

MEDIA RELEASE

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OSSTF/FEESO launches Don't Shortchange Education campaign

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation warns public that shortchanging education will impact Ontario's recovery

TORONTO, ON—Today, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is launching a multimedia advocacy campaign across the province to warn the public of the dangers of shortchanging Ontario's education system. "The Ford government's recent moves will cost the education system \$800 million at a time when we are not out of this pandemic," said Harvey Bischof, President of OSSTF/FEESO.

"Education is Ontario's competitive advantage. Eroding our education system will only put our economy and future at risk," warned Bischof. "We need to ensure that the funding is in place to deal with the continuing threat from this pandemic and ensure our students are provided with the education that will ensure their future success."

"At the start of the pandemic, the Ontario government shortchanged teachers and education workers by not implementing sufficient safety measures in schools. Now they are dithering in rolling out vaccinations to our members. This continued shortchanging is having an impact on staff and students," Bischof pointed out.

The *Don't Shortchange Education* campaign is a response to the Ford government's treatment of teachers and education workers. A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives showed that it was federal and school board funding that made up the bulk of emergency funding for the education system while the provincial government failed to step up meaningfully.

A report from The Conference Board of Canada showed that for every dollar invested in education generated one dollar and thirty cents in economic activity. Cutting education funding takes one dollar and thirty cents out of the economy while also increasing costs for health care, social services, and criminal justice services.

"OSSTF/FEESO is launching this campaign in part because of the draconian legislation of Bill 254 that the Ford government is steamrolling ahead to limit public discussion of important public issues," Bischof said. "Under this bill, severe restrictions hamper groups like OSSTF/FEESO and others from raising public policy issues, under threat of administrative penalties for violating these unfair rules."

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school

teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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