

For immediate release

## Beyond the smoke and mirrors – what's really going to happen in our classrooms?

*A statement by Diane Dewing,  
President of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)*

**TORONTO, March 18, 2019** — The recent announcement by the Ontario Minister of Education reveals the true goals of the Ford government and they are not pretty. Forget the issue of cell phones and sex education – essentially these issues are smoke and mirrors for the government to distract parents from the real issue of an estimated \$1.4 billion being cut from public education.

What's going to happen to our kids in the classroom? Well, if you take a small secondary school of 700, the proposed change in average class size from 22 to 28 means a reduction of seven teachers. This translates to larger classes for compulsory secondary school subjects, loss of smaller programs such as technology, and puts our most vulnerable students at risk of not having supports within the school. These job losses will negatively affect the programs and quality of the education of all Ontario's students.

Online courses may be meant to compensate for the thousands of teacher job losses. Evidence proves that these courses are only effective for some students. An Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) survey of 2017 showed that 75% of student respondents rated online courses as not giving comparable-quality learning capabilities of the classroom. Making online courses mandatory puts vulnerable students at greater risk. The support of a real teacher in a real classroom is the best answer for our students.

Although the Ontario Government still has not released the consultation results to which it refers, OTF doubts that parents want to see fewer programs and supports for their children, thousands of teacher jobs lost, or a move to mandatory online secondary credits.

Ontario's public education system has earned world-wide recognition as one of the best.

Premier Ford is not keeping his election promise; instead, he and his government are threatening our children's hopes for the future.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the advocate for the teaching profession in Ontario and for its 160,000 teachers. OTF members are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all the publicly funded schools in the province—elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and francophone.

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