

MEDIA RELEASE

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Flat Funding Won't Fix a Crisis: OSSTF/FEESO Responds to Core Education Funding Announcement

TORONTO, ON — The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is sounding the alarm over the Ford government's newly released core education funding for the 2025–2026 school year, which does little to address more than a decade of chronic underfunding in Ontario's public education system.

This year's funding announcement comes significantly later than usual as education funding details are typically released in April. The delay has disrupted planning for the upcoming school year, leaving school boards, staff, and students uncertain about what programming could be cut for next year. Once again, it's clear that public education is an afterthought for this government, not a priority.

"Despite repeated warnings from teachers, education workers, students, and their families, this government continues to ignore the real and urgent needs in our schools," said Karen Littlewood, President of OSSTF/FEESO. "The core education funding announcement may include increases on paper, but the reality is that these increases are nowhere near enough to address the budget pressures facing our schools. With over 40 per cent of school boards facing serious deficits, this funding falls far short of what's needed to repair the damage."

OSSTF/FEESO is disappointed that at this time the government has not provided specific details on education funding, but it does not appear that there is any funding that will help school boards address current budgetary pressures. The government's own budget projections show that core education funding will remain flat for at least the next three years, despite rising enrolment, rising inflation, and worsening conditions in schools. The government's refusal to properly invest in public education is jeopardizing the future of Ontario's students and our province's long-term prosperity.

"This funding plan does nothing to address the more than \$17 billion school repair backlog or the root causes of staffing shortages and rising violence that affect learning and working conditions in nearly every school across Ontario," said Littlewood. "And once again, it's students—especially those with the greatest needs—who will be left behind."

Reports from across the province reveal daily staff shortages, ballooning class sizes, insufficient mental health and special education supports, crumbling infrastructure, and increased classroom violence. These are not isolated incidents, but systemic issues made worse by the Ford government's refusal to fully fund public education.

OSSTF/FEESO is urging the Ford government to change course. With the looming threat of a global trade war and growing economic disruption, Ontario must be prepared to compete. Now is not the time to shortchange public education. It is time to make proactive investments that will strengthen Ontario's workforce and safeguard our economy for generations to come. While this funding announcement is a missed opportunity, it's not too late to act. There is still time for the government to listen to teachers and education workers on the frontlines.

"Our members are ready to be part of the solution," said Littlewood. "But it's going to take real partnership, real listening, and real investment to give every student in Ontario the opportunities they deserve."

OSSTF/FEESO will continue to analyze the core education funding information released last week and will share information with members and the public on funding for the upcoming school year.

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 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.

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