



# **ETFO Submission to the Ministry of Education**

## **2022-23 Education Funding Feedback**

November 2021


**Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario**  
**Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario**

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ETFO represents 83,000 elementary public school teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel and professional support personnel across the province. Its Building Better Schools education agenda can be viewed at **BuildingBetterSchools.ca**.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) represents 83,000 public elementary school teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel and professional support personnel across the province and is the largest teacher union in Canada.

ETFO is an important stakeholder in the public education system and appreciates the opportunity to make a written submission to the Ministry of Education in response to the consultations on education funding for the 2022-23 school year.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for people across the province. While no one has been left untouched by this public health crisis, the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, racialized and low-income communities. In its plans for a post-pandemic recovery, Ontario must consider the impact on these communities and invest in the public services necessary to build a more just and equitable province. Those investments must include public education.

The pandemic has been a reminder of the important role of public schools in our communities and to the overall well-being of students. The pandemic has exacerbated concerns about large class sizes, the poor physical condition of schools, the lack of access to technology and the Internet, and the government's failure to provide appropriate funding to meet the needs of all students, particularly students with special needs, English Language Learners and those from marginalized communities. These concerns were evident even before the pandemic due to devastating cuts to public education.

Yet, despite these pre-existing challenges, educators have shown incredible resilience and commitment throughout the pandemic. They have consistently done their very best to provide their students with high-quality public education but have, too often, felt abandoned by the provincial government.

In this submission, ETFO will address the themes included in the Ministry’s consultation document titled *2022-23 Education Funding Guide*. ETFO will also put forward recommendations that address some other important aspects of Ontario’s public education system. It is ETFO’s hope that the government seriously considers these recommendations and begins to allocate the necessary resources to undo the damage caused by years of funding cuts. Ontario students deserve a high-quality, equitable, inclusive public education system. Investment in this world-class system is the key to Ontario’s social and economic recovery after the pandemic.

## Provincial Economic Outlook

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a glaring spotlight on the challenges faced by the province. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the necessary public health restrictions triggered by it, have impacted economies worldwide. Various governments have responded with increased spending and stimulus packages to reduce the economic impact felt by workers. The pandemic is not over yet, which means governments must continue to support workers while, at the same time, continue to protect the public from COVID-19.

The economic data points to recovery over the next four years. To sustain this recovery, the government must invest in public education and in its public sector. While Ontario’s economy contracted by 5.1 per cent in 2020, the current outlook for Ontario in 2022 and beyond is positive news for the province<sup>1</sup> (See Table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> 2021 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review (2021). [budget.ontario.ca/2021/fallstatement/pdf/2021-fall-statement-en.pdf](https://budget.ontario.ca/2021/fallstatement/pdf/2021-fall-statement-en.pdf)

With a path to economic recovery and growth, now is the time for the government to increase spending in public education.

**Table 1: Ontario’s Economic Growth, Real GDP (%)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021p	2022p	2023p	2024p
<b>Ontario Real GDP Growth (%)</b>	2.7	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.2	2.1	-5.1	4.3	4.5	2.6	2.0

Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of Ontario<sup>2</sup>

p = Ontario Ministry of Finance planning projection based on external sources.

## Education Funding

Over the past decade, teachers and other educators have done their part in responding to the fiscal pressures created by the province. In October 2019, the Financial Accountability Office (FAO) looked at compensation growth in the public education system. It found that between 2010 and 2018 teacher base salary grew on average by 0.9 per cent, while wage growth in the private sector grew by 1.8 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, in 2019 the government adopted Bill 124 which limited compensation growth for public sector workers to 1 per cent annually. This legislation, which ETFO and others believe is unconstitutional, disproportionately impacts workers earning lower incomes in professions where women are overrepresented, including early childhood educators and daily occasional teachers. As a result of Bill 124, the salary increases for teachers and education workers have been capped at 1 per cent from 2019 until 2022 and have been easily surpassed by inflation.

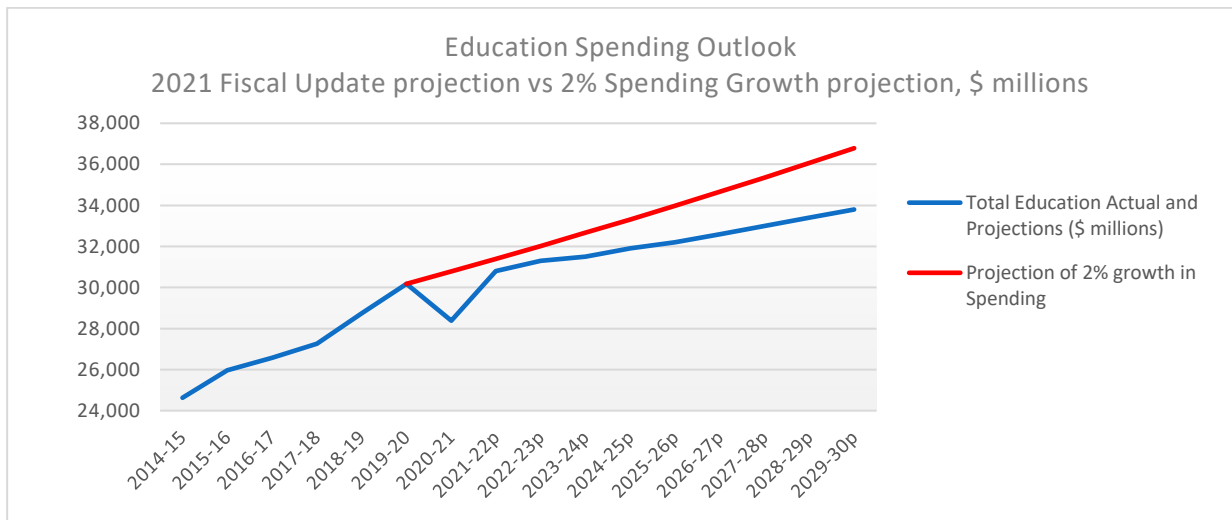
<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance, Government of Ontario [ontario.ca/page/ministry-finance](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-finance)

<sup>3</sup> Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (2019). *Comparing Ontario’s Fiscal Position with Other Provinces*. [fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/inter-prov-comparisons-feb-2019](https://fao.on.org/en/Blog/Publications/inter-prov-comparisons-feb-2019)

While Ontario’s economy appears to be on a path to economic recovery, the government delivered its fall economic statement void of any mention of public education, proving once again that Ontario’s students and educators are not a priority for this government.

The fall economic statement cut \$467 million dollars from the public education budget for 2021-22, and projected future funding allocations for the sector will grow by only 1.2 per cent.<sup>4</sup> According to the FAO’s review of Ministry programs and commitments, education spending would need to grow by 2.0 per cent to maintain current levels of service, which is almost double the government’s planned spending growth rate in education.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the fall economic statement, the FAO projected that the cumulative funding gap from 2021-22 to 2029-30 based on the government data was \$12.3 billion. Once the additional funding cut of \$467 million is included in the fall economic spending, this funding gap grows to \$15.8 billion (See Chart 1).

**Chart 1: Ontario Education Spending Outlook**



Source: Authors Calculation based on the Ministry of Finance, Government of Ontario, Financial Accountability Office of Ontario<sup>6</sup>  
 p = Ontario Ministry of Finance planning projection based on external sources.

<sup>4</sup> Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (2019). *Comparing Ontario’s Fiscal Position with Other Provinces*. [fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/inter-prov-comparisons-feb-2019](https://fao.on.org/en/Blog/Publications/inter-prov-comparisons-feb-2019)

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education: Spending Plan Review (2021). [fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/2021-education-estimates#\\_ftn5](https://fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/2021-education-estimates#_ftn5)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

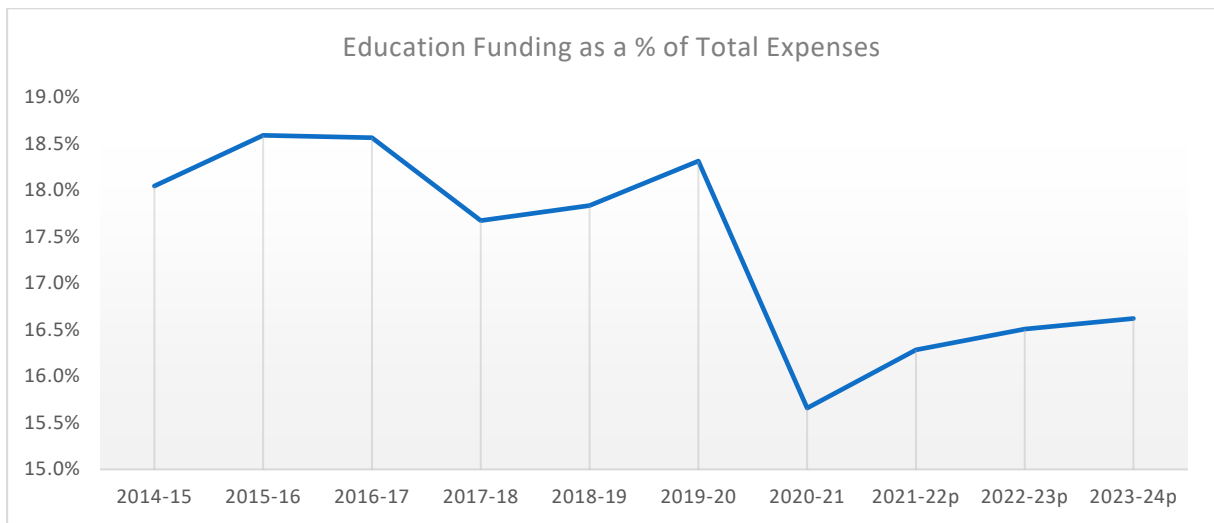
The government must close this funding gap and provide a plan for future increases to funding for public education that not only meet the benchmark established by the FAO for maintaining *status quo* service levels, but that also provide a path for improvements to Ontario’s public education system.

Ontario’s education funding formula needs to be fully reviewed and reformed. It is based on a model introduced two decades ago that was designed to reduce overall expenditure for public schools. The last comprehensive review of the Ontario education funding formula was by the Education Equality Task Force headed by Dr. Mordechai Rozanski in 2002. While previous governments increased education funding by introducing important initiatives such as primary class size caps and Full-Day Kindergarten, they failed to address some of the original cuts made by predecessor governments. An independent, external review of Ontario’s education funding formula is required to ensure that the education funding formula reflects the actual needs of students in 2022 and beyond.

Under the current government, public education funding has been reduced significantly. Education as a percentage of total government expenditures has fallen dramatically since the current government has taken office. Education funding was 18.3 per cent of total government expenditures in 2019-20; it is projected to be 16.6 per cent in 2023-24 (See Chart 2).



**Chart 2: Education Funding as a percentage of total government expenses**



Source: Authors Calculation based on the Ministry of Finance, Government of Ontario  
 p = Ontario Ministry of Finance planning projection based on external sources.

Budget 2022 and the upcoming release of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) provide an opportunity for the government to change course and properly address critical and urgent needs in public education.

Educators, parents, students, and the public at large will be paying close attention to the upcoming release of education funding parameters. They will be looking for a change in direction away from damaging cuts and towards investment in our public education system and the public services Ontario families rely on.

**Recommendations:**

1. Reinstate the \$467 million cut from core education funding in the fall economic update.
2. Increase funding to public education to close the funding gap identified by the FAO.
3. Establish an independent, external review of Ontario’s education funding formula to ensure it reflects actual student needs.

## Mental Health Supports

The Ministry of Education maintains that the mental health and well-being of students continues to be an important priority. In its consultation document, the Ministry refers to the allocation of \$80M in student mental health funding to boards, with \$45M directed to student mental health in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) for 2021-22. However, \$25.4M of that \$45M in funding from the GSN is allocated to the Mental Health Workers Allocation which excludes elementary schools, since the Mental Health Workers Staffing Component is only for regulated mental health workers in secondary schools. The government has committed to a renewed focus on achievement, equity, mental health and well-being, and yet there are no equitable supports for student mental health and well-being in elementary schools.

A 2019 report from People for Education<sup>7</sup> on supporting students' mental health found that:

- only 23 per cent of elementary schools have guidance counsellors, and the majority work less than half time;
- only 30 per cent of elementary schools have regular access to psychologists who spend, on average, 4.2 hours per week in elementary schools;
- 48 per cent of elementary schools have regular access to social workers who spend, on average, 4.7 hours per week in elementary schools; and
- 38 per cent of elementary schools have regular access to child and youth workers who spend, on average, 16.6 hours per week in elementary schools.

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<sup>7</sup> People for Education (2019). *What Makes a School?* (Annual report on Ontario's publicly funded schools 2019). Toronto, ON: People for Education [peopleforeducation.ca/report/2019-annual-report-on-schools-what-makes-a-school/](https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/2019-annual-report-on-schools-what-makes-a-school/)

Additional funding must be provided to improve access to in-school supports, including guidance counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and child and youth workers, especially in underserved areas.

The mental health of teachers, education workers, and students requires the provincial government's urgent attention. In May 2021, ETFO shared research that showed many of its members experienced burnout and other negative mental health impacts linked to the provincial government's failed response to COVID-19. The government's chronic underfunding of public education has led to unnecessary negative mental health impacts and outcomes for ETFO members and students. The government must fund the supports in schools and in the community that are necessary to ensure students' developmental, emotional, and behavioural needs are met so that ETFO members can focus on supporting students' learning needs.

Several surveys and research studies suggest student well-being has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students have been affected by the increased stress of the pandemic on their caregivers and loved ones, and others are still feeling the impact of the government's failure to take necessary action to ensure schools could remain safely open to in-person learning during the 2020-21 school year.

The impact of the pandemic on learning, on the social-emotional wellness of elementary students, and on the physical safety of our school communities would have been much worse without the dedication shown by ETFO members. ETFO members taught themselves online learning platforms, connected with children and families however they could, followed challenging health and safety guidelines, and continued to be caring adults creating a safe space for their students.

## **Impact of Online Learning and Hybrid Learning on Mental Health**

Despite the incredible support ETFO members have provided to students and their families, navigating uncertainty amidst a pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing mental health crisis. The stress and pressures of school closures, hybrid learning, repeated disruption and shifts to remote learning, compounded by other factors that disproportionately affect the most marginalized communities, have resulted in an increased need for additional mental health support and resources in Ontario’s public schools. The government must develop and deliver—in consultation with mental health experts, teachers, education workers, unions and other education stakeholders—long-term, fully-funded, comprehensive, culturally-responsive mental health supports for students.

The Ministry of Education has revealed that it has been working on a plan to fundamentally change our public education system by outsourcing and potentially privatizing online learning. The government’s plan proposes an entirely new online education system that would function in parallel to the current public education system. This proposal will negatively impact students’ health, well-being and learning outcomes.

ETFO believes that the daily, in-person model of instruction and support best meets students’ educational, developmental, and social needs. In-person learning provides the best learning experience and is the most equitable learning model for all students. Throughout the pandemic, we have seen that remote learning and the hybrid model of learning have detrimental impacts on student health and well-being. In-person learning is critical to the social and emotional health of students.

The full-time synchronous remote learning option that has been implemented by some school boards will contribute to greater isolation and mental health challenges for some students. ETFO’s position remains that brick-and-mortar schools are the best source of re-connection for all students and, in particular,

provide our most vulnerable students with face-to-face emotional support and a sense of belonging that cannot be replicated in a virtual format.

The use of hybrid learning models by school boards across the province has led to students and educators facing unprecedented challenges and pressures, further compounding the ongoing mental health crisis. The use of hybrid learning by school boards in Ontario must end.

### **Priorities and Partnerships Funding to Support Mental Health**

Additional funds were provided through the Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) to support mental health and well-being in 2021-22.

The Well-Being and Mental Health bundle provided funding to school boards and school authorities to meet local needs and priorities that promote well-being and mental health (including safe, healthy, inclusive and accepting learning environments). The total amount of Well-Being and Mental Health funding that is being distributed to 72 school boards is only \$3 million. One is left to question what can be done with that money. For example, Algoma District School Board (ADSB) has been allocated \$26,500 from the Well-Being and Mental Health fund. With 9,341 students enrolled in ADSB, that works out to funding of only \$2.83 per student. The Toronto District School Board's 239,579 students will receive \$312,800 from the fund - or \$1.30 per TDSB student. The funding allocation is simply not sufficient to provide significant support to students at a time when the need for support is at its highest.

In terms of professional development, the Ministry has allocated \$6.5 million from the PPF to School Mental Health Ontario to provide implementation support to 72 district school boards through clinical expertise, evidence-based resources/practical tools for educators, and the delivery of consistent professional learning to school-based mental health clinics. Most of the new resources created thus far direct members to visit

other websites, learn on their own time—outside of the instructional day—and do not include collaboration with colleagues. This method of delivery for professional development is not pedagogically sound. Funding needs to be provided for high-quality professional learning within the instructional day that is ongoing and sustainable.

### **Recommendations:**

4. That additional funding be provided to improve access to in-school supports, including guidance counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and child and youth workers, especially in underserved areas.
5. That funding be allocated for additional in-school and community supports necessary to ensure students' developmental and behavioural needs are met.
6. That the government develop and deliver—in consultation with mental health experts, teachers, education workers, unions and other education stakeholders—long-term, fully-funded, comprehensive, culturally-responsive mental health supports for students.
7. That the government abandon its plan to make virtual learning a permanent fixture of elementary instruction.
8. That the government instruct school boards to immediately cease the use of hybrid learning as a method of instruction.
9. That ongoing, sustainable funding be allocated for high-quality professional development for educators in the area of student mental health, occurring within the instructional day.

### **Learning Opportunities Grant**

The Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) was included in the education funding formula in 1997. The objective of the LOG was to provide additional funding to school boards with higher proportions of students who were deemed to be 'at-risk' of academic failure. The aim of the additional funding was to support a variety of interventions that would provide those students with an equitable chance of success.

From its inception, the LOG did not meet the recommendations made by the expert panel that was convened to advise the government on its implementation. This structural funding shortfall must be

addressed. ETFO recommends that a review of the LOG be part of an independent review of the funding formula recommended earlier in this submission.

As stated in the Ministry's consultation document, the largest portion of LOG funding is allocated through the Demographic Allocation. This allocation is currently based on social and economic indicators derived from 2006 Statistics Canada's census data. The Ministry has indicated that updating the census information, based on the 2021 census, for the 2022-23 school year and beyond, would require a redistribution of funding between school boards.

ETFO recommends that the Ministry provide education stakeholders with a projection of the impact of integrating updated census data in the distribution of LOG funding. ETFO also recommends that the Ministry allocate additional transitional funding to support a phase-in period to ensure that school boards that would otherwise see a reduction in LOG funding through this re-distribution do not do so immediately. Finally, ETFO recommends that those school boards that stand to see their funding increase as a result of the redistribution of LOG funding, begin receiving this increase for the 2022-23 school year.

### Recommendations:

10. That a review of the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) be part of an independent review of the education funding formula.
11. That the Ministry of Education provide education stakeholders with a projection of the impact of integrating updated 2021 census data in the distribution of LOG funding.
12. That transitional funding be allocated to support a phase-in period to ensure school boards that would otherwise see a reduction in LOG funding because of redistribution.
13. That school boards which would see an increase of LOG funding because of the redistribution, begin receiving this funding increase in the 2022-23 school year.

## New Teacher Induction Program

The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) was introduced in 2006 and was designed to support the growth and professional development of new teachers. It is the second step in a continuum of professional development for teachers to support effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices, building on and complementing the first step: pre-service education programs. NTIP provides another full year of professional support so that new teachers can develop the requisite skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve success. By helping new teachers achieve their full potential, NTIP supports Ontario's vision of achieving high levels of student performance.<sup>8</sup>

For the first three years of the program, NTIP was funded outside the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). Funding for NTIP was first introduced in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) in 2008-09 and was projected to be \$14.8 million. At that time, funding was provided as follows:

- NTIP Funding = \$20,000 + (\$2,000 x New Teachers) with the allocation based on a head count of new teachers that were hired between October 2007 and October 2008.<sup>9</sup>

The following year, the allocation for NTIP was projected to be \$13.8 million and a new method of allocating funds was introduced. Boards would receive the lesser of \$50,000 per board plus \$720 x the number of teachers on Rows 0, 1, 2 of the board's Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grid in 2008-09 or the board's actual expenditure for NTIP in 2009-10.<sup>10</sup> Since 2010-11, the projected allocation for NTIP has remained

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education (2006). *New Teacher Induction Program Induction Elements Manual 2006* p.5. [edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/NTIPInductionElements2019.pdf](https://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/NTIPInductionElements2019.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Education (2008). *Education Funding Technical Paper 2008-09*. [edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html](https://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html)

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Education (2009). *Education Funding Technical Paper 2009-2010*. [edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html](https://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html)



steady at \$13.7 million while the benchmark amount per teacher fluctuated from a high of \$1,538.63 in 2016-17 to the low amount of only \$730 per teacher in 2009-10.

As part of NTIP, boards are to use their funds to support first-year teachers, second-year teachers who need more than one year of support to gain proficiency in their role, beginning long-term occasional (LTO) teachers and any teacher in their first five years who falls outside of the required NTIP definition.<sup>11</sup> Since 2017, the number of elementary school teachers supported by NTIP has varied significantly, from a low of 5,226 in 2017-18 to a high of 7,251 in 2021-22. This is a difference of 2,025 teachers supported by the program, and yet the GSN allocation has remained unchanged. This year, the per-teacher funding benchmark is \$1,058.52<sup>12</sup>, which is the lowest it has been since 2012-13, yet the number of teachers requiring support is at its highest level.

One of the largest costs associated with the implementation of NTIP is the cost of release time for teachers supported by the program, which is determined by daily occasional teacher rates. These rates have increased over the past few years, and yet the allocation to NTIP has remained unchanged since 2010-11. The funding allocation for NTIP has simply not kept up with either inflationary costs or the increase in the number of new teachers entering the public education system.

When funding from the NTIP allocation is insufficient, boards can apply and access the New Teacher Induction Program-Enhancing Teacher Development Fund (NTIP-ETD) (\$1.0 M) made available through the Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF). As the Ministry states in its *B10 Memo 2021-22 Priorities and*

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Education (2019). *New Teacher Induction Program- Induction Elements Manual* p. 6. [edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/NTIPInductionElements2019.pdf](https://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/NTIPInductionElements2019.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Education (2021). *Education Funding –Technical Paper 2021-22* p. 100 [edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-technical-paper.pdf](https://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-technical-paper.pdf)

*Partnerships Funding (PPF)*, “the NTIP-ETD supplements the GSN funding formula by providing funded support for boards who experience a significant increase in the number of new permanent hires from the previous year and/or have new hires past Year 2 on the Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grid. Boards apply to the ministry for funding if either of these categories impact their ability to support the development of their new teachers. For some boards this funding is critical to the delivery of NTIP as these new teachers must be supported and are required to successfully complete two teacher performance appraisals.”<sup>13</sup>

While the absence of a fixed benchmark for NTIP might create some challenges for school boards in dealing with the fluctuation in the number of new teachers in a any given year, the root problem is the insufficient amount allocated by the Ministry for NTIP. As stated earlier, school boards are being asked to do more with less. To achieve the stated objectives of NTIP, the GSN allocation for this program must be increased not only to reflect inflationary costs, but also the increased number of new teachers entering the system.

A change in the formula to a fixed benchmark would not be recommended as it could have negative effects. For example, if a board were to see a large influx of new hires, a fixed benchmark would mean the same amount of money to support more teachers thus compromising the current quality and richness of professional development accessible to newly hired teachers in their first five years and the ongoing development of mentorship programs/supports. Alternatively, should teacher numbers drop, a fixed benchmark may mean that not all funds are spent which could, in turn, lead to NTIP programs that will shrink over time. Through supplemental funding made available through the PPF, the current funding could work in a way that is responsive to variances that may happen for some districts from one year to another,

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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education (2021). *B10 Memo 2021-22 Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF)*  
[efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B10\\_EN.pdf](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B10_EN.pdf)

however both the NTIP allocation in the GSN and the supplemental funding made available through the PPF should be increased.

### **Recommendations:**

14. That the NTIP Allocation in the GSN be increased to account for inflationary costs and for an increase in the number of new teachers entering the public school system.
15. That the NTIP Allocation criteria continue to reflect the number of teachers eligible for NTIP to ensure that fluctuations in new teachers are accounted for.
16. That the NTIP supplemental funding available through the PPF be increased to address sharp increases in the number of new teachers entering the public school system.

### **Support for Students with Special Needs**

Students with special education needs are not getting the front-line supports and services they need.

Inadequate supports have a bigger impact on students who face additional barriers, such as Black, Indigenous, and racialized students, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, and those who are English Language Learners.

These students need access to educational assistants, behavioural counsellors, child and youth workers, psychologists, and speech and language pathologists to help them learn and thrive.

Meeting the special education needs of students is a constant challenge for any government. A substantial portion of existing special education funding is currently based on a predictive statistical model tied to overall enrolment numbers. Unfortunately, this model fails to account for the increase in participation in special education programs and services that Ontario's public schools have observed over the past few years. It also fails to account for the differences in needs among students requiring special education supports. Special education funding must be based upon the actual needs of students.

In 2013-14, 340,562 students, representing 16.3 per cent of all students, received special education programs or services. By 2019-20, this number had increased to 364,038, representing 17.7 per cent of students that were accessing these programs and services. Special education funding has not kept up, either with inflationary costs, or with students' increasing need for special education supports. The government must increase special education funding to address this funding gap and ensure that special education grants are based on the actual education needs of students.

Occasional teachers and occasional education workers face additional challenges, as they often need to support students without knowledge of their individual needs and without the benefit of an ongoing rapport with the students. The government should allocate funding to provide paid professional development on teaching and educational strategies to support students with special needs.

### **Recommendations:**

17. That special education grants be based on actual student needs.
18. That funding be increased for educational assistants, psychologists, behavioural therapists, child and youth workers, school support counsellors, and speech and language pathologists.
19. That funding be allocated to provide occasional teachers and occasional education workers paid professional development on teaching and educational strategies to support students with special education needs.

### **Addressing Equity and Combatting Anti-Black Racism**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the deep-rooted socio-economic disparities that exist in communities across the province, the country and the world. The negative impacts of the pandemic have been disproportionately felt by already marginalized communities. Intersections of gender, race, sexuality, disability, status, language, employment precarity and a host of other factors have had a tremendous impact on how students and their families have experienced this ongoing crisis.

The government must take concrete steps to ameliorate the inequity experienced by these communities and ensure that Ontario's recovery plans account for the disproportionate impact felt by Black, Indigenous, racialized, and low-income communities.

Over recent years, there has been a wide-spread and unprecedented public recognition that systemic racism and, in particular, anti-Black racism, persists in our societies. ETFO recognizes the multiple and systemic ways that anti-Black racism is enacted and reproduced in all our institutions, including policing, health care, immigration, social services, and public education.

Anti-Black racism in education is longstanding and has harmed Black students, their families, and Black educators. In the past several years alone, several school boards have come under intense public scrutiny following the exposure of anti-Black racism in their practices. School boards, and the provincial government, need to be accountable to existing anti-Black racism policies and push for the introduction of additional policies, programs and strategies to address anti-Black racism.

The government has acknowledged that anti-Black racism exists within the education sector and has stated that the well-being and mental health of Black communities is paramount. Ending streaming in the public education system is a necessary step to address existing systemic barriers. The government has made announcements aimed at ending streaming in the secondary panel, however it has not announced any additional funding to support this important transition. Without the necessary support for students and educators, students who have faced systemic barriers in the past will continue to do so. The government must make good on its commitment and must direct funding to the education sector and community organizations to eradicate anti-Black racism, and all other forms of racism, from Ontario's public education system.

### Recommendations:

20. That additional funding be provided to school boards to hire additional counsellors, social workers and school nurses that would specifically assist families and students from Black, racialized, and Indigenous communities, as well as students living in low-income communities.
21. That funding be provided to the public education sector and community groups for the purpose of eradicating anti-Black racism and other forms of racism.
22. That all school boards be instructed to begin collection of disaggregated race-based student and staff data starting in the 2022-23 school year.
23. That the Ministry ensure that the collection of race-based data by school boards is standardized, includes all employees and their positions, respects employees' privacy, meets current best practices, and is made publicly available.
24. That the Ministry implement mandatory ongoing training and professional development for all administrators, school board trustees and teacher candidates on recognizing and addressing anti-Black racism, including microaggressions.

### **Supporting Second Language Programs**

An area that requires greater transparency and accountability from boards, and where additional funding is necessary, is supporting children who enter Ontario schools without language proficiency in either English or French. These children require more support to ensure they progress well academically, socially and emotionally. The number of children who speak neither English nor French when they register for school has increased significantly. As reported by the 2017 People for Education annual survey of public schools, 63 per cent of English elementary schools have English Language Learners (ELLs)<sup>14</sup> as compared to 43 per cent in 2002-2003. These students face significant challenges in catching up to their peers, and schools do not have adequate resources to support them. The ongoing pandemic has created additional challenges for these students, especially those engaged in virtual learning.

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<sup>14</sup> People for Education (2017). *Competing Priorities* (Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2017). Toronto, ON: People for Education. [peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/P4E-annual-report-2017.pdf](https://peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/P4E-annual-report-2017.pdf)

The funding formula for ELLs who are not born in Canada is a guaranteed per-student amount which is reduced over four years rather than a lump sum divided amongst school boards, which is the case for Canadian-born ELLs, resulting in funding of more than \$10,000 per eligible pupil. Furthermore, the grants assume that ELLs only require special language programs for up to four years, an assumption that is not supported by reports from teachers who work with these students or by research on language acquisition. Funding should be allocated based on students achieving a standard level of language proficiency and not based on whether they were born in Canada or the number of years they have been in Canada.

There is currently no direct accountability for school boards to ensure that second-language grants are used for their intended programs. All too often, the overall shortfalls in the funding formula have led to school boards using their second language grants for other purposes and short-changing ELL students. The Ministry of Education should establish accountability measures by mandating that school boards spend English as a Second Language (ESL) grants on the intended programs.

### **Recommendations:**

25. That the government ensure all funding envelopes that have been established to support equity-related programs, special education programs, and ESL programs be maintained.
26. That funding for English Language Learners (ELLs) program and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers be expanded to meet the language acquisition needs of students requiring ELL support.
27. That accountability measures be established to prevent school boards from diverting ESL funding to non-ESL services and to require school boards to spend ESL funding on ESL program delivery.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinstate the \$467 million cut from core education funding in the fall economic update.
2. Increase funding to public education to close the funding gap identified by the FAO.
3. Establish an independent, external review of Ontario's education funding formula to ensure it reflects actual student needs.
4. That additional funding be provided to improve access to in-school supports, including guidance counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and child and youth workers, especially in underserved areas.
5. That funding be allocated for additional in-school and community supports necessary to ensure students' developmental and behavioural needs are met.
6. That the government develop and deliver—in consultation with mental health experts, teachers, education workers, unions and other education stakeholders—long-term, fully-funded, comprehensive, culturally-responsive mental health supports for students.
7. That the government abandon its plan to make virtual learning a permanent fixture of elementary instruction.
8. That the government instruct school boards to immediately cease the use of hybrid learning as a method of instruction.
9. That ongoing, sustainable funding be allocated for high-quality professional development for educators in the area of student mental health, occurring within the instructional day.
10. That a review of the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) be part of an independent review of the education funding formula.
11. That the Ministry of Education provide education stakeholders with a projection of the impact of integrating updated 2021 census data in the distribution of LOG funding.
12. That transitional funding be allocated to support a phase-in period to ensure school boards that would otherwise see a reduction in LOG funding because of redistribution.
13. That school boards which would see an increase of LOG funding because of the redistribution, begin receiving this funding increase in the 2022-23 school year.
14. That the NTIP Allocation in the GSN be increased to account for inflationary costs and for an increase in the number of new teachers entering the public school system.



15. That the NTIP Allocation criteria continue to reflect the number of teachers eligible for NTIP to ensure that fluctuations in new teachers are accounted for.
16. That the NTIP supplemental funding available through the PPF be increased to address sharp increases in the number of new teachers entering the public school system.
17. That special education grants be based on actual student needs.
18. That funding be increased for educational assistants, psychologists, behavioural therapists, child and youth workers, school support counsellors, and speech and language pathologists.
19. That funding be allocated to provide occasional teachers and occasional education workers paid professional development on teaching and educational strategies to support students with special education needs.
20. That additional funding be provided to school boards to hire additional counsellors, social workers and school nurses that would specifically assist families and students from Black, racialized, and Indigenous communities, as well as students living in low-income communities.
21. That funding be provided to the public education sector and community groups for the purpose of eradicating anti-Black racism and other forms of racism.
22. That all school boards be instructed to begin collection of disaggregated race-based student and staff data starting in the 2022-23 school year.
23. That the Ministry ensure that the collection of race-based data by school boards is standardized, includes all employees and their positions, respects employees' privacy, meets current best practices, and is made publicly available.
24. That the Ministry implement mandatory ongoing training and professional development for all administrators, school board trustees and teacher candidates on recognizing and addressing anti-Black racism, including microaggressions.
25. That the government ensure all funding envelopes that have been established to support equity-related programs, special education programs, and ESL programs be maintained.
26. That funding for English Language Learners (ELLs) program and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers be expanded to meet the language acquisition needs of students requiring ELL support.
27. That accountability measures be established to prevent school boards from diverting ESL funding to non-ESL services and to require school boards to spend ESL funding on ESL program delivery.

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