



WE HAVE YOUR BACK ONTARIO: MPP LOBBYING KIT

Government decisions are made by your elected representatives, and nothing is more powerful in shaping the views of elected Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) than hearing from the people who live in their ridings. Writing letters or emails and signing petitions is helpful, but nothing resonates more with MPPs than in-person meetings. Typically, MPPs devote each Friday to meeting with local constituents in their community. They also will sometimes set-up meetings with constituents at Queen's Park in Toronto on provincial issues like sex ed.

Remember: every voter has the right to talk to their elected representative. At the end of the day, lobbying is just having a conversation with your MPP, but with a clear objective and 'ask'. It can also be helpful if you put together a delegation of several concerned people that request a meeting together. If you require some help getting a group together, let us know at organizing@the519.org and we see if we have anyone in your area who can support you.

This kit will give you the tools you need to navigate a meeting with your MPP and raise your concerns with the repeal of the 2015 Health and Physical Education curriculum.

I. HOW TO LOBBY THE GOVERNMENT: ASKING FOR A MEETING WITH YOUR MPP

- a) Identify your local MPP is [here](#), and their contact information [here](#).
- b) Draft an email to your MPP and their staff – you can personalize it and even add a personal story but here's a template to start:

Dear MPP [last name],

As a constituent of this riding, I am writing to request a meeting to discuss the government's proposed changes to the sex education curriculum. I have read that there is an upcoming consultation that I will certainly participate in, but I would like to discuss directly with you as my elected representative about what this will mean for our local schools.

I look forward to hearing from you about when we can meet.

Sincerely,

[Your name, address and phone number]

- c) Find the email addresses to include [here](#). If there is more than one email address, send to both (MPPs generally have one that handles Queen's Park matters and one that handles constituency matters). If your MPP is a Minister or Parliamentary Assistant, you



can also copy their scheduler or executive assistant which can be found [here](#), then by clicking on their ministry then Minister's Office.

- d) If they don't get back to you within two or three weeks, feel free to call their constituency office and respectfully follow-up on your meeting request. The phone number can be found [here](#).
- e) If you do not receive a reply, you can also post on their Facebook page or tweet at your local MPP saying that you are not getting a reply to your request to meet. As a last report, another option is to contact local media if your meeting is not being accommodated.

2. ATTENDING A LOBBY MEETING

Once you have a meeting scheduled, spend a bit of time preparing what you want to say and who will say what if it is a multi-person meeting. Typically, these meetings are no more than 30 minutes (sometimes less) so you want to make sure you are organized with what you want to get across. If they don't tell you how long the meeting is scheduled for up-front, feel free to ask the MPP's staff how long you have.

Try to arrive a few minutes early. After introductions, you'll want to start with giving an overview of your views and ideally some personal stories about how this is affecting your family and school experience. Try for this overview to take no more than 10 or 15 minutes.

You can use the talking points found [here](#). to prepare what you want to say about this issue. It's important to know the facts about why the 2015 curriculum is important. But it is also important to speak from your heart. Why does this issue matter to you and your community, and why should it matter to your MPP? This should guide what you prepare to say in your meeting.

The MPP or their staff may ask you some questions as well. Answer questions to the best of your ability and make a commitment to follow-up if you don't have immediate answers.

Then you will want to end with a concrete question or two about what the MPP is committed to doing (often called an 'ask & a task'). Potential questions to ask:

Question 1: Will you commit that any new curriculum maintains education on consent, healthy relationships, mental health, sexual health development, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in an accepting manner that reflects the diversity of Ontario?

Question 1: Will you commit to supporting educators who, through their professional judgement, continue to teach their students topics covered in the 2015 Health & Physical Education Curriculum?



Make a note of their answers, and regardless of what they say, thank the MPP for their time. It's also a good idea to send a follow-up email thanking them for the meeting and summarizing the key points you discussed.

3. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: 1998 vs 2015 SEXUAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM MYTHS AND FACTS

These myths and facts may come in handy in responding to MPP questions.

Myth: *The current curriculum does not respect family and parental values.*

Fact: The opening chapter of the 2015 curriculum states: “Parents are the primary educators of their children with respect to learning about values, appropriate behaviour, and ethnocultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and traditions, and they are their children’s first role models. It is therefore important for schools and parents to work together to ensure that home and school provide a mutually supportive framework for young people’s education.”

Any time parents have a question or concern about what their child is learning, they should talk to the teacher or principal. School staff can address any concerns and provide more information about the curriculum content. Then, a determination can be made whether parents want students withdrawn from particular parts of the curriculum.

Myth: *Students are encouraged to explore masturbation.*

Fact: Masturbation is not a learning expectation in the 2015 curriculum. It is included once as an optional prompt for Grade 6 teachers for if students have questions.

Myth: *Students are encouraged to explore anal sex.*

Fact: Anal intercourse is introduced in Grade 7, alongside oral sex and vaginal intercourse, as a potential way that to get infected with STIs and something to consider abstaining from until older. Canadian research has shown that teaching about sexual health does not increase sexual behaviour, and instead contributes to delays in sexual activity.

Myth: *Students are encouraged to develop a plan to begin sexual activity.*

Fact: In an optional prompt in Grade 8, teachers may encourage students to think about planning their own limits for sexual activity.

