

People for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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Education funding: Is the party over?

Release of Drummond report may signal the beginning of changes in education

TORONTO (February 15, 2012) – Today's release of the report from the Drummond Commission may mark the end of years of increases in education funding in Ontario.

While some of the recommendations from the report are unlikely to be implemented – including a call for a rollback of all-day kindergarten – the overall restraint message will definitely have an impact on education.

What will the Drummond report mean education and school boards?

Recommendations from Drummond, coupled with the economic downturn, mean school boards will most likely receive a funding increase of 1% or less for the coming year.

That will not cover the costs of:

- inflation – currently 2.3%,
- current commitments for wage increases (for example, teachers' salaries increases automatically according to years' served),
- increases in hydro rates – currently 3%,
- salary increases resulting from upcoming contract negotiations (teachers' four year agreements expire at the end of August),
- capital costs for new space needed for the expansion of all-day kindergarten (nearly all of the 900 schools to come on board in September require renovations or additions),
- ongoing infrastructure costs, and
- increased demand for special education programs (Ontario school boards currently spend over \$170 million more on special education than they receive from the province – money they must cut from other areas.)

Education about more than economics

"It is important that we remember that education is an *investment*, not just a cost," says Annie Kidder, Executive Director of People for Education. "And as an investment, there's no better performer. If education were the stock market, everyone would want to put their money there. We invest in education as a society through our taxes, and we reap the benefit in lower costs to health care, more tax payers, lower costs in social services and criminal justice, higher employment and a more engaged citizenry."

"We also have to be cautious when we look only to financial advisors for recommendations on our public programs. There are some effects that cannot be measured purely with dollars."

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