

Grants for Student Needs 2016-17 Brief

To the Minister of
Education

Ann Hawkins
President

Marshall Jarvis
General Secretary

December 2015

www.oecta.on.ca

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) represents more than 50,000 passionate and qualified teachers in Ontario's publicly funded English Catholic schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Ann Hawkins
President

Marshall Jarvis
General Secretary

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

65 St. Clair Avenue East

Toronto, ON M4T 2Y8

416-925-2493 or 1-800-268-7230

Fax: 416-925-7764

www.oecta.on.ca

December 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS	1
3.	SCHOOL FACILITIES & COMMUNITY NEEDS.....	2
4.	FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION	4
5.	FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN	5
6.	MENTAL HEALTH	7
7.	SPECIAL EDUCATION	8
8.	TECHNOLOGY AND 21 ST CENTURY LEARNING	10
9.	ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS	11
10.	ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	11
11.	MINISTRY INITIATIVES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	13
12.	OCCASIONAL TEACHER FUNDING	14
13.	ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN EDUCATION EXPENDITURES	15
14.	EDUCATION BUREAUCRACY	16
15.	CONCLUSION.....	17
16.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
17.	WORKS CITED	21

1. INTRODUCTION

1.01 The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the development of the 2016-17 Grants for Student Needs (GSN). As always, we will advocate for investments in publicly funded education that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of teachers, students and communities.

2. BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS

2.01 Ontario's education system has made great strides. We have fostered increased literacy and numeracy, advances in early childhood education, and a reduction in the number of low-performing schools (Fullan 2013). Our students perform at or above average on domestic and international assessments, and they are world leaders in problem solving skills (O'Grady and Houme 2014; CMEC 2014). Even in mathematics, where much attention has been paid to declining test scores, few jurisdictions in the world score statistically higher than Ontario, especially when it comes to computer-based methods (EQAO 2013). We can also pride ourselves on our commitment to equity, which is evidenced by the relatively small gaps in performance between high- and low-income students, and between Canadian- and foreign-born students.

2.02 As a number of observers have noted, these results have been achieved in large part due to the co-operative professional relationship between policymakers and teachers (OECD 2011). OECTA members would like to continue working with the government to build on our success. However, we are greatly concerned with how the austerity agenda is affecting Ontario's publicly funded education system. Teachers have done our part to help the government manage its finances. Salaries have been frozen for most of the past five years, while the cost of living has steadily increased. The Consumer Price Index for Ontario increased by another 2.3 per cent in 2014, which means it has gone up by almost eight per cent since 2010.

2.03 Furthermore, the consultation guide consistently asks how the funding formula can be improved without the need for additional resources. This is the wrong approach. Especially after we account for inflation, the education budget has already stagnated. The increases over the past few years have been primarily

related to the introduction of the Full-day Early Learning-Kindergarten Program. There are certainly areas where we can improve how existing resources are allocated, but we will never get where we want to go unless we address the structural shortages in our publicly funded education system.

Recommendation:

That the government increase investment in education to address cost increases and improve programs.

3. SCHOOL FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

3.01 Declining enrolment is a challenge, but any solutions must respect our history and communities. As the report of the Declining Enrolment Working Group (2009) stated, "Actions taken to address declining enrolment should ensure that students have fair access to education programs and services based on their need and circumstances. All measures must also respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario, which includes English-language public, English-language Catholic, French-language public, and French-language Catholic school boards."

3.02 Closing schools or merging school boards is more likely to cause unwanted and unnecessary disruptions than to create significant savings. Many costs, including administrative costs, would continue to be driven by enrolment. Also, Ontario's Catholic schools still enjoy considerable support, educating almost 650,000 students, including many non-Catholic students whose parents have chosen to send their children to Catholic high schools, in recognition of the system's high standards and forward-thinking methods. Our graduates, who are active in all fields of modern society, say the education they received in Ontario's publicly funded Catholic schools taught them a sense of community and fostered an understanding of social justice (Herbert and Childs 2013).

3.03 There is a need for flexibility, especially in the rural and northern areas of the province where there might only be one school in a community in any of the four publicly funded systems. Moving school boundaries and closing schools eliminates the range of opportunities available for families, while forcing students to move away from their friends and teachers. And it is not just Catholic families that

would feel the consequences of upheaval – merging systems would inevitably see students in the public system shifted among boards and schools.

- 3.04** Other public education advocates agree that rather than closing schools or merging boards, we should be concentrating on using our public facilities in smarter, more collaborative ways (Heartfield 2012; People for Education 2012). For several years we have been recommending a more holistic conceptualization of schools as community hubs. We would like to see various child- and family-related social services moved into school buildings and more fully integrated into students' daily lives. This would serve to lower costs and make efficient use of public assets while reducing social isolation and improving outcomes. Examples of services that could be offered in school buildings include child care, fitness and recreation programs, family counseling, paediatric services, and mental health supports.
- 3.05** Such models are popular in the United States, where studies of the impacts of these schools show they raise grades, reduce dropout rates, and improve work habits and behaviours (CCS and IEL 2013; Castrechini and London 2012). In the ideal scenario, "children's learning activities with the school contribute to community development, and...community activities contribute to and enrich children's learning within the school" (Clandfield 2010).
- 3.06** Each community is different, so it is important to consider local needs. However, the current community partnership guidelines give school boards too much leeway in determining whether and how to expand the use of school facilities to meet community needs. The regulatory amendment proposed by the Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group would go some way toward addressing this issue, but the government must go further in developing a provincial community hubs strategy and promoting inter-ministerial co-operation. The strategy should be developed in consultation with teachers' associations and other stakeholders. Also, it is crucial that the strategy build the strength of our publicly funded education system, rather than being used as a means of cutting back. Funds intended for the classroom should not be affected.

Recommendations:

That any action taken by the Ministry of Education to address declining enrolment ensure that students have fair access to education programs based on their needs and circumstances.

That the Grants for Student Needs continue to respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario, which includes English-language public, English-language Catholic, French-language public, and French-language Catholic school boards.

That the government implement a provincial community hubs framework.

4. FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION

4.01 More than 80 per cent of Aboriginal students in Ontario attend provincially funded schools, and more than 90 per cent of elementary and secondary schools have some Aboriginal students enrolled (People for Education 2015). Some progress has been realized since the government made Aboriginal education a priority in 2007, but data show we are unlikely to meet the goal of closing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 2016. In 2014, the Auditor General of Ontario reported that only 45 per cent of Grade 10 Aboriginal students were on track to graduate high school. And there continue to be significant resource gaps in schools with high proportions of Aboriginal students, including lower than average access to guidance teachers, teacher-librarians, and music and physical education programs (Gallagher-Mackay, Kidder and Methot 2013).

4.02 OECTA is proud to sponsor the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Summer Reading Camps, which deliver literacy programs to thousands of children in 28 communities. However, as trained professionals who are strongly committed to public education, we believe a comprehensive public policy response is best. We were disappointed to see the government partner with Teach for Canada to recruit teachers to work in Northern Ontario schools. This program undermines both the teaching profession and the communities it is meant to serve. The government insists that communities are eager to participate, and that Aboriginal leaders will help select the teachers, but the Teach for Canada approach is not what the public

expects or deserves. Rather than a private, corporate-sponsored solution, we need robust public policies that give all communities access to sufficient resources and properly trained and certified teachers (CTF 2015).

Recommendations:

That the Ministry of Education make further investments to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

That only fully trained, certified teachers be employed to teach in provincially funded schools.

5. FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

5.01 OECTA members are pleased the Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) program has been completely implemented. Parents, teachers, early childhood educators (ECEs) and administrators agree the program is preparing children socially and academically, leading to better outcomes in later years (Janmohamed et al. 2014). However, there are a handful of serious problems that are jeopardizing the success of the program.

5.02 Kindergarten-Grade 1 combined classes continue to be too common. This is troubling because a split classroom could have students ranging from four to seven years old, with large gaps in social and cognitive development. Also, there is a marked difference in the curriculum between Kindergarten and Grade 1. Play-based learning is a fundamental principle of the FDK program, while the Grade 1 curriculum is more structured. Split classes limit the time and space available for Kindergarten students to play and explore (Alphonso 2014).

5.03 Class size is another prevalent issue. Ministry of Education data show that in the 2014-15 school year, almost eight per cent of the FDK classrooms across the province had 30 or more students. In English Catholic schools, 11 per cent of FDK classrooms had 30 or more students. Forty-three per cent of FDK classrooms in English Catholic schools had more than 26 students. The academic research is very clear that class size is an important determinant of student outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and others who might have difficulty transitioning to the school setting (Schanzenbach 2014). Also, when dealing with

young children in a play-based environment, reasonable class sizes are essential for ensuring the safety of students and teachers.

5.04 Even when class sizes are kept relatively small, the interaction and combined efforts of the teacher and the ECE are vital to student success. When the FDK program was developed, the teacher/ECE teams were recommended based on experiments in Ontario and elsewhere, in which teams were found to “add to the strengths of the professional preparation and skill sets of both teachers and ECEs” (Pascal 2009). ECEs bring specialized knowledge about early childhood development, while certified teachers bring high levels of skills and training related to pedagogy and delivery of the curriculum. One of the main reasons students are benefitting from the FDK program is that staff teams are “uniting around the mission to support young children and families” (Pelletier 2014). The proper functioning of the staff teams is upset when school boards manipulate government regulations or staff schedules so that one of the members of the team is taken out of the classroom during the instructional period. We must keep the program true to its original promise and guarantee that teachers and ECEs are able to provide the best possible learning environment for every student in every class.

Recommendations:

That the Ministry of Education amend funding and class size regulations to eliminate Kindergarten-Grade 1 combined classes.

That the Ministry of Education limit the size of Full-day Kindergarten classrooms to 20 students.

That the Ministry of Education ensure every Full-day Kindergarten classroom has at least one teacher.

That the Ministry of Education guarantee there is a teacher and an ECE in the classroom at all times of the instructional period.

6. MENTAL HEALTH

6.01 Up to 70 per cent of mental health issues emerge by adolescence (Government of Canada 2006). In Ontario, 15 to 20 per cent of children and youth have a mental health need (OPACYO 2011). However, young people are still less likely than other age groups to receive adequate care. Children’s Mental Health Ontario (2015) reports that 6,000 young people, who require serious mental health treatment, are waiting more than a year for service. As many as 12,000 will be waiting a year or more by 2016. Young people are far too often turning to emergency services as a result of problems that should have been identified and addressed much earlier (MHASEF 2015).

6.02 The government has done a good job of producing resources to increase awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health issues. Our schools have also been providing more services, with programs like School Mental Health ASSIST, and Mental Health and Addiction Nurses in District School Boards. Last year’s GSN included funding for a Mental Health Leader for each school board, as well as resources for school-aged children and youth in care, treatment centres or custody. However, we are still not moving fast enough in developing a comprehensive, adequately resourced approach that strikes an appropriate balance between prevention and intervention, especially early and ongoing intervention.

6.03 This is a prime area where a community hub model could improve outcomes. Undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues are a significant impediment to student engagement and achievement. By providing more mental health supports in schools, where children and youth spend much of their time, we can further reduce stigma, help students with mental health issues feel connected to their communities, and deliver more responsive service.

6.04 Of course, while additional professional resources are certainly required, teachers will still have a critical role to play. The Ministry of Education’s (2013) guide for educators lists the wide variety of mental health issues students might be dealing with, including problems with anxiety, mood, attention and hyperactivity, behaviour, eating, substance use, gambling, and self-harm and suicide. To be able to identify student needs and offer the proper support, teachers urgently need expanded, focused, and ongoing training and professional development.

Recommendations:

That the Ministry of Education provide additional funding in the GSN to expand supports and services for students with mental health issues.

That the government co-ordinate funding from other ministries with the Ministry of Education to deliver child and family support services from space available in elementary and secondary schools.

7. SPECIAL EDUCATION

- 7.01** Teachers want to provide the best, most inclusive learning environments for all students. However, there are many issues with respect to funding, staffing and classroom composition that are limiting our ability to serve students with special education needs.
- 7.02** Changes to the distribution of the High Needs Amount are exacerbating shortages in some school boards. Boards were already reporting that they did not have the resources required to serve all of the students with identified special education needs, and now they are receiving even less funding (People for Education 2015; Rushowy and Ferguson 2015). The Minister of Education has claimed that the reductions in funding are due to declining enrolment, but we must keep in mind that having fewer students overall does not necessarily mean a board will have fewer students with special education needs.
- 7.03** It is acknowledged in the consultation guide that the demographic data currently being used for the Measures of Variability are inadequate, especially given the damage done when the mandatory long-form census was suspended by the previous federal government. It is also the case that many special education needs, such as autism and behavioural disorders, have seen considerable increases in incidence – as well as improvements in our ability to detect them – in recent years. We need to refresh our approach.
- 7.04** We can strengthen the existing formula by incorporating new sources of data, such as social service agency client rosters. We can also further develop our birth registries to record needs that are evident at birth. Furthermore, while we do not want to go back to an individual submission basis, it should be noted that school

boards collect a great deal of data on students. If certain boards feel they are being negatively impacted by the funding formula, they can use this data to inform their arguments.

- 7.05** Our members have also identified several specific issues that should be addressed, such as the utilization and replacement of certified special education resource teachers. In many boards, these teachers are constantly being called upon to undertake administrative duties. They are not always replaced in the classroom. As a result, students are going without the specialized support they need.
- 7.06** We should all be particularly concerned about those students who require especially intensive support. As we have argued for several years, the \$27,000 cap on the Special Incidence Portion, which has been in place since 1998, needs to be amended or removed. This amount is well below the salary grid for educational assistants and not nearly enough to cover the cost of specialized staff and necessary materials, especially given that inflation is constantly eroding the real value of the grant.
- 7.07** Research has shown that smaller classes enable teachers to more effectively address the unique learning needs of special education students while building safe, integrated classroom communities (Bascia 2010). This is also true when the class has partially integrated special education students, and especially true when there are several students with special education needs, or students with multiple exceptionalities. There must be provincial class size and composition guidelines that will help teachers to provide the best possible learning environment for all students.

Recommendations:

That the weighting factor be re-established as a component of the Special Incidence Portion of the Special Education Grant.

That the Special Education Grant establish clear benchmarks for the caseloads of special education teachers.

8. TECHNOLOGY AND 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

- 8.01** In *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, the Ministry of Education (2014) says students “will benefit from a wide array of opportunities both inside and outside of school that are compelling and contribute to their success, including the opportunity to benefit from the effective and appropriate use of technology in the classroom.” OECTA recognizes the need to help students develop the skills required in a technology-driven world. However, we remain concerned that the available resources are insufficient to provide meaningful opportunities and instruction.
- 8.02** Although the government announced last year that it plans to invest \$150 million in new technology, this really only compensates for the ground that has been lost since the Classroom Computers component and the Textbook and Learning Materials component of the Pupil Foundation Grant were permanently reduced in 2009-10. The need for infrastructure and hardware in schools is well beyond what this funding provides, and school boards are not able to keep up with rapid advances in technology. The result is inequality between boards, as well as the proliferation of “bring your own device” policies, which have the potential to widen the “digital divide” between students who have access to personal technologies and those who do not (Rushowy 2014).
- 8.03** We also need to be mindful that successful use of technology in education requires teachers who are comfortable with the hardware and software, and who have well-designed learning objectives (Jacobsen 2010). Even younger teachers, who might use technology frequently in their daily lives, are not necessarily proficient in translating their personal fluency into learning practice (People for Education 2014). Teachers have shown they are eager to gain knowledge and experience in this area. With the recent financial support offered by the Ministry of Education, uptake of Additional Qualifications courses has significantly increased. However, funding from the Ministry of Education is directed mainly toward the acquisition of new tools. To achieve true integration of technology in the classroom, a greater proportion of available resources should be invested in professional development.

Recommendation:

That the Ministry of Education review and amend the Grants for Student Needs to provide adequate funding and support for computers and technology in schools, and relevant professional development for teachers.

9. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

9.01 The majority of Ontario’s publicly funded schools have students who require language support, and the Ministry of Education’s (2007) policy is to promote academic achievement among English Language Learners (ELLs) “at the level expected of all learners in Ontario.”

9.02 However, according to People for Education (2015), schools with 10 or more ELLs have an average ratio of 76 elementary ELL students per English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, and an average of 42 secondary ELL students per ESL teacher. Previously, it has been found that more than 20 per cent of schools with 10 or more ELLs have no specialist teacher (People for Education 2013). Clearly, the vague proxies currently being used to determine funding are not reflective of the real need for services.

9.03 Investing in ELL programs will enable children to better interact with their peers and the learning materials. The need for a properly resourced program will take on new urgency as the province prepares for an influx of refugees, many of whom will not have had access to formal schooling or literacy training.

Recommendation:

That the Ministry of Education provide adequate funding and access to English Language Learning programs.

10. ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

10.01 Adult and continuing education programs are funded at roughly two-thirds the level of regular day school credit programs. Recent analysis calculated the annual

underfunding of adults studying the provincial curriculum at \$112 million (Mackenzie 2015).

- 10.02** Moreover, in many cases, these programs are delivered to new immigrants or students who were marginalized from the regular day school credit program. They often have special education, language and other needs that require support. However, funding allocations in the Special Purpose Grants are directed only toward students in the regular day school program.
- 10.03** School space for adult and continuing education programs is also limited. As a result, teachers and students often have to deal with large class sizes, sometimes in excess of 40 students, as well as different courses being delivered to students in the same classroom.
- 10.04** Teachers, especially those in day school adult education programs, are often employed from contract to contract, with substandard salaries, working conditions and rights. Furthermore, boards have been moving courses that were previously delivered by day school teachers to the continuing education system, where teachers are paid at an hourly rate, legislated and negotiated class size limits are circumvented, and other contractual obligations applicable to regular day school programs are ignored.
- 10.05** The demands of the modern economy will certainly require greater attention to post-secondary education, but completion of high school is still a fundamental building block. And across Canada, one in five working age adults lack basic literacy and numeracy skills (Drewes and Meredith 2015). Research shows that intensive support to raise literacy rates would yield dramatic increases in employment and wage rates, significantly reducing the number of adults living in poverty (McCracken and Murray 2010). Furthermore, by improving basic language proficiency, fostering notions of citizenship and social engagement, and encouraging healthier lifestyles and relationships, we can reduce the need for later interventions in these areas and enhance the well-being of our democracy and society.

Recommendations:

That the government fund adult and continuing education credit courses at the same level as regular day school credit courses.

That all credit-based courses be delivered by teachers who are members of the bargaining unit under the same legislative and contractual terms and conditions of work as regular day school teachers.

11. MINISTRY INITIATIVES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

11.01 Every year sees the introduction of new initiatives and workshops, which are often planned and implemented with little or no consultation with teachers' associations. They add to the already heavy workload of teachers who are striving to deliver the curriculum while integrating students with different needs, responding to individual learning styles, and incorporating new technologies. If the Ministry of Education is intent on keeping these new programs, it is imperative that they make funds available for release time so teachers are able to carry out all of their duties effectively.

11.02 Teachers are enthusiastic learners who are eager to consider new methods and improve their practice. But the most effective professional development is "job-embedded professional development" – self-directed, teacher-led, authentic experiences that allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn, and to connect their learning to their real experiences in the classroom (CEA 2015; Croft et al. 2010; Darling-Hammond and McGlaughlin 1995). Ontario teachers are already demonstrating their capacity in this regard. The Ontario Teacher Learner and Leadership Program supports experienced teachers to undertake "self-directed advanced professional development for improving their practices and supporting students' learning." Teachers report that the initiative has enhanced collaborative professional learning and improved knowledge, understanding, and instructional practices (Campbell, Lieberman and Yashkina 2013). It is in everyone's interest to expand the time and resources available for this type of ongoing, classroom-focused, teacher-directed inquiry.

Recommendations:

That in cases where the Ministry of Education’s directives involve or impact teachers, school boards implement the initiatives only with the agreement of the teachers’ union.

That funding for Ministry of Education initiatives support a model of teacher-directed professional development.

12. OCCASIONAL TEACHER FUNDING

12.01 As the Ontario College of Teachers (2014) reports, “Entry to the profession in Ontario is now typically in the form of contracted daily supply teaching. Many education graduates are confined to being on supply teaching on-call lists for multiple years.” However, funding for occasional teachers still has not been reformed to acknowledge this reality.

12.02 The allocation for occasional teachers under the Pupil Foundation Grant is a flat amount without reference to a benchmark, unlike the category for classroom teachers, which is based on a benchmark that includes salary and benefits. However, the Ministry of Education (2015) clearly states that funding for occasional teachers includes salary and benefits.

12.03 As new teachers enter the profession, they are spending more time on daily occasional teacher lists. They are experiencing challenges earning incomes and also suffering gaps in professional development during the very important first few years of teaching. It will be to the detriment of the quality of our system if these teachers are not able to keep their knowledge and skills current while they wait to find permanent teaching positions. For example, funding should be provided for daily occasional teachers to participate in the professional development and health and safety components of professional activity days.

12.04 The Ministry of Education continues to introduce new initiatives that will require teachers to devote a significant amount of time if the programs are to be worthwhile. However, there are not sufficient resources available to fund release time for these teachers, allowing an occasional teacher to replace them in the classroom. For example, OECTA members in several school boards report that

teachers are only able to leave the classroom for short periods to participate in the Reading Recovery program. Proper funding for release time will benefit permanent teachers, occasional teachers, and students.

Recommendations:

That the “supply teacher” lines in the Grants for Student Needs be adjusted to reflect a benchmark that includes salary and benefits for occasional teachers.

That the Grants for Student Needs include funding for occasional teacher professional learning.

That the Grants for Student Needs include funding for release time so teachers can undertake new Ministry of Education initiatives.

13. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN EDUCATION EXPENDITURES

13.01 Last year’s Grants for Student Needs implemented new reporting requirements for school boards with respect to certain grants. Unfortunately, this year’s consultation guide is already seeking ways to reduce the detailed reporting required. We strongly urge the Ministry of Education to continue making the appropriate allocation of resources a top priority.

13.02 We have been particularly concerned about the way school boards are using the Special Purpose Grants, such as the Learning Opportunities Grant. These programs are only worthwhile if the money is spent appropriately and effectively. Over the years, the proportion of the grant that goes to services targeted toward students in need – such as guidance counselors or nutrition programs – has been dramatically reduced (Brown 2013). Furthermore, with an overall education budget that does not match student needs, and legal pressure to balance their books, school boards have great incentives to use these grants to fill gaps in funding for core programs and expenses (Casey 2013). For instance, in 2012-13 the Toronto District School Board is reported to have diverted almost 70 per cent of the funds that were intended for targeted initiatives to support at-risk students. The board is said to have diverted almost \$1 billion of such funding since it was

introduced in 1998 (Johnston, Queiser and Clandfield 2013). This is a problem that our members report is happening in their school boards as well.

- 13.03** Rather than scaling back the reporting requirements, we should be strengthening the process by which funds are distributed and allocated. There is still no clear process to determine how allocations from these grants are made, and no disclosure regarding these allocations until after the funding has been distributed. To be useful in holding school boards to account, reporting must be prompt, with real-time transfers of data where possible.

Recommendations:

That the Ministry of Education link funding, as closely as possible, to teacher-directed initiatives that support teachers and students in the classroom.

That the Ministry of Education require school boards to report locally-determined program expenditures of funds allocated through the Grants for Student Needs and Education Program: Other grants as a compliance requirement under the overall accountability framework of the Grants for Student Needs.

That the Ministry of Education establish an annual process of consultation with teacher representatives at each school board regarding locally-determined program expenditures of funds allocated through the Grants for Student Needs.

14. EDUCATION BUREAUCRACY

- 14.01** OECTA members are strongly supportive of public servants. However, as much as possible, funds should be directed toward the fundamental ingredient in a successful education system: the interaction between a well-trained teacher and a well-supported student. Unfortunately, resources continue to be directed toward redundant or unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

- 14.02** Ministry of Education regional offices are a perfect example. In an era of instant telecommunication, these offices serve no discernable purpose. Information can

be disseminated across the province quickly and effectively without the need for these staff and overhead costs. Other examples of wasteful spending include the bloated Student Achievement Division, overstuffed central school board offices, and a \$35 million Education Quality and Accountability Office that continues to test every student when a random sample would yield equally valid information.

- 14.03** Some school boards have been hiring human resources professionals with the primary purpose of implementing attendance management systems. These programs cost a great deal to operate and place an unwarranted administrative burden on boards and teachers alike. They also threaten to drive up costs in the health care system, as teachers are forced to access clinics and doctors' offices to obtain supporting documentation, taking up time and potentially exposing themselves and others to communicable diseases. This is why medical professionals have been calling for more respect and empathy in the workplace, encouraging people to stay home when they are sick and discouraging employers from demanding documentation (Andersen 2014).

Recommendation:

That the Ministry of Education curb unnecessary bureaucracies and redirect funds to the classroom.

15. CONCLUSION

- 15.01** All stakeholders should be proud of the progress that has been made over the past decade. Even in the face of harsh criticism, the government has pushed ahead with some bold policies and programs that have greatly improved our publicly funded education system. But there is still much to be done. Now is not the time to step back, or to simply tinker around the edges. Adjusting funding formulas to more accurately reflect classroom realities is necessary, but not sufficient. To really move ourselves to the top of the class, Ontario needs to fully invest in our teachers, schools, and students.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 16.01 That the government increase investment in education to address cost increases and improve programs.
- 16.02 That any action taken by the Ministry of Education to address declining enrolment ensure that students have fair access to education programs based on their needs and circumstances.
- 16.03 That the Grants for Student Needs continue to respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario, which includes English-language public, English-language Catholic, French-language public, and French-language Catholic school boards.
- 16.04 That the government implement a provincial community hubs framework.
- 16.05 That the Ministry of Education make further investments to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- 16.06 That only fully trained, certified teachers be employed to teach in provincially funded schools.
- 16.07 That the Ministry of Education amend funding and class size regulations to eliminate Kindergarten-Grade 1 combined classes.
- 16.08 That the Ministry of Education limit the size of Full-day Kindergarten classrooms to 20 students.
- 16.09 That the Ministry of Education ensure every Full-day Kindergarten classroom has at least one teacher.
- 16.10 That the Ministry of Education guarantee there is a teacher and an ECE in the classroom at all times of the instructional period.
- 16.11 That the Ministry of Education provide additional funding in the GSN to expand supports and services for students with mental health issues.

- 16.12 That the government co-ordinate funding from other ministries with the Ministry of Education to deliver child and family support services from space available in elementary and secondary schools.
- 16.13 That the weighting factor be re-established as a component of the Special Incidence Portion of the Special Education Grant.
- 16.14 That the Special Education Grant establish clear benchmarks for the caseloads of special education teachers.
- 16.15 That the Ministry of Education review and amend the Grants for Student Needs to provide adequate funding and support for computers and technology in schools, and relevant professional development for teachers.
- 16.16 That the Ministry of Education provide adequate funding and access to English Language Learning programs.
- 16.17 That the government fund adult and continuing education credit courses at the same level as regular day school credit courses.
- 16.18 That all credit-based courses be delivered by teachers who are members of the bargaining unit under the same legislative and contractual terms and conditions of work as regular day school teachers.
- 16.19 That in cases where the Ministry of Education's directives involve or impact teachers, school boards implement the initiatives only with the agreement of the teachers' union.
- 16.20 That funding for Ministry of Education initiatives support a model of teacher-directed professional development.
- 16.21 That the "supply teacher" lines in the Grants for Student Needs be adjusted to reflect a benchmark that includes salary and benefits for occasional teachers.
- 16.22 That the Grants for Student Needs include funding for occasional teacher professional learning.

- 16.23 That the Grants for Student Needs include funding for release time so that teachers can undertake new Ministry of Education initiatives.
- 16.24 That the Ministry of Education link funding, as closely as possible, to teacher-directed initiatives that support teachers and students in the classroom.
- 16.25 That the Ministry of Education require school boards to report locally-determined program expenditures of funds allocated through the Grants for Student Needs and Education Program: Other grants as a compliance requirement under the overall accountability framework of the Grants for Student Needs.
- 16.26 That the Ministry of Education establish an annual process of consultation with teacher representatives at each school board regarding locally-determined program expenditures of funds allocated through the Grants for Student Needs.
- 16.27 That the Ministry of Education curb unnecessary bureaucracies and redirect funds to the classroom.

17. WORKS CITED

- Alphonso, Caroline. (2014). "Ontario's full-day kindergarten splits classes – and raises concerns." *Globe and Mail* (September 14).
- Andersen, Erin. (2014). "Stop asking employees for sick notes, OMA head urges." *Globe and Mail* (January 8).
- Bascia, Nina. (2010). *Ontario's Primary Size Reduction Initiative: Report on Early Implementation*. Toronto: Canadian Education Association.
- Brown, Louise. (2013). "TDSB says it spends \$103M of special \$143M grant on kids in need." *Toronto Star* (May 6).
- Campbell, Carol, Ann Lieberman, and Anna Yashkina. (2013). *The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program: Research Project*. Toronto: Ministry of Education and Ontario Teachers' Federation.
- Canadian Education Association (CEA). (2015). *The Facts on Education: What is Effective Teacher Professional Development?* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.
- Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). (2015). *Briefing Note: Teach for Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation.
- Casey, Liam. (2013). "TDSB diverting \$100 million annually from programs for underprivileged students, report says." *Toronto Star* (May 6).
- Castrechini, Sebastian, and Rebecca London. (2012). *Positive Student Outcomes in Community Schools*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.
- Children's Mental Health Ontario. (2015). *2015 Report Card: Child & Youth Mental Health – Moving Towards a Fully Functioning System*. Toronto: Children's Mental Health Ontario.
- Clandfield, David. (2010). "The School as Community Hub: A Public Alternative to the Neo-Liberal Threat to Ontario Schools." *Our Schools / Our Selves* 19, no. 4: 5-74.
- Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) and Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). (2013). *Community Schools Results*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools and Institute for Educational Leadership.
- Croft, Andrew, Jane Cogshall, Megan Dolan, Elizabeth Powers, and Joellen Killion. (2010). *Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Milbrey McLaughlin. (1995). "Policies that Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform." *Phi Delta Kappan* 76, no. 8: 597-604.
- Declining Enrolment Working Group. (2009). *Planning and Possibilities: The Report of the Declining Enrolment Working Group*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Drewes, Torben, and Tyler Meredith. (2015). "If at First You Don't Succeed: Toward an Adult Education and Training Strategy for Canada." *IRPP Study No. 54*.
- EQAO. (2013). *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2012: Highlights of Ontario Student Results*. Toronto: EQAO.
- Fullan, Michael. (2013). *Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario's Education Agenda*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Gallagher-Mackay, Kelly, Annie Kidder, and Suzanne Methot. (2013). *First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education: Overcoming gaps in provincially funded schools*. Toronto: People for Education.

- Government of Canada. (2006). *The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.
- Heartfield, Kate. (2012). "Separate schools: the subject that won't go away." *Ottawa Citizen* (June 16).
- Herbert, Monique, and Ruth Childs. (2013). *Beyond Catholic Graduation: How Graduates of Ontario Catholic Secondary Schools Live Their Faith*. Toronto: Institute for Catholic Education.
- Jacobsen, Michele. (2010). "Teaching in a Participatory Digital World." *Education Canada* 50, no. 3.
- Janmohamed, Zeenat, Kerry McCuaig, Emis Akbari, Romona Gananathan, and Jennifer Jenkins. (2014). *Schools at the Centre: Findings from Case Studies Exploring Seamless Early Learning in Ontario*. Toronto: Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Johnston, Lesley, Sharma Queiser, and David Clandfield. (2013). *A Triple Threat to Equity: Changing Priorities for Toronto Schools*. Toronto: Social Planning Toronto.
- Mackenzie, Hugh. (2015). *Harris-era Hangovers: Toronto School Trustees' Inherited Funding Shortfall*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Ontario.
- McCracken, Mike, and T. Scott Murray. (2010). *The Economic Benefits of Literacy: Evidence and Implications for Public Policy*. Kanata, ON: Data Angel Policy Research Inc.
- Mental Health and Addictions Scorecard and Evaluations Framework (MHASEF) Research Team. (2015). *The Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario: A Baseline Scorecard*. Toronto: Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences.
- Ministry of Education. (2015). *Education Funding Technical Paper 2015-16*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2014). *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2013). *Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being – Draft Version*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2014). *2014 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario*. Toronto: Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.
- Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth for Ontario (OPACYO). (2011). *Statement on Child and Youth Mental Health in Ontario*. Toronto: Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth for Ontario.
- O'Grady, Kathryn, and Koffi Houme. (2014). *PCAP 2013: Report on the Pan-Canadian Assessment of Science, Reading, and Mathematics*. Toronto: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2014). *Transition to Teaching 2014*. Toronto: Ontario College of Teachers.
- OECD. (2011). *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States*. Paris: OECD.
- Pascal, Charles. (2009). *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario – Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Pelletier, Janette. (2014). "Ontario's Full-Day Kindergarten: A Bold Public Policy Initiative." *Public Policy Digest* (June).

People for Education. (2015). *Ontario's Schools: The Gap Between Policy and Reality – People for Education Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2015*. Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education. (2014). *Public Education: Our Best Investment – People for Education Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2014*. Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education. (2013). *Language Support*. Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education. (2012). *School-Community Connections*. Toronto: People for Education.

Rushowy, Kristin. (2014). "BYOD – bring your own device – now in most Ontario schools, survey finds." *Toronto Star* (April 1).

Rushowy, Kristin, and Rob Ferguson. (2015). "Special ed cuts to hit most Ontario boards." *Toronto Star* (March 12).

Schanzenbach, Diane Whitmore. (2014). *Does Class Size Matter?* Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.