

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Ontario Government Misses the Mark on Core Education Funding

Ford government's funding announcement does not match rising needs in classrooms, as layoffs, larger class sizes, and increased violence continue across Ontario schools

TORONTO, ON — Once again, the Ford government's core education funding falls short of what students and schools need and does not address the growing pressures facing students and their families, teachers, and education workers across the province.

"Across Ontario, we are seeing larger class sizes, fewer supports for students, rising violence, and thousands of layoff notices," said Martha Hradowy, President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO). "The core education funding numbers released today do nothing to address these challenges and raise serious concerns about the government's approach heading into bargaining."

The Auditor General sounded the alarm on special education, calling for an additional \$195 per student just to keep up with growing needs, yet the government's 2026 Core Education Funding announcement answered with less than \$0.93 per student — leaving school boards nearly \$398 million short of what is required to properly fund special education programs.

Schools across the province are facing increasing challenges, including staffing layoffs, unmet student needs, and unsafe working and learning conditions. Students and their families are also seeing fewer course options, cancelled programs, and reduced opportunities as school boards are forced to make cuts.

Despite these pressures, this funding falls short of what students and schools need and does not provide the investment required to stabilize the system or support student success.

The provincial budget confirmed that public education remains significantly underfunded, with a gap of approximately \$6.3 billion since 2018. The 2026 Core Education Funding does nothing to meaningfully close that gap and continues a consistent pattern of government funding for schools and classrooms failing to keep up with rising costs, all while the cuts to support students have still not been restored.

As the education sector moves toward a new round of collective bargaining, this level of funding raises serious concerns about the government's commitment to addressing the real challenges facing students and schools.

“The government continues to talk about student achievement, but you cannot improve outcomes while cutting supports” said Hradowy. “Students succeed when they feel safe, supported, and connected at school. That requires real investment, not just rhetoric. Ontario students deserve more than spare change.”

As students and education workers face larger class sizes, fewer supports, and rising violence, the government’s *Bill 101* shifts more decision-making power away from local communities and into the hands of the province. Without funding to support students and staff, these changes do not improve conditions in classrooms.

“You can’t fix schools without funding them,” said Hradowy.

OSSTF/FEESO continues to call on the government to:

- invest in smaller class sizes
- address increasing levels of violence in schools
- expand mental health and special education supports
- ensure stable staffing and stop layoffs

“With agreements set to expire and a new round of bargaining approaching, stability for students and families must be a priority. That starts with adequate funding and a government prepared to address the real issues in our schools,” added Hradowy.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling on the government to come to the bargaining table immediately to address the growing challenges facing publicly funded education and to ensure stability for students and their families, teachers, and education workers across Ontario.

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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Contact: Vanessa Stoby, Communications and Political Action
Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation
vanessa.stoby@osstf.ca
416-885-0720