

PRE-BUDGET BRIEF

OEFTA Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

January 2018

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) represents the 45,000 passionate and qualified teachers in Ontario's publicly funded English Catholic schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Liz Stuart
President

Marshall Jarvis
General Secretary

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
65 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 400
Toronto, ON M4T 2Y8
416-925-2493 or 1-800-268-7230
Fax: 416-925-7764
www.catholicteachers.ca

January 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	WELL-BEING	1
	Mental Health	2
	Violence Against Teachers	4
	Special Education	5
	English Language Learners	6
3.	SUPPORTING PUBLICLY FUNDED CATHOLIC EDUCATION	8
4.	INVESTING IN FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT STUDENTS	10
5.	ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	13
6.	FOCUS ON THE CLASSROOM	14
	School Boards' Co-op Inc. – Administration, Bureaucracy, & Privatization....	15
	Professional Development	16
	Standardized Testing	16
7.	INVESTING IN ONTARIO'S FUTURE – ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE...18	
8.	REACHING OUR FULL POTENTIAL	20
	Fighting Poverty and Inequality.....	20
	Empowering Ontario's Young Workers.....	22
	Wages	23
9.	CONCLUSION	24
10.	RECOMMENDATIONS	24
11.	WORKS CITED	27

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.01** The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input for the development of the 2018 provincial budget.
- 1.02** In his 2017 *Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review Statement*, Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced that the Liberal government had achieved a balanced budget, and promised that the government would continue to balance the books over the next two years (Ministry of Finance 2017). The Minister credited this achievement to the province's economic strength – a result of “investing in our people and in what matters most to them: health care, education and the social programs that Ontarians depend upon to better their lives.” In this spirit, the Minister expressed the government's intention to continue making robust investments that promote “Fairness and opportunity for all.”
- 1.03** Over the past 12 months, the government made important progress in a number of areas. Legislation that provides free pharmacare for Ontarians under 25 years old, that makes investments to provide 100,000 additional child care spaces, and that overhauls the province's outdated labour laws and raises the minimum wage, will undoubtedly benefit citizens across the province. But as the Minister conceded in his statement, “We must go further.”
- 1.04** OECTA urges the government to build upon recent advances, and commit to further investments in the province's social programs and infrastructure as a means of fostering both near- and long-term prosperity for Ontarians. This includes the government's commitment to “improve public education, from Kindergarten to post-secondary.” Ontario's education system is already considered one of the most successful and high-performing in the world; by building upon more than a decade of educational success, we can ensure that every student has the opportunity to realize their full potential and to develop the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in our evolving society.

2. WELL-BEING

- 2.01** In recent years, the concept of “well-being” has moved beyond its traditional focus on physical health, and has taken on a more comprehensive definition. In May 2016, the Ministry of Education released *Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education*

Discussion Document, which defines well-being as “that positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are met” (Ministry of Education 2016). The document states that supporting well-being is essential for fostering healthy, active, and engaged citizens, and breaks down the concept into four main components: positive mental health; equity and inclusive education; safe and accepting schools; and healthy schools.

2.02 Catholic teachers applaud the government’s commitment to promoting well-being among students. But we must be sure that rhetoric and consultations are followed up with adequate investments. We also need to ensure that we are paying attention to the well-being of teachers and other staff, including administration, in order to foster a supportive environment for everyone within the school community.

2.03 Mental Health

It is difficult to overstate the importance of mental health to educational outcomes. Research has repeatedly verified the clear and identifiable link between children’s mental health and positive educational achievement (Johnston, Propper, Pudney, and Shields, 2011; Cornaglia, Crivellaro, and McNally, 2012; Veldman, Bültmann, Stewart, Ormel, Verhulst, and Reijneveld, 2014). As much as 70 per cent of mental health issues have their onset during childhood or adolescence (Government of Canada, 2006). In Ontario, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that one in six students describe their own mental health as fair or poor (Boak et al., 2015). At the same time, however, young people remain the least likely to receive adequate care; currently, more than 6,500 children and youth in Ontario with significant mental health issues wait more than a year to access treatment (Children’s Mental Health Ontario, 2016; Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2016). In order for elementary and secondary schools to support the many students with emerging or existing mental health needs, they must be adequately funded, prepared, and resourced.

2.04 Catholic teachers support some of the recent steps the government has taken toward improving a culture of mental health, such as maintaining a Mental Health Leader in every board, as well as increasing funding for School Mental Health ASSIST programs. We continue to advocate the position that teachers have an important role to play in supporting students who are dealing with mental health problems.

- 2.05** That said, we question some aspects of the government's *Well-Being Strategy for Education*. In September, the Ministry of Education (2017) released an executive summary of its consultation findings, entitled *What We Heard: Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in Our Society*. The document acknowledges that well-being is intangible and multifaceted, and reports a number of qualitative data from which the government can better understand progress on this file.
- 2.06** Despite this, the Ministry of Education has not backed off its belief that measurement "will provide the system, boards, schools and educators with indicators of how our students are doing beyond literacy and numeracy." It is notable that one of the three themes in the initial engagement paper is entirely focused on measuring well-being. We are wary of any strategy that is overly concerned with quantitative data collection, in an attempt to enumerate a distinctly nuanced and qualitative issue. Limiting conceptualizations of well-being to a few indicators is overly reductionist and simplistic.
- 2.07** Instead, we continue to advocate for the position that other groups and methods, such as teachers' observations and existing school climate surveys, are much better suited to examining well-being in all its complexity. There is also a need to bring consistency to the collection of survey data from all stakeholders in the system. The Ministry of Education's (2017) updated policy and resource guide for educators enumerates a wide variety of mental health issues that students might be dealing with. Rather than rely on quantitative metrics to determine mental health needs, it would be more effective to provide teachers with expanded, focused, and ongoing training and professional development so that teachers can identify student needs and offer the proper support.
- 2.08** Naturally, the mental health needs of students, and the accessibility of services, varies in accordance with the population and geography of our school communities. As such, we must ensure that rural schools and/or schools with lower student populations are not disadvantaged in their attempts to provide students with a healthy environment. The diversity of schools and communities within Ontario means that any mental health funding must be reflective of the needs of the specific community it is intended to serve. This is an area where co-ordination between the

Ministry of Education and other ministries, and further exploration of the community hub model, could be effective.

2.09 Violence Against Teachers

Ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment is among the most critical elements for providing students an excellent learning experience. Neither students, nor teachers and education workers, can reach their full potential if their physical safety or psychological well-being are threatened or compromised.

2.10 For almost a decade, OECTA has been raising the issue of violence and harassment experienced by Ontario teachers. We were consistently told by government that more data were needed to identify the scope and scale of the problem, and work toward tangible solutions.

2.11 In the spring of 2017, OECTA partnered with Pollara Strategic Insights to conduct a comprehensive survey of members. The results were sobering. Almost 90 per cent of respondents said that they have experienced or witnessed some form of violence or harassment by a student during their career. More than a quarter have had to take time off work because of the mental health effects of violence in schools. Eighty-five per cent feel that the incidence of violence is increasing, while 80 per cent say that incidents are becoming more severe. And despite advocacy by Catholic teachers and others in the education community, 72 per cent of respondents do not believe that students and teachers are protected against violence or harassment in schools, with two-thirds saying they do not believe that school administrators take the matter seriously. These statistics illustrate a widespread crisis that cannot be allowed to persist.

2.12 In addition to illuminating the problem's severity, the survey data also pointed toward potential solutions. One of the key conclusions was that the government must make significant, ongoing investments in professional supports – such as educational assistants, mental health professionals, social workers, and child and youth workers. In addition, funding is necessary to provide programs for those students who might need to be removed from the regular classroom for a time. Finally, the survey data made clear that increased funding for training remains an important requirement. Not only should there be proper informational training for

all staff on reporting procedures, but also teachers require intervention training that instructs on non-physical contact with students.

2.13 Special Education

On average, 18 per cent of students in each elementary school, along with 27 per cent of students in each high school, receive some form of assistance from the special education department (People for Education 2017). In the 2017-18 school year, the government allocated \$2.86 billion for the Special Education Grant, a \$100 million increase over the previous year (Ministry of Education 2017).

However, several important issues remain.

2.14 The introduction of the Identification Placement and Review (IPRC) process was a helpful step to ensure that students requiring assistance receive the supports and placements they need. However, it is not uncommon to hear of students waiting months, sometimes years to complete the IPRC process. In 2017, 64 percent of elementary schools and 55 per cent of high schools reported restrictions on the number of students who could be assessed that year; in total, as many as 37,000 students in Ontario were waiting for professional assessment, IPRC, or special education placements in 2017 (People for Education 2017). Children who experience delays in this process are forced to go without much-needed supports; this can negatively impact students' chances for long-term success (People for Education 2012).

2.15 There is also a persistent issue of the ratio of students to special education teachers, which has climbed steadily over the last ten years. During the 2014-15 school year, the average ratio in Ontario schools stood at 37:1 (People for Education 2015), and a recent study indicates that as many as 30 to 40 per cent of elementary schools in Eastern, Southwestern, and Northern Ontario, respectively, are still without a full-time special education teacher (People for Education 2017). With limited numbers of special education teachers, classroom teachers are now responsible for reporting, assessment, and completing paperwork, such as Individual Educational Plans. These factors combined create a negative impact on all students, as more classroom teachers are stretched too thin, and fewer special needs students have access to the skilled interventions they need to succeed.

2.16 Research has also shown that smaller classes enable teachers to more effectively address the unique learning needs of special education students while building safe, integrated classroom communities (Froese-Germain, Riel, and McGahey 2012; Bascia 2010). This is also true when the class has partially integrated special education students, and especially true when there are several students with special education needs, or students with multiple exceptionalities. Research from the Canadian Teachers' Federation found that 28 per cent of the nearly 10,000 classes surveyed had five or more students with special education needs, a percentage that has more than doubled in some jurisdictions over the past 10 years (CTF 2011). Teacher surveys now highlight "class composition as the biggest obstacle to professional satisfaction" (Bennett 2016). As such, the government must commit to developing provincial class size and composition guidelines, which will help teachers to provide the best possible learning environment for all students.

2.17 The government must ensure that school boards allocate special education resources in the most appropriate and effectual manner, including accountability measures to ensure the appropriate allocation of special education teachers. While there is a need for flexibility, so that boards can adapt to specific contexts and needs, there nevertheless remains a need for transparency and accountability, to ensure that money prescribed for various functions is allocated appropriately.

2.18 English Language Learners

Currently, the government provides schools with English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) grants based on census data and immigration statistics (Ministry of Education 2016). While these figures provide an estimate, they do not accurately reflect English Language Learners' (ELLs) needs based on actual proficiency. This problem is not a recent development. Fifteen years ago, the report of the Education Equality Task Force condemned the level of ESL funding in the funding formula, also pointing to the inadequacy of the duration of supports. Since then, this same conclusion has been reached on a number of occasions, most recently by Hugh Mackenzie and in the 2017 Auditor General of Ontario's annual report (Hugh Mackenzie 2017; Auditor General of Ontario 2017).

2.19 On average, elementary schools with 10 or more ELLs have one ESL teacher per 76 students. In secondary schools the ratio is 42:1 (People for Education 2015).

This issue has become increasingly problematic, given that 73 per cent of English-language elementary schools now have ESL students, compared with 43 per cent in 2002-03 (Auditor General of Ontario 2017).

- 2.20** As education economist Hugh Mackenzie has pointed out, the current funding formula “fails to recognize the additional costs associated with higher densities of ESL needs in areas with high levels of immigration” (Mackenzie 2017). Both Mackenzie and Ontario’s Auditor General have also recently noted the lack of oversight or transparency mechanisms, which would require that school boards direct ESL funding on programming for students who need the support.
- 2.21** Investing in English language supports, including specially trained teachers, ensures students are able to interact with their peers, achieve academic success, and ultimately contribute in our society. The need for increased funding for ELLs is more critical than ever as Ontario’s schools continue to welcome an increased number of newcomer students, as part of efforts to resettle refugees fleeing conflict in Syria.

Recommendations:

That the government provide additional funding to expand supports and services for students with mental health issues.

That the government provide funding for the proper training of all school staff on reporting procedures for incidents of violence in the workplace.

That the government provide intervention training that requires non-physical contact with a student.

That the government make significant investments in professional supports and services (e.g. psychologists, child and youth workers, social workers, and educational assistants).

That the government provide appropriate programs for students that might need to be removed from the regular classroom.

That the government provide sufficient funding for special education so as to ensure that classes are properly staffed and resourced.

That the government develop an accountability mechanism to ensure that special education teachers are deployed to support students with special needs.

That the government develop provincial class size and composition guidelines for the integration of students with special needs.

That the government ensure adequate funding and access to English Language Learning programs.

That the government include accountability and transparency measures, to ensure that funds for well-being initiatives are spent as intended.

3. SUPPORTING PUBLICLY FUNDED CATHOLIC EDUCATION

3.01 Ontario's education system is widely considered one of the most successful and high-performing in the world. In 2015, the five-year high school graduation rate reached 86.5 per cent for the first time in the province's history, representing a more than 18 per cent increase since 2004 (Ministry of Education 2016).

3.02 Publicly funded Catholic schools have made significant contributions to the overall excellence of this world-renowned system. Across Ontario, publicly funded Catholic schools provide high quality education to a third of Ontario's student population, and produce graduates who excel in all areas of 21st century society. The Catholic education system challenges students to develop their character and a deep understanding of the common good, through a modern and values-based curriculum. The unique approach to education offered by Ontario's Catholic schools is rooted in our province's history and culture. Catholic schools are fully integrated into the fabric of Ontario society and reflect Ontario's rich cultural diversity.

3.03 In recent years, declining enrolment has created questions around ways to maintain quality education, while finding cost savings. This question has led some to suggest that money could be saved by dismantling the Catholic education system.

- 3.04** In reality, scholarship suggests that the opposite is true. In their report on school board consolidation, Duncombe and Yinger (2001) found that over a 12-year period, consolidation generated almost zero long-term savings for boards that have more than 1,500 students (in Ontario, Catholic boards have an average of 19,000 students) (Ministry of Education 2016). An identical conclusion was reached in Saskatchewan, where Dr. John Wiens, former Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, put the matter succinctly: “If it’s about money, I think there is actually no evidence to show at all that anybody has saved money by [consolidating boards]” (CBC 2016).
- 3.05** One of the main reasons consolidation fails to generate substantial savings is that the majority of education funding is per-pupil, and tied to enrolment (Ministry of Education 2016). The funding follows the students. Thus, the only way to achieve significant savings would be to have thousands of students move to the private education system, and to close hundreds of publicly funded schools. Such massive upheaval would disrupt the livelihoods of tens of thousands of students, teachers, and education workers.
- 3.06** A more fruitful alternative would be to use provincially funded buildings in smarter, more collaborative ways (Heartfield 2012), and to incentivize inter-ministerial and municipal co-operation. One potential avenue is to consider shared facilities, specifically for co-terminus boards. In its 2014-15 Pre-Budget Consultation Summary, the government noted that “co-locating the schools of coterminous boards in the same facility was an idea with fairly broad support” (Ministry of Education 2014). Naturally, this would have to be done while protecting each school system’s unique framework and structures. However, research out of the United States suggests that this approach can reap considerable savings (PSBA 2011; New York State 2011).
- 3.07** There are several successful examples of such arrangements in Ontario. The Humberwood Centre houses Holy Child Catholic School, Humberwood Downs public school, a branch of the Toronto Public Library, the Humberwood Community Centre, as well as the 280-space Macaulay Child Development Centre. In Brantford, St. Basil’s Catholic Elementary School and Walter Gretzky Elementary School each have a wing in the 90,000-square-foot shared facility. These sorts of shared facilities can

be helpful in maximizing cost efficiency, specifically in rural areas where enrolment declines have raised the specter of school closures.

- 3.08** In addition to co-location, Ontarians can also benefit from shared services agreements (Ontario Education Services Corporation 2016). A case study feasibility analysis of 11 Ontario school boards revealed that shared services in areas such as energy and transportation could produce ongoing annual savings of \$3-8 million per year, which would represent a 13-28 per cent savings on these boards' annual total expenditures (Deloitte 2012). Ultimately, exploring options for shared services agreements and co-locating schools is a far more effective approach than board amalgamation, not only in meeting the needs of students and communities, but also in making efficient use of school space.

Recommendations:

That the government maintain full funding for all four publicly funded school systems, and ensure all funding continues to respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario.

That the government encourage boards to further explore shared-services agreements, as well as shared-facilities agreements for co-terminus boards.

4. INVESTING IN FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT STUDENTS

- 4.01** The 2015 publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report highlighted the serious challenges facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) populations in Canada. Central to the report, and several of the associated "Calls to Action," were issues pertaining to youth and education (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). While public attention is often drawn to the plight of students attending on-reserve schools, it is important to note that, in Ontario, 82 per cent of FNMI students attend a provincially funded school (Ministry of Education 2013). What is more, far from being concentrated in remote areas, EQAO data show that 92 per cent of elementary, and 96 per cent of secondary schools have at least some Aboriginal students (Gallagher-Mackay, Kidder, and Methot 2013).

- 4.02** Over the past 12 months, the government has made progress in several aspects of this policy area. The government has continued to work to embed Indigenous education into the school experience, such as the recent announcement of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tungasuvvingat Inuit, to provide province-wide Inuit curriculum materials, as well as support programs for Inuit students in Ontario schools (Nunatsiaq Online, 2017). In addition, the government has provided funding to allow all school boards across Ontario to hire a dedicated Indigenous Education Lead to support the implementation of Ontario's "Indigenous Education Strategy," with a focus on increasing Indigenous student achievement and well-being (Ministry of Education 2017).
- 4.03** These are important initiatives; however, there remains significant work to be done. FNMI students continue to lag behind their non-Indigenous counterparts in literacy and achievement (Ministry of Education 2014; Statistics Canada 2016; Gallagher-Mackay, Kidder, and Methot, 2013). These gaps have long-term consequences, as FNMI Canadians continue to have significantly lower employment rates, among 25-54 year olds (Government of Canada 2016).
- 4.04** As FNMI advocates point out, in order to address the current disparity in outcomes, the government must recognize two persistent gaps in its approach: the knowledge gap, and the resources gap (Dion 2009). In 2007, the government recognized that *all* students and educators require greater knowledge of "the rich cultures and histories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples" (Ministry of Education 2007). However, nearly a decade later, a pervasive knowledge gap remains. Only 10 per cent of elementary schools, and 30 per cent of high schools offer Indigenous cultural ceremonies. What's more, a "majority of schools do not offer any Indigenous education activities" (People for Education 2016).
- 4.05** Redressing this knowledge gap requires substantial investment in teacher-led professional development. The impact of integrating indigenous history and culture into daily lessons is well known (Dion, Johnston, and Rice, 2010; Dion, 2014). The resulting "indigenizing" of education not only helps broaden knowledge for all students, but also has direct and quantifiable benefits for improving outcomes of FNMI students (OECD 2017; Higher Education Strategy Associates 2013).

- 4.06** In addition to investing in the professional development of certified teachers, schools need additional resources to ensure that FNMI students have the proper supports. In the 2016-17 *Grants for Student Needs*, the government has set aside \$66.3 million as part of its FNMI education supplement, a nearly \$55-million increase since 2007. In addition, the government's new resource to support voluntary, confidential Indigenous student self-identification allows school boards to better customize programming to support Indigenous student achievement and well-being. These are positives steps. However, the government has yet to include sufficient accountability and transparency measures to ensure that funds are directed in the most impactful way. We continue to urge the Ministry of Education to work with other Ministries in order to ensure that FNMI students, their families, and teachers have access to the necessary supports, both in and outside of school.
- 4.07** It is important to acknowledge that gains will not be achieved through stopgap measures like Teach for Canada. Despite good intentions, having a private organization send inexperienced recent graduates to serve one of the highest-needs student populations will do nothing to redress the persistence of these educational gaps, and might even be counterproductive (Canadian Teachers' Federation 2015).

Recommendations:

That the government provide funding to integrate Indigenous education opportunities throughout the curriculum, and to ensure that students learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and history.

That the government provide funding for certified teachers to engage in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit-specific professional development.

That the government provide support to ensure that schools with a high percentage of Indigenous students are provided with adequate resources to meet the needs of this student population.

That the government include accountability and transparency measures to ensure that funds for FNMI education initiatives are spent as intended.

5. ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

- 5.01** Adult or continuing education programs, designed for learners over the age of 21 years of age, produce significant benefits, both for individuals and for society (Desjardins and Lee 2016). Specifically, adult education has been found to increase self-efficacy, civic and social engagement, as well as physical and mental well-being (Kil et al. 2013). These personal benefits are often in addition to economic benefits, derived from increased labour force participation of educated workers.
- 5.02** Regardless of age, all Ontario citizens deserve access to the province's high quality education system. Adult or continuing education learners often have specific and unique educational circumstances, which require particular supports. For instance, these learners may be new immigrants, or individuals who previously felt marginalized by the day school system. However, despite clear benefits and unique context, Continuing Education Credits are funded to only a fraction of the level of day school credit programs for younger learners. What's more, these programs are often delivered in less than desirable circumstances, such as in overcrowded classrooms where multiple courses are being delivered simultaneously.
- 5.03** A 2010 report conducted by Deloitte and commissioned by the Ministry of Education noted the lack of resources and supports available to adult learners. The report also found that "Boards' ability to meet current and future needs for viable adult and continuing education programs requires a cultural shift away from a concern with delivering adult and continuing education at 'no cost to the board,' towards putting students first in a fiscally responsible way" (Deloitte 2010). Following this, in 2014 the Ministry of Education sought feedback from education stakeholders on how to best implement an Adult Education Strategy for Ontario (Ministry of Education 2014).
- 5.04** Despite this, the government continues to underfund adult and continuing education programs. In particular, adult and continuing education students do not have access to the same breadth of resources available to younger learners in traditional day school programs. This includes a lack of early intervention processes, which would allow educators to proactively identify and target the necessary supports for adult learners. This often results in a detrimental consequence, whereby adult learners with a wide range of English language skills, and a variety of learner needs, are grouped together in the same class, and taught at the same level and pace.

- 5.05** The decision of adult learners to continue, or return to their education is a means by which to improve their lives; we must ensure that the necessary and proactive resources are in place to help these adult learners succeed.

Recommendations:

That the government fund adult and continuing education credit courses at the same level as regular day school credit courses.

That the government expand existing retraining programs, and develop new programs, to assist displaced workers in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully re-enter the job market.

6. FOCUS ON THE CLASSROOM

- 6.01** OECTA members are concerned about the continuation of top-down initiatives for education reform in Ontario. New plans, workshops, and accountability measures are implemented every year, often without consultation with teacher affiliates. The province must ensure that education funding is directed as closely as possible to the classroom. For instance, rather than promoting privatized attendance management policies, the government should instead be directing school boards to hire enough occasional teachers to meet classroom needs. Directing attention to the classroom will ensure that both students and teachers receive the support they need.
- 6.02** A recent government document revealed that, in the Ministry of Education alone, there are currently 85 ongoing initiatives or PPM-related activities. These wide-ranging programs and initiatives are ambitious, and add to the already heavy workload of teachers who are striving to deliver the curriculum, while integrating students with different needs, responding to individual learning styles, and incorporating new technologies. If the government is intent on keeping these new programs, it is imperative that they make funds available for release time so teachers are able to carry out all of their duties effectively.

6.03 School Boards' Co-operative Inc. – Administration, Bureaucracy, and Privatization

The ever-increasing number of senior administrators, such as supervisory officers and middle managers at school board levels, reflects a detrimental, top-down approach in the education system. Funds that should be directed to the needs of students and teachers are instead spent on financing redundant layers of bureaucracy.

6.04 OECTA is particularly concerned that an increasing number of Ontario school boards are turning to organizations such as the School Boards' Co-operative Inc. (SBCI) to advise them on issues of workers' compensation, health and safety, and attendance management, despite the fact that boards already employ staff for these purposes in schools and central offices. Companies such as SBCI hide their data and methodology from the public, making it impossible to verify findings. This is especially problematic given that SBCI profits by promoting these unverified findings.

6.05 This also has tangible public policy implications. Recently, SBCI's data on teacher absenteeism was incorporated into the Auditor General of Ontario's annual report (2017). Based on the data provided by SBCI, the Auditor General recommended that more school boards in Ontario adopt attendance management programs so as to combat the "crisis" in teacher sick leave. The problem is that the data upon which the recommendations are based are suspect. SBCI's calculations include not only sick leave, but also other forms of absenteeism (maternity leave, bereavement leave, unpaid personal leaves of absence, etc.). By conflating various forms of leave with "sick leave," and then refusing to disclose data or methodology, SBCI is able to artificially inflate the average and manufacture the appearance of a crisis, from which it then profits by providing the solution. When questioned about the veracity of SBCI's data, the Auditor General admitted to having taken the data at face value, presuming its accuracy.

6.06 School boards already employ qualified staff who are responsible for overseeing workers' compensation, health and safety, and attendance management. We are in strong opposition to any government program or initiative that promotes the intervention of private companies such as SBCI into the public education system.

6.07 Professional Development

The unhelpful top-down approach to education is also reflected in the delivery of professional development (PD). Designed to be replicated across many jurisdictions, each with different contexts, the top-down approach to PD fails to reflect teachers' actual needs or priorities. Research shows that this does not lead to tangible changes in the classroom (Jayaram, Moffit, and Scott 2012; Campbell, Lieberman, Yashkina, Rodway, Alexander, and Malik 2016). Countless studies note the superiority of teacher-led professional development (OECD 2009). Teacher-led PD allows training programs to reflect the experiences of teachers on the ground, rather than be dictated from central administration. OECTA continues to urge the government to specify that monies for professional development be allocated for teacher-directed and teacher-led initiatives.

6.08 This point seems especially pertinent given the influx of new Ministry initiatives. Every year sees the introduction of a host of new initiatives and workshops, and this past year was no different. If the government is intent on following-through with this suite of new programs and initiatives, then we hope that monies will be directed to allow for "job-embedded professional development" – self-directed, teacher-led, authentic experiences that allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn, and to connect their learning to their real experiences in the classroom (CEA 2015; Croft et al. 2010; Darling-Hammond and McGlaughlin 1995).

6.09 Standardized Testing

In September 2017, the government announced its intention to review Ontario's assessment practices, including the annual standardized tests administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). The stated goal is to ensure that the tests are culturally relevant, measure a wide range of learning, and reflect student well-being and equity.

6.10 Rather than merely looking to tinker with the tests by substituting questions or adding new sections, we believe that this review should serve as an opportunity to fundamentally rethink the EQAO testing regime, with an eye toward eliminating it entirely.

- 6.11** Research has shown that the province-wide standardized testing designed by EQAO has no positive impact on educational outcomes (Brand 2010). Despite these and other concerns over its effectiveness, more than \$31 million dollars was once again allocated for EQAO testing in Ontario, in 2017-18 (Ministry of Finance 2017). This figure does not take into account the time students and teachers spend preparing for these tests, or the resources re-allocated by school boards to improve test scores – time that would otherwise be useful to delivery subject-specific curriculum.
- 6.12** The time and money spent by school boards in preparing for EQAO testing means less money is available to invest in resources, such as science equipment, information and communications technology, musical instruments, or textbooks. OECTA members are concerned with the amount of teaching time that is being dedicated to test preparation at the expense of core curriculum areas.
- 6.13** The emphasis placed on achievement tests, such as those designed by EQAO, is particularly unhelpful given the body of research that shows these tests do not provide an adequate representation of the full spectrum of capacities and competences that develop active, productive, and responsible individuals. According to an OECD report, achievement tests fail to recognize skills and abilities valued by the labour market and society as whole, such as perseverance, self-esteem, tolerance of diverse opinions, trust, and attentiveness (Kautz et al. 2014).
- 6.14** It is our sincere hope that the government use the upcoming assessment review to carefully consider the value of EQAO testing. At the very least, OECTA advocates for the use of a more efficient random sample-based testing approach as an alternative to the costly policy of testing every student. This system, delivered at a fraction of the cost, would allow teachers and students to focus on classroom learning activities (OPSBA 2016).

Recommendations:

That the government reduce unnecessary bureaucracies and redirect these funds to the classroom.

That resources currently being allocated to Student Achievement initiatives be re-allocated to the classroom to directly support student achievement on a day-to-day basis.

That the government eliminate the EQAO standardized testing regime; or, at the very least, adopt a random sampling method to replace the current EQAO testing regime.

That the government link education funding, as closely as possible, to teacher-directed initiatives that support teachers and students in the classroom.

7. INVESTING IN ONTARIO'S FUTURE – ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

7.01 Investing in Ontario's publicly funded schools is one of the most important tools for shaping this province's future. It is also vital that the government carefully consider Ontario's youngest learners. Catholic teachers strongly advocate for accessible, affordable, high quality child care and early learning opportunities for all children. The government must also ensure that the early childhood educators (ECEs) who are tasked with supporting young learners are compensated fairly.

7.02 The benefits of investing in integrated early childhood development are many, and have proven to increase equity in learning outcomes, reduce poverty, and create a strong foundation for lifelong learning (McCuaig, Bertrand, and Shanker 2012). In fact, educators, academics, and business leaders agree that targeted investments in early childhood education and care (ECEC) are one of the most effective uses of taxpayer dollars (OECD 2012). These investments yield both short- and long-term returns for children and society as a whole. A 2012 report from TD Bank's Chief Economist, Craig Alexander, links early childhood development programs to economic benefits, such as reducing labour and skills shortages, and increasing productivity and innovation; the report also credits investment in ECEC with lifelong reductions in social welfare and healthcare costs (Alexander and Ignjatovic 2012).

7.03 This past year, the government made good on several promises with respect to child care. As part of its *Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework*, the

government renewed its commitment to provide 100,000 more child care spaces over the next five years, and also proposed to boost funding for fee subsidies in order to make child care more affordable (Ministry of Education 2017). Recently, the government announced 493 new child care rooms in schools, which will accommodate more than 8,400 children.

- 7.04** These efforts should be applauded. However, caution must continue to be exercised on several fronts as the government expands ECEC offerings. First, the government must ensure accessibility and affordability. A 2017 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives finds that the median monthly cost of full-day child care for infants in Toronto can be as high as \$1,758 (Macdonald and Friendly 2017). In fact, seven of the 10 cities with the highest monthly child care fees are in Ontario, where fee increases outpace inflation (Monsebraaten 2017). This is unacceptable. For many Ontarians, this cost is tantamount to a second mortgage. Given the social and economic benefits of ECEC, the government has an obligation not only to provide these services, but also to do so in a manner that is affordable for all Ontario families.
- 7.05** Second, it is critical to remember that ECEC must not be driven by “bottom-line” economics – doing so shifts the focus toward profitability, and away from optimizing children’s development. Currently, roughly 26 per cent of licensed ECEC spaces are run by for-profit enterprises (Toronto Star 2016; Macdonald and Klinger 2015). This is cause for concern. Research indicates that, both in Canada and abroad, for-profit child care models are consistently associated with a lower quality of early childhood education and care, due to lower staff-to-child ratios, lower wages for staff and lower levels of specialized training for caregivers (Prentice 2000; Rigby, Ryan, and Brooks-Gunn 2007; Cleveland 2008).
- 7.06** Finally, we must also ensure that ECEs are fairly compensated for the important work they do. The median hourly wage for child care workers in Ontario is just \$18 per hour, and starting salaries for ECEs can be as low as \$24,000 per year – roughly \$3,000 above the Ontario poverty line (Statistics Canada 2017). These wage levels fail to recognize the tremendous responsibilities ECEs undertake, and prevents many qualified, committed people from entering the field at all (Warren 2016). We hope

that public subsidies for child care will enable ECEs to receive pay that is commensurate with their skills and value.

- 7.07** Public investment in high quality child care reduces barriers to affordable and accessible options, and provides a pathway to increased economic stability by allowing individuals to return to work or further their education. A publicly funded model, led by qualified and adequately compensated professionals, ensures that children and parents from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to the opportunities afforded by ECEC.

Recommendations:

That the government invest in universal, accessible, regulated, and publicly funded child care and early learning.

That the government provide funding to ensure that all early childhood educators receive salaries commensurate with their training and responsibilities.

8. REACHING OUR FULL POTENTIAL

- 8.01** If we, as a society, are to reach our full potential, we must make a concerted effort to break down the social and financial barriers that many citizens continue to face. Poverty and inequality, especially the persistent issue of child poverty, prevents Ontarians from meeting their basic needs, finding and contributing to their communities, and achieving personal goals. Every day, teachers see this firsthand, as students across the province arrive to school hungry, tired, and unable to participate in class. This does not have to be the reality. The government possess the tools to create policies and programs to lift children and families out of poverty and create an equal playing field for all.

8.02 Fighting Poverty and Inequality

In 1989, the federal government pledged to end child poverty by the turn of the millennium; provinces echoed this call. However, nearly three decades later, and the national child poverty rate has increased from 15.8 to 17 per cent (Statistics Canada 2016). The problem is particularly acute in Ontario, where nearly 500,000 children

are living in poverty (Campaign 2000 2017). In this, Toronto continues to hold the dubious distinction as being “Canada’s child poverty capital,” with roughly 25 per cent of Toronto families with children age 12 or under living in housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or in poor state of repair. Ontario also fares poorly when it comes to the general issue of inequality. Recent figures show that the poorest families in Ontario are earning less than they were in 2000, while during the same period richer families have watched their income grow (Dunn 2017). In fact, the top half of Ontario families in terms of income now takes home 81 per cent of all earnings, up from 78 per cent in 2000 (CCPA 2017).

- 8.03** In the past year, the government has taken several critical steps toward creating a foundation to reduce child and family poverty. Provincial government investments in child care, the increase in minimum wage, and the introduction of a Basic Income Pilot are promising initiatives. Federally, the Liberal government announced that beginning in July 2018, Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments will be adjusted as the cost of living increases – two years earlier than previously promised. The change will also see the qualification threshold for families adjust along with the cost of living (Government of Canada 2017). These are important steps, provincially and federally; however, if the objective is to eradicate poverty, then more action is required.
- 8.04** Programs such as Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), although improved, continue to be hampered by overly complicated rules, which negatively affects social assistance rates (Campaign 2000 2017). To ensure that these programs provide quality supports and services, the government should implement immediate increases both to the OW and the ODSP. At the same time, we recommend an increase to the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB). The OCB was indexed in 2015, which coincided with the first of two consecutive years of reduction in child poverty rates (Ministry of Community and Social Services 2016). Further increases to the OCB will likely have continued positive effects on child poverty reduction. If the government is truly interested in providing fairness and opportunity for all, it must take immediate action to address the needs of Ontario’s most vulnerable citizens.

8.05 Empowering Ontario's Young Workers

Throughout Ontario, the rise in employment precarity over the past several decades has had a particular impact on young workers. Often, youth are forced to settle for temporary jobs, such as unpaid internships, with unpredictable schedules and no access to benefits. Today, almost a third of young workers are employed in temporary jobs (CUPE 2015).

8.06 The introduction of the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* will have positive impacts on young workers. At a base level, raising the minimum wage will benefit young workers, many of whom earn lower hourly wages than their core-age counterparts (CLC 2016). Furthermore, the government has supplemented the labour law legislation with an incentive for employers to hire and retain young workers. Small businesses with fewer than 100 employees will get an incentive of \$1,000 to hire a young person aged 15 to 29, and another \$1,000 if the company retains that worker for six months (Ministry of Finance 2017).

8.07 At the same time, there are potential negative consequences associated with the new labour legislation. In particular, updates to the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) will maintain a lower wage structure for certain jobs, such as liquor servers and students under 18 years old – though their wages will increase by the same percentage as the general minimum wage (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2017).

8.08 These exemptions will disproportionately impact young workers in Ontario. Data show that 33.7 per cent of young workers are employed in the retail, hospitality, and food service sectors, compared to 13.4 per cent of workers aged 30 and over (UFCW 2017). Further, 55.2 per cent of young workers employed in the retail, hospitality, and food service sectors were students, and 62.4 per cent of those working in these sectors were youth aged 15 to 19 (UFCW 2017). In effect, maintaining exemptions in the *ESA* creates a two-tiered labour market, with young workers disadvantaged and undervalued relative to the general worker population.

8.09 Fostering a labour market that values well-paying, full-time work for our youth ensures that all Ontarians receive the maximum return on their investments in publicly funded education. The province's "Employment programs for people under 30" website highlights paid learning experiences, specialized training for skills in

emerging markets, and entrepreneurship opportunities as levers to reduce youth unemployment. While some combination of these programs may be effective, we are wary of a solution that overemphasizes temporary positions and the need for youth to take on additional financial responsibilities to create their own job opportunities. OECTA urges the government to build on the progress made through labour law reform, and to extend these advances to young workers.

8.10 Wages

Although the passage of the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* introduced broad and sweeping changes to Ontario's labour laws, much of the coverage centred on increases to the minimum wage. After strong advocacy from Ontario's unions and other worker-advocates, the government passed legislation that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The minimum wage will increase to \$14 on January 1, 2018, then to \$15, on January 1, 2019.

8.11 This will undoubtedly have significant benefits for Ontario workers. Currently, roughly one-third of Ontario workers earn less than \$15 per hour (CCPA 2017). Thus, roughly 30 per cent of Ontario's workforce will immediately benefit from this legislation. Further, research clearly demonstrates the short- and long-term advantages of minimum wage increases. UBC economist David Green has concluded that the positive impact of reducing income inequality and increasing incomes for low-wage workers will offset any reduction in employment that could result from the rise in wage costs (Green 2015).

8.12 However, there remain two areas of the legislation that are problematic: timing and exemptions. Ontario workers have advocated for raising the minimum wage for over a decade. They should not have to wait for this legislation to come into full effect. Delaying full implementation of the \$15 minimum wage leaves open the possibility that legislation could be rolled back. Ontario workers deserve better. Secondly, the aforementioned exemptions included in the legislation devalue the contributions of young workers and those in particular industries. All Ontario workers deserve the benefits of increased minimum wage. All Ontario workers deserve the ability to provide for themselves and their families, today.

Recommendations:

That the government implement policies to reduce income inequality.

That the government provide immediate increases to Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, and the Ontario Child Benefit.

That the Youth Jobs Strategy focus on paid work with opportunities for advancement, with limited reliance on self-employment.

That the government eliminate all minimum wage exemptions.

9. CONCLUSION

9.01 Running throughout the government's 2017 Fall Economic Statement was the theme of fairness, and the promise to invest in social programs and infrastructure. This was the platform upon which Kathleen Wynne was elected in 2013. However, four years later, Ontario still spends less per capita on programs than any other province in Canada. This should not be a source of pride. It is time for the government to fulfil its mandate. Investing wisely in education, child care, employment opportunities, and other public goods will ensure that all Ontarians have the best chance to succeed in life. The provincial budget must honour the government's promises, and make bold investments in Ontario's future.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.01 That the government provide additional funding to expand supports and services for students with mental health issues.

10.02 That the government provide funding for the proper training of all school staff on reporting procedures for incidents of violence in the workplace.

10.03 That the government provide intervention training that requires non-physical contact with a student.

- 10.04** That the government make significant investments in professional supports and services (e.g. psychologists, child and youth workers, social workers, and educational assistants).
- 10.05** That the government provide appropriate programs for students that might need to be removed from the regular classroom.
- 10.06** That the government provide sufficient funding for special education so as to ensure that classes are properly staffed and resourced.
- 10.07** That the government develop an accountability mechanism to ensure that special education teachers are deployed to support students with special needs.
- 10.08** That the government develop provincial class size and composition guidelines for the integration of students with special needs.
- 10.09** That the government ensure adequate funding and access to English Language Learning programs.
- 10.10** That the government include accountability and transparency measures, to ensure that funds for well-being initiatives are spent as intended.
- 10.11** That the government maintain full funding for all four publicly funded school systems, and ensure all funding continues to respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario.
- 10.12** That the government encourage boards to further explore shared-services agreements, as well as shared-facilities agreements for co-terminus boards.
- 10.13** That the government provide funding to integrate Indigenous education opportunities throughout the curriculum, and to ensure that students learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and history.
- 10.14** That the government provide funding for certified teachers to engage in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit-specific professional development.

- 10.15** That the government provide support to ensure that schools with a high percentage of Indigenous students are provided with adequate resources to meet the needs of this student population.
- 10.16** That the government include accountability and transparency measures to ensure that funds for FNMI education initiatives are spent as intended.
- 10.17** That the government fund adult and continuing education credit courses at the same level as regular day school credit courses.
- 10.18** That the government expand existing retraining programs, and develop new programs, to assist displaced workers in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully re-enter the job market.
- 10.19** That the government reduce unnecessary bureaucracies and redirect these funds to the classroom.
- 10.20** That resources currently being allocated to Student Achievement initiatives be re-allocated to the classroom to directly support student achievement on a day-to-day basis.
- 10.21** That the government eliminate the EQAO standardized testing regime; or, at the very least, adopt a random sampling method to replace the current EQAO testing regime.
- 10.22** That the government link education funding, as closely as possible, to teacher-directed initiatives that support teachers and students in the classroom.
- 10.23** That the government invest in universal, accessible, regulated, and publicly funded child care and early learning.
- 10.24** That the government provide funding to ensure that all early childhood educators receive salaries commensurate with their training and responsibilities.
- 10.25** That the government implement policies to reduce income inequality.

- 10.26** That the government provide immediate increases to Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, and the Ontario Child Benefit.
- 10.27** That the Youth Jobs Strategy focus on paid work with opportunities for advancement, with limited reliance on self-employment.
- 10.28** That the government eliminate all minimum wage exemptions.

11. WORKS CITED

Alexander, Craig, and Ignjatovic, Dina. (2012). "Early Childhood Education Has Widespread and Long Lasting Benefits." *TD Economics Special Report* (November 27).

Bascia, Nina. (2010). *Reducing Class Size: What Do We Know?* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Bennett, Paul. (2016) *Special Education: Class Composition, Inclusion and Teaching in Today's Classroom*. Washington, D.C.: ReserchED.

Boak, Angela, Hamilton, Hayley A., Adlaf, Edward M., Henderson, Joanna L., and Mann, Robert E. (2015). *The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students: Detailed OSDUHS Findings*. Toronto: CAMH.

British Columbia Teachers' Federation. *Teach for Canada Policy Brief*. Vancouver: BC Teachers' Federation.

Brand, Joanna. (2010). "EQAO in Our Schools: Members Speak Out." *ETFO Voice*.

Campbell, Carol, Lieberman, Ann, Yashkina, Anna, Rodway, Joelle, Alexander, Sharon, and Malik, Sofya. (2016). *Teacher Learning & Leadership Program Research Report for 2015-16*. Toronto: Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2017). "Study Busts Myths About Who Benefits from \$15 Minimum Wage." *CCPA* (July 13).

Canadian Education Association. (2015). *The Facts on Education: What is Effective Teacher Professional Development?* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Canadian Labour Congress. (2016). *Diverse, Engaged, and Precariously Employed: An In-Depth Look at Young Workers in Canada, Research Paper 2016*. Ottawa: Canadian Labour Congress.

Canadian Teachers' Federation. (2015). *Teach for Canada Briefing Document*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Canadian Teachers' Federation. (2011). *The Voice of Canadian Teachers on Teaching and Learning*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation.

- Canadian Union of Public Employees. (2015). "Young Workers and the Future of Work." *Canadian Union of Public Employees – Economy at Work* (October 5).
- Campaign 2000. (2017). *A Poverty-Free Canada Requires Federal Leadership: 2017 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada*. Toronto: Campaign 2000.
- Campaign 2000. (2017). *Ending Child & Family Poverty Is Not Negotiable: Building Stronger Foundations for Ontario Families, Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Ontario*. Toronto: Campaign 2000.
- CBC Editorial Board. (2016). "No Big Bucks To Be Saved By Merging Schools Divisions: Expert." *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (November 17).
- Children's Mental Health Ontario. (2016). *Pre-Budget Submission 2016: Improving Mental Health Outcomes for Ontario's Children and Youth*. Toronto: Children's Mental Health Ontario.
- Cleveland, G. (2008). *If it Don't Make Dollars, Does that Mean that it Don't Make Sense? Commercial, Non-Profit and Municipal Child Care in the City Of Toronto*. Toronto: City of Toronto, Children's Services Division.
- Cornaglia, Francesca, Crivellaro, E., and McNally, S. (2012). *Mental Health and Education Decisions*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics.
- Croft, Andrew, Jane Coggshall, Megan Dolan, Elizabeth Powers, and Joellen Killion. (2010). *Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Milbrey McLaughlin. (1995). "Policies that Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform." *Phi Delta Kappan* 76, no. 8: 597-604.
- Deloitte. (2010). *Adult and Continuing Education Business Model Review: Final Report*. Toronto: Deloitte.
- Desjardins, R, and Lee, J. (2016). *Earnings and employment benefits of adult higher education in comparative perspective: evidence based on the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*. Los Angeles: UCLA Press.
- Dion, S.D. (2009). *Braiding Histories Learning From Aboriginal Peoples Experiences and Perspectives*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Dion, S. (2014). *The Listening Stone: Learning from the Ministry of Education's First Nation, Inuit and Métis-Focused Collaborative Inquiry Project*. Toronto: Council of Ontario Directors of Education.
- Dion, S.D., Johnston, K. and Rice, C.M. (2010). *Decolonizing Our Schools: Aboriginal Education in the Toronto District School Board*. Toronto: York University.
- Deloitte. (2012). *The Case for Shared Services in Ontario's School Board Sector: A Feasibility Study Based on Eleven School Boards*. Toronto: Deloitte & Touche LLP.

- Duncombe, William, and Yinger, J. (2005). *Does School District Consolidation Cut Costs?* Syracuse: Center for Policy Research, Syracuse University.
- Dunn, Trevor. (2017). "Poor Ontario families getting poorer: new report." *CBC News* (August 15).
- Froese-Germain, Bernie, Riel, Rick, and McGahey, Bob. (2012). *Class size and Student Diversity: Two Sides of the Same Coin*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation.
- Gallagher-Mackay, Kelly, Kidder, A., and Methot, S. (2013). *First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education: Overcoming Gaps in Provincially Funded Schools*. Toronto: People for Education.
- Government of Canada (2017). "Canada Child Benefit – Overview." *Canada Revenue Agency* (modified: November 9).
- Government of Canada. (2006) *The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- Government of Canada. (2016). *Study: Literacy and numeracy among off-reserve First Nations people and Métis, 2012*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Government of Canada. (2016). *Annual Income Estimates for Census Families and Individuals (T1 Family File): Family Data*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Green, David. (2015). *The Case for Increasing the Minimum Wage: What does the academic literature tell us?* Toronto: CCPA.
- Heartfield, Kate. (2012). "Separate schools: the subject that won't go away." *Ottawa Citizen* (June 16).
- Higher Education Strategy Associates. (2013). *Access to Post-Secondary Transition Programs for Aboriginal Students*. Gatineau: Employment and Social Development Canada.
- Jayaram, Kartik, Moffit, A., and Scott, D. (2012). *Breaking the Habit of Ineffective Professional Development for Teachers*. Chicago: McKinsey & Co.
- Johnston, David, Propper, C., Pudney, S., and Shields, M. (2011). *Child Mental Health and Educational Attainment: Multiple Observers and the Measurement Error Problem*. Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol.
- Kautz, Tim, James J. Heckman, Ron Diris, Bas ter Weel, Lex Borghans. (2014) *Fostering and Measuring Skills: Improving Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills to Promote Lifetime Success*. Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA).
- Kil, Monika, Ricarda Motschilnig, and Bettina Thöne-Geyer. (2013). *What Can Adult Education Accomplish? The Benefits of Adult Learning: The Approach, Measurement and Prospects*. Bonn, Germany: The German Institute for Adult Education Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Legislative Assembly of Ontario. (2017). *An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Macdonald, David, and Friendly, M. (2017). *Time Out: Child Care Fees in Canada 2017*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Macdonald, David, and Klinger, Thea. (2015). *They Go Up So Fast: 2015 Child Care Fees in Canadian Cities*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Mackenzie, Hugh. (2017). *Shortchanging Ontario Students: An Overview and Assessment of Education Funding in Ontario*. Toronto: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

McCuaig, Kerry, Bertrand, Jane, and Shanker, Stuart. (2012). *Trends in Early Education and Child Care*. Toronto: Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, OISE/University of Toronto.

Ministry of Children and Youth Services. (2016). *Published Plan and Annual Report 2016-2017*. Toronto: Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *An Adult Education Strategy for Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2016). *2017-18 Education Funding Engagement Guide*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2017). *2017-18 Education Funding: A Guide to the Grants for Student Needs*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *Consultation Summary: School Board Efficiencies and Modernization*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *Implementation Plan: Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework, Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2016). *Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education Discussion Document*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2013). *A Solid Foundation: Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2017). *Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Resource Guide*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2017). *What We Heard: Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in Our Society*. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Finance (2017). *Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*. Toronto: Ministry of Finance.

Ministry of Finance. (2017). *Ontario Passes Legislation to Create Fairness and Opportunity*. Toronto: Ministry of Finance.

Monsebraaten, Laurie. (2017). "Child-care fee hikes outpace inflation with Toronto parents hardest hit." *Toronto Star* (December 12).

Monsebraaten, Laurie. (2016). "Ontario urged to expand daycare in non-profit sector." *Toronto Star* (September 23).

New York State, Assembly Committee on Local Governments. (2011). *New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness Report*. Buffalo: New York State.

Nunatsiaq Online. (2017). "Tungasuvvingat Inuit signs five-year education pact with Ontario." Nunatsiaq Online (December 4).

OECD. (2012). *Investing In High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2009). *The Professional Development of Teachers*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2017) *Promising Practises in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2017). *Annual Report 2017, Volume 1 of 2*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Education Services Corporation. (2016). *School Energy Coalition Summary Status Report*. Toronto: Ontario Education Services Corporation.

Ontario Public School Boards' Association. (2016). *Discussion Paper: EQAO and Large Scale Testing In Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Public School Boards' Association.

Pennsylvania School Boards Association, Education and Research Policy Center. (2009). *Merger/Consolidation of School Districts: Does it Save Money and Improve Student Achievement*. Mechanicsburg: Pennsylvania School Boards Association.

People for Education, (2017). *Competing Priorities: People for Education Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools, 2017*. Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education. (2016). *The Geography of Opportunity: What's Needed for Broader Student Success* (Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2016). Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education. (2012). *Making Connections beyond School Walls: People for Education Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2012*. Toronto: People for Education.

People for Education (2015). *Ontario's schools: The gap between policy and reality* (Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2015). Toronto: People for Education.

Prentice, S. (2000). "The Business of Child Care: The Issue of Auspice." In L. Prochner & N. Howe (Eds.). *Early childhood care and education in Canada* (pp. 273-289). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Rigby, E., Ryan, R., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2007). "Child Care Quality in Different State Policy Contexts." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26 (4), 887-907.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

United Food and Commercial Workers. (2017). *By the Numbers: Employment of Young Workers in Canada*. UFCW (January 11).

Veldman, Karin, Bültmann, U., Stewart, R.E., Ormel, J., Verhulst, F.C., and Reijneveld, S.A. (2014). "Mental Health Problems and Educational Attainment in Adolescence: 9-Year Follow-Up of the TRAILS Study," in *Adolescent Mental Health: Connections to the Community* (ed. Areej Hassan). Boca Raton: Apple Academic Press.

Warren, May. (2016). "Early Childhood Education students sound the alarm about crippling low wages." *Metro News* (December 14).