Celebrating Today, Building Tomorrow

A Submission from TVO to the “Building the Next Phase in Ontario’s Education Strategy” Consultation
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TVO’s Mission and Vision

Mission
TVO is Ontario’s public educational media organization and a trusted source of interactive educational content that informs, inspires, and stimulates curiosity and thought.

Vision
Empowering people to be engaged citizens of Ontario through educational media.

TVO uses its media resources to support the following policy priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Education:
- Contribute to school readiness and help kids to be successful learners;
- Increase the involvement of parents in their children’s education;
- Encourage active citizenship and public engagement;
- Increase the province’s graduation rate by providing high quality distance education to Ontarians seeking to complete high school or acquire the GED.
A Message from the CEO

TVO was created as the technological extension of Ontario’s public education system. TVO’s role is as a facilitator of quality province-wide products and services for students, teachers and parents, informed by leading research and educators. We are driven to make a measurable impact on learning outcomes.

The pace of technological change is providing exciting opportunities for Ontario. As a key partner to the Ministry of Education, we look forward to supporting knowledge exchange with actionable tools and services that help all students achieve success.

On behalf of TVO’s Board of Directors, TVO would like to commend the Government of Ontario for initiating an extensive province-wide consultation to inform the development of the next phase of Ontario’s education strategy.

We hope that TVO’s response to the consultation provides valuable insights into building the future and how we may support the provincial education agenda. We believe that by working together with all sector partners on behalf of Ontario’s children, students will be better served in the 21st century, and Ontario will remain recognized internationally for its educational excellence.

Congratulations on the success today, and we look forward to building an even better tomorrow.

Lisa de Wilde
Digital TVO

Digital technology allows for an integrated educational experience across all platforms

1 ONLINE VIDEO CHANNELS
   - tvonline
   - tvolivetop
tvo.

2 MOBILE PLATFORMS
   - YouTube
   - tvoparents
   - tvokids

3 MOBILE VIDEO CHANNELS
   - Homework Help
   - tvoroad
   - Read22
   - ILGC
   - Ged

4 EVENT PARTNERS
   - Event Partner A
   - Event Partner B
   - Event Partner C

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
   - Twitter
   - Facebook
Celebrating today, building tomorrow

Ontario’s education system is at an exciting juncture. As a result of the collective efforts of the province’s education partners, the past decade has seen inspirational improvements in student achievement as measured by large-scale provincial and international standards. Grade 3, 6 and 9 EQAO assessment scores have trended upwards. High school graduation rates have risen from 68% in 2004 to 83% in 2013. In terms of benchmarking, the OECD’s PISA results demonstrate Ontario is above average among 65 countries and educational jurisdictions surveyed in the world in reading, mathematics and science test scores. Ontario’s educational system has become globally recognized and respected for its excellence. As a province, we have much to be proud of.

With this solid foundation in place, there still remains much to be done to support student success as we move further into the 21st century. Our world is becoming increasingly connected, wired and flat. Globalization and new technologies are impacting the ways people live, work, play, socialize and actively participate in civil society. Advances in neuroscience, and a deeper understanding of relationships and engagement as protective and supportive factors are influencing society’s understanding of learning.

The Building the Next Phase in Ontario’s Education Strategy consultation offers stakeholders the opportunity to provide input into important decisions that must be
made to shape an evolved educational strategy that is responsive to these new realities. A long-standing partner and proud advocate for public education, TVO is deeply committed to Ontario’s public education agenda with its focus on high levels of student achievement and well-being, excellence and equity. To support the Ministry of Education with its goals, TVO offers accessible evidence-based educational broadcast and digital programming reflective of the needs and demographic and contextual diversity of students, parents, teachers and citizens of Ontario’s communities.

To ensure Ontario continues to serve students well, it is imperative the evolution of the provincial education strategy addresses both change and sustainability. To support student success, the next phase of the education strategy must:

1. Balance the implementation of evidence-based practices already understood as drivers to student achievement with new practices and programs that address student engagement, student agency for learning, gaps in student achievement, and changes in labour market trends that are leaving a skills gaps for the future;
2. Broaden today’s definition of success to include measures of student engagement, qualities that reflect the development of the whole child, and 21st century competencies required in today’s world, such as digital literacy; and
3. Continue to support job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning for teachers, and school and system leaders in order to build capacity, contribute to a culture of learning, and improve school and classroom practices.

These factors that support change and sustainability provide the framework in which TVO’s response to three key questions (5, 6, 7) in The Building the Next Phase of Ontario’s Education Strategy consultation is respectfully submitted.
**Nurturing a love for learning**

**Question 5: What more can we do to keep students engaged, foster their curiosity and creativity, and help them develop a love of lifelong learning?**

The educational community collaboratively strives to create inclusive, respectful, instructionally effective learning environments that ensure all students will be successful learners. TVO recognizes that reading, writing and mathematics are the foundation of all learning. High expectations of these foundational skills make certain that students are successfully prepared for the kinds of learning and work required in today’s technology-rich globalized society. An ongoing, shared commitment to high expectations assures Ontario remains a beacon of excellence.

To increase the likelihood all students are engaged in learning, learning today must be supported within a globally contextualized curricula and a culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be able to see themselves in their learning, understand the relevance of their learning, and have opportunities to develop the competencies needed to lead and work collaboratively with diverse groups in physical and online environments. The curriculum benefits from an interdisciplinary, growth-oriented approach, grounded in learning theory and research-informed concepts of child development. Transferrable skills such as collaboration, global citizenship, advocacy and leadership provide advantages to supporting life-long learning and all pathways for student success.
Research indicates that as learning becomes more engaging, authentic and complex, a shift in pedagogy is required. Students must become partners in learning so that their needs, interests, strengths, cultural perspectives and learning preferences drive the learning process. Personalized learning, supported by digital content and interactive adaptive software that tailors learning according to student performance and the pace of each student’s needs, can offer individualized content with real-time feedback. These types of learning opportunities demonstrate to students what they can achieve and how they can track and customize their academic experiences. They ensure students have agency for directing their own learning.

To nurture a culture of intrinsic motivation, curiosity and creativity within a learning-focused paradigm, teaching models, methodologies and practices must extend to include more interdisciplinary, inquiry-based learner-centred approaches. Traditional roles in classroom learning will shift as students become valuable sources of learning for themselves, each other and the teacher. Also shifting will be the role of the teacher. Authentic and experiential opportunities must continue to support learning. Joy, play, passion and exploration, all essential to learning, help to build and sustain a student’s desire for, and love of, life-long learning.

To determine whether students are indeed more engaged in their learning as a result of the next phase of the education strategy, the development of provincial-wide student surveys to track and monitor longitudinal student engagement data should be considered.

A recent survey conducted by the Canadian Education Association (CEA) of public school students across the country found that by Grade 9, over 50% of Canadian high school students reported questioning the relevance of what they are learning. The study also found the majority of students in senior grades reported to be intellectually unengaged in their learning in the classroom.

Dunleavy and Willms, 2011

Ontarians rate TVO the “most trusted” and “most educational” media brand for kids in Canada.

Ipsos Reid, 2011 Impact Study.
N=2,519 - Closed Question:
• CBC
• Disney Junior
• Teletoon
• Treehouse
• TVO
• YTV
Using technology more effectively

*Question 6: What more can we do to keep students engaged, foster their curiosity and creativity, and help them develop a love of lifelong learning?*

Technological platforms are driving new designs and approaches to educational practice. TVO recognizes technology is an integral tool that engages children in learning. Technology provides opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge, anytime and anywhere, and provides choice in both the tools students use and the ways students can demonstrate learning. Students become actively involved in ownership for learning and the learning process itself, rather than sitting as traditional passive recipients of information. Networked digital technologies can bring the world into student learning, promote knowledge exchange, and help to enable an engaging, participatory culture that makes learning both visible and deep.

To support the more effective use of technology in teaching and learning, the next phase of Ontario’s educational strategy must be responsive to three key factors:

1. Gaps in access to infrastructure and technological tools must be addressed;
2. To support change and improvement, the strategy must support professional learning for teachers focused on technology as a tool to support sound pedagogical practice; and
3. To support evidence-based learning practices, Ontario researchers should be actively involved in examining technology-enabled learning to determine metrics, standards and methods that maximize student outcomes.
To support technology-enabled learning, TVO will continue to work in partnership with educational stakeholders to develop high quality digital resources for students, teachers and parents to support the provincial achievement and well-being agenda. To support teacher development and to reduce multiple access points for digital resources, TVO will contribute to the next phase of Ontario’s education strategy by establishing an accessible province-wide integrated hub for quality digital learning resources and collaborative knowledge exchange amongst teachers regarding technology-enabled learning.

With the next generation of interactive digital distance learning courses, TVO is continuing to expand the capacity and outreach of the ILC for all Ontario’s learners. This expands student choices by making additional courses available to students that may not be offered in their bricks and mortar school, particularly in rural or remote areas. Adult learners also benefit from expanded career opportunities. More than 9,000 students enrolled at the ILC already hold an OSSD, but are securing a post-secondary prerequisite course like Biology, Advanced Functions or Chemistry.

Operating since 1926, TVO’s ILC offers Ontario credit courses in English and French for Grades 9 to 12 and grants Ontario Secondary School Diplomas (OSSD). Students can choose from 70 courses in 13 subjects. It has a principal, a guidance counsellor and a Learner Services department that support more than 25,000 enrolments.

In 2013, The Agenda with Steve Paikin engaged Ontarians with an in-depth look at the impact of technology on how people learn and the future of education. The Learning 2030 series made stops in Kitchener-Waterloo, Peterborough and Sudbury before a week-long conference at the Waterloo Global Science Initiative, where TVO provided a week of coverage in collaboration with the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics and the University of Waterloo.

Research confirms that it is effective teaching and instruction that directly effects student achievement and that the quality of a school system rests on the quality of its teachers. This is reaffirmed by Hattie (2011) who rank-orders the factors that have the greatest effect size in improving learning, and reveals that it is teachers and teacher practice that makes the value-added difference.

Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010
Question 7: What are the various opportunities for partnership that can enhance the student experience, and how can they benefit parents, educators and our partners too?

The next phase of Ontario’s education strategy must maintain a relentless commitment to reciprocal communication, authentic interaction and shared leadership with all partners in education in order to acquire different perspectives from both within and outside the sector to design strategic solutions. Students, teachers, parents, school leaders, federation representatives, district staff, elected boards of trustees, community, researchers, business and industry, and Ministry partners are valuable sources of learning. All of these groups play a significant role in the process of educational change to enhance the student experience. Partnerships that support distributed leadership and solution-driven knowledge exchange are levers that schools can use to drive real school improvement so that gaps in achievement are closed, learning is more relevant and engaging for students, and Ontario is focused on building a strong and prosperous economy.

Partnerships in education wrap students in a wide array of experiences that support success, well-being and build learning cultures that benefit all in society. Partnerships support the instructional agenda, expand opportunities for co-curricular activity, and provide opportunities for students to explore and apply their knowledge in a wide range of learning environments. These alliances provide opportunities for students to give back to the community and develop a comprehensive understanding of the importance of volunteerism, civic participation and global citizenship.

Strong relationships with parents and caregivers, especially those who may sometimes feel marginalized, support student learning and augment the positive culture of community schools. Positive relationships with teacher federations support the goals for school improvement. Partnerships with academic researchers, Ministry officials, and business and industry provide additional knowledge to inform small and large-scale decision-making regarding change and improvement, and data regarding labour market trends to address closing Ontario’s skills gap. With the emergence of technology, local and global partnerships help the educational community learn, share and spread knowledge that supports more adaptive, flexible and relevant learning opportunities for students. These range from individual volunteers to global firms.

Founded as the technological extension of Ontario’s public education system, TVO remains a strong solutions-driven partner for the educational community. TVO offers extensive resources for students and families across Ontario to support the province’s goal of improving student achievement and well-being. The ILC, Homework Zone and
Homework Help are just a few examples of quality educational services provided by TVO. TVO also supports teachers in classrooms with a wide range of supplementary materials to support student learning. Parents are supported by initiatives like *Reading and Writing with Your Child: A Parent Guide*, authored by the Ministry of Education and TVOParents.com.

In addition, TVO works closely with academic and educator partners. A review by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto found that TVOKids resources improve student outcomes. TVOKids content is informed by education specialists, on-staff educators, curriculum advisors, parents, community leaders, and the TVOKids council of educators. Students and teachers at selected test schools work in focus groups to preview TVOKids-produced content to ensure that curriculum expectations are met. TVO is committed to maintaining these relationships as well as evolving new products in order to better learning for all Ontarians.
References

Brandt, Eds, 21st Century Skills, pp. 51-76.. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.


