

## Provincial Executive Liaison Report

**OSSTF/FEESO Pillars**  
**Promote & Protect Public Education**  
**Defend & Support Members**  
**Mobilize Members & Engage Communities**

To: District 10, District Council

From: Martha Hradowy, Vice-President

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### 1. Equity Update Since April 2024

OSSTF/FEESO is deeply committed to equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression work so that our Federation, workplaces, and communities are equitable, inclusive, and accessible spaces. The Federation continues to be engaged in several activities as per the Action Plan to Support Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression. A few of the completed and ongoing actions are found below.

- OSSTF/FEESO annually commits funds for an [International Assistance Program](#) to support projects that reflect our commitment to protecting and enhancing public education, social justice and equality in various parts of the world. The International Assistance Advisory Work Group (Human Rights Committee) meets to review applications.

For the 2023-2024 Federation year, the committee reviewed 154 applications and approved 18 from organizations in Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

- In May 2024, OSSTF/FEESO sought applications from members for vacancies on the 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee, Equity Advisory Work Group, and Long-Term Disability Advisory Work Group.
- The second cohort of the OSSTF/FEESO Equity Mentorship Program (2024-2026) launched in May 2024. A D/BU memo (#130) seeking mentee candidates for the program was issued in May 2024, and a D/BU memo seeking mentor candidates will be issued in the Fall of 2024.
- Registration will open in June for Bargaining Unit Equity, Anti-Racism and Equity Officer training, which will be conducted in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. Bargaining Units are encouraged to email [Membership-Database@osstf.ca](mailto:Membership-Database@osstf.ca) with the name of the elected/appointed Bargaining Unit Equity, Anti-Racism and Equity Officer so that they receive correspondence from the provincial office.

A D/BU Memo with registration details will be issued in June 2024.

- In July 2024, OSSTF/FEESO will be sending a delegation, including two members from an OSSTF/FEESO advisory work group, council, or standing committee to the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' (CBTU) Region 1 Conference in Syracuse, New York. The president of the CBTU-Canada chapter and CUPE's Secretary-Treasurer, [Yolanda K. McClean](#), will lead the conference. The Ontario Chapter consists of members from international and national unions residing predominately in Ontario, Quebec, and across Canada.

OSSTF/FEESO members, Bargaining Units and Districts interested in attending this conference can register and apply for provincial funding under accounts #2015 (Union/Health and Safety Training Programs), #2016 (Anti-Racism and Equity Training for Members), and #2018 (Anti-Racism and Equity Training).

Please click [HERE](#) for access to up-to-date registration information.

- This year, The Toronto Caribbean Carnival will kick off its festivities from June 15, 2024, through to the Grand Parade on August 3, 2024. Once again, OSSTF/FEESO will sponsor the Junior Carnival activities that celebrate youth. The organizers expect over 40,000 parents and youth to take part or spectate at this family-friendly event. OSSTF/FEESO members and their families are encouraged to attend this event. A D/BU Memo will be issued with the details for the OSSTF/FEESO Information Booth. Volunteers are welcome.
- The Pride Toronto Street Fair will occur from Friday, June 28, until Sunday, June 30, 2024. A D/BU memo detailing the annual OSSTF/FEESO Information Booth and Toronto Pride Parade will be issued. Please visit [Pride Toronto](#) for more information.

- Please click [HERE](#) for the updated version of the OSSTF/FEESO Action Plan to Support Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression for the 2024-2025 year.
- Account #2085 (The Advancing Human Rights District and Bargaining Unit) has increased in usage and a broadening of funded projects. Account #2085 has been exhausted for the 2023-2024 school year. Applications will open on July 1, 2024, for the 2024-2025 Federation year.
- Applications for the 2024-2025 school year for provincial funding for Account #2018 (Anti-Racism and Equity Training) and Account #2016 (Anti-Racism and Equity Training for Members) will open on July 1, 2024.

## 2. Radio Ads Promoting Kids Help Phone – Pride Month 2024

The Communications/Political Action (CPA) Department purchased radio broadcast space in communities across the province promoting the federation and the Kids Help Phone during Pride Month. The Federation has participated in similar radio ads promoting Kids Help Phone several times over the past three years. They provide an opportunity to promote the Federation and our designated charity for 2023/2024 – Kids Help Phone.

The ads began airing on various radio stations starting on June 3 for one week.

Radio ads will occur in the following communities:

Toronto (2 stations)	Hamilton	Ottawa (2 stations)
Newmarket	Windsor	London
Kitchener	Barrie	Peterborough
Kingston	Belleville	Sault Ste. Marie
Thunder Bay	Woodstock / Norwich County**	

\*\*Special Note – We are running the ad in Woodstock for the whole month of June in response to the local town council passing a motion to no longer fly Pride banners on downtown lampposts.

The thirty-second ads mention the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation twice while promoting the services Kids Help Phone offers, with specific mention of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. While these ads will support OSSTF/FEESO's designated charity, they will also promote OSSTF/FEESO's name recognition and connections to the community.

## 3. Toronto Caribbean Carnival

This year, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival is kicking off its festivities from June 15, 2024, through to the Grand Parade on August 3, 2024. We were thrilled with the outcome of our relationship beginning in the summer of 2023 and look forward to continuing to build on this initial success.

Although there are many events occurring during the festival, staff believe that continuing our participation in the Junior Carnival activities that celebrate youth is a great opportunity to engage the Caribbean Community, and many other diverse communities. At this event, youth will be conducting their own parade in the Malvern borough in Scarborough, Toronto. There will be over 40,000 parents and youth from various ethnicities taking part or spectating in the family-friendly event.

Staff have been liaising with the Festival's Management Committee (FMC) since last year and recommend continuing with a similar sponsorship model as was approved last year. The proposed sponsorship would include speaking time for an OSSTF/FEESO representative from the Provincial Executive at the Official Launch, the Junior King & Queen Showcase and finally the Junior King and Queen Carnival. We are currently waiting for the final sponsorship package and will consider any changes accordingly.

Proactive volunteer recruitment for events like this will help ensure a stronger foundation of community support and may help in securing an education float for the Junior Carnival by coordinating with other unions.

OSSTF/FEESO would provide items for kids and carnival attendees who visit our booth. We will also conduct a raffle for those who sign up on our new public supporter's page that we will be embarking on building out this summer.

Events to be attended will include:

1. Official Launch – June 15, 2024
2. Junior King and Queen Showcase – July 14, 2024
3. Junior Carnival Parade – July 20, 2024
4. King and Queen Showcase – August 1, 2024

#### **4. Violence in Schools Campaign Update**

In April 2024, the Provincial Executive approved retaining Stratcom to support the development and deployment of an OSSTF/FEESO Violence in Schools campaign for a period of 12 months, beginning May 1, 2024, and concluding May 1, 2025.

We know from the research done by Stratcom and other public opinion research that violence in schools continues to increase and is not only a concern for our members, but also for the general public.

OSSTF/FEESO's violence in schools' campaign will be public-facing directed at policy makers, employers, our members, and the public.

The campaign will be launched with a media event and release of a micro-site that is centred around the Stratcom Violence in Schools report and four substantive and comprehensive calls for action from the Ontario government.

#### **Campaign Launch Overview**

The public-facing campaign will commence with a campaign launch media event and the release of a micro-site on June 6, 2024.

##### **A. Campaign Launch Media Event**

- When: June 6, 2024
- Where: Queen's Park Media Studio
- Time: 10:00 –10:30 a.m.
- Tentative Agenda
  - Introductory Remarks
  - OSSTF/FEESO Commissioned Research
  - OSSTF/FEESO Education Worker
  - OSSTF/FEESO Calls to Action

##### **B. Launch of Violence in Schools Campaign Micro-Site that would:**

- House an overview of the campaign components.
- Promote OSSTF/FEESO commissioned 2023 Workplace Violence Research.
- Raise awareness of and build support for the campaign Calls for Action.
- Build member and public supporter engagement and activism opportunities, including:
  - Email your MPP, Minister of Education, Premier, and provincial party leaders in support of OSSTF/FEESO's calls to action/campaign.
  - Register to become a campaign supporter/ally.
  - Gather member and public stories about their experiences or concerns about violence and safety and its impact on learning and working conditions in Ontario schools.
  - **Campaign calls to action overview.**

However, it is not enough to simply report on the extent of the problem and impact of violence in schools; OSSTF/FEESO members, and the students they serve, deserve immediate action. Four concrete calls to action to address violence in Ontario schools/worksites are proposed. The calls were co-developed by OSSTF/FEESO and Stratcom, and informed by a combination of reports, research, and previous OSSTF/FEESO advocacy, including but not limited to the *2017 Stop the Silence, End the Violence Lobbying* campaign.

These calls to action respond to the urgent crisis facing staff and students and, if adopted, could provide immediate and comprehensive supports, while we continue to fight for lasting changes to increase safety and improve learning and working conditions in every school/worksite in Ontario.

#### **Emergency Safe School Funding**

- A call on the Ford Government to revise the 2024-2025 Core Education Funding, specifically the Responsive Education Program (REP) Allocations and the Learning Resources Fund (LRF) in 2024-25 to prioritize safe schools for all students and staff.
- This would be a dedicated fund to put more caring, specialized teams of adults in the school system to support students in the education system and help address the root causes of violence.
- Every school board and school need immediate access to hire more EAs (Educational Assistants), psychologists, social workers, speech-language pathologists, child, and youth care workers, etc., to begin working in September 2024.

#### **Education Sector Learn and Stay Grant**

- A call for the government to fund a grant, similar to those currently available for the health care sector, to help recruit students learn and stay/work in one of the education worker professions to support underserved communities across the province.
- These grants would provide full, upfront funding for tuition fees, books and other costs for students who enroll in an eligible education worker/sector program and agree to stay in underserved communities to work after graduation. For example, this funding could support grants for those who wish to train in areas facing significant recruitment and retention issues in both Anglophone and Francophone public education systems.

#### **What are you hiding? Release the data now!**

- A call for the MLITSD (Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development) to release the data /issue a full report from the workplace violence

initiative phase two from February 1 - March 31, 2023, which focused on workplace inspections.

- Frame and brand the Ontario government as a government that is deliberately hiding data and putting health and safety at risk for staff and students.

#### **Safe School Action Plan**

- A call for the Government to create a Safe School Action Plan with a Community and Stakeholder Advisory Group that includes union representatives.
- This action plan will address the concerns of violence in the schools with a mind to introducing better consequences for behaviours that are not condoned by the school's code of conduct and simultaneously offering better supports to the teachers and education workers in the buildings.

#### **Next Steps**

OSSTF/FEESO staff will collaborate with Stratcom to finalize preparations, including presentation materials for the June 6, 2024, campaign media launch and content for the campaign micro-website.

#### **5. Request for Support: Open Letter to Support Bill S-210**

OSSTF/FEESO received a request from Parents Aware to sign on to an [open letter](#) produced by the [National Council of Women of Canada](#) (NCWC) to support federal [Bill S-210 – Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act](#). The open letter calls on all members of the House of Commons to support Bill S-210 and commit to implementing age verification using certified third-party providers to lower the risk of premature and inadvertent exposure to pornography by children and youth.

The Bill originated in the Senate and passed. It has gone through first and second readings in the House and has been sent to the Public Safety and National Security committee for further study.

[Parents Aware](#), who shared this request with OSSTF/FEESO, is an organization helping families meet the challenge of raising children and teens in a media-saturated world. They are particularly concerned about the social, emotional, and health risks associated with early and frequent exposure to pornography. They feel that Bill S-210 is an important step in helping to safeguard children from online exposure to pornography.

According to NCWC, 82 organizations have signed on to the open letter, including the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

While not directly connected to public education, the issues covered by Bill S-210 have an indirect impact on the work our members do. NCWC policies align with many OSSTF/FEESO policies and positions on issues, and those of the labour movement. Showing support for Bill S-210 through signing on to the open letter would show our commitment to prioritizing the health and well-being of students, especially when it comes to sexual health and protecting children from internet-related harm.

OSSTF/FEESO has signed the open letter. The bill has passed through the Senate and has passed first and second reading in the House of Commons. It has been referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for review.

#### **6. French as a Second Language Labour Market Partnership Committee – Spring 2024** The French as a Second Language Labour Market Partnership Committee (FSL-LMPC)

has been meeting since 2017, exploring ways to address labour shortages in French language educators. Over the course of those years, several projects have been completed – each with varying levels of success.

The group is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Education, from employer groups (deans, directors, superintendents, principals) and from employee groups (federations, unions).

Many best practices have been shared, and new ones discovered, as yearly projects have been created, implemented and reviewed. Approved projects this year involved:

- 13 Catholic school boards;
- 16 Public school boards;
- 3 Faculties of Education; and,
- 4 Education Organizations.

These seven years have provided significant support to educators as well as creating numerous shareable resources. These are now available at [www.fslresources.opsba.org](http://www.fslresources.opsba.org)

The 2023-2024 projects highlight that collaboration has increased as we have not recognized that there must be a multi-faced approach to addressing these gaps. For example:

- Halton DSB generating an in-house FSL Part II Additional Qualification;
- York DSB partnering with Glendon Faculty of Education to provide interview preparation to Teacher Candidates;
- OPSBA re: recruitment study (details at: [www.fslresources.opsba.org/high-yield-recruitment-strategies/growing-our-own-strategy/](http://www.fslresources.opsba.org/high-yield-recruitment-strategies/growing-our-own-strategy/)); and
- OTF and affiliates, offered *Ici on parle français* to individual and teams to enhance their French language skills (details at: [Ici on parle français – PD grants for FSL teachers | Ontario Teachers' Federation \(otffeo.on.ca\)](http://ici.on.parle.francais-PD.grants.for.FSL.teachers|Ontario.Teachers.Federation.otffeo.on.ca)).

Overall, the FSL-LMPC is focused on continuing to build capacity and confidence in students, educators and the FSL community as a whole. Funding to the committee has been approved and applications for projects were accepted until May 22, 2024. OTF will again be submitting to continue *Ici on parle français* next school year.

Assigned Educational Services Staff will continue to liaise with the FSL-LMPC to bring both information and opportunities to OSSTF/FEESO.

## 7. Ontario Government 2024-25 International Student Permit Allocations

On March 27, 2024, the [Ministry of Colleges and Universities](#) announced the allocation of international student permits for 2024-2025 for publicly assisted colleges and universities, provincial language schools, private universities, career colleges, and other institutions.

The announcement was in response to the January 2024 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) changes to the [International Student Program](#) for 2024 and 2025, including a cap on the number of study permits issued to international students, excluding international students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, Master's and doctoral degree programs.

### Ontario 2024-2025 International student study permit allocation

- 96% of permit applications are allocated to public colleges and universities.
- 4% of permit applications are allocated to Ontario's language schools, private



- universities, and other institutions.
- Zero permit applications for career colleges.
- The rate of international permits cannot exceed 55% of an institution's 2023 first-year domestic enrollment.
- Study permit applications will be maintained at the 2023 level for 22 of 23 public universities.
- Algoma University will see a decline in the number of permit applications permitted from 2023
- 11 of 24 public colleges will maintain applications at the 2023 level.
- Conestoga College and Colleges with public-private partnerships will see the largest decline.

#### **Additional criteria for study permit allocations**

- Prioritize programs in the following high-demand areas, including skilled trades, health human resources, STEM, hospitality, and childcare.

#### **Impact of 2024-2025 Permit Allocations on District 35**

Unlike school board funding, university operating grants do not include requirements for pupil-support staff funding ratios. Therefore, fluctuations in International Student enrollment do not have a direct impact on university support staff FTE for District 35. However, the additional criteria are likely to have inconsistent impacts on each university depending on the number of “high demand” areas of study and the unique job classes and collective agreements at each of the District 35 Bargaining Units.

#### **8. Ontario Coalition for Child and Youth Mental Health Project**

Late 2023, the *Ontario Coalition for Child & Youth Mental Health* (Coalition), of which OSSTF/FEESO is a member, submitted a project proposal. The funds have now been granted by the ministry. OSSTF/FEESO does have a seat on the 10-member advisory committee for the project.

The project outcome is to create resources for parent/caregiver awareness regarding student mental health. This work is being done in collaboration with *School Mental Health Ontario*, *Children's Mental Health Ontario* and *Sick Kids Hospital*. In hopes of learning more about the topic areas of interest and preferences for how to best share information about children's mental health, a survey is open from May 27, 2024 through to June 17, 2024.

While boards of education will be distributing the information regarding the survey to all parents/caregivers, all Coalition partners are being asked to make their respective members aware of their organization's commitment to this work through their channels. OSSTF/FEESO members can feel confident in completing the survey if they so choose.

The survey is found here: [Complete the Ontario Parent/Caregiver Survey on Mental Health and Well-being / Enquête Ontarienne Auprès des Parents ou de Toute Autre Personne Élevant des Enfants - OPSBA](#)

For any questions/concerns, please contact [Rosemary.Judd-Archer@osstf.ca](mailto:Rosemary.Judd-Archer@osstf.ca)

#### **9. Ontario Teachers' Federation Curriculum Forum**

The *Ontario Teachers' Federation Curriculum Forum* (OTF-CF) is a collaborative group comprised of all of the OTF affiliates along with subject associations and other subject-specific interest groups. As members of the OTF-CF believe that strong and healthy



subject associations are the markers of a healthy publicly funded education system, they are in constant communication with each other throughout the entire year. Two formal meetings are held a year – one fall, one spring.

The theme of the May 25, 2024, Spring OTF-CF was “Foresight: Considering the paths forward.” Following welcome and introductions highlighting the upcoming 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OTF, the 30 participants engaged in a “Connections and Conversation” session focused on discussing ways in which the OTF-CF can support the teaching profession to continually renew/rejuvenate itself in service of learning and well-being.

Jason Shim, a Nonprofit Technologist of Pathways (information here: [Accelerating Opportunity: Non-profit Technology and Innovation – Medium's Digital Think Tank - Pathways to Education](#)), spent time explaining the innovative ways Pathways has increased engagement with broader audiences through technology. Some considerations for Districts and Bargaining Units:

- focusing on tiny gains brings quick tiny gains, whereas focusing on consistent effort leads to massive gains over time;
- text messaging signups with social proof (at start of presentations);
- intuition is perspective-based, use research;
- consider: surprise, delight, reframe to engage, self-identify to belong, mobilize; and,
- offering personalization/customization, a way to belong & an action to take – these three solidify relationships.

A collaborative session was then held to focus on assessing the current landscape for associations. Most of the points discussed fell within four areas: Teacher Professional Learning Needs; Teacher Engagement – Strategies for awareness, recruitment; Retention and Succession Planning; and, Operational Needs.

To consolidate the day, the group focused on two prompting questions to hold Open Space discussion groups: what are topics, challenges and opportunities in public education? What are ideas, questions and possibilities to explore to help my association thrive? Possible solutions raised:

- Increase subject association knowledge at faculties (OTF);
- Increase subject association connection with federation locals;
- Increase association connection with New Teacher Induction Programs (NTIP) with boards of education.

Assigned Educational Services Staff will continue to liaise with OTF-CF and share information.

#### **10. Canadian Labour Congress Education Advisory Committee**

The Canadian Labour Congress Education Advisory Committee (CLC-EAC) met for a full day April 30, 2024 in Ottawa and online. Several updates were shared by the CLC:

- July 7-12 Ontario Women’s School;
- July 14-19 Ontario Summer School;
- July 14-19 IBPOC Facilitator Training (provided at OSS);
- Human Rights Course & Program Review continues with hope to pilot revamped at OSS 2025;

- Labour College cohort 13 will have 16-20 students & applications for cohort 14 will open in August; and,
- Winter school programming and information will be out soon.

During affiliate updates, there was significant discussion regarding Learning Management Systems (LMS) and the pros and cons of those currently being used. This item will be further discussed at the next meeting as there is need to explore details such as: registration integration, access, cost, as well as both builder and user elements when considering which LMS provides the best experience within our varied union environments.

The CLC-EAC has been completing a review of offerings and time has been taken to consider course/program development, review and rotation. A tentative work plan is coming together with the following key areas: French language, member mapping, facilitator recruitment & training, updating videos and possibilities for ongoing communications pre & post trainings.

There will be one further meeting of the CLC-EAC this school year which will be held virtually. Assigned Staff will report any subsequent updates.

## 11. **Ministry of Education Information Session on Proposed PPM on Attendance Support Programs (ASP)**

### **Background:**

OSSTF/FEESO received an invitation from the Ministry of Education to attend an information session and to hear our feedback on a proposed PPM on Attendance Support Programs (ASP). MOE indicated that this PPM was prompted by the Auditor General's Value for Money Audit. They indicated that student achievement and well-being are positively impacted when there is stable staffing. They also noted a 10-year trend of increased sick leave use in education sector.

All employee bargaining agencies and OPSBA were invited to attend a virtual information session May 1, 2024. Also present were representatives from OECTA, AEFO, and OPSBA.

### **The Proposed PPM:**

The MOE staff presented the general contents of the proposed PPM, but none of the actual language. In particular, they highlighted that the PPM would provide certain requirements and certain best practices. They outlined the PPMs 6 Key Components and 6 Leading Practices. They indicated that the MOE will allow some flexibility if ASPs already exist so as not to require a complete redo. They also noted that all ASPs would be required to be in place and publicly posted within two (2) years of the PPM's release.

### **6 Key Components:**

These are elements that each ASP will be required to contain:

- Statement of principle
- In-scope absences
  - Including which would be culpable vs non-culpable
- Annual attendance thresholds
  - It was noted that these would not be prescribed by the MOE, and that they could vary between bargaining units within the same employer
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Documented processes and procedures, and stages or levels of progression

- It was noted that there should be no more than five (5) stages
- Process for the periodic monitoring, evaluation, and review of the ASP

### **6 Leading Practices:**

These are best practices that the MOE is suggesting be taken into consideration, but that they are not mandating of school boards:

- Attendance Support Committee
- Pre-implementation needs assessment
- HRIS system and staff
  - It was noted that the system and staff would need to gather data, respond immediately, differentiate absences, and track accurately
- Other health and well-being programs
- Communication plan (to provide information about the ASP to employees)
- Training plan (to provide information about the ASP to supervisors)

### **Feedback Provided:**

Representatives from each of the affiliates asked questions/provided feedback on the proposed PPM. Concerns were raised about the following:

- Concerns that there is a general lack of support for employees
- Concerns that the contact points for ASPs can feel like intimidation
- Concerns about the number of absences vs the number of incidents - what “counts” under ASP
- Concerns that ASPs are punitive to women who bear the brunt of childcare and eldercare responsibilities
- Concerns that the “flexibility” in the PPM could allow school boards to overstep; perhaps the PPM needs to be more prescriptive
- Concerns regarding the impact on sick day use of delays in return-to-work and/or failure to accommodate
- Concerns regarding the timeliness of communication with employees, and how significant delays can feel punitive
- Concerns about whether the workload would be manageable by employers or would cause further repercussions on employees
- Concerns that ASPs place the blame for absences on employees with no responsibility taken by the employer for the workplace environment
- Concerns about whether what constitutes a “disability” under this plan will be specifically defined for school boards
- Concerns about the lack of transparency regarding SBCI, and with how they are using the data gathered from our members

## **12. 2024-2025 Core Education Funding (Core Ed) and Responsive Education Programs (REP)**

The 2024-25 Core Education Funding (“Core Ed”, previously Grants for Student Needs, or GSNs) and Responsive Education Programs (REPs, previously Priorities and Partnerships Funding, or PPF) were released on April 26, 2024. These two sources provide most of the funding to school boards for the next school year. As well, Funding to External Partners (FEPs, previously PPF – Third Parties) were released, which describe the funding to third parties from the Ministry of Education for education-related programs. The projections, technical paper, B-Memos, and other documents are available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/education-funding-2024-25>.

The former GSNs have been completely restructured into Core Education Funding (Core

Ed). There are now only six funds that replace the 18 previous grants. Within these six funds are 28 allocations that replace the 77 allocations under the GSNs. Despite this restructuring and regrouping of allocations into different funds, the methodology remains largely the same.

Total Core Ed is \$28.6 billion, a 2.7% increase over 2023-24 education funding. However, these funds contain a Planning Provision of \$4.1 billion, which amounts to 4.9% of Total Core Education funding. A further \$294.6 million in funding provided to school boards through REPs to support Ministry of Education priorities.

Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) is projected to grow by 0.8% province-wide, with a growth of 0.4% in elementary and 1.7% in secondary.

Adjusting for enrolment, education funding has only increased by 1.9%, while annual inflation in Ontario as of March 2024 was 2.6%. The Minister of Education is touting a \$745 million increase in education funding and claiming the hiring of 9,000 education workers and 3,000 more front-line educators. These numbers do not add up. The funding details show that most of this increase is funding increased costs due to inflation. Classroom staffing is only receiving a 1.9% overall increase, with less than a 1% increase for secondary. Funding benchmarks for non-salary components have remained unchanged and has fallen far behind inflation.

Benchmark salaries through Core Education Funding have been increased to account for a wage increase of \$1 per hour for all education workers. Teacher salary benchmarks have been increased by a nominal 1.25%, which boards are required to hold in the provision of a future salary increase.

Ricardo Tranjan, of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, notes that, with the planning provision removed and adjusting for inflation, Ontario is spending \$1,500 less per student than it did in 2018-19<sup>1</sup>. He further calculates that Ontario will have 4,990 fewer teachers than it would have had funding not been changed since 2018-19<sup>2</sup>.

Notably, the salary benchmarks in Core Education Funding do not reflect any changes due to a Bill 124 remedy. The 2024-25 funding, as well as the 2023-24 funding, provides for a Planning Provision of \$1.4 billion in unallocated funding. This funding is anticipated to be allocated for the purpose of modifying the existing funding structure to accommodate the provisions of Bill 124 and any interim salary adjustments awarded to workers. This planning provision constitutes approximately 4.9% of the total education funding.

### **Core Education Funding**

Changes to education funding are outlined in *Memo 2024:B05. Appendix 1* to this B-Memo contains the *Technical Guide for School Boards, 2024-25 (April 2024)*. A shorter explanation of the new education funding and the amounts for each fund and allocation is contained in *A Guide to Core Education Funding: 2024-25 School Year*, a resource developed primarily for parents and trustees.

In addition to consolidating into fewer funds, the Ministry has permanently removed Debt Service Support costs and one-time funding from education funding documents. Also, a Planning Provision fund of \$1.4 billion, or 4.8% of total Core Ed funding, is included for possible in-year funding changes impacted by external factors.

<sup>1</sup> <https://monitormag.ca/articles/ontarios-core-education-funding-has-dropped-by-1-500-per-student-since-2018/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://monitormag.ca/articles/ontarios-core-education-funding-has-dropped-by-1-500-per-student-since-2018/>

Other ongoing changes to funding include:

- Revisions to enveloping structure, which restrict how education funding is spent.
- Expanded accountability through a School Board Financial Transparency Tool and online public dashboards that will provide information such as how much funding is received, how funding is spent and class size information.
- Restructuring of funding to separate funds generated to support the majority of classroom staff, specifically excluding special education and adult and continuing education, from other funding.
- A five-year phase-in beginning in September of funding updates based on the 2021 Statistics Canada census data, which replaces 2006, 2011 and 2016 census data, along with a one-time adjustment of \$13.7 million to ensure no school boards is negatively impacted by the net impacts of this change.

The *Technical Guide for School Boards: 2024-25* no longer provides total system-wide funding for each allocation and component of education funding, as it had done in the past. It is therefore difficult to see the system impacts of individual changes in how funding is generated.

Education funding is now separated into six funds:

- Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF);
- Learning Resources Fund (LRF);
- Special Education Fund (SEF);
- School Facilities Fund (SFF);
- Student Transportation Fund (STF); and
- School Board Administration Fund (SBAF).

There is a new enveloping framework to safeguard specific education funding. The Student Safety and Well-being Allocation and Mental Health and Wellness Allocation under the Learning Resources Fund (LRF), Special Education Fund (SRF), Indigenous Education funding under the Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF), and School Renewal Allocation Rural and Northern Education Allocation under the School Facilities Fund (SFF) are individually enveloped to contain spending within the specified purposes of the fund. As well, total administrative spending is now limited to \$2.1 million plus 3.5% of total operating expenses for each school board. School facilities and student transportation expenses combined now cannot exceed the total funding generated plus up to 5% of the total amount generated through Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF), Learning Resources Fund (LRF) and Special Education Fund (SEF).

Key changes to education funding for 2024-25, as identified by the Ministry of Education, are:

- A fourth year of an updated benchmark for differentiated funding for online learning in the Per Pupil Allocation of the Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF) decreases funding for classroom teachers based on a supposition that 32.5% of secondary students are taking one online credit, eliminating a further 110 funded teaching positions.
- Salary benchmarks have been updated to support a \$1 per hour increase in education worker salary and a 1.25% increase to teacher salary.
- A new Demographic Needs Component of the Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF) and Learning Resources Fund (LRF) is being phased in over five years with a new

Funding Units based approach using 2021 census data with a per unit benchmark of \$189.68.

- Within the Student Transportation Fund (STF), funding has been adjusted to support new routing simulations, updating salary and other benchmarks, introducing new benchmarks for special purpose vehicles and contracted taxis, and to guarantee school boards at least a 3% increase in funding over the previous year.
- A Professional Assessments Component of the Special Education Fund (SEF) has been incorporated into education funding that was previously funded through the PPF.
- An additional \$10 million is available through the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) of the Special Education Fund (SEF), which funds supports students with extraordinarily high needs.
- The Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) of the Special Education Fund (SEF) is now allocated through two components with a base and per pupil amount for equipment for students with special education needs and a claims-based component for any single item costing \$5,000 or more.
- With the removal of the Safe and Clean Schools Supplement of the former Learning Opportunities Grant, all COVID-19 related funding has now been removed from education funding.
- Some non-staff benchmarks have been updated to reflect a 2% cost increase.
- The Summer Learning Program component of Learning Resources Fund - Continuing Education and Other Programs Allocation is being funded to provide school boards with the same allocation as last summer.

Other changes in the generation of funding are difficult to track, given the overhaul of the funding structure and the Ministry of Education's lack of transparency in disclosing changes and the total funding allocated for each segment and component of the funding. From the information at hand, it seems that not all benchmarks have been updated. For example, the Department Head Allowance component of the Per Pupil Allocation of the Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF) has had no change to the benchmark. Likewise, non-staffing components of the Per Pupil Allocation of the Learning Resources Fund (LRF), such as Classroom Supplies, Textbooks and Learning Materials, Classroom Computers and Student Technology Devices all received no increase for the second year in a row, despite a 7% rate of inflation in Ontario over those two years. Increases in the Language Supports and Local Circumstances Allocation of the Learning Resources Fund (LRF) range from 0.83% to 1.3% with no explanation of how this is determined. As well, some components of allocations received no change to funding and are falling further and further behind inflation. Notably, the benefits portion of compensation benchmarks, which are a percentage of salary, have not been changed, while these costs, such as for employer Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employment Insurance (EI) have increased substantially.

The separation of education funding into a classroom (under the CSF) and non-classroom components (LRF) splits funding into two generators. In such cases a somewhat arbitrary percentage has been assigned to classroom and non-classroom portions. This results in the classroom portion receiving an increase commensurate with the salary benchmark increase, but the other portion either does not receive an increase or receives a lesser increase.

Continuing Education and Other Programs, including Adult Day School, now are now funded at \$3,705 per ADE, an increase of 1.2%.

The Special Education Fund receives a 3.5% increase in funding province-wide due to changes in the funding structure and updated census data. However, the Per Pupil Allocation in the Special Education Fund receives increases of 2.1% for grades 1 to 8, but only 2.0% for grades 9 to 12. Also, base special education funding, excluding complex supports and specialized equipment, only increases by 3.2%. As a significant portion of this funding is used for staffing, this is likely in line with the increased education worker and teacher benchmarks and does not represent new funding. Without knowing the province-wide amounts that each allocation and component generates, it is difficult to determine the impact on the delivery and staffing of programs within individual school boards.

When accounting for enrolment increases, all school boards received at least a 1.5% increase in special education funding, with two school boards receiving more than a 10% increase. The phase-in of the funding based on demographic data has varied effects on school boards, as 2021 data replaces data that is more than a decade old, and in some cases nearly two decades old. As a significant portion of the funding is claims-based, the actual amount of funding may vary depending on applications by school boards and approvals by the Ministry of Education. School boards receiving a lower funding increase in special education may experience service delivery issues, as special education funding fails to recognize the actual needs of individual students and still relies on data that is now almost 4 years old.

The Classroom Staffing Fund provides the bulk of the funding for regular classrooms. This fund received a 1.9% increase province-wide due almost entirely to increased salary benchmarks for teachers (1.25%) and ECEs (4.3%). There was also a reduction due to the fourth year of the implementation of differentiated funding for online learning. Kindergarten classroom funding increased by 2.1%, primary, junior, and intermediate funding increased by 1.25%, while secondary funding increased by only 0.94%.

As well, a change to use “funding units” in the Demographic Needs component was made. Because the funding of components of Core Ed funding are not provided, it cannot be determined if there is a positive or negative impact of this change.

The Learning Opportunities Fund received a 1.8% increase in funding province-wide, largely from updated salary benchmarks. This Fund is impacted in the same ways as the Classroom Staffing Fund.

The School Facilities Fund received a 2.8% in funding province-wide, largely due to an updated salary benchmark for education workers. School Renewal funding, as outlined in Memo 2024: B08, will be \$1.4 billion for 2024-25, with \$1.1 billion allocated to School Condition Improvement and \$375 million to School Renewal. This is the same as what was allocated in 2023-24 and in 2022-23. In November 2022, the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) noted in their *Ministry of Education: Spending Plan Review* that the \$21.2 billion in education sector infrastructure over 10 years represented a \$1.5 billion (8%) increase from the \$19.7 billion education sector infrastructure investment over the previous 10 years from 2012-13 to 2021-22. However, after adjusting for inflation, the 10-year education sector infrastructure spending plan in the 2022 budget represented a \$3.0 billion (14%) spending decline (in 2021 dollars) compared to the previous 10-year period<sup>3</sup>.

The Student Transportation Fund received a 6.6% increase due to updating salary and other cost benchmarks, the inclusion contracted special purpose vehicles and taxis in the

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/2022-education-estimates>



funding allocation and a one-time top-up so that every school board receives at least a 3% increase in transportation funding. Changes to student transportation funding are summarized in *Memo 2024:B07*.

The School Board Administration Fund received a 2.0% funding increase province-wide, a larger increase than either the Classroom Staffing Fund or Learning Resources Fund that provides the vast majority of services to students in schools. As well, the new enveloping requirement under this Fund potentially allows school boards to use money from outside the School Administration Fund to fund senior administration and other expenses.

### **Responsive Education Programs (REP) Funding**

In 2024-25 Responsive Education Programs (REP) and Funding to External Partners (FEP) replace Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF). REPs replace the portion of PPF that was provided to school boards. FEP replaces the portion of PPF that was provided to third party education partners.

For 2024-25, REPs provide \$294.6 million in additional funding to school boards to support programs that the Ministry of Education has identified as priorities. This is a decrease of \$77.6 million from the funding provided last year. An additional \$108.9 million will be provided to third parties. Funding for these programs is provided annually. While some programs may be moved into Core Education Funding in future years, these programs and the funding are time limited.

The following priority programs have been identified by the Ministry of Education and funded for REP Allocations:

- \$93.7 million for literacy, including early reading screening interventions, tools, and licenses.
- \$66.5 million for STEM to support school board math achievement action plans, including board math leads, subsidies for teachers to compete AQ courses in math, digital math tools and school math facilitators for grades 3, 6 and 9.
- \$49.4 million for supports for vulnerable students, including youth facing barriers to success and children and youth with special education needs and/or disabilities, including summer school, transition navigators, Focus on Youth, transportation for children and youth in care, removing barriers for students with disabilities, graduation coaches for black students, school board human rights and equity advisors, subsidies for teachers to compete AQ courses in special education, a student transition pilot for students with developmental disabilities, and teaching in de-streamed classrooms supports for educators.
- \$23.6 million to provide opportunities in French-language systems, including supporting the delivery of online courses, providing pedagogical resources to French-language students and staff and to fund relevant supports.
- \$23.2 million for mental health, including summer mental health support, School Mental Health Ontario, strategies to support emerging health needs, Health resources, training and supports, physical activity through cricket, and a concussion summit.
- \$17.8 million for student readiness, including supports for Personal Support Worker programs, de-streaming implementation, experiential professional learning for guidance counsellors, coop education supports for students with disabilities, entrepreneurship education, recognition of experiential learning, skilled trades bursaries, and learn and work bursaries.

- \$11.0 million for operations to provide support to the education system, including critical physical security infrastructure, such as security cameras and vape detectors, and enhanced New Teacher Induction Program funding when school boards experience a significant increase in new teacher hires.
- \$9.4 million for Indigenous education, including an indigenous graduation coach program, Indigenous languages revitalization, rapid response teams in northern schools, Aboriginal youth entrepreneurship program, first nation school supports, and the Limestone Bridge program.

A full list of the funding is provided in *Memo 2024:B06. Appendix A* of this B-Memo indicates the amounts funded to each school board.

### **Math and Literacy Supports**

The Ministry of Education also released *Memo 2024:B09* which details the \$70 million Math Achievement Action Plan and \$95 million in literacy initiatives. Boards are to assign Board Math Leads (Supervisory Officer) and School Math Facilitators (Teachers) for specific priority schools to support this plan. The literacy funding includes details on the ETFO negotiated reading specialist teachers that will provide literacy and language curriculum instruction to students in Grade 1, Grade 2, and eligible Kindergarten classrooms while the classroom teacher administers early reading screening to individual students in the early part of the school year.

### **Implementation Criteria for Select Student Success Programs**

The guide, *Implementation Criteria for Select Student Success Programs*, provides a mapping of student success programs in the new funds to the previous grants and allocations as a reference for school boards. It is meant to provide guidance on the intended purpose and recommended use of funds to support the success and well-being of students who are at greater risk of poor academic achievement. However, it does not appear that school boards are required to follow this guidance.

### **Conclusion**

The comprehensive restructuring of education funding in Ontario, ostensibly presented as a move towards transparency and accountability, merely masks the systemic challenges stemming from insufficient funding. Decisions, such as not providing inflationary increases for classroom supplies and resources, are intentional and designed to underfund the system. What the government touts as a historic investment is essentially a veiling of longstanding issues facilitated by the new fund enveloping system, rendering historical funding comparisons increasingly arduous, if not unfeasible. Moreover, the absence of rationale behind the discretionary adjustments in funding contradicts the transparency principles espoused by the government.

This government is intentional in its underfunding of education and continues to short-change students by removing and restricting classroom staff and funding for student supports. This underfunding results in school boards having to make choices on what will be cut as the cost of labour and supplies increases faster than the increase in funding. The supports provided through REP funding are inadequate to address the ongoing needs of students and put the future of public education in Ontario in jeopardy, opening door for more privatization.

This government claims historic investment in public education. This is far from the truth. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), the organization representing public English-language school boards in Ontario, has found that education funding per

student for 2024-25, when adjusted for inflation, sits at the lowest level in a decade. OPSBA notes that school boards are left to deal with these inflationary pressures on their budgets. OPSBA notes that nine in ten Ontarians agree that spending on public education is an investment in the future and quotes the Conference Board of Canada report that each dollar of public education spending generates \$1.30 in total economic benefits.<sup>4</sup>

### 13. DBU Memos Issued

- 140 CMHO Conference
- 142 Ministry Correspondence - Focused Apprenticeship Skills Training Pathway
- 143 Ministry Correspondence - ITQ 273 for Content Contributors to Inform Updates to the Kindergarten Program
- 144 Call for The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) Committee Applications
- 145 Toronto Pride 2024
- 146 Speaker Bank Applications
- 147 Ministry Correspondence - Addendum 1 to ITQ 273 for Content Contributors to Inform Updates to the Kindergarten Program
- 148 Persons Living with Disability(ies) Advisory Work Group
- 149 Ministry Correspondence - Updates to Technological Education
- 150 Ministry Correspondence - News Release – New High School Graduation Requirements
- 151 Environmental Advisory Work Group Vacancies
- 152 ELHT Advisory Work Group Vacancies
- 153 OMERS Proposed Contribution Rate Changes

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.opsba.org/ontarios-education-funding-gap-continues-to-grow/>