

Joint Statement on Education in Ontario

The following statement has been signed by five signatories, including: Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) – Ontario and its Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

Ontario's teachers and education workers believe in the importance of a strong publicly funded and delivered education system for all. The following principles reflect our shared values and our commitment to work together for the common good.

Sustaining investments in publicly funded and delivered education:

- A strong, stable publicly funded and delivered education system is a top priority for Ontarians.
- The government must invest in the future of our students and our province to ensure all students have equal opportunity and access to a high quality education.
- The cuts being made to the education budget will have devastating effects on student well-being and achievement.

Enhancing funding for mental health services and students with special needs:

- The current education funding formula does not provide adequate support to help all students realize their full potential.
- There is broad consensus among teachers, education workers, students, parents, and health care professionals on the need for immediate, substantial investment.

Promoting equity and inclusion in our schools:

- When we build a more inclusive learning environment and curriculum, students and society benefit.
- The government must ensure that all students have resources to reflect their diversity of experiences and backgrounds, and that there is equitable access to programs and activities, regardless of geographic location or socio-economic circumstances.
- Schools should be safe and offer a welcoming environment for all students, teachers, and education workers.

Providing funding to support teachers and education workers:

- Teachers and education workers are dedicated, highly skilled and trained professionals.
- Education systems work best when teachers and education workers have quality working conditions and opportunities to improve our practice through self-directed professional development.

Making schools safer for all students, teachers, and education workers:

- Ontario's school infrastructure is suffering from a significant repair backlog, which is resulting in unsafe working and learning conditions.
- It is also becoming increasingly evident that a lack of services and supports for students is resulting in negative behaviours manifesting in the classroom. The government must invest and offer resources to help schools meet students' social, emotional, and behavioural needs.

Protecting the current Full-day Kindergarten model:

- Ontario's Full-day Kindergarten program is a world-leading initiative grounded in solid research.
- Evidence shows the existing program is working well for students and families, in large part due to the complementary efforts of the teacher/early childhood educator teams.

Maintaining a commitment to smaller class sizes:

- Smaller class sizes improve attentiveness and attitudes about learning, while enabling teachers and education workers to provide individualized attention to students. This leads to long-term social and economic gains.
- Increasing class sizes affects the types of programs schools can offer, especially in smaller and rural schools; creates safety and workload issues; has a negative impact on student learning; and disproportionately affects students with special needs.