



Ontario's public education system is perhaps the province's most important asset. OSSTF/FEESO members continue to dedicate their time and energy to protecting and enhancing that system just as we have for 100 years. And we believe it's important for Ontario's government to have a similar commitment to ensuring that public education works for everyone. Public education in Ontario has a long tradition of providing students with the knowledge, skills and sense of community they need to find success and contribute in a meaningful way to the social and economic fabric of a dynamic province.

is for everyone

November 28, 2018

Dear Member of Provincial Parliament,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our discussion about the crucial role Ontario's public education system plays in the life of our province.

As front-line education workers, the OSSTF/FEESO members you will be speaking with today know first-hand the importance of a publicly-funded education system that is open and accessible to all students. They are proud to bring their knowledge and expertise to a system that's committed to laying the foundations that every student will need to reach their full potential and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Because it plays such an important role in laying those foundations for the future, Ontario's public education system is perhaps the province's most important asset.

For almost 100 years now, OSSTF/FEESO members have been firmly committed to protecting and enhancing that system. Ontario's students are counting on you, as a Member of Provincial Parliament, to undertake a similar commitment.

We hope you will join us in declaring your support for a strong public education system in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Harvey Bischof
President



Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

**Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants
des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario**

60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4A 2P3

TEL 416.751.8300

TEL 1.800.267.7867

FAX 416.751.3394

www.osstf.on.ca



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PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO ONTARIO'S FUTURE

Our education system has a long tradition of providing students with the knowledge, skills and sense of community they need to find success and contribute in a meaningful way to the social and economic fabric of a prosperous and dynamic province. OSSTF/FEESO believes strongly in that tradition, and for the last 100 years we have been working hard to build and enhance that system.

We believe that publicly-funded education should recognize the following principles:

UNIVERSALITY—Access for everyone
COMPREHENSIVENESS—Opportunity for everyone
PROFICIENCY—Achievement for everyone
ACCOUNTABILITY—Value for everyone

Our goal is to provide all students with the ability and confidence to meet the new challenges of a rapidly changing Ontario. There is always more work to be done, but we have a world-class public education system—a system that is perhaps Ontario's most important asset. Our work in education creates public value and our inclusive approach ensures that it works for everyone. By investing in our students, we are investing in Ontario's future.

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QUALITY OF ONTARIO'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Simply put, Ontario has one of the best education systems in the world.

The quality of learning for our students is almost unparalleled. Despite concerns that have been raised about the math curriculum, in 2015 only one province scored statistically higher than Ontario on math scores. In reading, no Canadian jurisdiction had results statistically higher than ours.

In 2017, almost  80% of students successfully completed high school within four years, and the graduation rate was  86.3% after five years.

The quality of Ontario's education system is recognized around the world. Schools in nine countries, including the Netherlands, China and Japan, are teaching our curriculum. In addition, 126,000 international students attend school in Ontario from kindergarten through to high school and post-secondary institutions. That's more than half of all the international students in Canada.

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PROGRAMS AND CHOICES

Our publicly-funded schools, from kindergarten to university, offer Ontario students a full range of programs and learning opportunities to help them pursue their interests and career goals.

**Ontario secondary schools provide
a crucial balance between
mandatory learning 
and optional learning **

This allows students to choose an educational path that both aligns with their interests and provides the essential knowledge and skills they will need for the workforce or for their post-secondary pursuits. Students have access to courses and programs that prepare them to be responsible citizens and ready them for the current and future job market. These include:

- Cooperative Education—Students gain on-the-job experience with local employers
- Specialist High Skills Majors—Focused programming in a subject area where students receive practical training and skills in preparation for the workforce or post-secondary education
- Dual Credits—Students can earn both a high school and college credit at the same time
- International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement—offer further options for academic achievement
- Liberal Arts—Provides students with a solid grounding in critical thinking and general knowledge that will allow them not just to succeed, but to fully participate in the social and cultural life of their community.

Canada ranks #1 in the U.S. News Quality of Life rankings, and scored 9.9 out of 10 for its well-developed public education system. Ontario's high quality, globally recognized public education system attracts investment and brings business to our province.

Business thrives and Ontario communities benefit because of our strong, well-established public education system.

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ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

The pace of change in our society is increasing every year, and Ontario's public education system is constantly adapting to provide diverse opportunities for our students in an ever-evolving world. To continue to meet the diverse needs of Ontario students, we must always ensure we have the capacity to adapt to the demands that our students will be facing.

Public schools in Ontario must continue to:

- support students through specialized programming that speaks to their interests
- be safe and inclusive spaces for learning, free of bullying, harassment and discrimination
- teach students how to navigate 21st century communication and technology
- teach students about consent and healthy relationships
- provide a wide range of options and pathways that are linked to:
 - employment
 - skilled trades
 - college and university education
- support the needs of students who:
 - have physical or mental disabilities
 - require opportunities for enrichment
 - are marginalized in any way
- provide literacy and numeracy support for adult learners, as well as ESL instruction

Ontario has a long tradition of building and maintaining an education system that is innovative, inclusive and accessible. To ensure that Ontario students are able to achieve their full potential, the education funding formula must be responsive to the needs of all students.

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THE EDUCATION TEAM

A major reason Ontario's publicly funded education system is one of the best in the world is the expertise of the professionals in the classroom. OSSTF/FEESO represents over 60,000 education workers in elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools and institutions. As a full-service, front-line education team, our members provide key services and resources to meet the diverse needs of Ontario students.

Members of the education team provide:

- Expert help for students who require additional supports
- Safe and healthy learning environments for students and staff
- High quality inquiry-based learning experiences for our youngest students
- Quality educational opportunities for adult learners
- Highly specialized supports for students with distinct needs
- University students and faculty with the assistance they need for a successful academic career

Ontario's front-line education workers ensure that the province's publicly-funded education system meets the needs of all students at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. The education team works every day to ensure that Ontario's education system remains among the best in the world.

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OSSTF/FEESO CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

Professional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff

OSSTF/FEESO front-line education workers have a long and well-respected history of creating and facilitating professional development training on a wide variety of topics including classroom management, cyberbullying, managing conflict, mental health and early learning, to name just a few. Education workers and boards of education across the province have come to rely on the excellent workshops created by OSSTF/FEESO members to share best practices, strengthen existing skills and develop new strategies.

Working together as an education team

OSSTF/FEESO represents instructors, office professionals, custodians, teachers, speech pathologists, educational assistants, early childhood educators...altogether more than 200 different job classes in Ontario's publicly-funded education system, from kindergarten classrooms all the way through to post-secondary institutions. Together, we make up a full-service education team, working every day to ensure that each and every student has the best possible chance to succeed.

Supporting new teachers

OSSTF/FEESO offers its services to Faculties of Education across Ontario to ensure that new teachers are better prepared when they enter our public education system. Faculties of Education invite OSSTF/FEESO representatives into their classrooms to offer up-to-date training and workshops to enhance the learning experiences of new teachers in Ontario.

We offer access to our long list of professional learning workshops and training, and frequently offer our Boundary Issues for Educators to ensure that new teachers understand appropriate conduct in the classroom prior to entering the public education system.

**I support
public
education.**



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