



People advocating for safe, well-maintained public schools

Fix Our Schools Campaign:

We are a grassroots, non-partisan, parent-led campaign creating a large network of citizens across Ontario who all expect:

- Every Ontario public school student to attend a **safe, well-maintained school that provides an environment conducive to learning**
- The \$15-billion of disrepair across all 72 Ontario school boards to be addressed
- Public education to be a priority within every party’s platform in the 2018 provincial election
- Public schools to be funded as critical public infrastructure - on par with transit

Education Funding in Ontario: A Brief History

1998: Mike Harris PC government amalgamates school boards and implements new funding formula with school boards relying exclusively on province for funding

2002: Rozanski Report, commissioned by Elizabeth Witmer, PC Education Minister reviewed funding formula and identified the following issues pertaining to capital needs:

Issues:	Rozanski’s Recommendations:
<p>\$5.6-billion of deferred maintenance had been allowed to accumulate in Ontario’s publicly funded schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School boards secure capital financing needed to quickly address this deferred maintenance via debentures • Province support school boards with \$200-million of additional funding for interest and principal payments on these debentures
<p>Yearly funding to school boards for renewal was \$266-million for assets valued at \$28-billion. This was less than 1% of the value of the facility replacement value of schools. Established guidelines recommended that governments provide annually a minimum of 1.5% to 4% of the current facility replacement value of a building for renewal needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the benchmark costs within the education funding formula and increase annual funding for school renewal



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2004: Liberal Education Minister Gerard Kennedy launched “Good Places to Learn” (GPL) initiative, stating, *“Ultimately, a schools condition reflects the state of commitment of one generation to the advancement of the next”*.

Issues:	Proposed solutions in GPL:
Over \$5-billion of disrepair had been allowed to accumulate in Ontario’s publicly funded schools. Ontario schools are not ideal environments for learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase annual renewal funding • Extraordinary one-time \$2.1-billion amortization fund to deal with the major outstanding needs

2015: Ontario Auditor General Report cited industry standards and Ontario’s asset base of school buildings to recommend **allocating \$1.4-billion/year to school boards for school repairs**, simply to keep Ontario schools in a state of good repair. However, she **identified a \$14-billion repair backlog in Ontario’s schools**, indicating that Ontario’s schools were clearly not in a state of good repair.

June 2016: Liberal Education Minister Mitzi Hunter announced \$1.1-billion of new money over two years for school repairs, effectively increasing annual funding for school repairs to the recommended \$1.4-billion per year that Ontario’s Auditor-General recommended.

August 2016: Ministry of Education releases disrepair data on all schools in Ontario, increasing transparency into the issue of school conditions and confirming **\$15-billion capital repair backlog** in Ontario’s publicly funded schools, impacting **every single one of our province’s 72 school boards**.

Education Funding: What is needed going forward?

- Ongoing commitment of at least \$1.4-billion per year for school repairs.
- Ongoing transparency about disrepair in Ontario’s schools via an annual release of disrepair data on all schools in Ontario as well as an analysis of the overall repair backlog figure.
- Debt instruments to secure the capital investment required to quickly address the \$15-billion of disrepair in Ontario’s schools, which accumulated over decades and will not realistically be addressed via annual funding or new school builds. These debt instruments



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should be used to drastically reduce the repair backlog in Ontario's schools via a combination of repairs and new school builds.

- Guidelines for the desired conditions at which schools should be maintained, and a plan for how to reach those goals.
- Guidelines for the actual learning and working conditions of children and adults who spend their days in Ontario school buildings, and a plan for how to reach those goals. Issues for consideration in these guidelines would include but not be limited to: acceptable temperature range of classrooms; acceptable air quality of classrooms; acceptable amount of natural light.
- A proportionate distribution of the capital costs of maintaining school assets with the municipalities, various provincial ministries and various federal ministries, which also use these school assets.
- An approach to selling schools that recognizes the importance of local schools as community hubs and focuses on the needs of students, families and communities rather than efficient use of assets at all costs.
- A structure where power over education funding and policies; and accountability for delivering public education reside in the same place; making "passing the buck" an exception instead of the rule.
- A structure where accountability for the delivery of public education reflects the reality and experience of real students and teachers.
- A review of the funding formula and the benchmark costs, which inform most grants in the funding formula.

Excerpts from Rozanski Report, 2002: Guiding principles - still relevant in 2016/17

I believe that the process for funding public education in Ontario should be guided by the following interrelated and interdependent principles:

- Adequacy
- Affordability
- Equity
- Stability
- Flexibility
- Accountability



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Adequacy. The goals of high program quality, high levels of student achievement, and continuous improvement in both will not be met, in my opinion, without a concomitantly high level of public investment. While financial support is not the only kind of support needed, it is important that it be adequate to the objectives school boards, teachers, and students are being asked to achieve.

Affordability. I tend to agree with those who say we cannot afford not to provide adequate funding to meet our goals for public education. Our children deserve no less; our economic future requires no less. But education is only one public priority, and taxpayers' pockets are not bottomless. The Province and the education community must engage in a continuous dialogue and a continuous process of assessing need, determining the appropriate level of funding to meet that need, then assessing results, including levels of student achievement, and reassessing need and the appropriate level of funding.

Equity. Equity means fairness. All Ontario students deserve equitable access to education and to the financial resources necessary for a high-quality education. Equity is not equality. Equality is not always equitable. One size does not fit all.

Stability. To plan for continuous improvement, boards and schools need to be able to count on a stable and predictable education funding system. When boards and schools are issued a new or an expanded mandate, they need assurances that they will also be given time to build the capacity to implement the change and resources that are adequate to meet the new demands.

Flexibility. Ontario is a vast and diverse province, and the needs of students in one board's jurisdiction are not necessarily the needs of those in another board. The funding system should be both flexible and adaptable to allow boards and their schools a certain amount of discretion in assessing their local needs and spending part of their funding allocation to address those local needs.

Accountability. In the context of Ontario's publicly funded education system, reciprocal accountability means that every demand by the public and the Province for improved performance involves a responsibility to provide appropriate resources to meet the demand, and that every investment accepted requires school boards, principals, teachers, and other staff to demonstrate accountability for using those resources efficiently and effectively for the purpose intended.