



April 5, 2019

The Honourable Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education
Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister

I write as a parent, educator, labour leader, and taxpayer dedicated to protecting and enhancing publicly-funded education.

Ontario has built one of the best education systems in the world. It has seen significant improvements resulting in better outcomes for our students and province. Our high school graduation rates now stand amongst the best in the world.

On March 15, 2019, you announced the PC government's New Vision for Education.

Your Plan puts all the advancements we have made in education at risk.

Your Plan is a failure to support and meet the needs of the students of Ontario. It is a decisive move to undervalue our children, their futures and our economic well-being.

Your Plan will increase class sizes, directly limiting the time teachers, educators and support staff have to work with students.

Your Plan will force students to take a minimum of four online courses, further reducing the time students have to engage with educators and peers.

How can you and your Ministry implement a plan that so directly attacks students, teachers, and schools? When you cut education funding you fail to recognize the significant dividends education pays down the road with better jobs, higher incomes and a healthier province.

The increased burden you will put on the publicly-funded education system will mean specialized programs like those leading to trades, the arts, special education and other important programs (e.g. International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, gifted, and outdoor education) will be at risk of cancellation.

How can you create a plan that will mean:

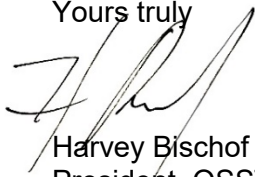


- less time for teachers to spend in and out of class supporting students who require extra help and guidance;
- fewer courses available for students to choose from as they move through the system;
- reduced access to guidance counsellors, educational assistants, therapists, psychologists, social workers, early childhood educators, and other important members of the education team;
- fewer professionals in schools available to volunteer their time for extra-curricular programs, clubs, and teams;
- fewer professionals available to support students with special needs?

True fiscal responsibility means investing in educating our students. True fiscal responsibility means ensuring our education system is able to provide all students the opportunity to find success. It means investing in, not cutting from, public education funding.

We are here for students. We expect the government to be here for them as well.

Yours truly



Harvey Bischof
President, OSSTF/FEESO