



PUBLIC EDUCATION it's for everyone





Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
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every step of the way



A sepia-toned photograph of a park with a winding path and trees. The path curves from the bottom left towards the center right. The background is filled with dense trees and foliage. The overall tone is warm and historical.

PREAMBLE

- 1. EARLY LEARNING**
- 2. MORE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS**
- 3. PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT AND COLLABORATION**
- 4. FUNDING FORMULA**
- 5. UNIVERSITY FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT**
- 6. ONE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN EACH OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**
- 7. SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT**



Public education in Ontario has a long tradition of providing students with the knowledge, skills and sense of community they need to find success and contribute in a meaningful way to the social and economic fabric of a prosperous and dynamic province.

OSSTF/FEESO believes strongly in that tradition, but we also recognize that in a rapidly growing and changing Ontario, there's always more work to do to ensure that public education continues to meet the needs of all who rely on it.

We believe that the publicly-funded education system should recognize the following principles:

UNIVERSALITY—access for everyone

COMPREHENSIVENESS—opportunity for everyone

PROFICIENCY—achievement for everyone

ACCOUNTABILITY—value for everyone

Ontario's public education system is perhaps the province's most important asset. OSSTF/FEESO members continue to dedicate their time and energy to protecting and enhancing that system, just as we have for almost 100 years. And we believe it's important for Ontario's government to have a similar commitment to ensuring that public education works for everyone.

EARLY LEARNING



The Early Learning experience should be positive and encouraging, designed to bolster a child's love for school and for life-long learning.

At OSSTF/FEESO, we know that it's important for every child to have the benefit of a robust, play-based learning environment in their full-day kindergarten classroom.

We also know that by providing appropriate and effective supports to children with learning disabilities and special needs, we not only help those children succeed, but we help to ensure the well-being of every child in the classroom.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling for:

- Equitable and timely access to professional student services to ensure that the Early Learning team is fully prepared to help every child reach their full potential.
- A commitment to safeguard the well-being of children with special needs through the presence of highly-trained educational assistants. When we do this, we enhance the learning of every child in the classroom.
- A teacher and an early childhood educator in each kindergarten classroom to ensure a robust, play-based learning environment where every student will benefit and feel supported.
- School boards to spend their Early Learning funding allocation on kindergarten classrooms.

**MORE
PROFESSIONAL
SUPPORT
FOR ALL STUDENTS**



One in five children and youth under the age of 19 in Ontario has a mental health issue. One in ten school-age children in Ontario has speech and language delays that can negatively affect academic success.

Student services professionals (for example, psychologists; social workers; speech-language pathologists; and child and youth workers) assist students with a wide range of issues. Their services are essential for student success and well-being.

OSSTF/FEESO calls for a best-practice student services model that includes:

- An increase in school and community services available to students with mental health issues.
- More school-based speech and language services, which are needed to support students in the classroom.
- Increased funding for services provided by board-employed practitioners.
- Predictable, stable and dedicated funding which will ensure a high level of service across the province, regardless of school board.
- Increasing mental health literacy for educators.
- Appropriate violence prevention resources and space.
- An education sector regulation under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT AND COLLABORATION



A world-class education system values the expertise of the professionals in the classroom.

This means that teachers and other education workers should always be consulted and given an opportunity to collaborate in the planning of initiatives.

It means having confidence in education workers to make decisions about instructional approach and strategies for meeting curriculum expectations.

And it means trusting educators to determine appropriate and effective methods for assessment and evaluation.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling for:

- A commitment that the next government will require all boards of education in Ontario to implement joint consultation committees with OSSTF/FEESO at the board and school level.
- A commitment that the professional judgement of education workers be formally recognized as a key factor in determining instructional strategies and student assessment.
- A commitment that the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and its testing programs will be discontinued, and that savings generated will be reinvested into student learning.

FUNDING FORMULA



Ontario's public education system has been saddled with a badly flawed funding formula for twenty years now. The next government must commit to fixing it.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling for an inclusive funding formula based on a new set of principles that support:

- A full range of services and programs available to all students.
- The diversity of our students.
- Targeted funding for special needs students.
- Early learning programs to improve achievement in later grades.
- Equitable access to professional services that meet the needs of all students.
- Well-maintained, safe and accessible school infrastructure.
- Access to technology and other learning tools.
- The maintenance of funding levels through adjustments for inflation.
- The full education team.

UNIVERSITY FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT



Ontario continues to rank dead last among Canadian provinces in per-student funding for universities. And when it comes to the way universities spend the public funding they do receive, there are surprisingly few checks and balances in place to ensure that the money is used wisely or in a way that benefits students. Inadequate funding and inadequate oversight are a deadly combination that put key student services at risk.

OSSTF/FEESO calls for significant improvements in university funding, including:

- A commitment to increase and maintain stable, dedicated funding for all universities to ensure that quality student services and supports are maintained year over year.
- A commitment that dedicated funding will be targeted to specific student needs at all universities.
- A commitment that increases in student enrolment will mean increased staffing levels to ensure that student needs are met.
- A commitment to examine and assess the oversight and transparency of university spending decisions, with an eye to ensuring that Ontario's universities serve the interests of both students and the broader community.

**ONE
PUBLIC EDUCATION
SYSTEM IN
EACH OFFICIAL
LANGUAGE**



Ontario in the 21st century is a multi-cultural, multi-faith society, but the provincial government continues to fund an entire school system for just one religious denomination. It's time to have a serious discussion about moving to one public secular education system in each official language.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling for:

- An all-party task force to look into the merits and challenges of moving to one public secular school system in each official language, to be convened immediately.
- Savings realized from a merger of systems to be reinvested back into the education system to enhance the quality of education and the availability of services that students need.
- All education stakeholders to be involved in a discussion about the future of publicly-funded education in Ontario, accessible to all students.

SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT



Central bargaining tables in the education sector were supposed to be for the negotiation of salaries, benefits and other matters requiring government funding or participation. But Ontario's school boards used their presence at those tables to advance entirely different issues, undermining discussions and obstructing the path to an agreement.

As a result, more than two full years elapsed between the beginning and the conclusion of bargaining, and more than 1.4 million student school days were lost due to job actions that should not have been necessary.

The *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act* (SBCBA) needs to be changed to avoid this kind of disruption in future rounds of negotiations.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling for the following changes to the SBCBA:

- Central bargaining should be between the unions and the government.
- The role of school board associations in central bargaining should be consultative only and they should not be involved in a decision-making capacity.
- There should be one central table for OSSTF/FEESO teachers and support staff.
- Issues covered by central bargaining should be limited to salary, benefits and other funding-related matters, unless additions are made by mutual agreement.

ABOUT OSSTF/FEESO

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

OSSTF/FEESO is an independent, socially active union that promotes and advances the cause of public education and the rights of students, teachers and education workers. OSSTF/FEESO also works to build strong public services, preserve academic freedom, prevent the privatization and commercialization of our educational institutions, ensure that students receive an education free of bias and discrimination and provide an equitable opportunity for all students to succeed in a strong, well-funded public education system.



