



# News Release

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## School Principals Establish Standards for Learning and Safety

### For Immediate Release

(Toronto, February 16, 2007) Today, the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) released a set of standards to provide schools with direction around safe, sensible and consistent supervision practices.

Over the past several years, the way supervision schedules are developed and implemented has changed. Increasingly, principals have lost the flexibility to ensure their students are appropriately supervised. Practices have been put in place that have led to concern and frustration for parents, students, teachers, support staff workers and principals.

“There has been a reduction in supervision, at both the elementary and secondary levels, creating a supervision gap that has not been adequately filled. That gap has negatively impacted student safety and the learning environment in our schools,” said Blair Hilts, President of the Ontario Principals' Council.

Ontario school boards currently have supervision standards in place for off-site field trips, physical education classes and sports activities. However, there are no standards to deal with supervision during recess, lunchtime, transition between classes, before and after school, in hallways and in cafeterias.

The Ontario Principals' Council has established reasonable, comprehensive and prudent standards to which schools can refer and use, based on practices that are in place in other jurisdictions. The OPC calls on the government to endorse these standards and provide immediate and appropriate resources for their implementation.

The francophone principals' association and the parent groups People for Education and the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations agree with the call for provincial standards to ensure students are sufficiently supervised, and with the call for additional funding to school boards to ensure all schools can provide the established levels of supervision.

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The 12 standards are as follows:

1. Only trained staff shall be given supervisory responsibilities in a school.
2. A supervision ratio of staff to students must fall within the following ranges:
  - Junior Kindergarten/Senior Kindergarten: 1 supervisor for 8 – 20 students
  - Elementary: 1 supervisor for 50 – 100 students
  - Secondary: 1 supervisor for 100 – 150 students
3. In elementary schools, at no time shall there be fewer than 2 supervisors (within direct line of sight of each other) during recess, lunch and before and after school.
4. Elementary supervisors must have continuous and direct sightlines of the students they are supervising.
5. Supervision duties cannot erode instructional time. For example, Educational Assistants must not be assigned to supervision duties if it will conflict with the instructional time of special needs students.
6. Students shall not be used to supervise other students in the absence of a teacher.
7. Junior and Senior Kindergarten students in separate designated play areas require separate/additional supervision.
8. Younger students should be separated from older students while playing in the schoolyard, due to the increased possibility of injury.
9. Play structures require separate supervision.
10. While students are eating, each enclosed room must be supervised separately.
11. In order to be available to handle emergencies and ensure the overall safety of the school, principals and vice-principals are not to be on the school's formal supervision schedule.
12. All supervisors on the schoolyard and in/around the school must have access to a communication device.

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“Ontario’s school leaders share this government’s commitment to education. We want nothing less than quality, stability and safety for our students. Practises that put learning and safety in jeopardy are not acceptable and cannot be allowed to continue,” said Hilts.

The Ontario Principals’ Council is a voluntary professional association representing over 5,000 principals and vice-principals in Ontario’s public elementary and secondary schools. Established in 1998, the OPC advocates on behalf of public education and provides professional supports to its Members.

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