

## Media release

# Recommendations from the Drummond report could increase gap between “have” and “have not” schools

### for immediate release

**Toronto** (Wednesday, February 15, 2012) Sweeping changes recommended in the report from the Drummond Commission could increase schools' reliance on parents as fundraisers and could disadvantage some students.

People for Education, an organization which conducts research on education in Ontario and provides support to thousands of parents, has raised a number of concerns about the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION	PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION REACTION
<p><b>Cut all-day kindergarten or eliminate ECEs</b> Report recommends cutting it completely, or barring that, cutting all the early childhood educators from the program, so that the classes (of 20) would be taught by a teacher alone.</p>	<p>Early childhood educators bring expertise in early childhood development and play-based learning. Losing that expertise and support would change the program fundamentally – making just kindergarten, but twice as long.</p>
<p><b>Fees for high school credits</b> Report recommends school boards be allowed to charge fees for high school courses if a student wants to take more than 32 credits.</p>	<p>Students who take more than 30 credits do it either to improve their marks or because require different courses for their post secondary destination. To charge fees would put boys and students from lower socio-economic brackets at a disadvantage.</p>
<p><b>Cut 9,700 non-teaching staff</b> This includes staff such as educational assistants, child and youth workers, psychologists, guidance counsellors, library staff, school secretaries, principals, custodians and more.</p>	<p>Cutting support staff could create longer waiting lists for services such as psychologists and social workers, and increase the number of special education students in classes with no educational assistants.</p>
<p><b>25% cuts to funding for supplies</b> This includes classroom supplies, computers and textbooks.</p>	<p>These cuts would increase reliance on parent fundraising, and create disadvantages for students in low-income neighbourhoods.</p>
<p><b>Fees for busing</b> The report recommends cutting funding for busing by 25% and allowing boards to charge a "modest" user fee.</p>	<p>Approximately 40% of Ontario students are eligible for busing, and 90% of schools have at least some students who are bused. Fees for busing may disadvantage some students.</p>
<p><b>A cap on education spending</b> The Commission recommends holding growth in education spending to 1%.</p>	<p>This will be a cut in real dollars because inflation, hydro and salaries are growing at a much faster rate.</p>
<p><b>Increasing class sizes</b> The recommendation is to increase the primary class size cap to 23 (up from 20), average sizes in grades 4 to 8 to 26 (up from 24.6) and average sizes in high school to 24 (up from 22).</p>	<p>There is little evidence that small changes in class sizes affect students' chances for success. The class size cap has created great difficulties for school boards. This recommendation may save money and alleviate staffing problems.</p>
<p><b>First Nations Education:</b> The report recommends that the provincial government should put pressure on the federal government to raise the level of education funding for children on reserves to a level equal to other Canadian children. In the absence of agreement, the province should step in and provide required funding.</p>	<p>Currently First Nation students receive \$2,000 to \$3,000 less per student than non-First Nation students. Given the slow progress on Aboriginal issues in Canada, it may be time for the province to address the inequities – in funding and in access to education.</p>