

BACKGROUND

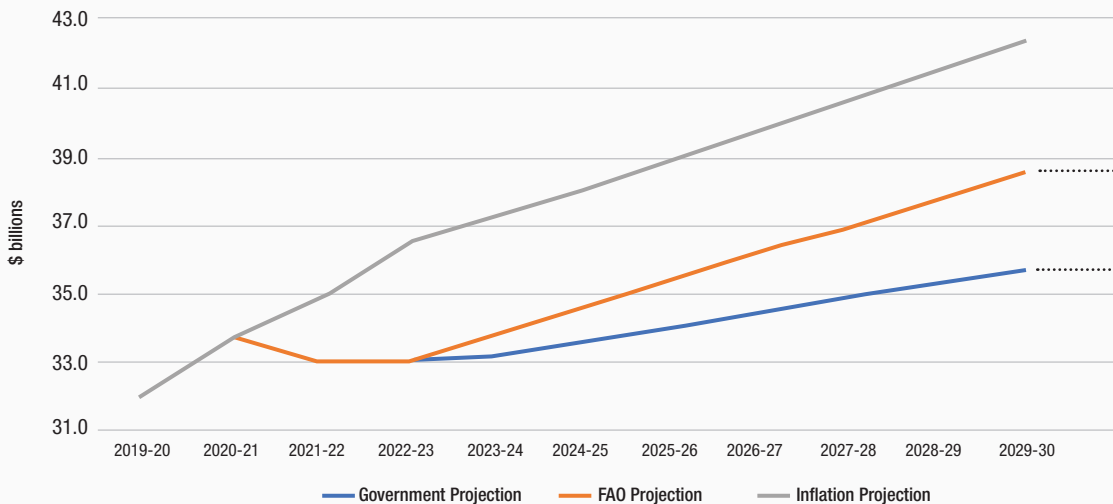
Ontario Budget 2022: What to look for on education

The 2022 Ontario Budget will be tabled on Thursday, April 28. Here is what to look for when they release the numbers.

When a so-called “investment” in education is actually a “cut”

- Canada’s inflation rate in March 2022 was 6.7 per cent.
- But the 2022-23 Grants for Student Needs (GSNs), which form the core element of the education budget, increased by only 2.7 per cent, an effective cut of more than \$1 billion when accounting for inflation and projected student enrolment.
- If education funding fails to keep up with rising costs, school boards will have no choice but to make cuts, meaning fewer teachers and education workers, less individual attention for students, and fewer programs and resources. The loss of educational assistants, child and youth workers, speech and language pathologists, and other specialized positions will disproportionately impact Ontario’s most vulnerable students.

Ontario Education Spending Outlook



According to the Financial Accountability Office (FAO), the Ford government’s planned cuts will result in a \$12.3 billion education spending shortfall over nine years.

Sources: Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (2021), Ministry of Education Spending Plan Review; TD Economics (2022), Long-term Economic Forecast.

“New money” vs. previously cut or announced funding

- The Ford government claims to have made \$683.9 million in new investments in education in the 2022-23 GSNs. This is not new money, as this “investment” was made only months after \$500 million was cut from the education budget in the Fall Economic Statement.
- The government’s so-called Learning Recovery Action Plan, which it announced with the GSNs, is a short-term program and overly focused on delivering tutoring programs outside the classroom, requiring families to sign up students after school hours or over the summer months, and with no guarantee that students will receive the support they need from qualified educators. Students and educators need ongoing support within the classroom.
- The Ford government likes to claim that it is making “new investments” in special education, infrastructure, and other areas, when in reality the government continues to re-announce multi-year funding investments promised by the previous government, but in smaller amounts than originally pledged.

Watch for misleading claims of “new investments,” as the Ford government often re-announces old pledges or purposefully uses deceptive numbers to hide its cuts and refusal to keep up with costs.