

ETFO calls on school board trustees to reject cuts to student programs, services caused by Ford government

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TORONTO, ON – The following is a statement from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) calling on public school board trustees across Ontario to reject cuts to student services and programs that are a direct result of the Ford government's chronic underfunding of public education:

“Faced with increased costs due to inflation and inadequate provincial funding, school boards across Ontario are again being asked to do more with less. This means possible cuts to valuable student programs and services as trustees seek to balance their budgets. In many cases, these services support our most vulnerable students, including those with special education needs, Indigenous and racialized students, and English language learners.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association recently sounded the alarm on school board funding, stating that 2024-2025 provincial funding “falls short of what is needed to ensure all students are set up to succeed.” Once inflation and enrolment are taken into account, Ontario's public education budget for 2024-2025 will be more than \$3 billion below where it was six years ago. Per-pupil funding will be \$1,500 lower this coming school year than in 2018-2019, when the Ford government first came to power.

Trustees feel pressured by a provincial mandate that threatens government supervision if they fail to pass balanced budgets. This coercive tactic undermines their role, which is to advocate for the best interests of students and to protect public education. Balancing budgets on the backs of students is unacceptable. Our children's education is not a budget line to be cut, but an investment to be protected. Students deserve nothing less.

If trustees are genuinely committed to supporting children and to prioritizing student achievement and well-being, they must reject passing on these devastating cuts and instead demand that the provincial government provide adequate funding for the students they were elected to serve. By implementing cuts to crucial education supports, they would be complicit in the Ford government's attack on public education.

These cuts are not just numbers on a spreadsheet or board report; they represent fewer front-line staff to support students with special education needs, longer wait lists for student assessments, fewer mental health supports in schools, and decreased resources overall for students and their families. It is time for the provincial government to step up and provide the financial support schools need. We demand a future where every student can thrive, and that future starts with rejecting these cuts and fighting for adequate funding.”

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 83,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel. Visit [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://www.buildingbetterschools.ca).

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