

## **Ford's education plan falls far short of what Ontario students need**

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TORONTO, ON – While the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) welcomes additional investments in mental health supports for students, the education funding announcement by the Ford government falls far short of what is needed to support students over the coming year. Under the Conservative government, public education funding will once again fail to keep up with inflationary costs and will leave longstanding issues in public education unaddressed. Today's announcement barely makes up for the almost \$500 million cut from the public education budget last fall.

"Improved funding for student mental health and tutoring intended to bring students up to speed is only one of the elements necessary to improve outcomes for Ontario students," said ETFO President Karen Brown. "The problems that have come along with pandemic learning are not something that can be solved without making critical changes to the way our province treats students, families, and workers."

"ETFO does not support the plan to bring back EQAO testing in grades 3 and 6. The resumption of EQAO exams will cause undue stress to students who are struggling," added Brown. "The suggestion that these results will be used as the baseline for their learning recovery program is irresponsible and fails to take into account that standardized testing is nothing more than an obstacle to quality education."

Students, educators, and families want to see smaller class sizes, adequate supports for students with special needs and a plan to invest in the future of public education. The Finance Accountability Office identified a long-term funding gap between the government's planned spending and the needs of the public education system, this announcement does not address this funding gap, and leaves the future of public education in question.

Today's announcement also included the requirement for school boards to keep the option for online learning available for another school year.

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ETFO firmly believes that in-person instruction is the best and most equitable experience for students, and that ongoing systemic changes are required to ensure that all students have a safe and effective learning in-person environment over the long-term.

[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://BuildingBetterSchools.ca).

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