# MEDIA RELEASE:
# Thousands of Ontarians to Attend 'Together for Publicly Funded Education' Rallies

**October 24, 2026**

ONTARIO — This afternoon, thousands of teachers, education workers, families, and supporters will gather at local community landmarks across Ontario in a major province-wide show of support for publicly funded education. Large crowds will gather at Queen's Park in Toronto, Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Victoria Park in London, Bell Park in Sudbury and Waverley Park in Thunder Bay. Each 'Together for Publicly Funded Education Rally' will be hosted by leaders from Ontario's major education unions and attended by local teachers, education workers, families, and community members. Media will have the opportunity to hear directly from those experiencing the modern realities of Ontario schools.

These coordinated rallies come at a critical moment. The latest Financial Accountability Office report confirms that real per-student funding, already near a 10-year low, is set to fall even further. Municipal elections are just days away, but fewer people are running for school trustee in large part because Bill 101 has undermined the role. The biggest issues facing Ontario's publicly funded education system will be at the centre of Saturday's rallies: the $6.5-billion funding gap; the teacher and education worker retention and recruitment crisis; class sizes and complexity; violence and safety in schools; special education and mental health supports; growing provincial control over school boards; and what the current round of bargaining could mean for students, families, and the future of publicly funded education.

**WHEN:** Saturday, October 24, 2026, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET

**WHERE:**
*London:* Victoria Park
*Ottawa:* Parliament Hill
*Sudbury:* Bell Park
*Toronto:* Queen's Park
*Thunder Bay:* Waverley Park

"Ontario's students deserve schools that are fully funded, fully staffed, and equipped to meet their needs. A $6.5-billion funding gap means fewer staff, fewer supports, and fewer opportunities for students. Today, thousands of people across the province are sending a clear message to the Ford government: Ontario's students deserve better, and publicly funded education is worth investing in." - Martha Hradowy, President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO)

"For years, teachers have been sounding the alarm about chronic underfunding from the Ford government and how it has eroded the world-class education system they inherited. Educators have always done what is necessary to provide the best for our students – but we cannot continue to do more with less. The Ford government needs to step up and invest in the classroom resources students depend on every day. Today's joint rallies show that Ontario teachers and education workers will never stop fighting for the education system students deserve." - René Jansen in de Wal, President, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)

"Our publicly funded education system is where students build their futures, where equal opportunities take shape, and, for our Francophone communities, where we nurture and preserve our language and culture. Teachers and education workers already carry an enormous weight on their shoulders, too often without the resources and support they need to do their jobs. This must change. Because ultimately, the working conditions of teachers and education workers are the learning conditions of our students." - Gabrielle Lemieux, President, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)

“The government’s ongoing failure to adequately fund public education is leading to larger class sizes, fewer supports, and growing unmet student needs. At the same time, the increasing push toward privatization threatens the integrity of Ontario’s publicly funded education system. Together with our education union partners, ETFO members are calling for the investments needed to support every student and every educator.” - David Mastin, President, Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

“Ontario’s public education system is at a breaking point. Years of chronic underfunding have left schools struggling with severe understaffing, rising violence, and students going without the supports they need to succeed. Education workers are doing everything they can to support students, but they cannot continue to make up for a system that lacks the resources it needs. The provincial government must invest in our schools, hire more education workers, and ensure every student has access to the supports they deserve.” - Joe Tigani, President, CUPE’s Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU)

-30-

**VISUALS:** High-resolution photos, video, and broadcast-quality B-roll from rallies will be available to media, by request.

**INTERVIEWS:** Media are invited to attend any of the five rallies today for on-site interviews with union leaders, teachers, education workers and other speakers.

To arrange on-site coverage or request media assets, contact:

AEFO—Marianne Raina at 613-218-3702 or mraina@aefo.on.ca
CUPE-OSBCU—Shannon Carranco at 514-703-8358 or scarranco@cupe.ca
ETFO—Carla Pereira at 416-576-9074 or cpereira@etfo.org
OECTA—Michelle Despault at 416-818-7533 or m.despault@catholicteachers.ca
OSSTF/FEESO—Caitlin Reid at 416-576-8346 or caitlin.reid@osstf.ca