

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
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Dear Minister,

As engaged parents, we are very concerned about the changes to public education being proposed by your government, particularly the changes to average class size. You have spoken often about the need for a Parents' Bill of Rights in Ontario's public education system, but we also believe that we, the parents and guardians, have collective *responsibilities* to our public education system. School Councils have a purpose, namely:

through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (1)." Education Act Ontario Regulation 612/00

However, targeting public education to theoretically balance the budget will actually cost more money in the long run, because it will take longer for students to successfully finish high school.

Due to the wide variety of needs present in most classrooms, the proposed larger class sizes are problematic. Larger classes will

1. impact the teacher's ability to provide one on one learning...
2. impact classroom management...
3. reduce access to resources in the classroom...
4. reduce in the variety of courses offered...
5. Credit recovery/rescue courses will be jeopardized, impacting some of our most vulnerable students.
6. Extra-curricular activities will also be impacted, with less teachers and staff available...

New E-learning requirements are another issue. There is no evidence to suggest that mandatory e-learning courses would lead to improved educational outcomes. Not all students have access to technology, or the self-discipline and experience to be successful in an e-learning course. Our graduation rates are slowly but surely moving up, but these initiatives will have a negative effect.

Moving the average class size funding in Ontario Secondary schools from 22 up to 28 students for every secondary teacher and e-learning funded at 35:1 will result in the cutting of over one quarter of current courses from the system, more in rural areas with already small schools. Also, many secondary schools already have classes of over 30 students, in order to accommodate ESL, trades, and other classes that require smaller classes.

Although developing resilience is important, compromising learning opportunities for students is not how we want this to be supported. Resiliency is best learned through supportive relationships, and the teaching of coping skills. These strategies are best delivered by parents, and by educators through close contact, not a ratio of 35 or 40 to 1.

The systems our children need require more, not less, funding. We will press your government on these issues as part of our responsibility to hold the education system accountable.

Sincerely,

The parents of xxxx school

CC:

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