



The Sentinel



All I Really Need to Know About Our Current Government

A spin-off of "All I Really Need to Know I Learned In Kindergarten" by Robert Fulgum
Mike Totten - President (acting), CEO of Elementary

- Don't share ANYTHING... take as much away from the Education system as possible.
 - Don't play fair... before you even begin bargaining, put in a bill that will ensure wage restraint.
 - Don't hit people... instead force them to "strike" as a result of your bargaining proposals.
 - Don't put education back to the pre-pandemic state that you found it in... use a pandemic to make permanent damaging changes to the education system.
 - Don't worry about cleaning up your own mess... this is virtually impossible since your government brings new problems to the table daily that will need to be cleaned up.
 - Make sure you take away the dignity of teachers...and attack the profession we have worked so hard to build.
 - Don't worry about truly saying sorry and making things right in your party...endorse an education minister who clearly doesn't understand anti-Black racism.
 - Wash your hands...of everything wrong your government did to the Education system these past 4 years.
 - Flush...publicly funded education down the drain
- as your government is clearly moving towards privatization.
- Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you... except the public probably gagged on them every Friday when the government made their 4pm education announcements during the pandemic.
 - Live a balanced life...or at least try to while the government's cuts to education have created so much stress for teachers that their mental health has been completely decimated.
 - Learn some, think some and plan and work every day some...or do none of that and just be Doug Ford.
 - Don't just take a nap every afternoon...prorogue your government for an additional two months during a pandemic to extend your summer vacation.
 - When you go out in the world, don't stick together...instead set up educational scenarios that pit School Boards against Teachers.
 - Finally, be aware of wonder...and continue to wonder how all the announcements this current government made during the pandemic on how safe our schools were actually made sense. And if you are having a difficult time wondering how this is true, let me help you.

We had a Chief Medical Officer who was able to spin lovely tales of safety in schools as Covid numbers in schools increased; an Education Minister who consistently talked about how safe schools were and then a few days later completely shut them down; and most of all, a Premier who consistently stood at podiums supporting his Chief Medical Officer's and Education Minister's decisions while leading his party to slashing the Education Budget and never really giving teachers or students a fighting chance during this pandemic.

We can do better than this current government...so let's "Get It Done" on June 2nd and replace this government. We need an opportunity to sit across the table from a government that is truly willing to put money into the education system and to make serious bargaining proposals as we enter into negotiations on our next Collective Agreement.

Election Day 2022!

Heather Manassis - Past President

Four years ago, in the Spring of 2018, I wrote my final Sentinel article as president of York Catholic Teachers. I wrote about the then-pending provincial election in which Doug Ford was running for Premier of this province. In that article, I stated that should Ford be elected we could anticipate political unrest in education, not unlike the turmoil we experienced under the "Harris" regime. I wrote: "It was during these, the "Harris" years (1995-2002), when the government under the leadership of Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party, cut thousands of jobs and millions of dollars from the education sector. Rallies, strikes and illegal walkouts were the order of the day." Some of you will be able to recall those tumultuous years. Well . . . Despite the efforts and hard work of my colleagues, and many other members, we were unsuccessful. Doug Ford became the Premier of Ontario.

Fast forward to Spring 2022. We have just endured 4 tumultuous years in education and God knows we can't endure another 4 years. We are once again on the cusp of a provincial election and Doug Ford has every intention of maintaining his title. Take a minute to reflect on what has happened during Ford's reign.

In November of 2019, only months after forming the government, Ford and friends passed the "Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector

for Future Generations Act, (Bill 124)". Bill 124 capped public sector wage increases at an average of one per cent annually for the next three years. Although OECTA and its affiliates immediately prepared a court challenge of the legislation, it has not yet been repealed! Many cuts to the education sector (and to health care) followed.

According to some reports the Ford government has cut over half a billion dollars from the education sector. We know he has cut more. His actions have made it quite clear that he does not support teachers and only tolerates unions. Shortly after he was elected, 100,000 students protested Doug Ford's cuts to education (April 2019). They were especially motivated by increased class sizes. Two days later over 10,000 teachers protested those same cuts and other 'proposed' changes. Those changes included the requirement of all students to complete 4 online courses, cutting monies for supplies and for Indigenous Language Programs, implementing a new math curriculum, a provincial math test for all teacher candidates and rolling back the Health and Physical Education curriculum. In most Boards across the province Ford's cuts resulted in hundreds of teachers being declared surplus. Students now have fewer elective options and larger classes. Much of this happened in his first year and things did not improve over his subsequent years in office. In fact the decisions he made for educators and students during the pandemic forced many

students to opt for home-schooling and left teachers juggling the teaching of students in the classroom and online simultaneously with the outrageous hybrid model!

OECTA, ETFO and OSSTF were all forced to respond with work action when Ford refused to make any effort to reach a negotiated settlement. Then OECTA Provincial President Liz Stuart stated in an interview with CP24, "We have been doing our part to negotiate an agreement, including meeting almost 40 times with the government and school board trustees. However, the Ford government has been disorganized and disrespectful throughout the process, and they continue to insist on an agreement that includes significant cuts." Each and everyone of us can remember the work-to-rule and rotating strikes which followed. Local negotiations were stalled until a provincial agreement was ratified and as a result some units finally signed local Collective Agreements (which will end in August) as recently as last month.

Today I am not only pleading, but I am begging each and every one of you to get involved. It is imperative that every single one of us get out and vote, encourage everyone we know to vote, and to do whatever we can to ensure that an 'education friendly' government is elected on June 2nd! We have only days left until "E" Day, make yourself available on Election Day and help to make a difference! If you are interested in helping to make this happen beyond casting your vote, contact the Unit office.

www.yctoecta.com



E-Learning - The Erosion of Secondary Education

Greg Bolton - 1st Vice President (acting), CEO of Secondary

If there was ever a time to be paying attention to the changing of the funding models in secondary, it is NOW! The decision by the Ford government to mandate that two mandatory e-learn courses be completed to graduate is and will continue to affect our face-to-face courses. The expected rollout of e-learn will have an exponential impact for years to come. We need to change the government and change that mandate of mandatory e-learning.

Currently, staffing face-to-face classes are funded at an average of 23 to 1. E-learn classes are not being funded at 23 but at 30 to 1! The difference between 23 to 30 has a massive effect on our staffing because there is no additional funding for this change. The government has put in stipulations that schools MUST be offering the e-learn to 15% of the secondary population or they will claw back funding from the Board. The percentage of the population required to take e-learning will go up 8.5% yearly, resulting in the steady annual decline of sections face-to-face if the funding amount stays the same or is reduced.

Though you may have been lucky and not had excess at your school this year, this will not always be the case. At this point, most classes are jammed full or just about. We will need to run pathways courses so that all students have access to an education. Somewhere in this mix, we are going to run out of funding...it will be either layoffs or extremely huge class sizes or a combination of both.

I am not confident that if the Ford government is re-elected that they won't be looking to cut the educa-

tion budget even further and begin offering up our day-to-day course to the private sector via e-learning. They have clearly shown us their hand that privatization is possible and is their endgame. At the same time they hold their cards tight and their next move is still unknown. All indicators clearly show - it is not going to go well for publicly funded education.

If secondary continues down this path of mandatory e-learn, we are going to see an erosion of face-to-face day school which is the foundation of our system. If we continue to let a PC party hold a majority government, there will be no accountability and we will remain at their mercy. If we choose not to speak up to our friends and family about the erosion of our education system, we have done a disservice to ourselves and our students. We have inside information on the implications of continuing on this path that our friends and family do not.

Please make sure to engage your friends and family on these topics. As a tip to make this process easier, refer to our website as it contains many great resources under the tab of Provincial Election Resources on the main page <http://www.yctoecta.com>. Also, you could consider downloading the Elections Ontario app on your phone as it makes the voting process very easy.

Make sure you and everyone you know gets out and votes to restore our education system back, then build it up to the better system we all know it can be.

Promises, Promises: Highlights of the OLP and NDP Election Platforms

David Pianezza - Political Action Committee Member

The next Ontario general election is set to take place on June 2, 2022. For the past month or so, party leaders have been traveling across the province making promises and meeting with constituents in an effort to gain your vote. In York Region, voters can generally expect to see candidates from five political parties appearing on their ballot this year:

- the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, led by Doug Ford;
- the Ontario New Democratic Party, led by Andrea Horwath;
- the Ontario Liberal Party, led by Steven Del Duca;
- the Green Party of Ontario, led by Mike Schreiner; and
- the New Blue Party of Ontario, led by Jim Karahalios.

The last provincial general election in Ontario in 2018, saw the highest voter turnout since 1999, with 58% of Ontarians casting a ballot. Since only 40% of those who voted selected the PCs, it means that less than 24% of eligible voters installed a PC majority in 2018. That is alarming and renews the call for all of us to vote for change.

There are 124 seats in the Ontario legislature which means a party needs to win 63 seats in order to claim a majority government. At dissolution, the PCs had 67 seats, the NDP had 39, the Ontario Liberals had 7, the Greens had 1, the New Blue Party had 1, with 6 independents and 3 vacant seats rounding out the House. But the truth is that all parties now have ZERO seats and are all competing for your vote. This is your chance to have your say on what the makeup of Queen's Park will look like on June 3. The following is a comparison of the Ontario Liberal and Ontario NDP election platforms around healthcare, affordability, transportation, environment, and education so that you can make an informed vote.

Healthcare:

OLP:

- \$1 billion to clear the surgery backlog and establish maximum wait times for surgeries and return to pre-pandemic wait times by the end of 2022
- Revolutionize senior care through universal home care guarantee and end for-profit long-term care
- hiring 100,000 new nurses, doctors and other health care professionals and ensure all Ontarians have access to a family doctor
- The Liberals also pledge to expand access to mental health services including training 3,000 new mental-health and addictions professionals

NDP:

- Accelerate roll out of Universal Pharmacare and Dentalcare
- expand operating room hours over the evenings and weekends to increase hospital capacity
- Universal, Publicly Funded Mental Health Care
- begin hiring 30,000 nurses and 10,000 PSWs

Affordability:

OLP:

- Remove the HST from prepared meals under \$20
- increase the minimum wage to \$16 an hour immediately, and then have regional living wages based on cost of living
- Portable benefit packages for those with no employer coverage

- increase the Old Age Security top-up for eligible seniors by \$1,000 more per year
- Increase the ODSP payments by 20%

NDP:

- Raise the minimum wage by \$1 a year until it gets to \$20 in 2026
- Four-year income-tax freeze for individuals making less than \$200,000 annually
- Will ban postal-code discrimination so car insurance rates aren't based on where someone lives

Transportation:

OLP:

- \$1 transit fares for one year and \$40 for a monthly pass for all public transit in Ontario
- Scrap the 413 and use the \$10 billion to invest in new schools and school repairs

NDP:

- Fund public transit at 50% of all operating costs
- Scrap the 413 and redirect funds to social and health infrastructure

Environment:

OLP:

- 50% emission reductions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050
- Create 5 new provincial parks and plant 800 million trees
- Expand Greenbelt by 30%
- \$3000 a year grants for business and families for energy efficiency upgrades
- Electric vehicle rebate of up to \$9,500

NDP:

- 50% emission reductions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050
- Will reinstate the provincial cap and trade carbon pricing system
- Plant 1 billion trees
- Goal of ending all drinking water advisories in the province
- Zero interest loans for families making energy efficiency upgrades

Education:

OLP:

- Temporary reinstatement of optional grade 13 to close learning gaps for 4 years
- New grade 13 curriculum around financial literacy, civics, mental health, and general well being
- Hire 10,000 new teachers and 5,000 new special education workers
- Build 200 new schools and repair 4,500 schools
- Eliminate EQAO
- End mandatory 2 online courses
- Cap class sizes at 20 across the board

NDP:

- Hire 20,000 new teachers and education workers
- Cap grades 4 to 8 at 24 students
- Eliminate school repair backlog in 10 years
- Eliminate EQAO
- End mandatory 2 online courses

Find more information
at www.yctoecta.com .

Click on the
Prov Election Resources tab

Make Your Vote Count:

How We Can Flip Some Key York Region Ridings

Vito Totino - Councillor & Chair of Political Action Committee

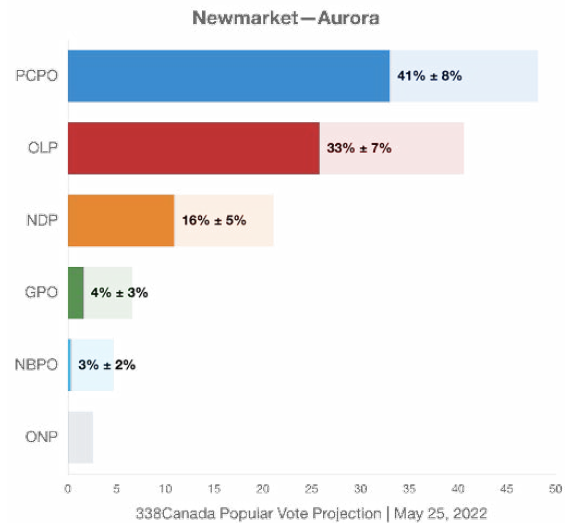
Fellow educators, the time for meaningful action is upon us. With the June 2nd provincial election here, we need to focus our efforts in the most practical and strategic way that will allow us to help elect a government that is friendly to publicly funded Catholic education. The time for canvassing, phone calls, conversations and convincing is done; now you must perform that most sacred of democratic responsibilities and get out to your polling station and vote.

However, when you do go and exercise your right, please be informed about what is at stake for us as educators and how your vote can help determine who is sitting across from us at the bargaining table in a few months. To be clear, a PC government would ensure more cuts, more chaos, and continued contempt for our world class publicly funded education system. What is also clear is that the Green Party's stance on Catholic education in this province is troubling at best and a Green government, as unlikely as that is, would almost certainly spell the end of our Catholic Boards. Therefore, a vote for either of those parties would be a vote against our students' best interests.

So who is left? Well, in York Region that means the Ontario New Democratic Party and the Ontario Liberal Party. Both of these parties have platforms and records of strong support for publicly funded education, however in York Region's history the NDP have unfortunately never really been a strong contender. The polling numbers continue to show that this remains the case in this election as well. Below I will present you with the polling figures for six of the most flippable ridings in York Region to help you understand the significance of voting strategically, voting together, and most importantly voting for our students.

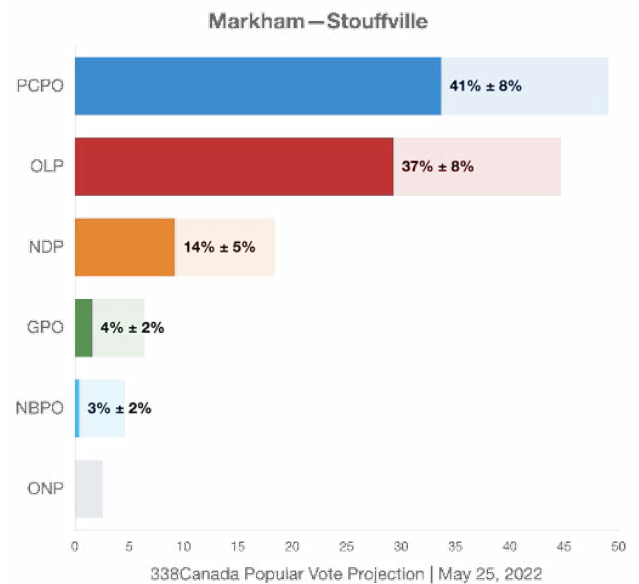
The six ridings in York Region that have the best chance at unseating an incumbent PC "candidate are: Newmarket-Aurora, Markham-Stouffville, Markham-Thornhill, Richmond Hill, Vaughan-Woodbridge, and King-Vaughan. The polling information used below is taken from Canada 338, which uses a statistical model of electoral projections based on aggregated opinion polls, recent electoral history, and demographic data for each riding.

Newmarket-Aurora:



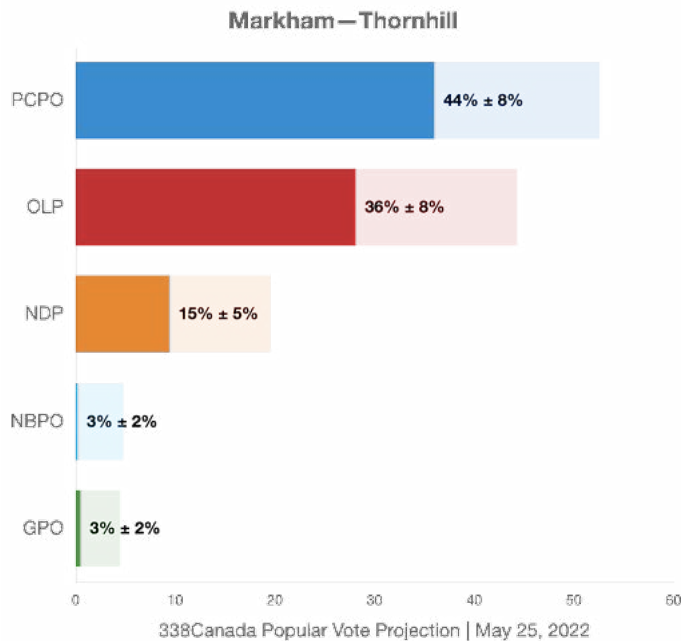
This is a riding where there is no incumbent as PC Minister of Health Christine Elliott has decided not to run. This means that the path is clear for change in this riding. The candidate that is best positioned to take this seat from the PCs is the OLP candidate Sylvain Roy, a neuropsychologist, with a gap of only 8% between first and second. The polling data below (as of May 25) clearly illustrates that if constituents vote strategically in that riding, and move their support from the third place candidate to the second place candidate, they could steal that seat back from Ford's PCs by giving the second place candidate upwards of 49% support.

Markham-Stouffville:



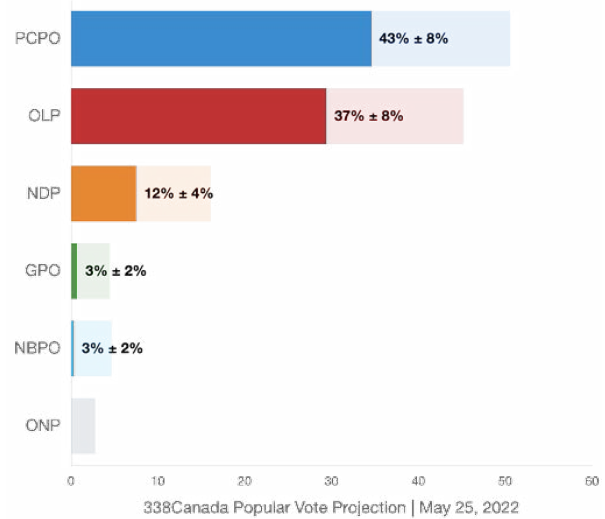
The PC candidate that needs to be unseated here is Paul Calandra and we have OSSTF member Kelly Dunn running for the Ontario Liberal Party. While there is a labour friendly NDP candidate running here as well, the polling numbers show that the only chance we have to unseat Calandra is by voting strategically for the candidate currently polling in second. According to this poll on May 25, the second place candidate is only 4% away from the PC incumbent. More importantly, when you combine the second and third candidate support you would have 51% support for Kelly that would surely send Calandra packing.

Markham-Thornhill:



The PC candidate that should lose their seat here is Logan Kanapathi. The Ontario Liberals are running Sandra Tam, a long time resident of Markham and small business expert with over twenty years of public service experience. In this riding, the gap between the incumbent and the second place candidate is only 8% as of May 25. So again, if we were to vote strategically and cohesively support the second place candidate, they would have 54% support amongst progressive voters in the riding which would be more than enough to send Logan looking for other employment.

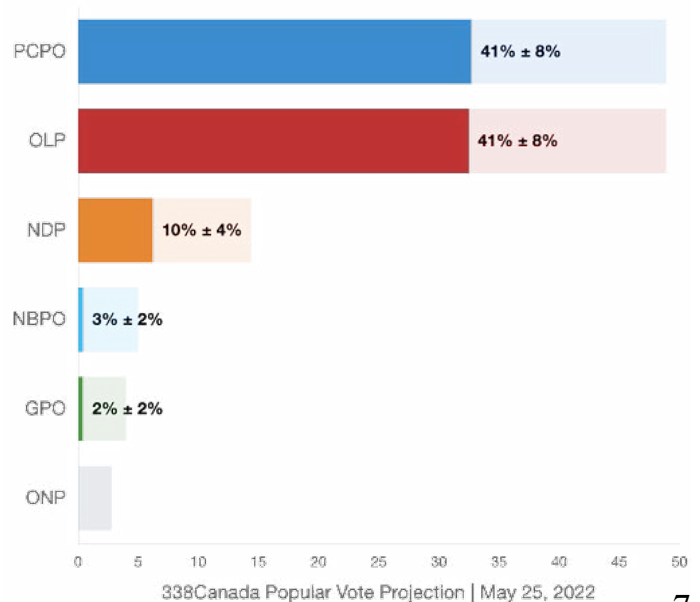
Richmond Hill



Richmond Hill:

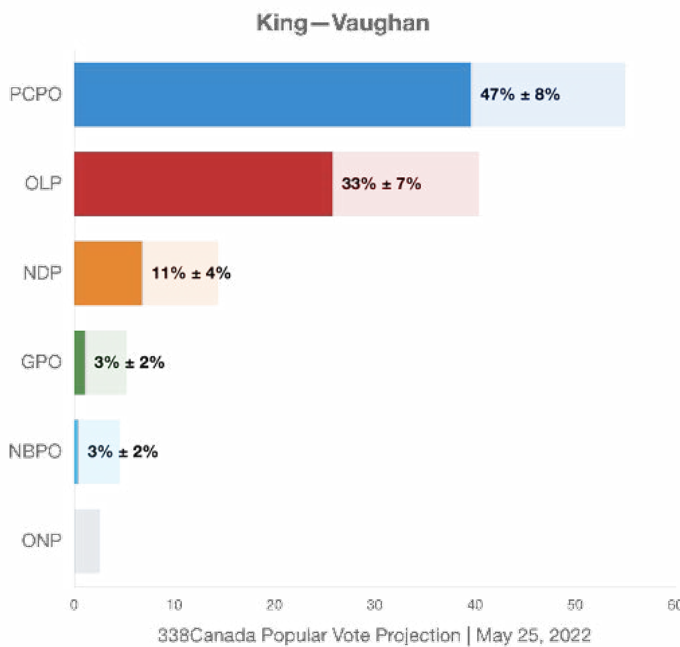
The PC candidate here that does not deserve to be re-elected is Daisy Wai. The Ontario Liberals are countering with Roozbeh Farhadi, an MBA and a small business advisor with one of the major banks. In Richmond Hill, the gap between the incumbent and the second place candidate is only 6% as of May 25. That means if all progressive voters in the riding put their support behind the second place candidate they would have 52% support in the riding which would be more than enough to unseat Wai.

Vaughan—Woodbridge



Vaughan-Woodbridge:

The PC candidate here that needs to go is Michael Tibollo. This is also the home riding of the Ontario Liberal leader, Steven Del Duca. This is the most hotly contested riding and the most probable to flip with a virtual tie between the incumbent and Del Duca as of May 25. Again, a look at the data will show us that if we voted strategically in this riding, and threw the support of all progressive voters behind Del Duca, that would mean upwards of 53% support for him in the riding which would be enough for us to say “Tibollo’s gotta go”.



King-Vaughan:

Last, but first in the forefront of our minds as educators, is the home riding of our much maligned Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce. Here, OECTA member, Gillian Vivona with more than 40 years of experience in the classroom and plenty of years as a union leader, is looking to unseat Lecce. Of the other ridings mentioned above, this is the one that we need the most help with. As of May 25, Lecce currently has a 14% lead on the second place candidate. However, if we combined support for the second, third, and fourth placed parties and cohesively supported the candidate in the best position to beat Lecce, then that candidate would have 47% support in the riding and they could potentially school Lecce this time around.

The message is this: if we truly want to give ourselves a shot at electing an education friendly government then there is no other option than to vote strategically. If we vote based on our own personal preferences we will just split the progressive vote again and the PCs will sneak up the middle to another mandate. If we lived in a region where the NDP was the stronger party, I would wholeheartedly advocate for a strategic vote in their favour, but the reality of our situation in York Region is that the Ontario Liberals are the only party that can beat PC candidates here. If you live in one of the ridings profiled above, please use the data to inform yourself on who the candidate is that has the best chance of beating a PC incumbent and vote for them. If your riding was not found in this article, please go to www.338canada.com/ontario and look for your riding so that you too can arm yourself with the necessary information to make your vote count on June 2. Most importantly, I urge you all to make a plan to vote and be sure that you do it. If we stay home we give Ford a pass (again), but if we vote en masse for change, we can achieve it together.



Prioritize 2SLGBTQIA+ People

Steven Vieira - Diversity Committee Member

2SLGBTQIA+ people face many challenges which can be difficult to overcome. These challenges include poverty and low income, mental health, and intersectionality. Even though these challenges affect all people, they tend to affect 2SLGBTQIA+ people more acutely. Let's look briefly at some of these issues and how we can address them during this provincial election.

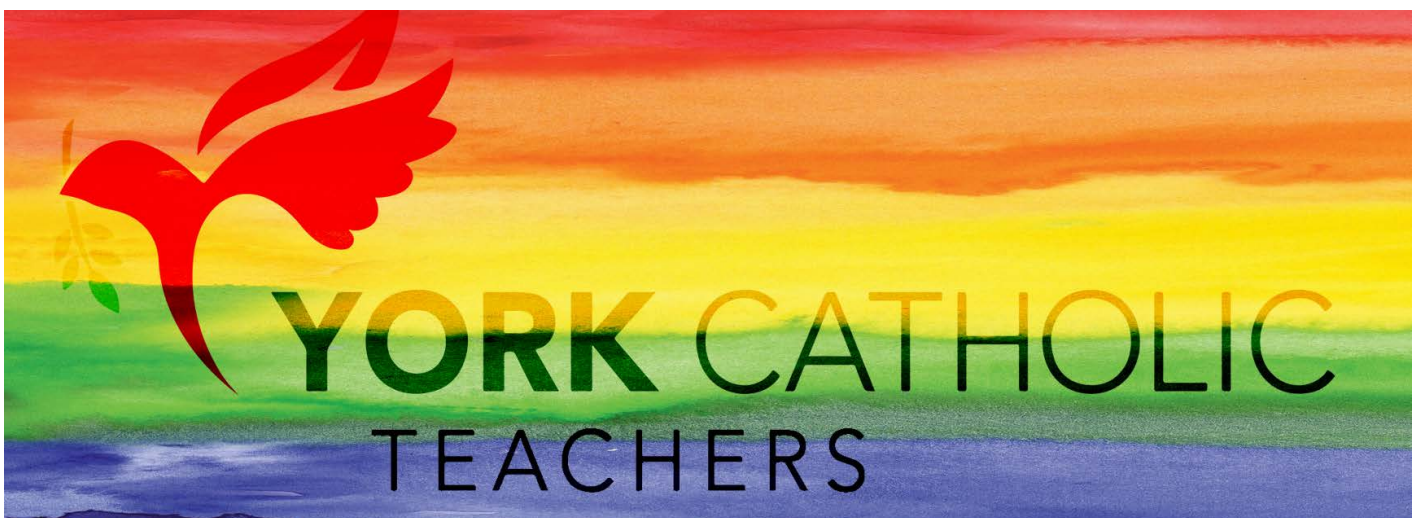
Poverty and low income affect many people in Ontario. 19% of income earners in Ontario receive less than \$15,000 per year. (statcan.gc.ca) This is in contrast to people who identify as trans where half of them earn less than this. (ontario.cmha.ca) We have to ask ourselves: why this is happening? How are we systematically depriving this many people of the ability to earn more income? The PC party of Ontario in 2018 passed a resolution that dismisses gender identity theory as "unscientific 'liberal ideology'" and would have had it removed from our curriculum. Even though Doug Ford stated that the government would ignore this resolution, the majority of delegates passed the motion. (hrw.org) Let's not forget

this fact when we go and vote. The PC Party directly voted for an increase to the systemic issues affecting people that identify as trans.

Mental health is an issue that has affected many individuals to different degrees; however, "LGBTQ individuals are more than twice as likely as heterosexual men and women to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime. They are 2.5 times more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and substance misuse compared with heterosexual individuals." (psychiatry.org) These statistics are compounded in youth: "LGBTQ youth face 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than heterosexual peers. 77% of trans respondents in an Ontario-based survey had seriously considered suicide and 45% had attempted suicide." (ontario.cmha.ca) The Ontario government's response to the mental health crisis is the Roadmap to Wellness, a plan to fix Ontario's mental health care system so that patients can access quality care. Please look at this closely before you vote. Some analyses suggest that "this roadmap is like remodeling cancer care in Ontario

so that patients can access publicly funded treatment, but only for stage one leukemia, and only to receive one type of short-term, low-dose chemotherapy." (thestar.com). Vote for a mental health plan that is comprehensive and evidentiary-based.

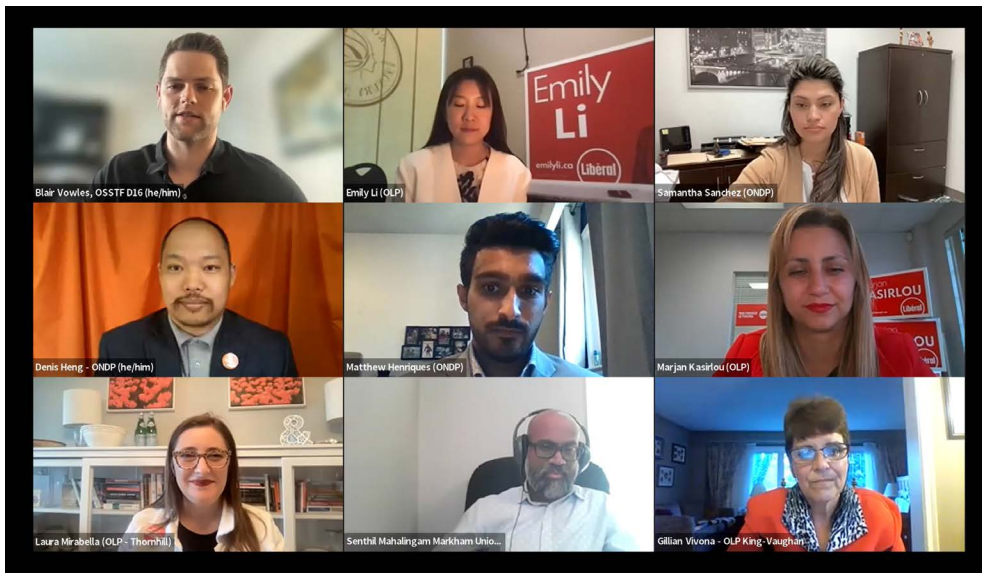
Intersectionality is also an issue that affects all 2SLGBTQIA+ people (and everyone, for that matter). We not only face barriers surrounding gender identity and sexual orientation, but also racial, economic, physical, language, and religious barriers, to name a few. It is this intersectionality that can lead to discrimination from a variety of sources. Mounting discrimination can seem insurmountable. A study of Black LGBTQ youth found "that 44% seriously considered suicide in the past year and 17% reported a suicide attempt in the past year." (thetrevorproject.org). These horrific examples illustrate the need for more social, economic, and educational supports in order to combat the negative realities of people's lived experiences. Vote for a government that doesn't "divide and conquer". Vote for the health of our 2SLGBTQIA+ members and families on June 2nd.



OFL May Day - Queen's Park - May 1, 2022



All Candidates Evening - May 17, 2022





The Impact of the Elections on Occasional Teachers

Anna Polisco -
Occasional Teacher Rep

Who we vote for will determine who we will be bargaining against when our Collective Agreement expires at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

- ✓ Smaller class sizes equals more permanent teachers, which equates to more permanent positions for occasional teachers.
- ✓ More funds for education will ensure more resources for students and teachers and more Personal Development.
- ✓ More funds for education will mean benefits and better working conditions for all occasional teachers.
- ✓ Better working conditions means improved mental health.
- ✓ Better health and safety measures means a safe working environment.
- ✓ Salary increase above the inflation rate means no second job and more family time.

We have the Voting Power to affect change. Use your POWER!!

- ✓ Stand up for what and someone you believe in.
- ✓ Read through the candidates' platforms on their websites and make a list of the Education Friendly candidates.
- ✓ Network with your family, friends and your community.
- ✓ Identify where they stand in terms of support for Education Friendly candidates and persuade undecided voters.
- ✓ Reach out to voters by canvassing with a friend to help with your first time jitters.
- ✓ Encourage and remind everyone how, when and where to vote. <https://www.elections.on.ca/waystovote>

Once elected, these candidates will make the decisions that impact your day-to-day life the most.

“All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” Edmund Burke

Be the change!!

Health and Safety in Education Was Run Over By A Ford (Government)

Peter Sciacca - Certified Worker Member

The Ford government failed in their duty to provide safe workplaces for educators.

To begin with, there were issues in providing proper PPE to teachers. Masks were rationed out and caused a host of health issues from skin irritation to headaches. When COVID-19 was then declared an airborne virus, workers should have had access to N95 masks from the beginning. The Ford government did not deem it necessary and only provided the N95 masks to teachers in late 2021.

Eye protection was limited to full face shields that were prone to fogging up leading to further safety issues including teachers getting

injured, tripping and falling and having their vision obscured by the face shield.

There was a concern with air quality in our schools. The switchover to MERV 13 (hospital grade filtration) was slow since older schools in our board do not have full mechanical ventilation which meant they only have MERV 13 in parts of the building. The HEPA units provided are also quite loud. Workers are placed in potentially precarious circumstances with a product that produces levels of noise pollution that may have effects on them for years to come.

Class sizes in elementary were

not reduced which forced students and teachers to be much closer than the required 6 feet (2m) of distance. Even though teachers were provided with PPE as per COVID-19 guidelines and to keep us safe, being in this environment heightened our risk of exposure and many teachers inevitably contracted COVID-19 from classroom exposure.

Ontario Education was run over by a Ford and on June 2, 2022, we have to ensure that we do not face four more years of cuts and disregard for our safety. Ontario Education cannot endure another hit and run by a Ford (government).



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Ford's Underfunding Detrimental to Occasional Teachers

Loredana Foti - Occasional Teacher Councillor Elect

Sporadic and temporary work is an all too familiar landscape for occasional teachers. Occasional teachers have known for decades now that the road to full-time, permanent positions includes short-term, contractual and uncertain employment conditions. Occasional teachers who await daily calls for daily assignments must face the reality of precarious work. Occasional teachers in long term occasional assignments must also face the uncertainty of not knowing when they will next get work and are unable to financially plan for the future.

However, the Ford government's irresponsible underfunding of public education, inadequate planning and reckless approach to safety in the past four years has drastically changed the landscape of precarious work for occasional teachers.

Ford's \$1.3 billion cut in education funding has led to the elimination of hundreds of teaching positions for occasional teachers. Now more than ever, occasional teachers have been confronted with fewer opportunities for full time work with benefits and relative job security.

Ford's announcement in 2019 to increase class sizes led to many occasional teachers being declared surplus at their schools. Since many permanent teachers lost their positions and were added to the long-term occasional pool, many occasional teachers found themselves back in the daily

pool where work was already scarce. The Ford government's further cuts to electives like art and drama not only resulted in fewer positions for occasional teachers but also completely ignored the importance of these courses for creative industries that are integral to our economy and for students' artistic expression, mental health and well-being. The Ford government's \$12.3 billion in planned cuts over the next decade and implementation of mandatory online courses will continue to impact the amount of work available to occasional teachers.

To add to all this upheaval, the Ford government failed to create a safe working environment for occasional teachers when they were needed the most. When Covid hit, occasional teachers were forced to deal with new risks associated with their work amidst the constant precarity that comes with backfilling permanent staff at multiple schools. Inadequate health and safety measures in schools fuelled fears about transmission for occasional teachers going from school to school. This, coupled with the financial challenges of the situation, forced occasional teachers to make the heavy decision to either not put food on the table and pay rent or risk their health by going into work. During this time, occasional teachers sacrificed their well-being to meet the needs of schools and students while following constantly changing directives from a government that clearly did not provide for their safety.

The government's long term trend of underfunding continues with no plan to address the severe teacher shortage at hand. Ford claimed to fix the problem by giving temporary certificates to students who are currently enrolled in education programs which would allow them to teach uncertified. Ford also made changes to allow retired teachers to return to the classroom as a way of dealing with the shortage problem. However, such measures are only a band-aid solution that leaves the root problems of the teacher shortage unaddressed. The situation highlights the Ford government's stop gap approach to problem solving that has both exhausted and alienated educators in Ontario.

Ford's trend of underfunding will continue to have a domino effect that leaves occasional teachers, permanent teachers and students abandoned. There is a lot at stake on June 2nd. We must seize the opportunity to make Ontario better by voting Ford out.



Government Roadblocks New Teachers from Moving Forward

Nicole Barnett - Chair of the New Teachers Committee

As we prepare to head to the polls on June 2nd, a lot of rather frustrating realities about our current government sit heavy on my shoulders. As a relatively new permanent teacher and a mother of young children, I grapple with the difficulty facing us in job security given this government's track record of cuts and changes that have already dramatically impacted staffing in the education system. I also worry about the struggle to provide for our families as the cost of living increases and inflation skyrockets. Yet, Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservative's Bill 124 holds us to a maximum wage increase of only 1%.

Current numbers indicate that the inflation in cost of living in 2022 has raised to over 5%. Additionally, housing costs across Ontario have increased to unaffordable levels in the past two or more years, making it almost impossible for first time home buyers to purchase any home in the GTA or urban areas of Ontario. Many new teachers are among those first time buyers hoping to start the next chapter of their lives. Gas prices have almost doubled and grocery prices are terrifying. But yet New Teachers all across Ontario are starting out on wages with very little pay increases and having very

little opportunity to move ahead in life because of Bill 124.

As a new teacher and a parent of young children, I can attest to the fact that the reality of paying for the mortgage, bills, groceries, extracurricular activities and now obscenely high gas prices is both frightening and stressful. Bill 124 needs to be repealed so that teachers, nurses and other public servants can afford to live in the communities we serve and are passionate about. The Progressive Conservatives and Doug Ford need to be shown the door.

Do electric vehicles need maintenance?

With the rising cost of fuel and the growing movement for a more sustainable future, electric vehicles (EVs) can seem like a win-win for the planet and your bank account. But how do electric vehicles compare to conventional gasoline-powered vehicles when it comes to maintenance?

Read more at www.otip.com/article144.



Look Inwards - Does the Ontario PC Party Reflect Who You Are?

Michael Oyston - Councillor

As the election date draws near we have all had the opportunity to take a look at the parties, the leaders and their platforms (well, those who have actually provided a platform) and we have some choices to make. However, sometimes it is important to look inwards and examine who we are as voters when making decisions about who to vote for. With that being said, it is important to look at the profile of a person who supports Doug Ford and the Ontario PC party. So if you identify with any of the following, voting for the PC party is the right vote for you.

- 1. You hate the environment and food:** That's right, if you have ever thought to yourself, "wow, I hate the environment, I hate greenbelts, fresh air, and wildlife," then you should vote for the conservative party. If you despise produce and agriculture grown in some of the most valuable farmland in Ontario, then a vote for the conservative party is for you. Under Doug Ford the Conservatives will pave over ecologically sensitive protected land as well as prime agricultural areas to create highways to nowhere so that his developer buddies can get rich. Again, if smog, endangered species and starvation are things that make your eyes light up with excitement, then you will cast a vote for the Ontario PC Party.
- 2. You have no use for your grandparents:** If you feel that your grandparents or even your parents have had a good run but they are getting old and it's time for them to move onto the next life, you will certainly vote for the Ontario PC party. Doug Ford and the Conservatives allowed close to 4000 residents of long term care homes to die during the pandemic. However, it should be noted that many of them were left to starve and wallow in their own filth for days prior to their passing. But you, as a supporter of Doug Ford, think this really isn't a big deal. In fact, you like it so much that you want Doug to privatize more than 18,000 LTC homes while introducing the Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act. This bill will make it significantly harder for residents and families to hold long-term care homes liable for any harm. As a supporter of Doug Ford you are a little ticked that the Canadian Military had to uncover many of these horrors. You just wanted grandma to live out her days in filth and squalor. Yep, if you want senior citizens neglected while they die and allow LTC homes to cover it up while mak-

ing record profits (while Conservative MPP's buy shares of these companies), you need to vote for the Ontario Conservatives.

- 3. You think Teachers and Nurses are overpaid and their work isn't of value:** You look through that sunshine list and say to yourself - wow, look at all those lazy overpaid teachers and nurses. (Note that \$100,000 today is about the same as making roughly \$60,000 back in 1994 when the sunshine list was introduced). You wish someone would really limit how much these people make. Especially when these leeches on society are the ones who only look after your children all day, or who take care of you when you are in an emergency. In fact, you REALLY wish that they could only earn raises that were far less than inflation. Well, do I have some good news for you! Doug Ford and the Conservatives have your back on this one. They hate nurses and teachers so much that they have legislated Bill 124 which will make sure those Ferrari-driving teachers and jet-setting nurses never see more than a 1% wage increase. Those greedy nurses working 12-hour shifts to do work like neonatal intensive care certainly are not worthy of anything more than 1% and teachers? Well ... who works less than they do?
- 4. You don't think families with autism need support:** You lay in bed at night and you lose sleep because you can't believe that these families are still complaining about the lack of services provided or the fact that the wait list for services has grown to over 51,000 children. You think to yourself "who cares about the fact that this is more than the number of people that could fit into the Rogers Centre for a Jay's game." You truly don't care that this system is broken because really this isn't your problem and all those families should just learn to live with the lack of support and just wait longer. In essence, you know that these programs have nothing to do with making donors more money so you're good with no programming and an ever increasing waitlist.
- 5. a) You really enjoy failure and broken promises:** Your entire hope for the day is that someone just flat out lies to you or lets you down. You hope that their incompetence from yesterday is only topped by their incompetence of today. For

example, you embrace the idea that you were going to get beer for a dollar but it never came through. You love that you were told that hydro rates would go down, but now you are paying record amounts. You totally believed that Dougie would hold those oil companies to account and reduce gas by 10 cents/liter but now you love paying over \$2.00/liter at the pump. Speaking of the pumps, the sight of peeling stickers (from a sticker salesman) is a breathtaking sight. You also don't see a need for license plates to be seen at night. You love failure and disappointment. You support Doug Ford and the Ontario PC party because low expectations are simply common sense.

b) **You are easily impressed:** Related to your love of failure, you are also easily impressed. For example the sight of a tiny red shovel digging in a snowbank during an orchestrated photo op kind of makes you smile. You are impressed that you got sent a bribe for \$150 for your plate sticker, but don't care that health and education budgets will be slashed because of these plate bribes. You also don't care that vehicle safety certifications will be introduced which will cost you far more than plate renewal fees, because...you are easily impressed. You like not paying tolls on a section of highway you have likely never driven or even knew existed. Phrases such as "getting it done" and "Party of Yes," elicit feelings of euphoria within the deepest depths of your soul even though such phrases have no substance. You don't see the need for Doug Ford to take questions at political debates as one time you heard that his heart broke for something he was responsible for, or that he was going to be on it like an 800-lb gorilla and that was good enough for you. You like being referred to as "my friends." There is also a good chance that things like jingling keys, bright lights or a Minister of Education who just takes selfies will also give you an overwhelming sense of satisfaction.

- 6. You don't have a problem with racist actions and policies:** You don't see the big deal that our Minister of Education willingly participated in or organized a Slave Auction not that many years ago. You really truly believe that someone who would trivialize and minimize the brutality of slavery is qualified to understand anti-Black racism and can be responsible enough to implement

policies to disrupt it. You also don't really think it was a big deal that one of the first acts of the Ontario PC's was to cancel a project to update Provincial curriculum documents with Indigenous content. Your ears may have also picked up the racist dog whistle that Ford loudly blew as he called for closing the borders and banning international students during the fight against COVID-19. You may also share the value of Doug Ford that most new immigrants come to Canada to just "collect the dole and sit around." But this is okay as you don't mind the idea that the government can scapegoat racialized immigrants as opposed to taking any sort of responsibility for their government's failed policies. Don't feel bad about it. These are just actions and policies and you are pretty sure everyone else is just overreacting.

- 7. You think public education shouldn't be funded:** This one may be awkward as you are likely a teacher reading this, but, you will need to own this if you are an Ontario PC Party voter. So let's get to the point, you don't see a need for public education. You are absolutely enthralled that Doug Ford plans to cut \$1.3 BILLION out of public education despite the fact that your job is funded by public tax dollars. You don't think kids need this kind of funding to make up lost learning gaps, to fix a backlog of repairs, to support students with special education needs, to hire new teachers, to reduce class sizes, to lessen the number of students being forced into online learning, to ensure elective classes run. Nope, you just don't see the need. You want those learning gaps to widen and schools to crumble. You simply don't care about the needs of our children in publicly funded schools in Ontario.

Of course there are many other elements that make up the profile of an Ontario PC party supporter - for instance: you like that party donations go into allowances for PC MPP's, you don't believe in mask mandates for schools, you think only private schools should get rapid tests, you like schools being closed for the longest period in North America, you think Arthur is a real person, you like EV charging stations ripped out only to be installed again, you think land developers should make more money, you host parties on the weekend with the theme "notwithstanding clause", you "misplace" 4.4 Billion Dollars, you rarely go to work (like hardly ever), you find huge deficits and reduced services appealing, you like the idea of privatized

health care, you think its cool when someone declares themselves to be a huge Republican, you like defunding rape crisis centres, you want your buddy to be OPP Commissioner, you routinely use a binder during discussions, or maybe you crave terrible cheesecake.

If you find yourself identifying with any of the above statements then you clearly fit the profile of an Ontario PC supporter and you should vote accordingly. If, however, you find that none of the above traits represent who you are, if you don't relate to even one of the statements above, then you will need to explore an alternative party to support. This also goes for your spouse, relatives, and close friends. Educate them on the profile of an Ontario PC Supporter. Do your research, find out which party better represents you, and find out which party candidate is most likely to defeat Doug Ford and the Ontario PC Party on election day.

Check out the following resources to stop the vote split:
Votewell.ca
Stopthesplit.ca
338canada.com/ontario



Stay current on savings, contests and more from OTIP! Plus, you'll be entered into the monthly draw for \$500 in e-gift cards! Enter today: <https://bit.ly/3MhmoAA> #OTIPUpdate

When The Electorate Does not Vote

Karen Ebanks - Recording Secretary

Did you know that the 2018 provincial election saw the highest voter turnout in 20 years? Encouraging! Did you know that in 2018 only 58% of voters voted in the provincial election? Devastating...

A mere 58% handed Doug Ford a resounding 76/124 seats, a clear majority government in 2018. The number of civic atrocities that occurred under Doug Ford's majority government over the last 4 years are too many to count here. No better example of the destructive power of the majority PC government can be seen than when examining what happens when progressive MPPs try to introduce legislation that centres workers. The *Stay Home if You are Sick Act*, introduced by NDP MPP Peggy Sattler, called for workers to have access to 10 paid sick days plus 14 paid sick days during a health crisis. Had this bill passed into legislation it would have been a significant step in addressing inequity among workers. We know that women and racialized workers are disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid sick days, often bear the burden of childcare and are often over-represented in lower-paying jobs.

Despite mass popularity, this bill has been voted down by the Ontario PCs

over 25 times. The PCs simply hold the majority of seats and there is no mathematical way to outweigh their collective voting power in the House. Constituents who voted for their MPP but have not found their MPP has voted consistent with their concerns must remember this fact on June 2nd. And remember we must. There is only 1 time in a 4 year cycle that voters can hold the government accountable and make progressive change. This day is coming on June 2nd. There must be a reckoning. We must be the ones to bring it.

Teachers have access to 11 paid sick days bargained in our contracts, with an additional 120 days paid at 90%. How much safer would Ontario school communities have been if parents were not forced to choose between going to work covid-positive needing to put food on the table, and staying home to reduce public spread costing them desperately-needed income? Teachers witnessed this dilemma first-hand every time we noticed a student in class with covid symptoms that we were pretty sure probably should not have been there.

And as I walk York Region neighbourhoods these past weeks, talking to voters about the election, I am stunned by the number of undecided voters

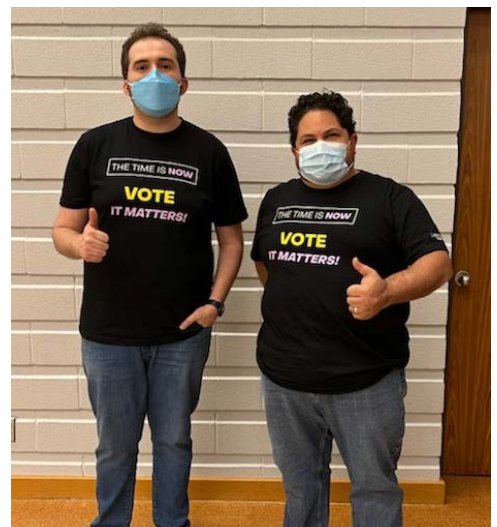
out there. "Cannot say I have given the election much thought yet" and "There's an election coming up?" and "I cannot say I follow politics" are too commonly heard from those who answer knocked-on doors and from those curious about my *Vote It Matters* t-shirt at the car dealership. These responses are confounding to teachers who live the failures of the Ford government daily in our classrooms.

Living under a PC government elected with 98% voter turnout is one thing. It is undesirable but acceptable, as this result would have represented democracy in action. Living under a PC government elected with 58% voter turnout is quite another thing. In 2018, we could not fathom what a PC government would do to Ontario. In 2022, [now that we know](#), the question is - what are we going to do about it? The answer is - exercise our civic duty.

We have to vote. We have to speak with our family and friends about voting. We have to help those with mobility challenges get out to vote. It is the only way to effect progressive change in our communities.



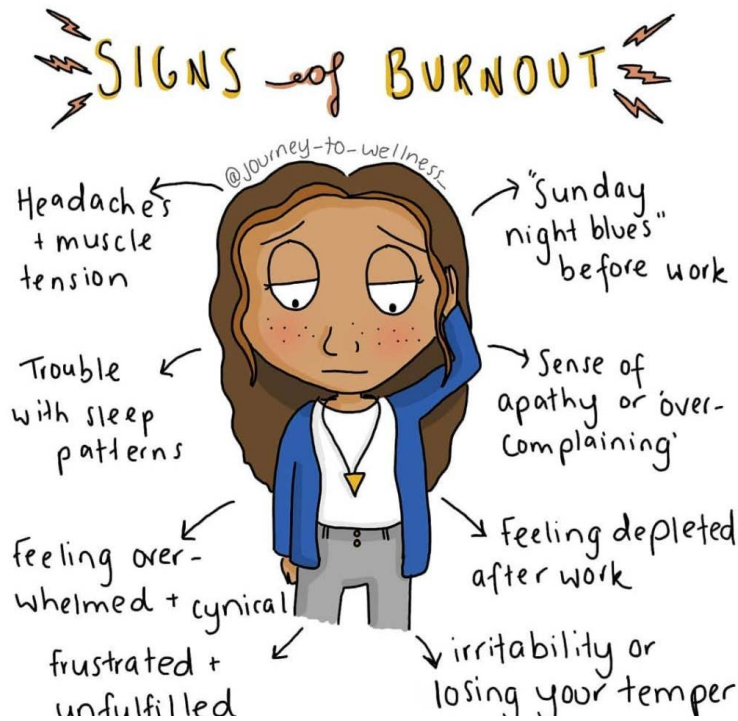
Canvassing





Thank you Doug Ford for the Teacher Mental Health Crisis

Patricia Chiarella - 2nd Vice President (acting)



As the Ministry of Education under Doug Ford ignored safe school guidelines demanded by Teacher Unions in our Province, the responsibility of keeping students and school staff safe was largely left to teachers, support personnel, and Administrators to organize and maintain. Add to that burden, the world of remote and hybrid teaching, and it is not surprising that teachers have detailed unbearable levels of stress, anxiety, and a relentless struggle to cope with the demands of daily teaching.

The Canadian Teachers Federation conducted a Mental-Health Check-in survey in October of 2021, which garnered nearly 14,000 responses. The results show that close to 70% of teachers are concerned about their own mental well being and constantly deal with the dilemma of “Teacher Guilt” - fulfilling their duties and responsibilities over taking care of their own mental and physical health.

This government has perpetuated this corrosive and demanding environment for teachers and has offered no hope of relief by continuing to pursue virtual schools and elearn courses.

In order to address the deteriorating state of mental health for our teachers, it is imperative that on June 2nd, teachers choose a government that will acknowledge and support the needs of staff and students. We must ensure that who we vote for will:

- Allocate more resources and funding to mental health services and supports which are tailored to the unique workplace stressors of teachers.
- Implement health and safety guidelines in schools that are already mandated outside of education.
- Consult with teachers and value their input as experienced frontline workers.

Let's take back our education system on June 2nd!

Underfunding a Pandemic

Reg Shepherd - 3rd Vice President



Upon election, the Ford Government was quick to announce major cuts to education. OEETA and all other Education Unions fought back, to save our system. In March 2020, OEETA signed a deal with this Government, in an attempt to bring stability to a system that was about to be broken down. The Ford Government pushed for larger class sizes, mandatory online learning as well as other cuts to a world class education system.

As Provincial negotiations ended, Covid was looming. Ford encouraged people to travel and enjoy their March break, since a two week shutdown would fix everything.

Week by week, we sat and waited for the Government to announce when schools would open. We were told to “pivot” to an online world with NO training, NO funding, NO direction and NO support. Minister Lecce would gloat weekly about his leadership in education, while providing no support to front line workers.

Minister Lecce introduced his “plan” to reopen schools in Sept 2020. This would include:

- Online remote schools
- “Smaller” in person classes, topped up with hybrid learning
- No Additional funding for resources
- No Additional funding for training
- No Additional funding for supports

The Ford Government was able to implement their cuts, during a pandemic, continuing their attack on publicly funded education.

The cuts kept coming. Education workers were left with inferior PPE, minor upgrades to HVAC systems, and no access to rapid antigen testing. Schools were forced to ‘pivot’ back and forth from face to face back to remote, based on the Government's flip flopping public health policies.

During a worldwide pandemic, the Ford Government, through Minister Lecce continued their plan to slash our education system. Instead of following Public Health guidelines of smaller class sizes, upgrading air quality and providing N95, they forced Boards into massive deficits, added bandaid solutions to make schools unsafe, all while ensuring their plan to undervalue education proceeded.

Leadership during a pandemic should not focus on Provincial Party platforms. Our Premier needed to focus on building a safe Province for all members of society, instead of pushing a right wing agenda, pursuing political goals and overriding Collective Agreements. We need leadership that will ACT during a disaster, FOLLOW doctors and scientists and FUND our education system to ensure we keep students safe and continue to provide a world class system. The cost of underfunding a pandemic has been too much for members of society to pay. On June 2nd, force the Ontario PC government to pay this bill in full and unseat them all with your vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Births & Adoptions

Noelene Cerqueira, teacher at Light of Christ on the birth of her daughter Sienna.
Natalie Cultraro, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the birth of her daughter Camilla.
Marianna Fabris, teacher at Our Lady of Good Counsel and Mauro Fabris, teacher at Sacred Heart CHS on the birth of their son.
Stefanie Ianniello, Occasional Teacher on the birth of her daughter Evelyn Rose.
Stephanie Pacitti, teacher at St. Br. Andre CHS on the birth of her daughter Lia.
Laura Petricone, Occasional Teacher on the birth of her daughter Emma.
Agatha Seventikidis, teacher at Christ the King on the birth of her daughter Isla.



Condolences & Sympathy

The Leggio Family, on the passing of Georgia Leggio, teacher at Holy Name.
Cathy Arnone, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing of her grandmother.
Filomena Cammisuli, LTO on the passing of her grandmother.
Melanie Cherkes, teacher at Canadian Martyrs on the passing of her father.
Amanda Chianelli, OT on the passing of her mother.
Stephanie Dametto, teacher at St. Br. Andre CHS on the passing of her uncle.
Rose Di Pardo, teacher at Our Lady of Fatima on the passing of her father.
Paolo Di Pietrantonio, OT on the passing of his uncle.
Franca Grisolia, teacher at Blessed Trinity, on the passing of her father.
Marylinda Lamarra, teacher at St. Joan of Arc and Councillor on the YCT Executive, on the passing of her father.
Lisa Manzo, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing of her grandmother.
Sonia Martelli, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of her grandmother.
Nancy Morcos, OT on the passing of her mother.
Marlon Moskal, teacher at St. Br. Andre CHS on the passing of his brother.
Bernadette Myers, teacher at Our Lady of Grace on the passing of her mother.
Nadia Resende, OT on the passing of her grandfather.
Deana Spaziani, OT on the passing of her father.
Reg Shepherd, 3rd Vice-President on the YCT Executive and Release Officer on the passing of his mother.
Rita Tenaglia, teacher at St. Gabriel on the passing of her father-in-law.



Election Readiness Event - May 5, 2022

