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I am pleased to provide the following information about three new initiatives that the Ministry of Education is supporting in preparation for the 2018 school board elections. Please circulate this information to your members.

1. Curriculum Resource on School Board Elections

The province is committed to enhancing civic engagement among young people. In service of this goal, and to promote knowledge of and interest in school board elections, the Ministry is working with the [Ontario History and Social Science Teachers Association](#) (OHASSTA) to develop support materials for teachers of the Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course specifically about school board governance. The curriculum resource will support students to find opportunities to engage with parents and other adults about school board elections and to canvass their peers on issues affecting their school board.

To ensure the success of the OHASSTA curriculum resource, OHASSTA will be contacting the associations in the coming weeks requesting feedback. OHASSTA is planning to launch the resource with principals through the principals' associations in May 2018.

2. Support and Funding for Student-Organized All-Candidates Meetings

In addition to promoting civic engagement among Ontario's students, the Province is also committed to Community-Connected Experiential Learning and to increasing voter turn-out rates more broadly. To this end, the Ministry is supporting [YouthREX](#) to conduct a pilot project that aims to support students to organize public all-candidates meetings for trustee elections. YouthREX is a research and implementation group at York University that promotes the integration of evidence and evaluation in the development and delivery of Ontario's youth programs. The pilot will include boards from each of the four systems to provide grant funding and hands-on support to students and their teachers to organize public all-candidates meetings.

The support for students of pilot boards will be through YouthREX's [NOISE](#) program. Students will be encouraged and supported to engage the adults in their families and communities as well as their peers. Additionally, because low voter turn-out rates have often been found to correlate to areas with large marginalized populations, YouthREX will be focusing their engagement efforts on outreach to marginalized communities, including Indigenous communities.

YouthREX will contact Directors of Education of the pilot boards. If the pilot is successful, we may consider providing this support across the province for the 2022 elections.

3. Trustee Candidate Research

The Ministry will be supporting the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) to partner with Ryerson University to conduct research about the candidates who are seeking election to school boards for 2018. This project has a two-fold objective:

- to produce a demographic profile of trustee candidates seeking election in the October 2018 school board election that will then be compared to population data in school boards' jurisdictions; and
- based on sampling interviews, to produce a report on barriers, enablers, best practices and the significance of trustees reflecting the socio-demographics of their constituent populations.

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan includes comprehensive data collection as one of its pillars. Demographic data collection allows for systemic issues to be seen and tracked, and provides much-needed information that the Ministry and the associations can use to enhance the vibrancy of trustee elections.

The research will include online surveys to all trustee candidates in the 2018 school board election and approximately 100 semi-structured interviews with school board candidates sampled from across the regions and school board systems of Ontario. The research findings will support the Ministry and the associations to pinpoint areas where initiatives would have the greatest effect on increased voter turn-out rates, robust candidacy, and enhanced civic engagement.

OESC will be in contact with you about this project. We trust that you will make every effort to encourage your trustee colleagues to support this important research.

The ministry will also be supporting OESC to update and enhance the following 2014 election resources:

- An elections website with information on each trustee candidate and election results by board;
- *Making a Difference for Kids: Running for Election as a School Board Trustee Guide for Candidates and Communities*;
- *Your Guide to Hosting a School Board Trustee All Candidates Meeting*; and,
- *Good Governance: A Guide for Trustees, School Boards, Directors of Education, and Communities*

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to share your feedback on the OHASSTA curriculum resources, and for your continued collaboration as we approach the next school board election.

Sincerely,

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