress and support your child’s learning.

We have been advocating for the recognition of professional judgement for many years. Through the last round of bargaining with the provincial government we achieved that goal.

Now, professional judgement is defined in Ministry of Education documents and ETFO collective agreements as:

“Professional Judgement” shall be defined as judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction.

How will teacher professional judgement affect your child?

The ability to more consistently exercise our professional judgement means we are better able to make insightful decisions regarding instructional practices, classroom resources, interaction with students, creating a positive



classroom environment, and communication with parents and guardians.

Classrooms change from year to year, depending on the individual strengths and challenges each student brings to the class. For far too long, teachers have been required to administer a number of standardized assessments to the entire class regardless of whether the results would provide useful information for more than a few students. As acknowledged by the Ministry of Education's policy guideline entitled *Growing Success*, "Teachers' professional judgements are at the heart of effective assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement."

With greater recognition for our professional judgement, we are now better able to determine which assessments correspond to your child's learning needs. We now have more discretion to decide which students would benefit from a particular assess-

ment. This leaves more time for focusing on regular classroom learning and for individualized programming for your child.

Teachers are active participants in ongoing professional learning. Using our professional judgement, we have more ability to determine which professional learning best supports us and our students. It also contributes to a more collaborative and positive professional community at the school level. As teachers, we learn best from each other.

How can you support your child's teacher's use of professional judgement?

Parent-teacher communication is an important part of student well-being and success. Talk to your child's teacher about how their use of professional judgement is making a difference in the classroom and in meeting the needs of your child.



**TEACHERS
USING THEIR
PROFESSIONAL
JUDGEMENT
CONTRIBUTES TO
BUILDING BETTER
SCHOOLS.**

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