

CHAPTER 5

FIXING EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS



Schools are the heart of our communities. Children and youth have suffered enormous losses during the pandemic.

Years of Liberal and Conservative funding freezes and cuts have left our schools overcrowded, understaffed, and in urgent need of repairs, with a multi-billion-dollar repair backlog. Ford slashed \$800 million from classrooms and refused to spend money to keep schools safe during COVID. The Ontario NDP has a detailed and doable plan to fix what the Liberals and Conservatives broke and invest to ensure Ontario's world-class public education system thrives. We'll ensure every student in the province gets the support, education and opportunities they need to succeed.

COMMITMENT

Reverse Ford's cuts: We'll invest to help students get back on their feet academically, emotionally, and psychologically after a tough few years.

COMMITMENT

Hire 20,000 Teachers and Education Workers and invest in in-school remedial learning programs to help students recover after two years of learning disruptions.

COMMITMENT

Repeal Bill 124: We'll restore respect and fair compensation for the people who deliver education.

COMMITMENT

End violence against education workers: We'll work with teachers to improve workplace violence reporting and develop training materials to ensure education workers, and kids, are safe at school.



HELPING STUDENTS THRIVE IN SMALLER CLASSROOMS

Overcrowded classes mean less direct support for students. Doug Ford's careless cuts to education even before the pandemic led to dangerously packed classrooms and fewer one-on-one supports.

The Ontario NDP has a plan to fix this.

COMMITMENT

Help students thrive by capping class sizes: We'll cap classes for Grades 4 through 8 at 24. We'll reduce high school class sizes to ensure students at every age get the direct support and attention they deserve.

COMMITMENT

Keep Building Early Learning in Our Schools: We'll build on Ontario's successful Full Day Kindergarten model by capping class sizes at 26 and maintaining the Teacher-ECE team.

FIXING THE BROKEN EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA

Students and families pay the price for government cuts to education. Under Liberal and Conservative governments, per-student funding has declined since 2011, and the model for funding has not been updated to reflect the needs of today's students.

COMMITMENT

Review and repair the funding formula: We will work with parents, front-line educators, students, and educational experts to overhaul the education funding formula, starting with a comprehensive public review to be completed within one year.

SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO NEED EXTRA HELP

COMMITMENT

Increase special education funding: We will base special education funding on actual needs with timely needs assessments. This will mean overall funding increases for students with special educational needs, helping schools, teachers and education assistants give children the support they need.

COMMITMENT

Learn from Demonstration Schools: We will build on Ontario's Provincial and Demonstration schools' track record of success, especially in helping students who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind, and students with severe learning disabilities who need greater support.

SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Students deserve safe places to learn.

The Liberals allowed Ontario's school repair backlog to reach a whopping \$15.8 billion. The Ford Conservatives let the backlog grow to 16.8 Billion.

An Ontario NDP government will make real investments to fix our schools.

COMMITMENT

Clear the school repair backlog: We'll immediately address the backlog, with a plan to clear it within 10 years.

COMMITMENT

Hire more custodians and maintenance staff and establish a province-wide standard for cleaning and school repairs.

COMMITMENT

To support rural and Northern schools as their communities grow, we will **double the Rural and Northern Education Fund**.

COMMITMENT

As part of our [Green Democratic New Deal](#), we'll upgrade public school buildings to make them carbon neutral and climate resilient, ensuring they meet the current and future needs of their communities. We'll bring those same principles to new school buildings, to ensure they meet international energy efficiency standards.

COMMITMENT

We'll ensure that all schools have up-to-date ventilation systems to prevent the spread of infection during potential future waves of COVID-19.

COMMITMENT

Fairness in Education Development Charges: We'll fix the rules around education development charges so they can fund the new schools families need.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Students suffered enormous losses during the pandemic.

The Ford government's cuts to education have meant fewer support staff in schools to support students' mental health and well-being.

COMMITMENT

Hire more mental health workers and child and youth workers: We'll increase in-school support by hiring more mental health workers, child and youth workers, and other education workers. We will create a new position at the school board to assess and improve the delivery of mental health care in our schools.

PROTECTING FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Ontario's French-language schools are vital to our education system and preserving Franco-Ontarian culture and heritage.

The Ford Conservatives haven't done enough to attract and retain French language teachers.

The Ontario NDP has a plan to address the French-language teacher shortage and protect French language schools.

COMMITMENT

Implement a Working Group on Teacher Shortage in the French-Language School System:

We'll implement the recommendations to help our French language schools thrive.

COMMITMENT

We'll respect the constitutional right of French school boards to control their own learning, and scrap plans to take online course content out of the hands of French-language school boards.

COMMITMENT

Ensure students can access French learning close to home: We'll review the process for approval of new schools to ensure that students province-wide are able to access French-language learning.

RESPECTING EDUCATION WORKERS

Ontario's education workers, from teachers to EAs to custodial staff, have done remarkable work under challenging circumstances throughout the pandemic. Yet the Ford Conservatives responded with insults and attacks, ignoring education workers' expertise and undermining their professionalism.

Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats will forge a new relationship with education workers, founded on respect and collaboration.

COMMITMENT

Establish a Partnership Table with representation from workers' unions, school board trustees, principals and other education stakeholders, working together to strengthen public education for the long term.

COMMITMENT

Roll back damaging changes to the governance of the Ontario College of Teachers, ensuring the profession is truly self-regulating.

COMMITMENT

Work with education workers to improve school board compliance with health and safety legislation.

COMMITMENT

Recognizing the role of teachers in curriculum development: We will ensure front-line teachers play a role in curriculum development, and that they are provided with time and support to learn and implement it.

EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

No student, teacher or education worker should have to experience racism in Ontario's public schools.

The Liberals and Conservatives have failed to fix gaps in the legislation that have allowed racism, discrimination, and systemic barriers in our schools to continue unchecked.

An Ontario NDP government has a plan to keep racism and discrimination out of our schools and across education settings.

COMMITMENT

Amend the Education Act to address racism and discrimination: We'll create amendments to set out clear, consistent definitions of racism and anti-racism and standard policies around racial equity training for education workers, procedures for reporting incidents of racism and resources for students who experience racism.

COMMITMENT

Holocaust education: Ensure students learn the history of the Holocaust, to prevent antisemitism, hatred, and the insidious spread of Holocaust denial.

COMMITMENT

Support de-streaming: We'll continue the long-overdue work of ending streaming in Ontario so that no student is put at a disadvantage due to systemic racism, and every student has the opportunity to succeed.

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Indigenous cultures, languages and histories have long been neglected within Ontario's school curricula.

One of Doug Ford's first acts as Premier was to cancel Indigenous curriculum writing sessions.

An Ontario NDP government will fix this.

COMMITMENT

Ensure Indigenous curriculum: We'll work with Indigenous leaders and educators to ensure that Ontario's school curricula appropriately reflects Indigenous experiences and histories.

COMMITMENT

Support more Indigenous representation on boards: We'll encourage the recruitment of Indigenous school board trustees to ensure Indigenous people are represented in school decision making.

COMMITMENT

Boost funding for Indigenous language education.

FIXING STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Standardized testing is rigid, outdated and ineffective.

New Democrats believe teachers, not politicians, are best placed to assess individual student progress.

We have a plan to fix Ontario's outdated system of evaluations.

COMMITMENT

End the EQAO: We will end EQAO testing, and work collaboratively with educators to determine how random sampling could help spot early trends and determine where we should focus on improvement.

PRESERVING IN-PERSON LEARNING

Online learning has been a rough experience for so many students and their families. The pandemic has made it clear that kids need to be in school for their academic, mental and emotional well-being, with in-classroom, face-to-face interactions with teachers and education workers.

Even before the pandemic, Doug Ford was trying to save money by shifting students out of classrooms into mandatory online courses.

An Ontario NDP government will protect in-person learning for the educational, social, and mental health needs of students.

COMMITMENT

Scrap Doug Ford's mandatory requirement for two online courses and end hybrid learning models that leave students without the direct attention they deserve.

COMMITMENT

Scrap Ford's plan to privatize online learning and ensure Ontario curricula is developed and led by certified Ontario teachers, not private companies.

IMPROVING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Post-secondary education shouldn't be a debt sentence, yet too many students in Ontario are stuck graduating with tens of thousands of dollars of debt. COVID-19 has also hit students hard, eliminating jobs that many relied on to pay tuition and make ends meet while in school.

The Liberals underfunded post-secondary education and the Ford Conservatives have made things worse. Ford cut more than \$500 million from the Ontario Student Assistance Program, and left students to struggle with inadequate funding through the pandemic.

An Ontario NDP government will ensure a quality post-secondary education is accessible to all Ontarians who want one, and work towards a future where tuition is never a barrier to education.

COMMITMENT

Reverse Ford's cuts to OSAP.

COMMITMENT

Make sure all students graduate debt-free by converting loans to grants: We'll overhaul Ontario's post-secondary education funding system and re-invest in the Ontario Student Assistance Program, with a focus on converting loans to grants and bursaries.

COMMITMENT

Retroactively wipe out student loan interest: We will wipe out any student loan interest owed or paid to the province by any student or past student who still holds a provincial loan.

FIX COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Colleges and Universities need stable funding to secure good faculty and deliver quality education to students.

Doug Ford has cut college and university funding and imported "performance-based funding" models from the United States.

An Ontario NDP government will ensure colleges and universities have the funding they need.

COMMITMENT

We'll scrap Ford's U.S.-style funding schemes: We'll work with colleges, universities, faculty, and students to ensure reliable funding and faculty renewal.

COMMITMENT

Audit of the sector: Launch a collaborative and holistic find-and-fix audit of college and university funding to fix what Ford has broken and ensure the sector is strong.

PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

All students deserve to be safe on campus.

For too long, survivors of sexual violence on campus have been afraid to speak up or have spoken up and been dismissed or ignored.

Liberals and Conservatives have not gone far enough to protect students from sexual violence and update university policies on response to sexual violence. Ford's sexual violence prevention program for new Smart Serve trainees does not go far enough to provide widespread training to servers to protect survivors.

The Ontario NDP will listen to survivors and advocates to keep students safe from sexual violence and improve policies for post-secondary institutions regarding sexual violence reporting.

COMMITMENT

Compel universities to update their policies on sexual violence reporting to reflect calls from survivors and advocates, and to protect survivors from further harm.

COMMITMENT

Fund culturally competent, trauma-informed services: We'll invest to ensure that post-secondary institutions have properly funded, survivor-centred services and staff.

RESPECT FOR STUDENTS

The rights of Ontario post-secondary students must be protected.

The Ford government waged an attack on post-secondary student unions and attempted to strip them of funding – a scheme that was struck down by the courts.

The Ontario NDP will protect students' fundamental right to organize and operate autonomous groups and clubs.

COMMITMENT

Enshrine students' right to have a union, groups and clubs: We'll work with student unions, groups and clubs to enshrine in law students' right to organize and form clubs.

MAKE COLLEGE MORE ACCESSIBLE

A college education is a pathway to professional training and a rewarding career for many Ontarians.

Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to deliver the support colleges need.

A New Democrat government will work with colleges, unions, and employers to ensure college graduates are ready for the workforce and help establish partnerships between colleges and employers to provide ongoing training for workers to help them transition to technological changes in the workforce.

PAID WORK-INTEGRATED TRAINING

As technology changes and we move towards a net-zero economy, opportunities for workers to gain new skills and retrain mid-career will become increasingly important.

The Liberals and Conservatives have neglected to make the investments Ontarians need to get accessible skills and training opportunities while making ends meet.

The Ontario NDP has a concrete plan to put Ontario workers on the path to prosperity now and in the future, with paid work training opportunities in every part of the province.

COMMITMENT

Create thousands of new, paid co-op and internship opportunities for young people: We'll invest to create thousands of new paid placements for post-secondary students to get real-life work experience.

COMMITMENT

Double Ontario's Career Ready Program from 2020 levels so Ontario colleges and universities can create additional work-integrated learning opportunities.