

Terms of Reference Ontario Education Research Panel

Purpose:

The purpose of the Ontario Education Research Panel (OERP) is to promote education research and evaluation activities that will contribute to the advancement of education in Ontario. It will promote:

- new or improved relationships between and alignment among the many organizations and individuals involved in conducting and using education research and evaluation;
- better use of the unique talents, resources and positions of those organizations and individuals;
- collaborative research and evaluation among the various education partners;
- a focus of research and evaluation efforts in areas that will contribute to the attainment of improved student learning.

Establishing the OERP

At the 2006 Ontario Education Research Symposium, participants were invited to provide input to the formation of the OERP. Reflecting the diverse make-up of the Symposium participants—researchers, educators, and public policy developers—an Interim Organizing Committee was struck to refine these Terms of Reference and to propose a process for identifying a Panel Chair and Panel members. The Interim Organizing Committee included Richard Franz and Don Young from the Ministry; Dr. Lorna Earl, the Ministry of Education’s Researcher in Residence; and representatives from the following education and research communities:

Association of Educational Researchers of Ontario
Canadian Council on Learning
Canadian Evaluation Society
Council of Deans of Faculties of Education
English and French-Language District School Boards

Activities of the OERP

The OERP will:

- Facilitate discussion about and collaboration among school boards, faculties of education, other university-based researchers, independent researchers, researchers from professional organizations, community agencies, school boards, the Ministry of Education, and other Ministries on
 - research priorities for Ontario education,
 - the state of knowledge in specific areas,
 - opportunities for and impediments to the advancement of research, and
 - the potential for future partnerships among the various parties.

- Facilitate discussion among researchers working in Ontario, nationally and internationally.
- Contribute to the planning and implementation of the annual Education Research Symposium hosted by the Ministry of Education.
- Facilitate discussions at the Ministry of Education-hosted annual Education Research Symposium.
- Promote the themes emerging from the Ministry's symposium.
- Promote actions in response to the themes through their networks and across the education research community of interest.
- Update the Ministry on its activities. Reporting will be on-going in nature and contain information and advice aimed at enhancing research capabilities and usage as well as professional linkages between researchers, education and public policy developers.

Measurement of Success

The OERP will establish a set of indicators by which to judge its success. The following are among the areas in which indicators should be developed:

- Frequency and scope of collaboration in research and evaluation in Ontario
- Quality, quantity and relevance of research and evaluation to educational policies and practices in Ontario
- Extent of dissemination and use of research and evaluation results to inform Ontario education policy and practice.

The OERP Chair

The Ontario Education Research Panel will be chaired by a person external to the Ministry who is well-known and respected in the field of education, public policy and the relevant research. The Chair will be chosen by the Ministry.

The term of the Chair will be for two years, with a possibility of renewal for an additional term.

The OERP Members

Members and the Chair of the Ontario Education Research Panel will meet the following qualification criteria. They must demonstrate:

- Breadth and depth of knowledge and/or experience in applied research and/or evaluation relevant to education JK-12, its antecedents and outcomes.
- Ability to communicate to a broad range of audiences about research and evaluation as it relates to education JK-12, its antecedents and outcomes.
- Broad knowledge of the Ontario educational system.
- Commitment to using research and evaluation in education decision-making.

It should be understood that the kind of research and evaluation expertise sought is not limited to that found in faculties of education, but includes the full range of disciplines typically found among universities and university-trained researchers as

they may shed light on education topics of importance. The Ministry will seek external experts for the Panel by requesting letters of nomination from various stakeholders and then selecting 6 to 8 members to serve on the OERP. Individuals will be able to nominate themselves. [The invitation and participant lists for the 2006 Ontario Education Research Symposium will be the starting point for the Ministry mailing list used to solicit nominations.]

The Ministry staff will recommend six to eight members and a chair of the OERP to senior management, based on the qualifications of the applicants. The names of the potential members and chair will be submitted to the ADM, Instruction Leadership Development Division, and the Deputy Minister for final approval and appointment. (Note: These are not Order in Council appointments, but rather they are appointed by the Deputy Minister).

The Ministry of Education, Manager, Policy Information and Research Unit, and the Ministry's Researcher in Residence will be *ex officio* members of the Panel.

The terms of Panel members and the chair will be for two years, with the exception of the very first Panel for which the terms for half of the members will be for only one year. At the very first meeting of the Panel, members except the chair will draw lots to see who will serve a one year term and who will serve a two year term. After that, all subsequent Panels will have sitting members with staggered end dates for their terms so that there is always a mix of new and experienced members. Panel members are all eligible for renewal for an additional term.

Meetings

The OERP will meet at least twice yearly, in addition to participation in the annual symposium.

Remuneration

The Chair and OERP members will receive *per diems*, in keeping with Management Board Directives, for their contribution toward the work of the Panel. The Ministry will also cover the expenses of the Chair and Panel members to participate, e.g., travel and accommodation, in accordance with Management Board Directives.

The Policy and Program Branch will work with Legal Services Branch to ensure that appointments to the Panel are in accordance with Management Board Directive and to prepare Letters of Agreement between the Ministry and the Chair and each Panel member outlining their roles and responsibilities and remuneration.

Resources to the Panel

Secretariat support to the OERP will be provided by the Policy and Program Branch, Ministry of Education. This support will extend to maintaining minutes of Panel meetings; arranging meeting logistics; communicating about Ministry priorities to the Panel; collecting and disseminating information about research initiatives and

findings connected to the Panel's purposes and Ontario's education priorities; and organizing the annual symposium.

Mandate Review

After the first year of operation, the Ministry will review whether the OERP has made progress in respect of its purposes and/or whether those purposes and Terms of Reference require amendment.

Timetable of Next Steps

Convene the Interim Organizing Committee	Completed, May 25
Submit revised Terms of Reference for approval	Early June, 2006
Issue Letters soliciting nominations for members and a chair for OERP	Mid-June, 2006
Submit proposed list of Panel members for approval	Late-July, 2006
Orientation Meeting of the OERP	August, 2006
Fall Regular Meeting of the OERP	Mid-November, 2006
2007 Ontario Education Research Symposium	Late January 2007

O:\Policy Information & Research Unit\Ontario Education Research Panel\Terms of Reference\Draft Terms of Reference for Research Panel --Version reflecting comments from IOC's members-June 2006.doc