

# LET'S MAKE OUR SCHOOLS SAFE



## UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY AND SAFE LEARNING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

### Violent Incidents are Increasing in Schools

Almost 80% of public elementary teachers report that violent incidents in schools are increasing. Whether your child has been affected by a violent incident caused by others or themselves, they need to be safe and receive the supports they need.

Since the 1980s, school boards have been required to provide special education programs and services for students with exceptional needs. Yet, funding for inclusive classrooms has never met the actual needs of students.

Students with special needs, mental health challenges, or high-risk behaviours are not getting the front-line supports and services they need in a timely manner.

The Ontario government needs to provide adequate resources, services and supports for all students in need. It must improve the education funding formula, particularly Special Education funding, which is currently based on an inadequate statistical model, rather than actual student needs.

### What Students and Schools Need

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) continues to advocate for the changes highlighted on the next page with parents, caregivers, parent groups and community groups such as the Ontario Autism Coalition and Children's Mental Health Ontario.

Ontario's public education system and students need investment, not cuts. It is time for the government to make children a priority. You can help make a difference.

Join us in protecting high-quality public education **BuildingBetterSchools.ca**.



# What Students and Schools Need

## More Supports for Students with Special Needs

There are not enough front-line supports in classrooms and schools like educational assistants, psychologists, behavioural therapists and other paraprofessionals to make sure that students have the supports and resources they need to do well.

## More Mental Health Supports for Students

One in five children and youth in Ontario face mental health challenges. Parents and caregivers are struggling to get referrals and specialist appointments for their children. The government needs to provide more children's mental health services in schools and communities. Oppressed and underserved communities are faced with additional challenges that more supports could ease.

## Timely Assessments

Students with special needs, mental health challenges and high-risk behaviours, particularly in Kindergarten and primary grades, are waiting too long for assessments in schools and communities. Lack of early assessment negatively impacts these students when it comes to their emotional and academic well-being, health, social interaction, and speech language development.

### More Front-line Support Workers for All Students in Need

Students with special needs, mental health challenges and high-risk, disruptive behaviours arising from other circumstances need earlier and better access to timely, sustained, and direct supports in schools. That includes educational assistants, school board psychologists, behavioural therapists, support counsellors, social workers, child and youth workers and speech-language pathologists to meet the rising number of these students in classrooms.

### Training for School Administrators and Staff

More and better training is needed on procedures for administrators and staff to report and deal effectively with violent incidents.

## Here's How You Can Take Action!

To push back against the damaging funding cuts to school boards in 2019-2020 and to make schools safe for everyone, we need your help!

### ➔ SHARE

Share the information in this brochure with other parents/guardians, school councils and trustees. Ask to have the issue of violence in schools put on school council agendas.

### ➔ LOBBY YOUR MPP

Contact your MPP by phone, email or in-person to advocate for more front-line support staff in our schools and tell the government to stop the cuts. It is time to increase investment in public education. You will find a draft letter to MPPs on our website at [BuildingBetterSchools.ca/funding](http://BuildingBetterSchools.ca/funding)

### ➔ TAKE ACTION

Sign up to receive campaign updates and calls to action at [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](http://BuildingBetterSchools.ca).