

Ontario Liberals promise to double length of teachers college if re-elected ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Ontario's Liberals are planning to double the length of teachers college from one to two years, in an effort to give teachers in training more hands-on classroom time.

Though Ontario teachers already rank highly, the move is said to be based on international models in countries such as Finland, Japan and Singapore, which are leaders in standardized testing.

The change, if the Liberals are re-elected, would also address a perceived over-supply of qualified teachers. The plan would split 9,000 annual graduates over two years, adding only 4,500 new teachers per year to the system instead of 9,000.

The longer degrees, which would be accompanied by more professional development opportunities in a teacher's first three years, are expected to come at no extra cost to the government, which will continue to spend about \$77-million annually on teacher training.

"As good as we are, as good as our teachers are, we can't stand still," said John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, at a Tuesday morning announcement.

Mr. Milloy said Ontario has "one of the shortest" teacher training programs in Canada. Currently, students complete a practicum of 40 days as part of their one-year program.

The government promises to consult widely before cementing the plan's details, and hopes to launch the longer degree in 2012, though no firm date has been set.

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