

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMDSB Declares Sixty-Nine Secondary School Teachers Redundant

[SEAFORTH, ONTARIO, April 16, 2019] Earlier this week, the Avon Maitland District School Board distributed redundancy letters to sixty-nine secondary school teachers. The letters signified that the Board does not currently have a position for any of the 69 teachers in September 2019. The 69 redundant teachers represent 17% of the 410 names on the secondary teachers' seniority list.

Although many of the area secondary schools are facing declining enrollment, the Ford Government's education cuts are a significant factor to the job losses. When the Government ended the Local Priorities Fund, the Secondary Programming amount of the Pupil Foundation Grant, and made funding cuts to other programs, the equivalent of approximately 25 full time teaching positions were eliminated.

The positions, such as Student Success, Re-engagement Coordinator, and Learning Coaches, worked with struggling students and provided supports for teachers working with students with special education needs.

Shane Restall, President of the local secondary school teacher's federation explained, "Those teachers provided invaluable support for students and connected them to their school in a way that they wouldn't have otherwise. They provided the complex services that we expect in our world-class public education system in Ontario. Our schools will look very different in the fall."

Restall continued to explain that because of local contract language, the cuts do not begin to address the increase in class sizes announced by the Ford Government.

"To our Board's credit, they have chosen to follow our class size and staffing language for the 2019-2020 school year, even though they are expecting to receive basic funding at the 28:1 student-teacher ratio."

The current contract expires in August 2019. Once the Government's vision is fully implemented over the next 4 years, the average class size of 28 will also mean:

- ballooning class sizes in some subjects
- cuts in specialty programming with small class sizes
- fewer choices for students
- more classes that are multi-grade or multi-level

"In our small rural Huron and Perth secondary schools, it is already difficult to offer a variety of program choices for students. These cuts will make an existing problem very much worse, or even impossible," Restall explained. "School closures in our area are a possible long-term solution that the AMDSB will need to consider if the government's cuts are fully realized." Currently, there is a moratorium on school closures implemented by the previous Liberal government.

Recent meetings scheduled by local federation leadership with both MPP Randy Pettapiece and MPP Lisa Thompson have been canceled by the MPP offices.

“Our MPPs have canceled meetings and don’t return our phone calls. We must rely on our parents and communities to help deliver our message because they aren’t listening to us.”

Parents and community members are asked to visit the website ***hereforstudents.ca*** to contribute their voice. Additionally, local rallies are planned in the near future:

Office of MPP Lisa Thompson 408 Queen Street, Blyth Friday April 26 4:30 to 5:30	Office of MPP Randy Pettapiece 55 Lorne Ave, Unit 2, Stratford Friday May 3 4:30 to 5:30
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“Today is a sad, sad day in Avon Maitland. Not only have schools lost those curriculum-based supports, they’ve lost coaches of their sports teams, leaders of clubs and activities, and mentors that students look up to. The teachers themselves are family and community members who have personal and financial struggles ahead of them. It’s heartbreaking.”

OSSTF District 8 represents over 1000 educational workers employed by the Avon Maitland District School Board in Huron and Perth counties, including Teachers and Occasional Teachers, Professional Student Services Personnel and Education Support Staff.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please call Shane Restall at 519-527-0364, or email tbupres@d8osstf.on.ca.