

Ontario education workers warn of province-wide school cuts

With only seven days until the provincial election, now is the chance to stop Conservative and Liberal underfunding

TORONTO, ON – With only one week left until provincial election day, frontline education workers are warning of significant and avoidable staff cuts that have been announced for the 2022-2023 school year starting in September.

“School boards are choosing to cut educational assistants which will lead to more students not having access to the supports they need to succeed, cutting early childhood educators that will lead to more crowded classrooms for our youngest learners, and cutting custodial and clerical staff which will reduce the cleanliness, safety, and security in our schools,” said Laura Walton, president of CUPE’s Ontario School Boards Council of Union (OSBCU).

Despite misleading claims by Premier Doug Ford, Education Minister Stephen Lecce, and other governing party candidates, provincial spending is insufficient to meet existing needs and increases will not cover costs that are rising due to inflation. Almost the entire increase in funding from last year is time-limited or temporary.

“Years of underfunding by Conservative and Liberal governments have led to bad decision-making by school boards right now,” said Walton. “The lowest paid education workers are on the chopping block. These are people who have worked throughout the pandemic – the backbone of every community’s schools.”

In 2021 dollars, per pupil funding in 2011-2012 (the last year before a decade of funding that did not cover the costs of inflation and increasing enrolment) was \$13,285, compared to per pupil funding of \$12,686 today – a reduction of \$599 per student. If real per pupil funding had remained at the 2011-2012 level for the past decade, there would be \$1.2 billion more in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding envelope for school boards in the 2021-2022 school year. This money would go a long way to meeting needs in schools, including maintaining necessary staffing for student success.

“Whether schools across the province are provided enough money to stop damaging cuts is a political choice made by our elected representatives. Ontario is the richest province in Canada and [the money controlled by only 59 billionaires has increased by more than \\$100 billion during the pandemic](#). There’s no excuse for this government or any political party to skimp on our children’s future.”

“If you want to stop education cuts that are undermining the success of our children and our province, get out to vote for a different government by Thursday, June 2.”

Quick Facts:

- An important 'letter of understanding' that required school boards to have sufficient staffing in schools expires this August. As part of their negotiations with school boards and the provincial government, frontline workers are making it a priority to secure a commitment from boards and government that would continue this as a permanent service guarantee to students and parents within their collective agreements.
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (CUPE Local 2026) is cutting at least 36 school support staff.
- Halton Catholic District School Board (CUPE Local 5200) is cutting 22 dedicated early childhood educators and increasing class sizes.
- Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (CUPE Local 1453) is cutting 65 staff, including 43 educational assistants.
- Upper Canada District School (CUPE Local 5678) is cutting 1 elementary school office administrator, at least 12 custodians, and 13 early childhood educators.
- York Region District School Board (CUPE Local 1196) is cutting 10 caretakers.

The Ontario School Boards Council of Unions (OSBCU) unites 55,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) who work in the public, Catholic, English, and French school systems throughout Canada's largest province. OSBCU members are education assistants, school library workers, administrative assistants, custodians and tradespeople, early childhood educators, child and youth workers, instructors, nutrition service workers, audio-visual technologists, school safety monitors, and social workers.

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