

## Education Week highlights need to protect public education

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TORONTO, ON – Education Week, which takes place annually during the first week of May, is a time to recognize the many successes occurring in public elementary schools across Ontario. It also serves as a reminder that public education is worth protecting given the invaluable role it plays in society.

On this first day of Education Week, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) celebrates the above-and-beyond efforts of students, educators and other education workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and urges Ontarians to elect a government that is committed to ensuring our public school system remains one of the best in the world.

“As champions for students and public schools, educators deliver professional, high-quality instruction and support every day. Their professionalism and commitment to students is what continues to sustain our public schools,” says ETFO President Karen Brown. “The best way we can celebrate and honour Education Week is to continue to advocate for a government that puts students first by adequately funding public education in Ontario. Students deserve nothing less.”

The ongoing pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for people across the province. While no one has been left untouched by this public health crisis, there has been a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities due to Ford's failed handling of the pandemic. The province must support students, families, and educators in these communities, and invest in the public services necessary to build a more just and equitable province.

As we fight for a just recovery that centres public education and public services, ETFO remains committed to working to eliminate all forms of racism and to dismantling oppression at all levels. To support this, more must be done by the government to embed principles of equity and social justice in the education system, and to reflect the history and contributions of historically marginalized groups to the fabric of Ontario.

The Ford government leaves behind a legacy of funding cuts and chaos in the education sector. Adds Brown, “It's critical that we protect public education by electing a provincial government in June that puts students first, genuinely values educators, and invests in schools. By building unity in our workplaces, by taking action, and by mobilizing our school communities, we can transform our public education into a system that supports, uplifts and celebrates every student. Our collective efforts, voices and votes can and will make a difference in June's Ontario election.”

[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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