

# SCHOOL COUNCIL

# newsletter

## Hello Ontario School Councils and School Council Chairpersons

We are reaching out to school councils to provide information and news directly from the **Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation**. We are the union that represents secondary teachers in the English public school system. We also represent a great number of the Education Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Child and Youth Workers, Office Professionals, Custodial Staff, Social Workers, Psychologists, Tradespeople and numerous other Education Workers who work in many of the Elementary and Secondary English public schools as well as some English and French Catholic schools in Ontario.

## Tips for parents of students with disabilities on how to advocate for your child's needs at school

Are you the parent or guardian of a student with disabilities? Would you like very practical tips on how to advocate for your child's disability-related needs at school?

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* Alliance Chair David Lepofsky has created a captioned talk for parents and guardians about how to advocate for children with disabilities. In addition to his efforts advocating for students with disabilities as the AODA Alliance chair, he is also a member and past chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Toronto District School Board, Canada's largest school board. He also serves as a member of the Government-appointed K-12 Education Standards Development Committee.

This new talk will be helpful to parents, grandparents, guardians and siblings of students with disabilities who are in or about to enter the school system. It will also be helpful to those working in the school system like teachers, principals, special education specialists, and school board administrative staff, as well as for those working at Ontario's Ministry of Education. As well, any professionals outside the school system who work with students with disabilities and their families can benefit from this talk, such as physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, autism ABA therapists, speech and language pathologists, and others. Faculties of Education could use this talk when training future teachers.

You can watch "Tips for Parents of Students with Disabilities on How to Advocate For Your Child's Needs at School" by visiting [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtadvCvcGCO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtadvCvcGCO)

This talk does not go into the details of Ontario's laws on special education. There is an excellent series of short videos on that topic from the ARCH Disability Law Centre and its partner in that project that you can find at [inclusiveeducation.ca/advocacy-for-inclusion](https://inclusiveeducation.ca/advocacy-for-inclusion)





## Articles of interest

### Children with Disabilities left out of the pandemic response.

[www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/pandemic-leaves-students-with-disabilities-disconnected-from-peers-and-short-on-support/ar-BB1bCTkv?li=AAggXBV](http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/pandemic-leaves-students-with-disabilities-disconnected-from-peers-and-short-on-support/ar-BB1bCTkv?li=AAggXBV)

[www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/children-and-youth-with-special-needs-left-out-of-pandemic-response-b-c-watchdog/ar-BB1bBQyq?li=AAggXBV](http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/children-and-youth-with-special-needs-left-out-of-pandemic-response-b-c-watchdog/ar-BB1bBQyq?li=AAggXBV)

**Education Forum** is OSSTF/FEESO's full-colour magazine. Its articles explore the contemporary issues, events, trends and personalities that shape education.

Published tri-annually—winter, spring, and fall—*Education Forum* has the largest circulation of any other Canadian magazine serving the education market, reaching more than 60,000 secondary school teachers and educational workers in Ontario, as well as directors, trustees, MPPs, and Ministry of Education officials.

To read individual articles or download an entire issue as a PDF, please find us at our online home [Education-Forum.ca](http://Education-Forum.ca). Some of our latest articles include:

#### Online education during COVID-19

[education-forum.ca/2020/11/26/online-education-during-covid-19](http://education-forum.ca/2020/11/26/online-education-during-covid-19)

#### The 5 essential elements of parent solidarity

[education-forum.ca/2020/11/26/the-5-essential-elements-of-parent-solidarity](http://education-forum.ca/2020/11/26/the-5-essential-elements-of-parent-solidarity)

As well, some great information on equity, racism and oppression. Visit: [education-forum.ca](http://education-forum.ca).

#### Safety for All—Survey Results for Students and Education Workers

This report provides an overview of recent OSSTF/FEESO polling data supplemented by some publicly available surveys, specifically related to student engagement during the initial lockdown and subsequent emergency remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The focus of this report is on questions and findings as directly related to student engagement as possible. The analysis has been organized under seven broad categories:

- Students' readiness to learn
- Access to learning infrastructure
- Equity and remote learning
- Student mental health and wellbeing
- Communicating with students and families 3
- Synchronous and asynchronous learning
- Parental support during emergency remote learning

For more information and a link to the full report, please visit: [www.osstf.on.ca/public-education/safety-for-all/osstf-feeso-proposals-updates-and-commissioned-reports.aspx](http://www.osstf.on.ca/public-education/safety-for-all/osstf-feeso-proposals-updates-and-commissioned-reports.aspx)

#### High School—Creating Conversation

*By Theresa Pastore, Parents Engaged in Education, one of our community partners*

When our kids reach high school, we have to learn to ask new questions to engage them in talking about school. The old “what did you do in school today?” will likely get you the standard “nothing” response.

Try some of these suggestions:

- Where in the school do you hang out the most? (for instance, a particular hall, classroom, parking lot) Where in the school do you not like to hang out?
- What would your school be better with? What would your school be better without?
- If you were a teacher, which class would you teach?
- What class would be the worst to teach? Why?
- What was the coolest (saddest, funniest, scariest) thing that you saw today?
- Tell me one thing that you learned today.
- If your day at school were an emoticon, which one would it be?
- If you had only one class every day which class would it be?
- If you could be invisible for one day at school, what would you do?
- Whom did you help today, who helped you?
- If you could read minds what teachers mind would you read? What classmates mind would you read? Whose mind would you NOT want to read?
- What are the top 3 things that you hear people say in the halls?

- What is your easiest class? What is the hardest class?
- In what class do you learn the most? In what class do you learn the least?
- Have you decided what you want to do for a career? If yes, what courses are you taking that will help you achieve your goals?
- What do you think you should do more of at school? Less?
- What do you think the most important part of school is?
- Which classmate is most likely to be made a Prime Minister, become a millionaire, be in movies, etc.

## Hybrid Learning affects the quality of education for our students

Hybrid learning combines in-person and remote learners into the same classroom simultaneously, creating a confusing learning environment for students and making it difficult for educators to provide the necessary time and support our kids need to succeed.

From the moment the Ford government knew the COVID-19 pandemic would affect all facets of Ontario's public education system, they had an opportunity and responsibility to listen to public health experts who told them they needed to put in place the necessary health and safety measures for the 2020–21 school year. They chose to ignore this expert advice, as well as the voices of parents, students and educators.

The Ford government's failure to act has caused many school boards, including the Toronto District School Board—the largest board in the country—to make the move to hybrid learning in order to ensure students can get the learning they need. A shift to hybrid learning means:

- Students will have difficulty getting the attention and help they need from their educator
- Educators have to juggle between in-person and remote students simultaneously
- Costs are being prioritized over quality of education for students during a pandemic

**The Ford government needs to step up and offer the funding and technical resources needed to ensure the best quality of learning and support is offered to students. To send a message to the Ford government.**

Demand that Doug Ford make available the necessary funds to ensure the best quality of learning for students. For more information or to email your MPP visit. Ford make available the necessary resources needed to [www.hereforstudents.ca/say-no-to-hybrid-learning](http://www.hereforstudents.ca/say-no-to-hybrid-learning)



**Say NO to hybrid learning.**  
**Say YES to smaller classes and a dedicated teacher for every class on every platform.**



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