



ARE THERE CUTS TO EDUCATION?

UNDERSTANDING ONTARIO'S FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

The Ford Conservative government has claimed that it has made an investment in public education, but that is false.

No matter how the Minister of Education or Premier spin things, there are cuts to public education.

Here is what you need to know to debunk the Conservative rhetoric

FACT: Per-student Funding Decreased

- ✓ Per-student funding has decreased under the Conservatives. For every student enrolled this fall, there is less money allocated to the education system.
- ✓ After adjusting for inflation, per-student funding decreased 3% for the 2019-20 school year from the previous year.

FACT: Bloated Budget Numbers

- ✓ The Minister of Education claims there is an increase in education funding in the 2019-2020 budget, but that's false. The funding dedicated to education includes more than funding for schools.
- ✓ On paper, the total education funding number looks like it increased, but that is largely because the new Child Care Tax Credit is accounted for in education funding although it is a dedicated tax credit and will not be used to fund public education.

FACT: Funds Fall Short

- ✓ The Financial Accountability Office found that to maintain current levels of funding in public education, the government needed to increase the budget by 3% annually. Instead, the government's education budget only grows at a rate of 0.8% annually.
- ✓ The provincial funding in the 2019 budget does not cover inflation costs, and it does not account for enrolment growth. After adjusting for inflation, operating funding for education was cut by 2% for the 2019-20 school year.
- ✓ This is basic math. If the government is allocating less money to fund public education, it's a cut!

FACT: Cuts Impact Vulnerable Students the Most

- ✓ While Conservative cuts impact students, educators, and the entire public education system, it is important to remember that there is a disproportionate negative impact on racialized and marginalized students, and their families.
- ✓ By eliminating the Local Priorities Fund, the government defunded programs that focused on Indigenous students, students with special needs and other at-risk students.
- ✓ While students and the quality of learning are directly impacted by larger class sizes those students that need additional supports are impacted the most.
- ✓ Government cuts have also resulted in the elimination of educator positions dedicated to special education, leaving many students without the specialized support needed.

FACT: Gaps Create Cuts

- ✓ Over the next four years, the funding gap between what was needed to maintain current levels and what the government has allocated will reach \$3.5 billion.
- ✓ The government's plan for education provides less funding for special education; it flat-lined funding for school repairs, and it created larger classes in schools.
- ✓ The government made massive cuts to public education and other social programs to finance corporate tax cuts. No one voted for these kinds of cuts and it's not what a majority of Ontarians want or need. 61% of Ontarians believe the Conservatives are on the wrong track for public education and meeting student needs.

FACT: Classes Will Be Larger

- ✓ Larger classes and less funding means fewer teachers. Despite what the government says, there will be fewer adults in Ontario's schools.
- ✓ Starting September 2019, the average province-wide class size increased for grades 4 up to 12. Students will now have less individual support with teachers and less access to the support they need.

Additional Resources

- As the new school year starts, Ontario school boards are strapped for cash. Here's by how much. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). September 2019.
- Economic and Budget Outlook. Financial Accountability Office. May 2019.
- Changes to Ontario education funding and policy will have a long-term impact. People for Education. March 2019.
- Ontario budget funding shortfall starts out bad—and gets worse fast. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. April 2019.