

Fix Our Schools

Ontario Election 2018

**CAMPAIGN INFORMATION
FOR MPP CANDIDATES**



FixOurSchools.ca



**CAMPAIGN FOR
PUBLIC EDUCATION.ca**

Message to MPP candidates

Please sign the Fix Our Schools Pledge

Dear MPP candidate,

The **Fix Our Schools** campaign calls on you to commit to the **standards** and **funding** needed to ensure that all of Ontario's publicly funded schools are safe, healthy, well-maintained buildings that provide environments conducive to learning and working.

Across Ontario, schools are in a state of serious disrepair. In fact, twenty years of gross and chronic underfunding by the provincial government has allowed \$15.9 billion of disrepair to accumulate in Ontario's schools.

Disrepair takes many forms, including: cold classrooms; hot classrooms; leaky roofs and ceilings; mold; vermin; broken washroom fixtures and stall doors; walls that are so overdue for fresh paint they can no longer be cleaned; broken railings, windows and doors—and the list goes on.

Ontario voters know the importance of education to our economy. The 2-million students who attend publicly funded schools in Ontario need better school conditions—as do those who attend childcare/early learning programs in these same schools and the adults who work every day in these buildings.

I,

candidate for the riding:

Pledge to the People of Ontario that I Will:

- 1 Support the development of an Ontario-wide **“State of Good Repair Standard”** for all publicly funded schools so that these public assets are safe, healthy, well-maintained buildings that provide environments conducive to learning and working;
- 2 Support the provision of adequate, stable funding needed to ensure that by 2022 all Ontario schools meet this **“State of Good Repair Standard”**.

Please sign, then scan and send to info@fixourschools.ca

Signature Date



 **FixOurSchools.ca** 

We ask you to sign the Fix Our Schools Pledge today.

**Find the separate pledge form included
with this information kit.**

CAMPAIGN BACKGROUNDER

1 About the campaign

Across Ontario, publicly funded schools are in a state of serious disrepair. In fact, gross and chronic underfunding by the provincial government has allowed \$15.9 billion of disrepair to accumulate in Ontario's schools.

The **Fix Our Schools** campaign is organizing now to put the disrepair in Ontario's schools front and center in the June 2018 provincial election. Members of the campaign are visiting candidates to urge them to sign the **Fix Our Schools Pledge**.

In the 20 years since our provincial government took over education funding in Ontario, the important public assets we call schools have been allowed to deteriorate:

- Roofs and ceilings routinely leak
- Mold issues, vermin, asbestos concerns and poor water quality are not uncommon
- Classrooms can be over 35 degrees in spring and fall
- Classrooms can be as cold as 12 degrees in winter months
- Bathrooms can often be missing stall doors or are so old they are impossible to keep clean...and the list goes on.

The 2 million students who attend publicly funded schools in Ontario need better school conditions—as do those who attend childcare/early learning and adult programs in these same schools. Not to mention the adults who work every day in these buildings.

Ontario schools ought to be safe, healthy and well maintained!

Visit the campaign website fixourschools.ca to find out more about the issue and stay up to date with the campaign.



2 The problem: School disrepair

Ontario's publicly funded schools are in a state of serious disrepair. Our provincial government has acknowledged and documented the extent of this disrepair, **confirming that there is a \$15.9 billion repair backlog in Ontario's schools as of Fall 2017!**

Studies show that school conditions matter. They impact student learning and achievement, attendance and health. Poor and dangerous school conditions send a strong message about the value society places on education. Studies also show that repairs are only going to get more expensive and school conditions are only going to worsen unless our provincial government starts to truly prioritize and fund schools as critical public infrastructure.



3 The cause of the problem: Underfunding

Twenty years ago, the provincial government took over responsibility for funding education. By 2003, \$5.6 billion of disrepair had accumulated in Ontario's schools and in the 15 years since, disrepair in Ontario's schools has been allowed to triple to \$15.9 billion.

In 2015, Ontario's Auditor-General confirmed that provincial funding for school repairs was grossly inadequate—in some years, only **one-tenth** or less of what it ought to have been, according to industry standards.

Where does the money come from to fix Ontario's schools?

Ontario's provincial government took responsibility for providing all funding for public education in 1998. The streams of provincial funding that go towards ensuring Ontario's schools are safe, healthy, well-maintained buildings that provide environments conducive to learning and working are different than those that go towards ensuring quality education happens inside our schools and include:

- School Condition Improvement (SCI) funding for addressing identified repair backlog items
- School Renewal Allocation (SRA) funding for repairing and renovating schools
- Operations and maintenance funding for day-to-day repairs, maintenance and operations
- Capital funding for building new schools and additions

4 Campaign goals

Economist Hugh Mackenzie has examined the current provincial education approach to funding and outlined precisely what our provincial government must do to truly fix Ontario's schools and address the \$15.9 billion repair backlog:

- Increase annual funding for school renewal, capital projects and operational maintenance by \$1.6 billion per year while at the same time maintaining the special \$1 billion per year SCI funding until the \$15.9 billion repair backlog is eliminated.
- Establish measurable **standards for good school conditions**, including not only Facilities Condition Index (FCI) data but also issues such as: water quality, air quality, vermin, mold, asbestos, fire and electrical code, natural light requirements and temperatures of classrooms.



5 Campaign news: The campaign is up and running across Ontario!

The members of the **Fix Our Schools** campaign are parents, students, grandparents, teachers, principals, caretakers and voters. We believe that every publicly funded school in Ontario ought to be a safe, healthy, well-maintained building that provides an environment conducive to learning and working. Our schools must be funded as a key component of our public infrastructure.

Since the campaign launch in October 2014, we have built a large and growing network of people across the province. We believe that there is strength in numbers and power in our grassroots, non-partisan activism.

We are off to a great start. Politicians of all political stripes and from all levels of government are already signing the **Pledge** and following the **Fix Our Schools** campaign with interest.



6 Campaign history: We have already made progress!

APRIL 2014

Frustrated with \$3.3 billion of outstanding repairs in Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools, a group of parents organized the first meeting of what would become the “Fix Our Schools” working group.

OCTOBER 2014

The **Fix Our Schools** campaign officially launched.

APRIL 2015

Fix Our Schools expanded to become a provincial campaign after realizing that disrepair impacted schools in all 72 Ontario school boards.

JUNE 2016

A big win for the **Fix Our Schools** campaign! The Province announced \$1.1 billion of new funding over two years, which brought annual renewal funding to \$1.4 billion per year. Although **Fix Our Schools** was thrilled that this new provincial funding brought annual renewal funding to the level at which it always **ought** to have been, there was no funding solution offered to address the \$15.9 billion of disrepair that was allowed to accumulate in the many years when provincial funding was grossly inadequate.

AUGUST 2016

The provincial government released detailed information about school disrepair in all 72 Ontario school boards. For the first time, every citizen in Ontario could readily see the level of documented disrepair in Ontario’s schools.

APRIL 2017

After continued pressure by **Fix Our Schools**, the provincial government maintained annual funding for school renewal at \$1.4 billion—the amount industry standards suggest is needed to “keep schools in a state of good repair”. However, no new funding was announced in the budget to address the \$15.9 billion repair backlog.

OUR NEXT CHALLENGE

is the 2018 provincial election: The election will be held on or before June 7, 2018. Together we can win a commitment to the **standards and funding** levels required to address the \$15.9 billion repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.

