

BUILDING BETTER SCHOOLS

AN ETFO EDUCATION AGENDA FOR THE 2011 PROVINCIAL ELECTION



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Fédération des enseignantes et des
enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario





FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

HOW CAN WE DO OUR BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN?

In public schools, that's the question we all care about. In October 2011 there will be a provincial election in Ontario. Elementary teachers will be talking about how our public schools can be the best they can be.

ETFO members – elementary public school teachers, early childhood educators, and educational support personnel – work in 2,600 schools across Ontario. We teach and support over one million children. In our schools, we see what is working and what is not. And we have a powerful desire to improve public education. These are some of our suggestions. ■

1

MORE MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Classroom teachers can share how children are doing at school every day. In comparison, the government's standardized tests don't really tell us very much, and almost nothing about an individual child's progress. Teachers are calling on the government to reduce standardized testing and instead place more emphasis on teachers' classroom assessment. Teachers' day-by-day assessments are much more useful to parents and students and much more supportive of real learning. ■





2

GREATER ACCESS TO SPECIALIST TEACHERS

We know that learning is more than math and language. Real learning includes the arts, design and technology, physical education, and libraries. We have lost many of our specialist teachers in Ontario over the past twenty years. Teachers are calling on the government to ensure that students have access to teacher librarians and specialist teachers in the arts, design and technology, and physical and health education in order to provide an enriched and engaging program for all elementary students. ■

3 SMALL CLASSES FOR ALL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Small classes provide the best environment for learning and teaching. Ontario has gone a long way to reducing primary class sizes. But in too many schools classes in grades 4 to 8 now have more than 30 students. And the new early learning classrooms are bigger than traditional kindergarten classes. Teachers are calling on the government to reduce class sizes in grades 4 to 8 and in full-day early learning kindergarten. This will give teachers the opportunity to provide individual attention to every student and provide more activity-based, hands-on learning that is key to engaging many of our students. ■





4

MORE RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

We all know that children learn in different ways. Teachers recommend greater support for students with identified special needs and students who are English language learners so that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. ■

5 GREATER FOCUS ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION

Students in Ontario's public schools are diverse. They come from many different countries; they speak different languages; they live in different circumstances. Our schools need to embrace them all. Teachers recommend that the government provide more support for children living in poverty and children whose families are marginalized. They recommend that schools become community hubs, offering a range of children's services. ■



IN ONTARIO'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS, STUDENTS ARE LEARNING

Ontario public schools are good. Students are learning. But we can always do better. Elementary teachers are encouraging you to talk about public education, ask your MPP about public education, make public education an issue in the province.

For more information, visit www.etfo.ca. Talk to your child's teacher. Find out what we need to do to make our schools the best they can be.



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