

# THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS: WHAT REALLY COUNTS

People for Education Annual Report  
on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2011



THE  
ANNUAL  
REPORT ON  
ONTARIO'S  
PUBLICLY  
FUNDED  
SCHOOLS  
2011

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## DATA FROM THE SURVEY

If specific research data from the survey is required, it can be provided for a fee. Elementary school data has been collected since 1997, and secondary school data has been collected since 2000. Please contact [info@peopleforeducation.ca](mailto:info@peopleforeducation.ca).

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People for Education is a registered charity working to support public education in Ontario's English, French and Catholic schools.

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THE  
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# HIGHLIGHTS: QUICK FACTS

## PRINCIPALS

- 12% of elementary school principals are part-time, double the percentage in 1997/98.
- 42% of elementary schools have a vice-principal, compared to 54% in 1997/98.
- 49% of elementary school principals have been in their current schools for two years or less.

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES & INFORMATION LITERACY

- 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian, a decline from 80% in 1997/98.
- 66% of secondary schools have a teacher-librarian, a decline from 78% in 2000/01.
- 40% of elementary schools and 57% of secondary schools have a policy on social networking.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

- More than 10% of the provincial budget for education is spent on special education.
- 67 out of the province's 72 boards spend more on special education than they receive from the province.
- 30% of GTA elementary schools report that not all identified students are receiving recommended supports, compared to only 15% of elementary schools in Southwestern Ontario.

## THE ARTS

- 47% of elementary schools have a specialist music teacher, compared to 58% in 1997/98.
- 10% of elementary schools with music specialists report their elementary school music teachers have no special qualifications.
- 53% of secondary schools charge fees for fine arts courses.

## HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 43% of elementary schools have a specialist health and physical education (H&PE) teacher, compared to 41% in 1997/98.
- 72% of GTA elementary schools have an H&PE teacher, compared to 25% of Northern Ontario schools.
- 16% of elementary schools with specialist H&PE teachers report that their teachers have no special qualifications.

## SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS

- 63% of English-language elementary schools have students who require English-language support, compared to 54% in 2003/04.
- 40% of French-language elementary schools with more than ten students requiring French-language support have no specialist French as a Second Language teacher.

## EARLY YEARS EDUCATION & CARE

- 19% of English-language schools outside of Northern Ontario offer full-day, every day kindergarten programs, compared to 5% last year.
- Across Ontario, 30% of elementary schools have on-site child care programs for kindergarten-aged children.
- 24% of schools report having a family support program, up from 20% last year.

## FEES & FUNDRAISING

- 97% of elementary and secondary schools fundraise.
- Fundraising per school ranges from a low of \$0 to a high of \$275,000.
- 68% of secondary schools charge fees for courses.
- Schools with a high proportion of low-income students raise, on average, less than half the amount raised in schools with a low proportion of low-income students.

## POVERTY & INEQUALITY

- Compared to schools with a low proportion of low-income students, schools with a high proportion of low-income students have, on average, double the number of students on special education waiting lists.

## SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- 20% of elementary schools and 34% of secondary schools have staff time allocated for maintaining school-community connections.
- Only 6% of elementary schools and 9% of secondary schools have a full-time school-community liaison.

# INTRODUCTION

***On the importance of education generally we may remark, it is as necessary as the light; it should be as common as water, and as free as air.***

Egerton Ryerson, 1829<sup>1</sup>

Ontario students are doing very well by many measures: Among OECD countries, our fifteen-year-olds place in the top ten on reading, writing, science and mathematics tests, and the vast majority of Ontario students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 get C or better on standardized tests in reading, writing and math. In randomized pan-Canadian tests of thirteen-year-olds, Ontario students ranked first among English-language schools in mathematics, reading and writing, and second in science.

The question is—is that enough? Is it enough to achieve these measures of success, or do we need to look further at what constitutes true success in a publicly funded education system?

In this year's annual report, we see some improvements: more schools with all-day kindergarten and more communication between child care and schools; fewer students waiting for special education services; and a smaller percentage of schools reporting they have students who have been identified as needing special education support, but who are going without services. There has been a slight improvement in the percentage of schools with health and physical education teachers, and this year, only 9% of elementary schools report they have ten or more students who require English language support but have no English as a Second Language teacher—a vast improvement from five years ago, when a third of schools reported this lack of service.

But our schools also have fewer teacher-librarians, more part-time principals and a lack of staff to support school-community connections. Very few schools report they have strategies in place to promote information literacy, and less than half of Ontario elementary schools have either music or physical education teachers.

Most worryingly, not all Ontario students have equal access either to the educational supports or to the enrichments that are vital components of a well-rounded education.

This year, for the first time, we compared school-by-school data from our surveys with demographic data from the Ministry of Education's [School Information Finder](#). And the

results fly in the face of the fundamental premise of public education—that it should provide all students with an equitable chance for success.

In schools with a high proportion of students who live below the low income cut-off (an average of approximately \$30,000 for a family of four),<sup>2</sup> students are more likely to be on special education waiting lists, less likely to be receiving appropriate special education supports and less likely to have access to the arts, technology and physical education enrichment that fundraising can buy.

This, coupled with an increased reliance in all schools on fundraising and fees to augment school budgets, underscores deep inequities within our education system.

If, as it should, our definition of success in education goes beyond test score results, and instead includes a wide range of competencies that will prepare students to be successful, happy and contributing citizens, then it is vital that we as a province articulate a more complete vision for education.

What are the programs, resources and supports that every student should have access to—no matter how rich or poor? How can we ensure that all students can participate in extracurricular activities, as well as the arts? Some students do not have access to books and technology at home. Should we not be ensuring that our school libraries are hubs of learning in schools—open and staffed and accessible to all students?

Students do better when they have access to a range of supports, some of them beyond the school building. For decades, experts have recommended that Ontario have policy and funding to support school-community connections. Other provinces have such policy, why doesn't Ontario? Our publicly funded schools have the potential to change children's lives and to be the foundation for a civil society that provides *all* children and young people with a chance to succeed. To attain a full measure of success, we need to build on successes to date, aim higher and do still more.

# PRINCIPALS

*...the role of school principal designed for the industrial age has not changed enough to deal with the complex challenges schools are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*Improving School Leadership*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Great schools need great leaders.

When principals can ensure that all of the components of a school are working well together—by setting clear directions toward common goals, establishing high expectations and providing teachers with support—students are more successful, and the school community is stronger.<sup>3</sup>

The evidence shows unequivocally that, after teachers, the investment that has the most positive impact on students' capacity to learn and to succeed is the investment in recruiting and training effective principals and vice-principals.<sup>4</sup>

## SOME ONTARIO PRINCIPALS RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL

This year, 12% of elementary schools report their principals are part-time, double the percentage in 1997/98. In some cases, the part-time principals are teachers as well, and in other cases (7% of schools), they are responsible for more than one school. Five per cent of secondary school principals are part-time.

There are also wide variations across the province: While only 3% of Greater Toronto Area (GTA) elementary schools have a part-time principal, 29% of Northern Ontario elementary school principals are part-time.

In addition to an increase in the number of part-time principals in elementary schools, there has been a decrease in the percentage of schools with either full- or part-time vice-principals—from 54% in 1997/98, to 42% this year.

## LIMITED EXPERIENCE AND SHORT TENURES AFFECT SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Fostering strong connections is a key role for school principals, but many principals are in their schools, and thus their communities, for a very short period of time. Many also lack experience. Surveys of principals by the [Education Quality and Accountability Office \(EQAO\)](#) show that 49% of elementary principals have been in their current school for two years or less, and 49% have been principals for a total of five years or less.<sup>5</sup> The [Ontario Principals' Council](#) has recommended that administrators be guaranteed tenures of at least five years per school.<sup>6</sup>

## QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 12% of elementary school principals are part-time, double the percentage in 1997/98.
- 42% of elementary schools have a vice-principal, compared to 54% in 1997/98.
- 49% of elementary school principals have been in their current schools for two years or less.

## EXPANDING ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Schools work best when principals can focus on building cooperative “learning communities” among the staff, fostering strong links between school and community, and ensuring the school provides equitable opportunities for all students. However, many principals report their time is dominated by paperwork, management issues, new government directives and “administrivia.”<sup>7</sup>

Over the last two decades, the role of the principal has expanded substantially to include more managerial and administrative responsibilities, including more responsibility for facilities management, and an ever-increasing number of government-directed initiatives and accountability requirements. One review of provincial initiatives for the eight-month period from June 2009 to January 2010 revealed 64 different Ministry directives to principals.<sup>8</sup>

Principals and vice-principals have also taken on an increased responsibility for supervising students before and after school and at recess and lunch time; this is in response to reductions in the time teachers are required to perform this function.<sup>9</sup>

These administrative tasks leave many principals with little time to act as “instructional leaders”—a core component of a successful school leader's job.<sup>10</sup>

## RECRUITING NEW PRINCIPALS

Great principals are the key to great schools, but it has become increasingly difficult to interest teachers in applying for these jobs, and the pool of candidates for principalship is rapidly

shrinking.<sup>11</sup> A report from the OECD found that “potential candidates often hesitate to apply, because of overburdened roles, insufficient preparation and training, limited career prospects and inadequate support and rewards.”<sup>12</sup>

In Ontario,

- principals surveyed by the Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario say that, while they love their jobs, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fulfill their vast array of responsibilities,<sup>13</sup>
- the Ontario Principals’ Council has described the current role of principal as “almost unmanageable”,<sup>14</sup>
- there are fewer vice-principal positions available, which means fewer placements for future principals to learn the role, and
- recruitment is difficult because teachers who decide to become principals must leave their teachers’ federation and lose all seniority, which makes it impossible for teachers to “test drive” the role. In Quebec, this situation has been remedied by granting teachers a two-year leave of absence to try leadership positions and return to teaching without loss of seniority.<sup>15</sup>

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

In response to the pressures facing Ontario principals, the Ontario government launched the Ontario Leadership Strategy in 2008. One facet of this strategy includes increased mentorship for new principals. Mentors can play a vital role, given that nearly half of Ontario principals have five years of experience or less. But in the survey of Catholic principals, only 53% say they have a mentor. And while these principals report that their mentors are very helpful, many say they don’t have enough time to consult with them.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Strong principals, working cooperatively with teachers and the school community, are crucial to student success.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide funding for other staff to take over some of the responsibility for school and facilities management, and for school-community coordination,
- the province increase funding for vice-principals to allow more chances for “apprenticeships,”
- that new policy is developed to allow teachers to “test drive” the role of the principal for two years without a loss of seniority in the teacher unions, and
- school boards endeavour to ensure that principals’ terms are at least five years.

**WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .**

We have had an additional VP assigned to our school, but the new VP has been assigned a teaching load that accounts for 1.33 full-time teaching loads. Now all three of my VPs must share the teaching load. This has resulted in a net loss of VP administration.

*Secondary School, Windsor-Essex CDSB*

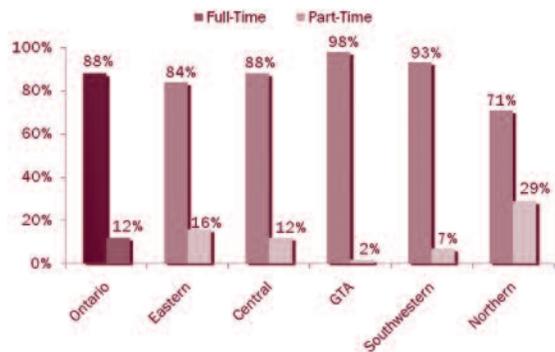
We are a little school with a big heart... [But] we are all stretched to the max because there are so few of us to keep up with all the mandated initiatives... Being an instructional leader is becoming increasingly challenging as a teaching principal with multiple roles and responsibilities.

*Elementary School, Renfrew County DSB*

Over the past couple of years, support in our schools through the hiring of “Special Assignment Teachers” has been cut... [These] teachers were an integral part of the school and supported initiatives that the Ministry of Education introduced and which continue to move forward. We now have no Special Assignment Teachers left. All this support now rests on the shoulders of the principal.

*Elementary School, Superior North CDSB*

**Principals in elementary schools, by region**



# SCHOOL LIBRARIES & INFORMATION LITERACY

*What a gift to give a child, this chance to discover that you can love a book and the characters in it...No one else can get in the way, no one else can invade it, no one else even knows what's going on in that wonderful space that opens up between the reader and the book. And the body that gave it to you is the library.* Philip Pullman, author

School libraries are a doorway for children and youth to learn about the world.

By design, they are sites for students to explore and develop their own interests, and to foster a love of reading,<sup>16</sup> along with their inquiry and research skills. And as the digital world puts more and more information at students' fingertips, the library can open the door to learning beyond the walls of the school.

## CONTINUED DECLINE IN TEACHER-LIBRARIAN NUMBERS

In Ontario, there appears to be declining support for the role of school libraries. This year, only 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian (eighty percent of them part-time), a number that has fallen steadily from 80% in 1997/98. In high schools, where students do more independent work, the number is higher—66%—but is down from 78% ten years ago.

Students in smaller communities and in smaller schools are much less likely to attend schools that have teacher-librarians. Only 19% of elementary schools in Eastern Ontario and 10% of elementary schools in Northern Ontario have teacher-librarians, compared to 92% of elementary schools in the GTA. Some principals from these regions say that their schools don't have a library at all.

The loss of teacher-librarians also affects the number of hours school libraries are open each week. Libraries in schools with teacher-librarians are more likely to have longer hours, which ensures that students have access to them before, during and after the school day.<sup>17</sup>

## QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian, a decline from 80% in 1997/98.
- 66% of secondary schools have a teacher-librarian, a decline from 78% in 2000/01.
- 40% of elementary schools and 57% of secondary schools have a policy on social networking.

## THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN BUILDING "21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS"

There is a widespread movement—in politics, business and education—to shift the emphasis in education from the industrial/manufacturing skills needed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>18</sup> to the "knowledge" skills or competencies needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are varying definitions of these so-called 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.<sup>19</sup> Some suggest adding the 4Cs of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity to the 3Rs; others focus more on technological skills. But the common core element of this new movement is a focus on developing students' capacity to find, evaluate, organize and transform information now available in the staggeringly large, unfiltered and collaborative digital universe. These skills fall under the term "information literacy."

There are references to information literacy throughout the Ontario curriculum, and many curriculum documents link information literacy to the library. But there appears to be a gap between the provincial policy-level commitment to "21<sup>st</sup> century learning"<sup>20</sup> and what the province communicates to Ontario principals.

That gap is evident in the responses to a new question on this year's surveys. When asked if their school had an information literacy strategy or plan, elementary school principals were almost six times as likely to describe plans for improving test scores in reading and writing as they were to report on strategies to improve students' skills in research or the use of information technology. High school principals were three times as likely to reply with descriptions of strategies to improve literacy outcomes.<sup>21</sup>

But some schools did provide responses related to research and information technology. And in those schools, half listed the teacher-librarian as having a key role in the implementation of their strategies.

### BUILDING A LEARNING COMMONS

While most teachers see technology in the classroom as beneficial, the majority remain unable to find feasible ways to make full use of it.<sup>22</sup> Information literacy needs a base in schools where both teachers and students can develop these competencies. The [Ontario School Library Association](#) (OSLA) recommends developing school libraries as “learning commons” to provide that base.

In 2010, the OSLA, with support from the [Ministry of Education’s Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat](#), published *Together for Learning*, which provides a blueprint for the development of a “learning commons” in every school. These hubs would be based in school libraries and would provide centres for information literacy, technology and collaborative learning. Although the Ministry funded the document, the Ministry has not endorsed it for use in schools.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

All students and teachers should have the capacity to find, evaluate, organize and transform information in the digital universe.

People for Education recommends

- the province support a leadership role for teacher-librarians, who can work with classroom teachers to develop feasible information literacy programs for all students, and
- the province support information and technology education in faculties of education and through ongoing professional development for all teachers.

### WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

**We no longer have a library. The bookroom is used by teachers.**

*Elementary School, DSB Ontario North East*

**Teachers look after themselves in the library—we have a 0.1 teacher available to support student research and learning.**

*Elementary School, Bluewater DSB*

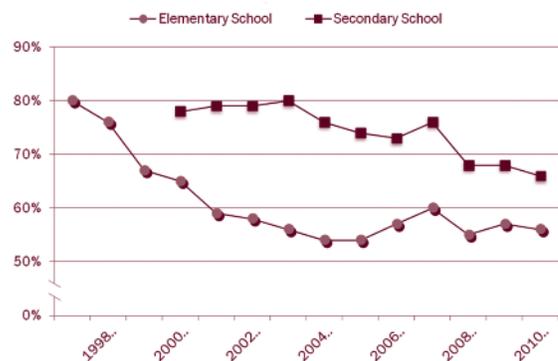
**We only have in-class libraries in our school, and we go to the local public library twice a month.**

*Elementary School, Sudbury CDSB*

**Our committee is trying to raise \$36,000 in order to purchase more laptops for the school. We find we are very limited in this technology and therefore have to find ways to provide it for our students. We feel that information literacy is important, but without the technology, we struggle to move towards greater use by staff with their students.**

*Elementary School, Simcoe Muskoka CDSB*

**Percentage of elementary and secondary schools with teacher-librarians, full- or part-time**



# SPECIAL EDUCATION

*An inclusive society cannot accept the idea that exclusion is normal.*

John Ralston Saul

Thirty-one years ago, the province of Ontario passed legislation guaranteeing that all students, no matter how exceptional their needs, would have the supports they need to attend and succeed in school.<sup>23</sup> The goal: schools as places where everyone can learn, inclusion is the norm, differences are celebrated and children's individual needs are met.

## FEWER STUDENTS WAITING FOR HELP

This year, 17% of elementary students and 19% of secondary students are receiving some form of special education support—up from 11% and 14% respectively, since 2000/01. This increase may reflect, at least in part, successful efforts to get students off waiting lists and into services: The total number of elementary and secondary students on special education waiting lists province-wide has fallen from approximately 46,000 in 2000/01 to approximately 33,000 this year.<sup>24</sup>

These changes in student numbers may also reflect changes in the province's special education strategies. There have been increases in overall funding for special education, and there is a shift away from the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process—which gives “identified” students a legal right to the recommended service<sup>25</sup> — to the less formal Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Despite some improvements, there continue to be concerns with the number of students who have been identified but are not receiving recommended support. The number has improved since 2005/06, when People for Education began collecting this data, but this year, 23% of elementary schools (down from 35% in 05/06) and 21% of secondary schools (down from 28% in 05/06) report having identified students who are not receiving support.

## CHALLENGES IN THE CLASSROOM

While there are more students receiving special education support, there has not been a similar increase in the number of special education teachers or educational assistants.

## QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- More than 10% of the provincial budget for education is spent on special education.
- 67 out of the province's 72 boards spend more on special education than they receive from the province.
- 30% of GTA elementary schools report that not all identified students are receiving recommended supports, compared to 15% of elementary schools in Southwestern Ontario.

In elementary schools in 2007/08, there was an average per school of one special education teacher for every 30 special education students. This year, it has increased to a ratio of one teacher for every 35 students. In secondary schools, the ratio is even higher. It has risen from 1:53 in 2007/08, to 1:58 this year.

Educational assistants in elementary schools often support special education students in regular classes, but this year, only 69% of elementary schools reported they have at least one full-time educational assistant, compared to 80% in 2007/08.

In their comments, many principals report more students are receiving supports in regular classrooms. However, at provincial special education consultations this year, participants acknowledged “many educators do not have the capacity to respond to students' complex needs” in the regular classroom.<sup>26</sup>

## FUNDING FORMULA STILL NEEDS A FIX

Ontario does not provide special education funding to school boards according to the actual special education needs of the board. Although special education funding has nearly doubled since 1998, when the province introduced the provincial education funding formula,<sup>27</sup> serious concerns remain about the way funding is allocated, and the adequacy and effectiveness of that funding:

- Without a standard definition of what “counts” as a special education support or service, it is difficult to provide funding to boards based on their actual needs.
- In 2009/2010, 67 of the province’s 72 schools boards spent more on special education than the amount they received from the province,<sup>28</sup> with over half of those spending more than a million dollars above their allocation, and five large boards spending over \$10 million dollars more than they received.
- In total, school boards spent \$174 million more on special education than the province provided.<sup>29</sup>
- The percentage of students with special needs ranges widely from board to board, from a high of 25% in some boards, to a low of 5% in others.<sup>30</sup>
- Despite concerns identified by the Auditor General in 2008 and again in 2010,<sup>31</sup> there is still no mechanism to assess the quality of special education services and supports in schools. Without information about quality and effectiveness, the system has limited means to improve services or manage costs.
- Because special education funding is based on numbers of students, boards with declining enrolment lose funding, even if the proportion of students requiring support is increasing.

### MORE COORDINATION NEEDED

Differences between school board practices can have a significant effect: A parent and child can go through an IPRC process in one board, and have to repeat the whole exercise if they move because, in many cases, neither IPRCs nor IEPs are transferable from board to board. In some cases, students who move from one school board to another may even need new psycho-educational assessments.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

All students can learn and all students can succeed, but some students require different kinds of support.

People for Education recommends

- the province develop consistent definitions about “what counts” as special education services,
- the province develop a method to regularly evaluate the quality of special education services provided, the equity of access to the services and value for money, and
- with these measures in place, the province fund special education based on need.

### WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

The special education teacher spends more time in the classroom. There are more children who need support for a variety of reasons that don't necessarily fall under a formal assessment.

*Elementary School, DSB Ontario North East*

More informally identified students are being serviced.

*Secondary School, Thames Valley DSB*

We are a small but industrious school, striving to meet the needs of our students with limited human resources and budget. Students needing 1:1 are not getting the support on a daily basis.

*Elementary School, Avon Maitland DSB*

The number of psychological assessments done in a school year had been reduced from 5 to 2. Case conferences with central staff for the year have been reduced from 4 to 3.

*Elementary School, York CDSB*

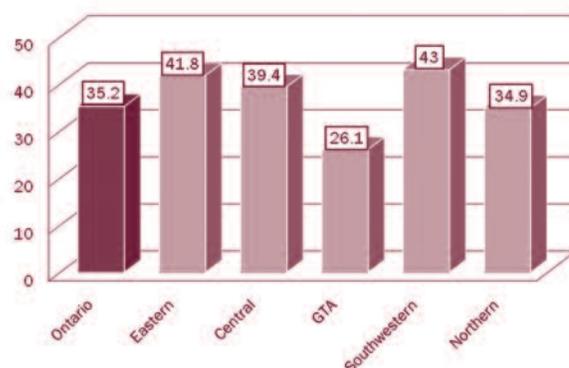
Outsourced therapies and assessments (CCAC) often have huge backlogs and to make matters worse, parents who move from one jurisdiction to another have to start all over again and this also happens with school board assessments.

*Elementary School, Trillium Lakelands DSB*

A new physically handicapped program was added—however facility renovations have not yet occurred.

*Secondary School (Special Needs), Toronto DSB*

**Average number of special education students per special education teacher, in elementary schools**



# THE ARTS

*I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys of learning.*

Plato

Education in the arts develops students' imaginations, increases their motivation to learn and allows them to achieve at higher levels. For many students, schools provide their first and, for some, their only experience of the arts.

Ontario has an extensive arts curriculum, but no specific funding for arts programs or specialists.

In contrast, Singapore, a jurisdiction that consistently outperforms many countries in reading, writing, math and science, is hiring more arts and music teachers and moving more teachers into single-subject specialization.<sup>32</sup> Finland, another high-performing country, is expanding its arts programs so that arts and crafts courses (including music, drama, visual arts and crafts) have a higher percentage of "weekly lesson hours" than math.<sup>33</sup>

## MUSIC TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This year, only 47% of elementary schools report either a full- or part-time music teacher. This percentage has increased over the last eight years, but still remains below the 58% reported in 1998, when the provincial funding formula was introduced.

Some schools without specialist music teachers have itinerant music instructors, who may or may not be certified teachers, and usually teach specific programs such as band, choir or specific musical instruments. This year, 28% of elementary schools without music specialists have itinerant music instructors.

## SPECIALISTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

For the most part, elementary teachers are generalists who can teach everything from math to history. However, there are technical aspects of some of the curriculum that require very specific knowledge. For example, the elementary music curriculum requires teachers to teach students to read, write, perform and compose music, understand musical notation and sing and/or play music in two or more parts. The visual arts curriculum requires that teachers have knowledge of a

### QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 47% of elementary schools have a specialist music teacher, compared to 58% in 1997/98.
- 10% of elementary schools with specialist music teachers report their elementary school music teachers have no special qualifications.
- 53% of secondary schools charge fees for fine arts courses.

range of traditional two- and three-dimensional art forms, and the ability to teach visual arts using current media technologies.<sup>34</sup> Teaching subjects such as these may be difficult for many non-specialist teachers.

People for Education and Ontario's Ministry of Education both keep track of the percentage of elementary schools with teachers who specialize in certain subjects, such as the arts or health & physical education (H&PE). But the Ministry of Education has no guidelines about the qualifications that a teacher must have in order to act as a specialist at the elementary level.

This year, People for Education asked schools about what qualifications their specialist music teachers have. Of the schools with music teachers, 52% report their teachers have taken [Additional Qualifications](#) (AQ) courses accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers, and just over one quarter report their specialist music teachers have either a music degree or some form of advanced training. However, 10% report their specialist music teacher has no special qualifications.

## INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE ARTS

The arts are a required subject in elementary school, and students require one arts credit to graduate from high school, but there is no specific funding for the arts in Ontario schools. And because many schools rely on fees and fundraising to support the arts, there is no guarantee that all students will have access to arts programs or enrichment:

- School boards receive a Program Enhancement Grant to “provide a well-rounded education.”<sup>35</sup> The Grant provides \$9,650 per school and may be used to cover the costs of things like arts, and physical or outdoor education programs. However, many boards report that this funding is instead added to their general revenue to fund core areas, such as building maintenance.
- Students in smaller schools are at a disadvantage. This year, only 28% of elementary schools in Eastern Ontario and 33% of elementary schools in Northern Ontario have specialist music teachers—both are regions where schools tend to be small. 67% of schools in the GTA have music specialists.
- 61% of elementary and secondary schools rely on fundraising to cover the costs of things like musical instruments, art supplies and other forms of arts enrichment.<sup>36</sup>
- 53% of secondary schools charge fees for art courses and 26% charge fees for music courses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Education in the arts helps students develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies necessary for success in school and in life.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide specific and targeted funding for arts programs and specialists in elementary and secondary school,
- the province ensure the availability of professional development and support in the arts for generalist teachers, and
- the province require boards to report on their programs that are funded through the Program Enhancement Grant.

## WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

We are quite concerned that there is no formal staff allocation for the arts in our school; specifically for instrumental music. Should one of my instrumental music teachers retire, and I experience declining enrolment in my school, I will not be in a hiring position and my instrumental music program could be wiped out completely because the position is not protected. Over time, this will devastate our instrumental music programs at the elementary level across TDSB.

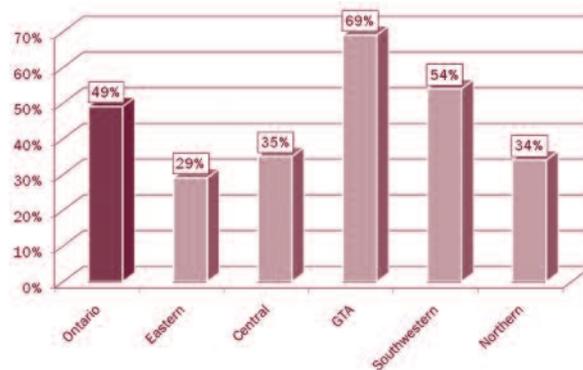
It should also be noted that a few years ago, TDSB decided that a teacher assigned to instrumental music does not need to have music qualifications. This would be the equivalent of putting a French teacher in front a classroom that doesn't speak French!

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

. . . We have a school marching band. The teacher for this band is paid for by fundraising that the band does. We have an arts portable that the parents in this community built and that our school board maintains.

*Elementary School, Simcoe County DSB*

Specialist music teachers in Ontario elementary schools, by region



# HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*To keep our brains at peak performance, our bodies need to work hard.*

John J. Ratey M.D., Spark: *The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise*

A healthy school environment helps children learn and contributes to life-long patterns of fitness and good health.

But fewer than 10% of Canadian children are getting the level of physical activity recommended in Canadian and international guidelines,<sup>37</sup> and a quarter of Canadian children and youth are overweight or obese.<sup>38</sup>

Ontario has some promising new strategies to improve students' overall health, but still lags behind other jurisdictions in its health and physical education requirements.

In Ontario, health and physical education (H&PE), which includes 20 minutes of daily physical activity, is mandatory until the end of Grade 8, and students require one secondary school physical education credit to graduate. In contrast, British Columbia and Quebec require at least 30 minutes of activity every day right up until the end of high school.<sup>39</sup> And in Finland, where there is an increased recognition of the importance of health education, the percentage of “lesson hours” per week for Health and Personal Functionality (a combination of health and physical education and home economics) is being increased to be equal with the number of hours spent on mathematics.<sup>40</sup> The province does provide a Program Enhancement Grant (see p. 11) to cover extra costs for things such as physical and outdoor education programs, but many boards use the funding to cover core costs.

## HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS

Research shows that health and physical education specialists not only ensure students have more hours of physical education classes, but that the physical education itself is of a higher quality.<sup>41</sup>

This year, 43% of Ontario's elementary schools have a specialist health and physical education teacher, and most of them work part-time. This is a slight increase since 1997/98, when 41% of elementary schools had health and physical education teachers. But these specialists are not evenly distributed around the province. Schools with higher enrolments have funding for more teachers, so they are more likely to

### QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 43% of elementary schools have a specialist health and physical education (H&PE) teacher, compared to 41% in 1997/98.
- 72% of GTA elementary schools have an H&PE teacher, compared to 25% of Northern Ontario schools.
- 16% of elementary schools with specialist H&PE teachers report that their teachers have no special qualifications.

have specialist health and physical education teachers. For this reason, in the GTA, where schools tend to have higher than average enrolments, 72% of elementary schools report a full- or part-time specialist health and physical education teacher. Outside the GTA, only 1/3 or fewer schools have these specialists.

### WHAT MAKES A SPECIALIST?

This year, People for Education asked schools to identify the qualifications of their specialist health and physical education teachers.

Among the schools that reported having specialist health and physical education teachers, 55% have taken Ontario College of Teachers-certified Additional Qualification (AQ) courses, 29% have degrees in physical education or a university specialization in physical education and 16% have no special qualifications. Schools report that some teachers have more than one qualification.

### WORKING TOWARD HEALTHY SCHOOLS

The Ministry of Education has started implementing a comprehensive strategy to develop “Healthy Schools” for Ontario. The strategy includes new curriculum, a new food and beverage policy and a provincial framework to help parents, students and staff develop “Healthy Schools.” A Healthy School supports healthy eating, more physical activity, bullying prevention, and provides information about healthy growth and development, substance abuse and mental health. Over 2,200 schools have participated in the Healthy Schools Recognition Program.<sup>42</sup>

The new School Food and Beverage Policy—which comes into effect in September 2011—sets out nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold in elementary and secondary schools in the province,<sup>43</sup> and requires that 80% of foods being sold in schools or served at special events should be “healthiest” choices—highly nutritious and low in fat, sodium and sugar.

The new curriculum, introduced in 2010 in elementary schools and coming next year for secondary schools, is comprehensive in its approach to H&PE and covers all aspects of young people’s health—from mental health and well-being to sexual health and physical fitness. There were some objections to the examples provided in the sex education component of the healthy living strand of the new elementary H&PE curriculum, so it was withdrawn until further consultation can be held.

### EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The benefits of physical activity for student learning and engagement with school are clear,<sup>44</sup> as is the long-term correlation between poverty and poor health outcomes.<sup>45</sup> But in Ontario, access to sports and physical activity may be at least partially dependent on family income.

Renovated playgrounds are associated with more active play,<sup>46</sup> but 47% of Ontario’s schools depend on fundraising for playgrounds and nearly two-thirds of school councils fundraise for sports.<sup>47</sup> In secondary schools, 41% charge fees for health and physical education classes and 73% charge Athletic fees, which range from \$10 to \$1,800. This raises serious equity concerns.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools can play a key role in promoting physical activity, healthy eating and overall health, including mental, sexual and social health.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide specific and targeted funding for health and physical education programs, as well as specialists in elementary and secondary school,
- the province ensure the availability of professional development and support in H&PE for generalist teachers, and
- require boards to report on programs funded through the Program Enhancement Grant.

### WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

We are an inner city school, and many of our students come from low-income families. We supply our students with healthy snack bins (fresh fruit, cut-up carrots, 100% fruit drinks, etc.) in the classroom every morning, and by the end of the day, the bins are empty. We have found feeding the students helps with behaviour and learning.

*Elementary School, Simcoe Muskoka CDSB*

We are a “Healthy Living School” that was originally started with support and financing from OPHEA and other community grants. We continue to recognize and implement Healthy + Active components with our students and our community through nutritional programs and extracurricular activities during and after school.

*Elementary School, Simcoe County DSB*

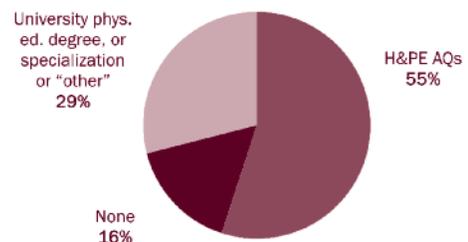
Classroom teachers are also scheduled to teach a class in order to provide the programme as well as planning time.

*Elementary School, Peel DSB*

Each homeroom teacher does their own P.E.

*Elementary School, Waterloo Region DSB*

**Specialized health and physical education teacher qualifications in elementary schools**



# SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS

*Our success depends not only on our ability to attract new immigrants, but on providing an environment where new Canadians can maximize their potential...we have to work harder both to attract and maximize the potential of talented people.* Gordon Nixon, President & CEO, RBC Financial Group

The development of a Canadian identity has been tied to immigration since the earliest colonial days, and Ontario now welcomes over 100,000 immigrants each year from all over the world<sup>48</sup>—many of them are highly skilled professionals travelling with their families to build a better future.

Some children, with or without their families, are fleeing persecution and seeking a haven in Canada. At their best, schools can help create safety, connection and opportunities for newcomer children and their families.

## PROVIDING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS NEW TO CANADA

Ontario has English-language and French-language schools, and in both systems, there are students who need language support. In English schools, we refer to English Language Learners (ELLs), and in French schools, students are enrolled in Actualisation linguistique en français et Perfectionnement du français (ALF/PDF) programs.

Over the last ten years, there has been a steady increase in the number of English Language Learners in Ontario schools. There are more students per school and more schools with ELLs.

In English-language schools,

- 63% of elementary schools have English Language Learners this year, compared to 53% in 2003/04. The percentage of secondary schools with ELLs has remained fairly steady at 47%.
- 56% of elementary schools and 33% of secondary schools report having 10 or more students learning English, up from 46% and 25% respectively in 2003/04,
- in elementary schools with *ten or more* ELLs, 19% have no English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, an improvement from a high of 33% in 2006/07, and
- in secondary schools with ten or more ELLs, 95% have a specialist ESL teacher.

## QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 63% of English-language elementary schools have students who require English-language support (ELLs), compared to 53% in 2003/04.
- 40% of French-language elementary schools with more than ten students requiring French-language support have no specialist French as a Second Language teacher.

Children of parents educated in French and children who come to Canada from French-speaking countries have a right to go to French-language schools. However, in most of Ontario, these schools are in English-speaking communities, and many of these children need support as they learn French:

- 66% of elementary schools in French-language boards report students who require ALF/PDF support.
- Of the French-language elementary schools with ten or more ALF/PDF students, 40% report having no ALF/PDF teacher.

## NOT JUST THE GTA: UNMET NEEDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

Schools in the GTA have the highest number of ELLs in the province: 90% of elementary schools have English Language Learners in them; an average of 13% of students per elementary school are ELLs, and 5% of GTA schools report that 60% or more of their students are English Language Learners.

However, across the province many schools report significant ELL populations: 18% of schools outside the GTA have 10 or more English Language Learners in them, and 29% of those schools do not have teachers who specialize in teaching English to newcomers.

## ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS BEING STREAMED IN HIGH SCHOOL?

In secondary school, students who require language supports may face limits beyond simple language acquisition. Data from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) show that English Language Learners are 36% more likely to be enrolled in applied mathematics than their English-speaking counterparts.<sup>49</sup> This raises concerns because enrolling in applied courses may limit post-secondary choices for these students. It is more difficult to go on to university if a student has taken applied courses in Grades 9 and 10. Thus, short-term language skill problems may be making a long-term difference for a large number of English Language Learners.

## BEYOND LANGUAGE: CONNECTING TO SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Schools are logical places to provide connections to settlement supports for immigrant children and families, who may face considerable barriers to accessing educational, health and social services.<sup>50</sup>

Newcomer students and their families need information about things such as how the education system works, where parents can further their own education and training, where they can access health care and how to find employment. Worryingly, 59% of elementary schools and 40% of secondary schools with English Language Learners report they “never” cooperate or coordinate with settlement agencies. Given substantial federal cuts to settlement agencies this year,<sup>51</sup> it is unlikely that this relationship will improve in the next few years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Newcomers enrich our province, but these students and their families require effective support and programs to ensure they have an equitable chance for success.

People for Education recommends

- the province fund ELL/ALF supports for students until they reach a provincially established standard of academic proficiency in English and French, and
- the province protect funding for ELL/ALF, so that it may only be spent on the purpose for which it is given, and
- the province ensure that all English Language Learners and students enrolled in ALF/PDF are receiving appropriate supports and are not being streamed into applied courses due to short-term language issues.

## WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

**Over 22 languages are spoken in students' homes, and most students are fully able to communicate in English. But we have a great deal of difficulty communicating with our parent community that does not speak English.**

*Elementary School, Waterloo Region DSB*

**Has not changed, just no service.**

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

**Resource staff no longer able to support students and staff at the school level - email support from a designated board person is still available.**

*Elementary School, Simcoe County DSB*

**While we have 325 ELL students in our school, only 80 children are serviced by our ESL staff.**

*Elementary School, Peel DSB*

# EARLY YEARS EDUCATION & CARE

*A child's ability to think, form relationships, and live up to his or her full potential is directly related to the synergistic effect of good health, good nutrition, and appropriate stimulation and interaction with others.* The World Bank

Ensuring that children have a solid start in their early years has immediate and long-term benefits for children and society as a whole.<sup>52</sup> But for decades, Ontario has had an “underfunded patchwork”<sup>53</sup> of services that has left families scrambling to piece together quality early learning and care opportunities for their children.

## WITH OUR BEST FUTURE IN MIND: VISION AND POLICY BLUEPRINT

In 2008, Premier Dalton McGuinty asked Dr. Charles Pascal, his Early Learning Advisor, to develop a plan for a seamless and integrated system to support children from birth to age 12 and their families. Dr. Pascal's 2009 report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*, is a blueprint for how to organize, manage and deliver services for children, including full-day early learning, integrated before- and after-school programs and child and family centres.

## FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

In response to the Early Learning Advisor's report, the province introduced “the biggest change for Ontario's education system in a generation.”<sup>54</sup> The government committed to offering full-day kindergarten in all Ontario schools by 2015.

This year's surveys show improvements related to full-day kindergarten:

- 19% of English-language elementary schools outside of Northern Ontario offer full-day, every day kindergarten programs, an increase from 5% in 2009/10.
- 21% of elementary schools across the province report that child care centres and kindergarten teachers work together to coordinate curriculum, an increase from 15% in 2009/10.
- 52% of elementary schools report they have a system in place between child care and school to keep track of children with special needs, an increase from 35% in 2009/10.

## QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 19% of English-language schools outside of Northern Ontario offer full-day, every day kindergarten programs, compared to 5% last year.
- Across Ontario, 30% of elementary schools have on-site childcare programs for kindergarten-aged children.
- 24% of schools report having a family support program, up from 20% last year.

## SEAMLESS DAY: FULL-DAY, FULL-YEAR PROGRAMS FOR 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLDS

*With Our Best Future in Mind* recommended that parents have an option beyond full-day kindergarten: a seamless full-day, full-year program for their children. This was not intended to be an add-on to kindergarten, but a cohesive part of the Early Learning Program that extended before and after the traditional school day and year.

Last year, the *Education Act* was changed to require boards with full-day kindergarten to offer fee-based extended day programs to four- and five-year-olds, but only during the school year.<sup>55</sup> Only a few parents registered for the programs because of concerns about uncertain cost, quality and availability.<sup>56</sup> As a result, only seven English boards operate integrated programs.<sup>57</sup> Even in those boards, the programs operate only in a limited number of schools: for example, the Ottawa-Carleton DSB has a well-regarded program,<sup>58</sup> but the program is only offered in four of its schools.

The province has recently passed legislation that threatens the “seamlessness” of the program. The legislation will allow boards to contract out before- and after-school care,<sup>59</sup> and school boards, unions and early childhood experts are particularly concerned that for-profit providers are permitted under the new changes. Across Ontario, 30% of elementary schools have on-site child care programs for kindergarten-aged children.<sup>60</sup>

## BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR 6-TO-12-YEAR-OLDS

According to Active Healthy Kids Canada, nearly three-quarters of Canadian children do not have access to supervised after-school programs.<sup>61</sup> The Early Learning Advisor's report recommended that if enough parents requested them, boards would be required to offer fee-based before- and after-school programs for 6-to-12-year-olds.

This year, 42% of elementary schools have before- and after-school programs, an improvement from 37% last year, but, despite the Advisor's recommendation, school boards are not required to offer them.

## CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES

Finally, *With Our Best Future in Mind* recommended the development of an integrated network of Best Start Child and Family Centres organized by municipalities. Centres would provide families with a full range of services for very young children, including childcare; pre- and post-natal care; family support programming, including home visiting, family literacy, and playgroups; early identification and intervention resources; and links to special needs treatment and community resources. These centres would incorporate the current array of family support programs, including Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Best Start Programs and Early Years Centres.

This year, 24% of elementary schools report they have some form of family support program, up from 20% last year.

## CHALLENGES FOR BOARDS AND CHILD CARE SECTOR

The rollout of the new policy has not been without difficulties. School boards have raised concerns that the province has not provided sufficient funding or support for full-day kindergarten or for before- and after-school programs. In addition, because the full-day kindergarten program was introduced without recommended changes to provincial child care policy and funding, it may jeopardize the already struggling child care sector:

- Childcare centres will lose a significant number of 4- and 5-year olds to the full-day kindergarten programs, and their fees often help to cover the costs of the more expensive care of younger children.<sup>62</sup>
- Early childhood educators may leave daycares to seek better-paying, more secure jobs within the school system.<sup>63</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing children with the supports and enrichment they need when they are very young has a positive impact throughout their lives—on their health, well-being, learning and their capacity to become contributing adults.

People for Education recommends

- the province enact regulations so that only school boards, municipalities and not-for-profit agencies are permitted to operate extended day programs in schools,
- the province mandate, with appropriate funding and support, that school boards offer extended day programs for children from 4 to 12 years of age,
- the province develop policy and funding to ensure municipal and not-for-profit operators have access to space in schools, at cost, for full-year, extended day programs for 4- and 5-year-olds,
- the province mandate boards to establish collaborative policies and practices, including joint professional development for teachers and early childhood educators, so that extended programs are truly seamless, and
- the province work with other levels of government to provide support to the child care sector to offset revenue losses associated with full-day kindergarten.

### WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

The kindergarten teacher and the child care workers are in constant communication in regards to shared students.

*Elementary School Toronto DSB*

The local child care centre received a grant for healthy living, and we have been participating in some of their programs.

*Elementary School DSB Ontario North East*

Full day kindergarten—concerns around classrooms that were not designed for upwards of 30 children, including activity centers, etc. The rooms are not very comfortable. Also, there should be a cap on these classes of 20. We are finding that if a student is having a difficult time, the ECE works with that student, which leaves the teacher working with 27-28 students on her own.

*Elementary School Toronto DSB*

The FDKP has been a tremendous success for the students and teachers. We have been wonderfully surprised at how well the integration of the JK and SK students has worked. The emergent curriculum has allowed the students to direct the learning, and they have shown us their tremendous capability to go further than we very expected. We are extremely excited as we learn to facilitate their learning.

*Elementary School DSB Ontario North East*

# STUDENTS' VOICES

*...in some cases the voices of students provide the tipping point to shift the culture and practices of high schools. Combining collaborative and authentic tasks that build skills and confidence, and widening the arena of student influence, student voice processes can give students a credible voice in and impact on the institution that plays a major role in their lives.*<sup>64</sup>

Ben Levin and Sharon Pekrul

It is vital that students' voices are represented in conversations about education policy and funding.

*People for Education asked the Ontario Student Trustees' Association to contribute this section.*

There are just under 2 million students in Ontario's publicly funded schools. These students are truly the key stakeholders in the education system, as their future will be affected by the education they receive today.

This year, to get a better picture of what Ontario's students truly think about their education system, the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, in partnership with [Student Vote](#) and [ScholarshipsCanada.com](#), created the Ontario Student Survey. The survey is a tool to address important education issues identified by students themselves, and to build awareness of these issues in order for government and students to work together toward solutions.

The survey results have garnered attention from across the education community, as well as the general public. Perhaps most important of all, they have been read by thousands of students.

## EVALUATION, TESTING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In response to questions about their academic work, students expressed interest in having more input on important aspects of their education, and a better understanding of how they are assessed:

- Almost 75% of students say that they would achieve better results on their culminating activities (the large year-end projects required in most high school courses) if they were able to choose the project with their teacher.
- 92% of participants believe that students should be allowed to view their Grade 10 EQAO literacy test (which students must pass in order to graduate) after it has been marked.

## ABOUT OSTA-AECO

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association-l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO) is the largest student organization in Ontario's education system. The association represents students and student trustees in all publicly funded schools in Ontario.

Student trustees are elected by their peers to bring the student voice to district school board tables. Every school board must have at least two student trustees.

Student trustees also act as consultants on policy for the Ministry of Education, collaborate with others in the education community and work to unite all student trustees across the province.

Student trustees work diligently to ensure that the student voice is heard at both the school board and provincial level and play an integral role in crafting the future of public education in Ontario. All while keeping up with their regular school work!

The survey also asked students whether a later school day start time would have an impact on their academic success. The responses were evenly split on this issue, with half of the participants indicating that a 10:00 a.m. start time would benefit students academically.

## **STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The survey also included questions about student councils, guidance services and bullying:

- Only 57% of participants indicate that the guidance system is doing enough to support students.
- Over half of the students (54%) indicate that they had been bullied at school at some point in their education.
- 89% of students believe that all middle and high schools should have student councils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SEXUAL HEALTH**

When asked whether all students should be required to take health and physical education until the end of high school, 53% of the participants indicate that it should be mandatory.

The majority of participants (82%) also believe that information on all sexualities should be taught during sexual health classes.

## **CELLPHONES IN THE CLASSROOM**

One of the most interesting findings from the survey, given the ubiquitous nature of cellphones for today's students, was their response to the question about the use of cellphones as a teaching tool in the classroom. A majority of students (72%) think that cellphones do not have a place in the classroom as an educational tool.

In the fall of 2011, the students will announce the results of a new survey, launched in 2011. It was launched with a complementary survey for parents in partnership with People for Education.

For more information about Ontario's student trustees and their important work, please visit [www.osta-aeco.org](http://www.osta-aeco.org).

# FEES & FUNDRAISING

*Year after year, demand at food banks spikes in late August and early September as parents find themselves having to choose between purchasing food or school provisions.*

Katharine Schmidt, Executive Director of Food Banks Canada

The fundamental premise of publicly funded education—that every student should have an equitable chance for success—is in danger because of an increasing reliance on fees and fundraising to support programs in Ontario schools.

Audited financial statements for 2009/10 show Ontario schools raised a total of \$588.4 million to augment school budgets and support charitable causes.<sup>65</sup> These dollars, known as “school-generated funds,” come from a combination of fees, fundraising, vending machines, cafeterias, grants, corporate sponsorships and money raised by schools for external charities.<sup>66</sup>

This private money is neither equitably distributed, nor consistently accounted for.

## FUNDRAISING AND INEQUITY

This year, amounts fundraised by individual schools range from a low of \$0 to a high of \$275,000 per school. The wide range in fundraising—with the top 10% of fundraising schools raising the same amount as the bottom 78% put together—coupled with schools’ increased reliance on fees, raises grave concerns about students’ equitable access to a broadly based education.

And when data from the Ministry of Education’s [School Information Finder](#) are compared with individual schools’ fundraising amounts, a fundamental inequity becomes clear: Schools with a high proportion of low-income families raise, on average, less than half the amount raised in schools with a low proportion of low-income families. Thus, students whose families can fundraise or pay fees have access to better learning materials, more arts enrichment and more extracurricular and athletic activities.

The Ministry of Education released new draft guidelines for fundraising in March of 2011.<sup>67</sup> In addition to fundraising already done in most schools, the new draft guidelines propose to allow fundraising for such core costs as:

### QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 97% of elementary and secondary schools fundraise.
- Fundraising per school ranges from a low of \$0 to a high of \$275,000.
- 68% of secondary schools charge fees for courses.
- 92% of secondary schools have a Student Activity Fee, and the average fee has increased by 75% since 2000/01.
- Schools with a high proportion of low-income students raise, on average, less than half the amount raised in schools with a low proportion of low-income students.

- school improvement projects (e.g. outdoor structures and skating rinks),
- upgrades to school facilities that do not increase the square footage of the school (e.g. retrofitting auditoriums and upgrading science labs),
- upgrades to sports facilities (e.g. running tracks and specialized recreation facilities) and
- technological investments (e.g. computer and media labs).

If these guidelines are an indication of future policy, students from families with the capacity to fundraise in the hundreds of thousands of dollars will also have better science labs, new gyms and auditoriums and greater access to 21<sup>st</sup> century technological advancements.

The Ministry of Education is conducting a consultation on new draft guidelines for fundraising until August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011.<sup>67</sup>

## FEES AND THE EDUCATION ACT

Ontario's *Education Act* guarantees resident pupils "the right to attend school without a fee," and requires that boards provide "instruction and adequate accommodation," as well as textbooks.<sup>68</sup>

Ontario's new provincial fee guidelines forbid schools from charging registration or administration fees, or fees for core materials necessary to teach the curriculum. But at the same time, the guidelines allow fees to cover the costs of "enhanced programming and materials" and "enrichments and upgrades."<sup>69</sup> These enhancements can include anything from physical education equipment to superior science materials. The guidelines provide no guarantee for students' equal access to "enhanced" materials or enrichments. In fact, these guidelines may create very real divisions between those students whose families are willing and able to pay for "enhanced" materials, and those whose families are not.

## STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Research from the OECD and the National Research Council (U.S.) shows that participation in extracurricular activities, sports and clubs are key characteristics for evaluating student engagement and students' sense of belonging at school.<sup>70</sup> This research also shows that both engagement and belonging have a significant impact on students' overall success.

According to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, "extracurricular activities can . . . foster lifelong appreciation and interests, preparing a young person for life in ways that go beyond academic success."<sup>71</sup>

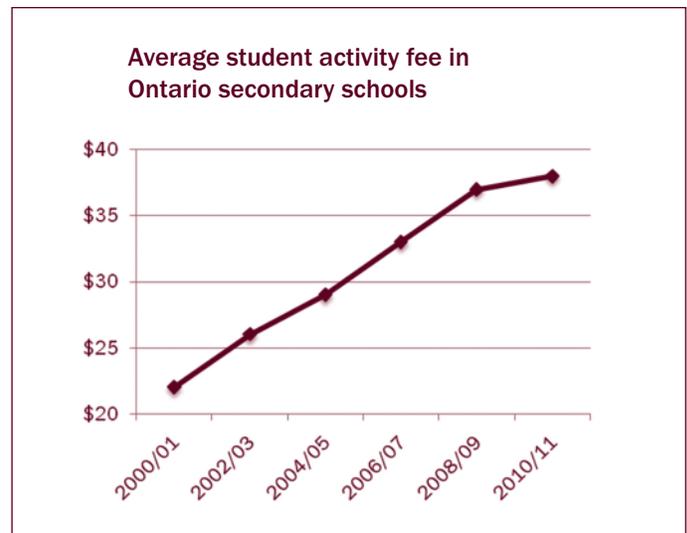
In Ontario, students do not have equitable access to these important activities. More than two-thirds of Ontario secondary schools charge fees for student activities and/or athletics. Some schools charge as little as \$5, while others report Student Activity Fees as high as \$100 and Athletic Fees as high as \$1,800 per student. New fee guidelines do not forbid these types of fees, nor do they guarantee students' access to these activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

An increased reliance on fees and fundraising in Ontario schools will lead to an increased gap between "have" and "have not" schools.

People for Education recommends

- the province specify and provide funding for the materials, programs and resources that should be available to all students in every school,
- the province ensure that every student in Ontario has access to a broadly based education that includes adequate learning materials in all subjects and access to extracurricular activities, arts programs and sports at no extra charge,
- the province prohibit boards and schools from fundraising to cover capital costs,
- the province track and publish an annual report on school-generated funds, including information on amounts raised and costs covered, and
- the province establish provincial fee guidelines that mandate that all fees are voluntary and that all fees requests from schools clearly state "ALL FEES ARE VOLUNTARY."



# POVERTY & INEQUALITY

*An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics.*

Plutarch, Ancient Greek biographer (c. 46–120 CE)

Schools have the potential to change children’s lives, to overcome intergenerational cycles of poverty and to set young people on a trajectory for lifelong success.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, despite some real successes, poverty remains one of the most powerful factors affecting students’ chances for success in school.<sup>73</sup>

By international standards, Ontario can congratulate itself on being one of the jurisdictions where the effect of socioeconomic status on achievement is less than in many other countries.<sup>74</sup> But there remain stubborn gaps in outcomes and resources.

## **MORE THAN ONE IN SIX CHILDREN IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS LIVE IN POVERTY**

This year, for the first time, People for Education looked at the connection between the income of students’ families and the resources and supports available in their schools. School-by-school data from the People for Education surveys, when matched with data from the Ministry of Education’s [School Information Finder](#), reveal information about the distribution and impact of poverty in Ontario schools.

According to the School Information Finder, the average proportion of students living below the low income cut-off (approximately \$30,000 for a family of four)<sup>75</sup> is 16.5%, and almost every Ontario school has at least some of these students. However there are some schools that have a very high proportion of students from very low-income families. This is a concern because research shows students are less likely to overcome the impact of poverty when they attend economically segregated schools.<sup>76</sup>

For the purposes of analysis, this report looks at elementary schools at either end of the spectrum (see Methodology). These schools represent two kinds of populations. In the schools at one end of the spectrum, over 30% of the student population come from families below the low income cut-off. At the other end, *under 2%* of the students come from low-income families. People for Education calls these schools “high” and “low” poverty schools.

In those schools, the averages tell the story. In the high poverty schools, an average of 42% of the students come from low-income families. In the low poverty schools, the average is 0.6%. High poverty schools also had an above-average percentage of newcomer students.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Schools across the province raise millions of dollars per year through fundraising to augment school budgets. But the fundraising is not evenly distributed. High poverty schools raise, on average, less than half the amounts raised in low poverty schools. When this result is combined with the fact that the top 10% of fundraising schools raise as much as the bottom 78% put together, it is apparent that communities with the fewest resources also have the fewest opportunities for the enrichment provided by fundraising.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Inequities are also apparent in special education waiting lists and access to programs.

The average number of children on special education waiting lists in high poverty schools (10) is more than double the average number of children (4) per low poverty school. And 28% of high poverty schools report they have identified students who are not receiving recommended support, again, double the percentage of low poverty schools.

These differences in access and support may be caused by differences in parents’ capacity to either pay for outside assessments—which can cost as much as \$2,000—or to engage in the advocacy that is sometimes necessary to ensure students are receiving the support they are entitled to.

Surprisingly, the percentage of students receiving special education support is similar in schools at either end of the spectrum, despite the fact that research shows that children from low-income families have higher levels of disability.<sup>77</sup>

The only area that appears to favour high poverty schools is the ratio of special education students to special education teachers in high poverty schools, which is much lower than the provincial average (1:29, as opposed to 1:36).

#### **WHERE IS THE POLICY? THE DISAPPEARING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES GRANT**

The Ministry of Education does provide funding to school boards to support students whose socio-economic status puts them at risk of struggling in school. This funding, known as the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG), was originally intended to be used for programs and resources such as increased numbers of counsellors and social workers, more educational assistants, smaller class sizes, mentoring programs, breakfast and lunch programs, free access to extracurricular activities and recreation and before- and after-school programs.<sup>78</sup>

In 2002, the government review of the funding formula recommended an increase in the amount of the grant and better analysis of the programs and services being provided to students at risk.<sup>79</sup>

But over the years, and despite emphasizing education as a key part of the government anti-poverty strategy,<sup>80</sup> two things have happened: The number of programs the LOG is intended to cover has expanded, and the funding has been reduced. Since 2005, the per-pupil amount in the LOG has been reduced by 9%, and the grant is now intended to cover the costs of not only programs based on demographic needs, but also a range of literacy and numeracy programs, the [Specialist High Skills Major program](#), the [K-12 School Effectiveness Framework](#) and more.<sup>81</sup> The grant now gives more weight to boards' poverty demographics, but that has not overcome the loss of funding and the breadth of programs the grant is intended to cover.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The current Learning Opportunities Grant is neither protected, nor targeted at programs for disadvantaged students, and it is insufficient to support programs that would alleviate the effects of poverty.

People for Education recommends

- the provincial government develop a new Equity in Education Grant, designated solely for providing programs to mitigate socio-economic and ethno-racial factors affecting students, and
- further that the new Equity in Education Grant should be protected, and include a built-in accountability process to mandate that school boards report annually on the programs and services funded by the grant and on their effectiveness.

# SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

*The healthy development, learning and life success of children depend upon the joint efforts of parents, families, community members and agencies, educators, health providers, social and justice workers, Elders and many others.* Saskatchewan School<sup>PLUS</sup>

Schools can't do it alone. That message is clear from decades of research.<sup>82</sup>

When schools have strong connections to a range of community organizations and supports, families are more likely to use them, and students are more likely to be successful.<sup>83</sup>

"Connected" schools are either home to or have strong links with things like child care, employment support, health centres, community kitchens, adult education, parent groups, community gardens, youth groups, social services, cultural centres, parenting classes, nutritional classes, public libraries and recreation programs.<sup>84</sup>

Many provinces have expansive policies and funding to support schools as centres of their communities. In this, Ontario lags behind.<sup>85</sup>

## SCHOOLS AT THE CENTRE

Over the last two years, People for Education conducted a series of public dialogues about the future of Ontario's education policy. These dialogues led to a new vision for education: "Schools at the Centre," where schools are a vital part of the ecosystem of influences on Ontario's children, families, communities. Strong, two-way connections between the school and the community are a key element of this vision.

## WHERE DO SCHOOLS CONNECT?

For the first time, People for Education asked schools whether there was "often," "some" or "never" cooperation or coordination with a selection of community organizations (the list of organizations will be expanded next year).

While almost all schools report they have some connection with Public Health Units (98% of elementary schools and 99% of high schools), schools' connections to many other organizations are sporadic.

### QUICK FACTS FOR 2010/11

- 20% of elementary schools and 34% of secondary schools have staff time allocated for maintaining school-community connections.
- Only 6% of elementary schools and 9% of secondary schools have a full-time school-community liaison.

Elementary schools most frequently report that they have "some" connection with seven or eight community organizations, including child care, municipal recreation programs, and public libraries.

- 47% report they "often" cooperate with child care, while 25% report they "never" do.
- 22% report they "often" cooperate with municipal recreation programs, while 19% report they "never" do.
- 16% "often" connect with the public library, while 25% "never" do.
- 5% "often" connect with Aboriginal organizations, while 60% "never" do.

High schools are more likely than elementary schools to report that they "often" connect with community agencies.

- 31% report they "often" cooperate with youth employment agencies, while 5% "never" do.
- 30% report they "often" cooperate with adult education programs, while 26% "never" do.
- 22% "often" connect with Aboriginal organizations, while 35% "never" do.
- 25% report they "often" cooperate with municipal recreation programs, while 6% "never" do.
- 12% "often" connect with the public library, while 31% "never" do.

## HIGHLY “CONNECTED” SCHOOLS

A small number of schools report they have connections with all the community organizations listed on the survey, and principals from these schools described a number of benefits. A principal from Waterloo Region DSB said that the school’s strong connections to its community “provides more opportunities for student learning, more community partners who support school activities, and a safer, more caring school and neighbourhood. There is a significant impact on school climate and culture, and the strong connection with the community helps to ‘market’ the school and promote public education. In addition, the students gain supports from various programs in terms of resources and expertise.”

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS NEED HUMAN RESOURCES

It takes many hours of consistent work and outreach to maintain a network of community connections. Schools that have specific staff members who are dedicated to this work are much more likely to report high numbers of connections with ethnocultural programs, settlement programs, faith-based organizations, seniors’ organizations and youth employment organizations. But only 34% of secondary and 20% of elementary schools report they have a staff member (other than the principal or vice-principal) who is responsible for acting as a liason with the school community. And in those schools, less than a quarter report they allot any actual staff time for this position.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

While there are many examples of successful school-community partnerships across Ontario, the provincial policy framework is patchy. The province provides some support for the community use of schools and funding for one position per board to coordinate that community use. However, there is still no integrated framework of education, health, health promotion, children and youth services and recreation services that would effectively address the needs of Ontario’s children and youth. This is despite decades of talk about dismantling these service “silos.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Families are more likely to use programs offered through school. School-community partnerships promote child well-being, and housing these services and programs in schools is a cost-effective use of these public spaces.

People for Education recommends

- the province develop strong community-school policy and include funded staff time to build and maintain school-community connections, and
- as recommended in 2008 by the Honourable Roy McMurtry and Dr. Alvin Curling, that the province establish a cabinet-level secretariat to oversee an integrated and funded policy framework that would include measurable outcomes for healthy child development.

### WHAT PRINCIPALS TOLD US . . .

**Our connections with the community are long-standing and nurtured by continuous communication and project work. We are the only school in town, and I like to say that we are the best school in town. The community loves our school, supports our school and works with us (and we work with them) on many worthwhile projects. Having all of these connections is priceless— we express a need, the word gets out and the network of friends and contacts that we have in the community will usually come forward with possible solutions or supports for our school.**

*Secondary School, Hastings & Prince Edward DSB*

**Students require support with mental health issues, and we have more family issues related to social-economic factors that require support from community agencies.**

*Elementary School, Ottawa CDSB*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. PRINCIPALS

Strong principals, working cooperatively with teachers and the school community, are crucial to student success.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide funding for other staff to take over some of the responsibility for school and facilities management, and for school-community coordination,
- the province increase funding for vice-principals to allow more chances for “apprenticeships,”
- that new policy is developed to allow teachers to “test drive” the role of the principal for two years without a loss of seniority in the teacher unions, and
- school boards endeavour to ensure that principals’ terms are at least five years.

## 2. SCHOOL LIBRARIES & INFORMATION LITERACY

All students and teachers should have the capacity to find, evaluate, organize and transform information in the digital universe.

People for Education recommends

- the province support a leadership role for teacher-librarians, who can work with classroom teachers to develop feasible information literacy programs for all students, and
- the province support information and technology education in faculties of education and through ongoing professional development for all teachers.

## 3. SPECIAL EDUCATION

All students can learn and all students can succeed, but some students require different kinds of support.

People for Education recommends

- the province develop consistent definitions about “what counts” as special education services,
- the province develop a method to regularly evaluate the quality of special education services provided, the equity of access to the services and value for money, and
- with these measures in place, the province fund special education based on need.

## 4. THE ARTS

Education in the arts helps students develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies necessary for success in school and in life.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide specific and targeted funding for arts programs and specialists in elementary and secondary school,
- the province ensure the availability of professional development and support in the arts for generalist teachers, and
- the province require boards to report on their programs that are funded through the Program Enhancement Grant.

## 5. HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Schools can play a key role in promoting physical activity, healthy eating and overall health, including mental, sexual and social health.

People for Education recommends

- the province provide specific and targeted funding for health and physical education programs, as well as specialists in elementary and secondary school,
- the province ensure the availability of professional development and support in H&PE education for generalist teachers, and
- require boards to report on programs funded through the Program Enhancement Grant.

## 6. SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS

Newcomers enrich our province, but these students and their families require effective support and programs to ensure they have an equitable chance for success.

People for Education recommends

- the province fund ELL/ALF supports for students until they reach a provincially established standard of academic proficiency in English and French,
- the province protect funding for ELL/ALF, so that it may only be spent on the purpose for which it is given, and
- the province ensure that all English Language Learners and students enrolled in ALF/PDF are receiving appropriate supports and are not being streamed into applied courses due to short-term language issues.

## 7. EARLY YEARS EDUCATION & CARE

Providing children with the supports and enrichment they need when they are very young has a positive impact throughout their lives—on their health, well-being, learning and their capacity to become contributing adults.

People for Education recommends

- the province enact regulations so that only school boards, municipalities and not-for-profit agencies are permitted to operate extended day programs in schools,
- the province mandate, with appropriate funding and support, that school boards offer extended day programs for children from 4 to 12 years of age,
- the province develop policy and funding to ensure municipal and not-for-profit operators have access to space in schools, at cost, for full-year, extended day programs for 4- and 5-year-olds,
- the province mandate boards to establish collaborative policies and practices, including joint professional development for teachers and early childhood educators, so that extended day programs are truly seamless, and
- the province work with other levels of government to provide support to the child care sector to offset revenue losses associated with full-day kindergarden.

## 8. FEES & FUNDRAISING

An increased reliance on fees and fundraising in Ontario schools will lead to an increased gap between “have” and “have not” schools.

People for Education recommends

- the province specify and provide funding for the materials, programs and resources that should be available to all students in every school,
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- the province establish provincial fee guidelines that mandate that all fees are voluntary and that all fees requests from schools clearly state “ALL FEES ARE VOLUNTARY.”

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Families are more likely to use programs offered through school. School-community partnerships promote child well-being, and housing these services and programs in schools is a cost-effective use of these public spaces.

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- as recommended in 2008 by the Honourable Roy McMurtry and Dr. Alvin Curling, that the province establish a cabinet-level secretariat to oversee an integrated and funded policy framework that would include measurable outcomes for healthy child development.

# APPENDIX

## Comparison of provincial special education funding and board expenditures, 2009/10

School board	Total special education funding from the province	Board's actual special education expenses	Special ed. spending over or under amount board receives
Algoma DSB	\$14,676,801.00	\$14,758,206.00	\$81,405.00
Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB	\$16,591,611.00	\$17,683,646.00	\$1,092,035.00
Avon Maitland DSB	\$20,310,882.00	\$20,934,930.00	\$624,048.00
Bluewater DSB	\$23,535,147.00	\$24,096,978.00	\$561,831.00
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB	\$10,146,558.00	\$11,919,758.00	\$1,773,200.00
Bruce-Grey CDSB	\$4,447,471.00	\$5,317,214.00	\$869,743.00
CDSB of Eastern Ontario	\$20,178,116.00	\$21,368,404.00	\$1,190,288.00
CEP de l'Est de l'Ontario	\$13,178,983.00	\$14,233,143.00	\$1,054,160.00
CSDC Centre-Sud	\$14,747,465.00	\$16,472,576.00	\$1,725,111.00
CSDC de l'Est Ontarien	\$16,735,478.00	\$18,344,124.00	\$1,608,646.00
CSDC des Aurores boréales	\$1,342,830.00	\$1,406,370.00	\$63,540.00
CSDC des Grandes Rivières	\$8,594,253.00	\$10,055,896.00	\$1,461,643.00
CSDC de Centre-Est de l'Ontario	\$21,468,699.00	\$21,790,881.00	\$322,182.00
CSDC du Nouvel-Ontario	\$10,288,711.00	\$12,297,005.00	\$2,008,294.00
CSDC Franco-Nord	\$6,241,693.00	\$6,293,393.00	\$51,700.00
CSD des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	\$8,105,493.00	\$9,294,279.00	\$1,188,786.00
CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest	\$7,224,425.00	\$8,533,424.00	\$1,308,999.00
CSD du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	\$6,285,720.00	\$6,328,645.00	\$42,925.00
CSD du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	\$3,829,216.00	\$3,813,798.00	\$(15,418.00)
DSB of Niagara	\$37,790,282.00	\$41,835,061.00	\$4,044,779.00
DSB Ontario North East	\$11,919,690.00	\$12,888,992.00	\$969,302.00
Dufferin-Peel CDSB	\$78,201,951.00	\$79,658,551.00	\$1,456,600.00
Durham CDSB	\$24,190,569.00	\$27,224,758.00	\$3,034,189.00
Durham DSB	\$80,111,531.00	\$80,951,668.00	\$840,137.00
Grand Erie DSB	\$31,480,054.00	\$31,946,731.00	\$466,677.00
Greater Essex County DSB	\$37,250,262.00	\$42,291,570.00	\$5,041,308.00
Halton CDSB	\$28,500,448.00	\$33,054,826.00	\$4,554,378.00
Halton DSB	\$64,378,184.00	\$66,712,590.00	\$2,334,406.00
Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB	\$32,224,561.00	\$37,098,469.00	\$4,873,908.00
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	\$53,975,268.00	\$59,001,087.00	\$5,025,819.00
Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	\$21,071,521.00	\$23,952,368.00	\$2,880,847.00
Huron Perth CDSB	\$4,432,451.00	\$4,755,028.00	\$322,577.00
Huron-Superior CDSB	\$5,599,392.00	\$7,858,077.00	\$2,258,685.00
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	\$45,826,976.00	\$47,568,691.00	\$1,741,715.00
Keewatin-Patricia DSB	\$10,423,092.00	\$10,463,529.00	\$40,437.00

School board	Total special education funding from the province	Board's actual special education expenses	Spending over or under amount board receives
Kenora CDSB	\$1,793,550.00	\$2,222,125.00	\$428,575.00
Lakehead DSB	\$14,445,588.00	\$14,446,433.00	\$845.00
Lambton Kent DSB	\$24,959,063.00	\$26,258,033.00	\$1,298,970.00
Limestone DSB	\$30,492,477.00	\$30,542,536.00	\$50,059.00
London CDSB	\$21,145,761.00	\$20,913,221.00	\$(232,540.00)
Near North DSB	\$16,618,833.00	\$18,380,248.00	\$1,761,415.00
Niagara CDSB	\$24,305,666.00	\$25,890,685.00	\$1,585,019.00
Nipissing-Parry Sound CDSB	\$5,216,392.00	\$6,292,894.00	\$1,076,502.00
Northeastern CDSB	\$4,435,086.00	\$4,614,125.00	\$179,039.00
Northwest CDSB	\$1,632,332.00	\$1,774,587.00	\$142,255.00
Ottawa CDSB	\$42,481,707.00	\$52,932,809.00	\$10,451,102.00
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	\$73,903,002.00	\$75,493,857.00	\$1,590,855.00
Peel DSB	\$137,394,651.00	\$158,172,196.00	\$20,777,545.00
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington CDSB	\$18,861,050.00	\$19,318,394.00	\$457,344.00
Rainbow DSB	\$19,566,190.00	\$19,735,628.00	\$169,438.00
Rainy River DSB	\$4,234,740.00	\$4,988,321.00	\$753,581.00
Renfrew County CDSB	\$6,234,085.00	\$7,300,615.00	\$1,066,530.00
Renfrew County DSB	\$9,883,344.00	\$11,639,107.00	\$1,755,763.00
Simcoe County DSB	\$61,212,732.00	\$60,983,279.00	\$(229,453.00)
Simcoe Muskoka CDSB	\$23,193,649.00	\$32,245,446.00	\$9,051,797.00
St. Clair CDSB	\$11,368,787.00	\$11,621,578.00	\$252,791.00
Sudbury CDSB	\$7,287,174.00	\$6,912,301.00	\$(374,873.00)
Superior North CDSB	\$1,534,412.00	\$1,605,937.00	\$71,525.00
Superior-Greenstone DSB	\$2,406,560.00	\$3,497,919.00	\$1,091,359.00
Thames Valley DSB	\$81,959,408.00	\$87,816,376.00	\$5,856,968.00
Thunder Bay CDSB	\$11,228,241.00	\$12,085,333.00	\$857,092.00
Toronto CDSB	\$107,124,621.00	\$121,465,961.00	\$14,341,340.00
Toronto DSB	\$282,940,048.00	\$296,813,425.00	\$13,873,377.00
Trillium Lakelands DSB	\$24,486,124.00	\$28,697,325.00	\$4,211,201.00
Upper Canada DSB	\$46,760,519.00	\$44,920,616.00	\$(1,839,903.00)
Upper Grand DSB	\$35,331,920.00	\$41,610,294.00	\$6,278,374.00
Waterloo CDSB	\$24,352,254.00	\$26,018,570.00	\$1,666,316.00
Waterloo Region DSB	\$62,902,488.00	\$63,167,582.00	\$265,094.00
Wellington CDSB	\$7,937,700.00	\$9,639,066.00	\$1,701,366.00
Windsor-Essex CDSB	\$25,679,154.00	\$27,252,474.00	\$1,573,320.00
York CDSB	\$61,391,087.00	\$65,565,984.00	\$4,174,897.00
York Region DSB	\$116,211,990.00	\$127,508,035.00	\$11,296,045.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$2,248,218,169.00</b>	<b>\$2,422,547,981.00</b>	<b>\$174,329,812.00</b>

# METHODOLOGY

This is People for Education's fourteenth annual survey of resources in Ontario elementary schools, and eleventh in secondary schools.

The survey acts as an information tool for parents and Ontario citizens. It focuses on the quantifiable resources available in schools across the province and it tracks any changes that occur. The resulting data provides an annual picture of the effects of education policy and funding shifts.

In October 2010, surveys were mailed to principals in every publicly funded Ontario elementary and secondary school, with an explanatory letter requesting that they complete it. Translated surveys were sent to French-language schools. Reminders were faxed to schools in December and January. Surveys could also be completed online.

Confidentiality of all individual school responses is guaranteed. Where direct quotes are used that might identify a school, permission has been obtained. Only aggregated data is released.

This year's sample of 1,027 elementary and secondary schools equals 21% of the province's schools, and 21% of its 1,901,237 students. Schools in all of the province's 72 school boards participated. 54% per cent of the elementary and secondary schools in the sample also participated in the 2009/10 survey.

## ANALYSES AND CALCULATIONS

The analyses in this report are predominantly based on descriptive statistics (such as frequency distributions), two-way cross-tabulations and nested custom tables. Some inferential statistical analysis (e.g. correlation, Chi-square and student t-test) is also conducted to look at correlations and associations between variables and compare means of different variables. The data in this study was analysed using SPSS 18. Calculations have been rounded to the nearest whole number where necessary, and therefore, do not always add up to 100%. Where appropriate, comparisons by school size, region or year-over-year are noted.

Where significant shifts were found in year-over-year comparisons, the trends were confirmed by a comparison with the smaller sample of repeating schools. Some results, such as special education waiting list totals and the number of ELL students in the province, were extrapolated to the total number of elementary and secondary schools in Ontario by using average amounts as the basis for the calculation. Student-to-staff ratios were calculated for schools that reported both the total number of students and the full-time equivalent for staff positions. The student-to-staff ratio for the province is the mean of the distribution of the student-to-staff ratios of reporting schools.

## REGIONAL VARIATION

To make regional comparisons, schools were sorted into postal code regions and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The Greater Toronto Area includes all the schools in Toronto (M postal code) and schools in the Regional Municipalities of Durham, Peel, Halton and York (all part of the L postal code). The Central Region, for the purpose of regional comparisons, includes all the schools in the L postal code, minus the schools in the Greater Toronto Area.



## OTHER PROVINCIAL DATA

Since People for Education first started to survey schools and report on its findings, other data has become available.

This year, People for Education has accessed some of the data (such as the percentage of students who live in lower-income households and the percentage of students who are new to Canada from non-English/French speaking countries) from the School Information Finder on the Ministry of Education's website. This data was integrated with the elementary and secondary school survey data on a school-by-school basis to make comparisons between schools with a low versus high percentage of low-income students. Both elementary and secondary schools were defined as having a high or low level of poverty if the percentage of students living in a low-income household was greater than one standard deviation from the mean percentage of students living in a low-income households among the schools in our sample.

**Schools were sorted according to their postal codes into geographic regions. The distribution of respondent schools is representative of their distribution in Ontario.**

Postal Code Region	% of schools in survey	% of schools in in province
Eastern Ontario (K)	18%	18%
Central Ontario without GTA	12%	15%
GTA	30%	35%
Southwestern Ontario (N)	22%	21%
Northern Ontario (P)	19%	12%

## Number of participating schools, per District School Board

District Board of Education	# schools	District Board of Education	# schools
Algoma DSB	11	Lambton Kent DSB	26
Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB	12	Limestone DSB	13
Avon Maitland DSB	27	London District CSB	4
Bluewater DSB	19	Near North DSB	17
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB	2	Niagara CDSB	3
Bruce-Grey CDSB	5	Nipissing–Parry Sound CDSB	8
CDSB of Eastern Ontario	1	Northeastern CDSB	4
CEP de l'Est de l'Ontario	7	Northwest CDSB	4
CSDC Centre-Sud	12	Ottawa CDSB	17
CSDC de l'Est ontarien	7	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	25
CSDC des Aurores boréales	5	Peel DSB	47
CSDC des Grandes Rivières	19	Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington CDSB	6
CSDC du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	14	Rainbow DSB	21
CSDC du Nouvel-Ontario	14	Rainy River DSB	7
CSDC Franco-Nord	4	Renfrew County CDSB	9
CSD des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	10	Renfrew County DSB	14
CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest	9	Simcoe County DSB	28
CSD du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	7	Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB	13
CSD du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	3	St. Clair CDSB	1
DSB of Niagara	7	Sudbury CDSB	5
DSB Ontario North East	11	Superior North CDSB	4
Dufferin-Peel CDSB	19	Superior-Greenstone DSB	10
Durham CDSB	2	Thames Valley DSB	37
Durham DSB	18	Thunder Bay CDSB	3
Grand Erie DSB	19	Toronto CDSB	19
Greater Essex County DSB	16	Toronto DSB	168
Halton CDSB	4	Trillium Lakelands DSB	17
Halton DSB	17	Upper Canada DSB	13
Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB	5	Upper Grand DSB	29
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	18	Waterloo CDSB	4
Hastings & Prince Edward DSB	16	Waterloo Region DSB	19
Huron Perth CDSB	3	Wellington CDSB	1
Huron-Superior CDSB	8	Windsor-Essex CDSB	4
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	25	York CDSB	15
Keewatin-Patricia DSB	2	York Region DSB	17
Kenora CDSB	1	School Authorities	2
Lakehead DSB	14	<b>TOTAL SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING</b>	<b>1,027</b>

# HOW FUNDING WORKS

In 1997, the provincial government took control of education funding in the province. A funding formula for education was developed and, though many adjustments to the formula have been made since then, the basic structure of the formula remains.

## PER-PUPIL FUNDING

Since 1997, substantial increases have been made in a number of areas. Funding has been added to support the province's smaller schools and to somewhat cushion the blow of declining enrolment. But much of education funding continues to be tied to enrolment.

Funding for classroom teachers, education assistants, textbooks and learning materials, classroom supplies, classroom computers, library and guidance services, preparation time (which funds specialist and student success teachers), professional and para-professional supports, textbooks, classroom supplies and computers is all allocated on a per-pupil basis (e.g. for every 763 elementary students, the province provides funding for one teacher-librarian; for every 385 secondary students, the province provides funding for one guidance counsellor).

Principals, vice-principals, school secretaries and school office supplies are funded according to a formula based both on numbers of students and numbers of schools.

Funding to heat, light and maintain and repair schools depends on student numbers. There is funding to maintain 104 square feet per elementary student, 130 square feet per secondary student and 100 square feet per adult education student. There is also some "top up" funding for schools that are just below their provincially designated capacity.

While a proportion of boards' funding is based on numbers of students, there are other grants added to the "per-pupil" base (Special Education, English or French language support, Transportation, Declining Enrolment, Learning Opportunities, etc.). Per-pupil funding is not meant to be equal, as different boards have different needs. But it is meant to be equitable in order to provide equal educational opportunity for all students.

## WHERE ARE THE DECISIONS MADE?

### The province

The Ministry of Education provides funding to school boards based on a number of factors, including the number of students in a board, the number of schools, the percentage of high needs special education students, the number of students who have either English or French as their second language and based on some unique geographical needs (a high number of small schools, very far apart, for example).

But only the special education funding is "sweatered," meaning it cannot be spent on anything but special education. Most other funding can be moved from one category to another, which means that many funding decisions are made at the board level.

### The school board

School boards make decisions about individual schools' budgets and on criteria for things like the numbers of students a school must have in order to get staff such as teacher-librarians or vice-principals. Boards distribute funding for teachers to schools depending on the number of students and, in some cases, depending on the number of students who might struggle to succeed—either because of socio-economic or ethno-racial factors or because of other special needs. Boards also decide which schools should stay open and which should close, and how many custodians, secretaries and educational assistants each school will get.

### The school

Principals receive a budget for the school from the school board. They make decisions about school maintenance and repairs within that budget, and about the distribution of teachers and class sizes. They decide how to allocate educational assistants and whether their school can have staff such as a teacher-librarian, a music teacher or department heads. Depending on the size of the school, principals may also allocate funding to different departments.

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- 80 Government of Ontario. (2009). *Breaking the cycle: Ontario's poverty reduction strategy*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/breakingthecycle/report/index.aspx> **Back to report**
- 81 See [note 35](#), page 59. **Back to report**
- 82 See, e.g., Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Secretary of the Treasury (U.K.). (2003). *Every child matters*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM5860.pdf>; Rothstein, R. (2008). Whose problem is poverty? *Educational Leadership*, 65(7), 8-13; Government of Ontario. (1976). *Open doors: A community school handbook*. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer. **Back to report**
- 83 There is strong evidence that strategic work with community organizations is a resource to make schools better academically. See e.g. Bryk, A.S., Sebring, P.B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., Easton, J.Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, which identifies relationships with community organizations as an "essential support" for improving schools (page 57). **Back to report**
- 84 Province of Nova Scotia. (2010). SchoolsPlus. Retrieved from <http://schoolsplus.ednet.ns.ca/schoolsplus> **Back to report**
- 85 Saskatchewan's School<sup>Plus</sup> is a province-wide initiative led by the Ministry of Education and the provincial education system that promotes learning success and well-being for every child and young person. It envisions a province where every school is actively improving student outcomes through the delivery of a strong learning program and serving as a centre for social, health and other services for children and their families. It includes local-level planning mechanisms for service integration and funding support for items like prevention and early intervention.

Saskatchewan Learning. (n.d.) School<sup>Plus</sup> at a glance. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=589,144,107,81,1,Documents&MediaID=1354&Filename=SchoolPlus-at-a-glance.pdf> shtml

The Manitoba Community Schools Partnership Initiative calls for the development of community hubs in high-needs communities. Schools which develop joint community school councils can apply to the province for up to \$100,000 to improve the learning program, parent community partnerships, integrated services and community development. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2006, August). *Community schools: A support document for the partners in the community schools partnership initiative*. Retrieved from [http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/cspi/documents/support\\_doc.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/cspi/documents/support_doc.pdf)

English schools in Quebec have developed the Community Learning Centres program, which includes technical assistance and financial assistance to help schools become community learning centres. The program funds a local coordinator, who has responsibility for developing partnerships and seeking external funding. Early evaluation suggests positive results for students, schools and communities. See e.g. WestEd. (2010, October). *Evaluation of the Quebec Community Learning Centres: An English language minority initiative*. Retrieved from [http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/CLC\\_final\\_report\\_WestEd\\_ANG\\_NC-437\\_Nov\\_18\\_2010\\_REV\\_10\\_03\\_2011\\_F\\_Final\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_Vol1.pdf](http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/CLC_final_report_WestEd_ANG_NC-437_Nov_18_2010_REV_10_03_2011_F_Final_Evaluation_Report_Vol1.pdf)

New Brunswick has a goal of establishing 75 community schools by 2012. Community schools receive financial support, and have designated staff who work to build relationships with different community actors, from health services to seniors volunteering to partnerships with local auto shops. See, e.g. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (n.d.). Community schools: Anglophone sector. Retrieved from <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/communityschools.asp>

Nova Scotia has a SchoolPlus policy, which ensures family resource centres, child care and youth health centres will be located within select schools at all school boards. SchoolsPlus programs and services are delivered in a school setting, during and after school. Each hub site acts as a base for services at multiple schools. The sites support information and connection to services through outreach programs and partnerships with service providers. Each hub site has a SchoolsPlus facilitator and a community outreach worker. Department of Education. (2011, April 14). *SchoolsPlus expanded to all school boards*. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110414001>  
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