

# News Release

## Glaring Omission: Ford Government Budget Ignores Teachers, Failing Students Yet Again

March 26, 2024

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) has issued the following statement from President René Jansen in de Wal in response to the announcement of the 2024 provincial budget:

"Not once does the Ford Conservative government's proposed budget mention the word 'teacher' in the body of its 'plan' to build a 'better Ontario,' with the only passing references relegated to the footnotes.

As Ontario faces a growing teacher recruitment and retention crisis, increasing violence in schools, and a severe underfunding of the critical resources and supports students need to succeed, this baffling and glaring omission demonstrates yet again that Premier Doug Ford does not care about students, their well-being, or publicly funded education. It is Ontario's teachers that make our schools world class, and this budget does nothing to support the critical work that they do.

Catholic teachers love teaching. More than anything we want to be doing the job we love in a learning and working environment that helps students to thrive. But to be at our best, we need a government that makes education and students a priority. A government that makes the real investments necessary to foster healthier schools for students and teachers alike. A government that *actually* wants students to thrive, and is committed to supporting their academic success, as well as their mental health and well-being.

Instead, Ontarians have the Ford Conservative government, which would rather use the budget to paper over its failings with cheap accounting tricks to hide its growing inflationary cuts to education.

A real plan to build a better Ontario, one that is focused on student success and investing in the future, would:

- offer real solutions to address the growing teacher recruitment and retention crisis, with meaningful collaboration with teachers – not more band-aids;
- address the growing epidemic of violence in schools;
- seek to lower class size averages, so students get more of the dedicated, one-on-one attention from their teachers that they need; and
- significantly enhance mental health services in schools, and expand school-based resources, supports, and services.

Ontario's students, families, and teachers deserve better. They deserve a government with a real plan, with a budget that makes real investments to ensure that our publicly funded education system remains world class.

A government that ignores teachers, and continues to erode the world-class publicly funded education system it inherited six years ago, is not one that is seriously committed to students, their future, and what they need to succeed."

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