



# News Release

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## **MORE EDUCATION CUTS HURTING ONTARIO'S MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS**

TORONTO – The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) is extremely alarmed by a government memo to school boards, recommending that boards stop hiring teachers and other staff, including hiring needed to fill vacancies for retirements and leaves, pending further announcements on education funding.

"The memo uses vague language like 'prudence in hiring,'" says Liz Stuart, President of OECTA, "but the message is clear: the government is asking schools to do more with less. This will have a negative impact on student achievement and the learning environment."

More concerning are indications that the government plans to make additional cuts, including failing to maintain funding negotiated as part of OECTA's collective agreement that provides additional supports for students with special education needs.

"It would be egregious enough to disregard collective agreements that were negotiated in good faith, and that benefit Ontario students," says Stuart. "But to implement more cuts that hurt students with special education needs is unconscionable. We all understand this government's desire to reduce expenditures, but that cannot come at the expense of student learning and well-being."

This direction is the latest in a series of troubling announcements by Premier Doug Ford's government, which signals drastic cuts to the education sector, and specifically target vulnerable youth. It follows dramatic reductions to autism supports, as well as cuts to specialized education programs for at-risk students, and the loss of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

- 30 -

OECTA represents the 45,000 passionate and qualified teachers in Ontario's publicly funded English Catholic schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

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