

ETFO Position Paper

Promises Unfulfilled: Addressing the Special Education Crisis in Ontario

Crisis in Public Education

- ETFO is sounding the alarm on Ontario's failing special education system, where students are being left behind due to government neglect.
- ETFO's new position paper, *Promises Unfulfilled: Addressing the Special Education Crisis in Ontario*, exposes the chronic underfunding, systemic neglect, and policy failures that have left Ontario's most vulnerable students without the supports they need.
- The Ford government's inaction and underfunding has worsened the special education crisis, forcing students with disabilities into an under-resourced system that cannot meet their needs.

Systemic Failures Identified in the Paper

- The Ford government has systematically stripped away resources while claiming to support public education.
- Since 2018, Ontario has lost 5,000 classroom educators, and special education programs have been shut down across the province.
- *Promises Unfulfilled* identifies significant systemic failures that are leaving children behind and resulting in a rise in school violence, including:
 - lack of early intervention and timely access to psychological assessments
 - declining availability of specialized educators
 - barriers to accessing essential programs
 - insufficient resources for English language learners with special education needs

Call to Action

- Backed by research from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the University of British Columbia, the report presents 27 concrete recommendations to ensure students with special education needs receive the support they deserve and are legally entitled to.
- The Ford government must take swift action to implement the 27 recommendations, which include:
 - increasing special education funding to match student needs
 - reducing class sizes
 - hiring additional support staff
 - ensuring timely access to psychological assessments
 - updating the flawed funding formula with current data

Equity and Justice for All Students

- Every child has the right to an education that allows them to reach their full potential, yet the Ford government is denying this right to thousands of students with disabilities.
- This is an issue of equity, justice, and human dignity that supports the economic and social health of Ontario.