



JOINT STATEMENT

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No more band-aid solutions: Ford Conservative government must deliver a real plan to address the growing teacher recruitment and retention crisis

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) issued the following statement today in support of the decision by the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) not to extend the re-employment limit for retired teachers and administrators from 50 to 95 days. Students, families, and educators need a real solution to the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, not more band-aids and half-measures:

“This is an emergency – a crisis that the Ford Conservative government is refusing to address. Ford and his government are actively exacerbating the crisis by their refusal to invest in publicly funded education, their obvious disdain for the teaching profession and its importance, failed policies and unconstitutional wage suppression legislation, and their willful ignorance of the supports and resources students, teachers, and education workers need to succeed.

This government is more than willing to let students pay the price for its continued failures. As teachers and parents have seen firsthand across the province, more and more classes are being combined, covered by unqualified and uncertified adults, or even outright cancelled. All of this jeopardizes the learning environment and takes an extraordinary toll on students, teachers, and education workers.

Students and school communities deserve far better. They deserve a real plan from this government, with real consultation, collaboration, and investment to address the crisis.

Instead of investing in schools and meaningfully engaging with teachers and educators, the Ford Conservative government is only interested in yet another band-aid solution – one that does more to help the government's public relations image than to support educators or the students we serve.

Just like transitional certificates for teacher candidates who have not yet graduated, extending the re-employment limit from 50 to 95 days for retired teachers and administrators is not effective. The data proves that retired teachers are not picking up the jobs, and the problem is only getting worse.

The crisis is not due to an actual shortage of teachers. Ontario has tens of thousands of qualified individuals who are leaving the profession. And why are they leaving? Because the Ford government refuses to address the root causes of the issue: the learning and working conditions in Ontario schools coupled with the decade-long suppression of wages and inadequate recognition of teachers' credentials and expertise. This is especially acute for new teacher graduates and occasional teachers who often deal with precarious and poorly paid work. If the Ford Conservative government was serious about recruiting and retaining more

teachers, it would immediately make real investments in publicly funded education to address compensation issues, growing violence in schools, make class sizes smaller, and improve special education resources and supports, among other critical issues.

The Ford Conservative government has done none of these things, despite having the resources at their fingertips. In fact, if this was a priority for them, the government could have addressed this issue in central bargaining with the affiliates, but they failed to act on that opportunity. Once again, teachers and education workers are leading the fight for students and quality publicly funded education, in the face of government obstinance.

The solution to the teacher recruitment and retention crisis is to foster healthier schools and workplaces for staff and students alike, which is where this government would be devoting its time and energy if it really cared.”

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