

News Release

Catholic Teachers Demand the Ford Government Stop its Plan to Cut \$12.3 Billion from Ontario Schools

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TORONTO – In response to the Ford government’s plan to cut \$12.3 billion from schools over the next decade, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA) is launching **Stop School Cuts**, a new campaign calling on the government to invest in publicly funded education and student success.

The Ford government’s failure to provide a safe and sustainable learning environment for Ontario students led to the longest in-person learning disruption in North America, with unprecedented learning loss over the past two years. Now, instead of providing students with the supports they need for learning recovery, the government is doubling-down on its plan for more school cuts.

In 2019, the Ford government increased class sizes and slashed education funding. In the 2021 budget, the government underfunded schools by an additional \$1.3 billion, taking away critical resources from the publicly funded education system. The government has also allowed the province’s school repair backlog to grow to more than \$16 billion, leaving safety concerns such as crumbling infrastructure and poor ventilation unaddressed.

Furthermore, the Financial Accountability Office reports that the government is planning to spend \$12.3 billion less on schools than what is needed to keep up with population growth and infrastructure needs over the next decade.

“The Ford government plans to cut \$12.3 billion from schools over the next 10 years when our students need investments to make up for unprecedented learning losses. This government is jeopardizing our students’ futures,” says OECTA President Barb Dobrowolski. “Catholic teachers are demanding an end to the senseless and damaging cuts.”

Throughout the pandemic, the Ford government has failed to deliver on its promise of smaller class sizes to allow for the necessary physical distancing to protect students from COVID-19. School boards are now forced to increase class sizes because of the government’s cuts. Larger class sizes reduce the quality of education, and mean less help and attention, particularly for students with special needs, those with social and mental health concerns, English as a second language learners, and equity-deserving students.

“The impacts of these cuts, paired with the disruptions of the past two years, will harm a generation of learners. Now, more than ever, we must invest in publicly funded education,” says Dobrowolski. “We invite all educators, parents, and Ontarians to join us in calling on this government to prioritize our next generation.”

Students deserve learning environments where they can succeed, but this requires a real investment in Ontario schools to improve infrastructure, reduce class sizes, and provide learning recovery supports.

To learn more and write your MPP to *Stop School Cuts*, visit stop-school-cuts.ca.