



## Ford government's ill-conceived plan will not improve literacy, math skills

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Toronto, ON – Yesterday, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) learned about the Ford government's plan to improve literacy and math skills, but it doesn't add up. Put in simplest terms:

### Limiting Teacher Input + Chronic Underfunding ≠ Improved Skills

The band-aid "solutions" put forward by the province on Sunday dismiss teachers' professional judgement and expertise, and will not improve students' literacy and numeracy skills.

"Yesterday, Minister Lecce told us that Ontario has underperforming schools," says ETFO President Karen Brown. "What we actually have are underfunded schools, which is something he and the government refuse to take responsibility for."

The Ford government is trying to obscure the depth of cuts they have made to public education. Because of inadequate funding year after year, school boards are having to deal with deficits to balance their budgets. This is resulting in deep cuts that will impact student success.

When you remove thousands of educators from public schools over time, and then add a few hundred back, you are leaving students across the province without the support they require to develop the skills they need to be successful in school and beyond.

**7,000 job losses in education on Friday + 1,000 new jobs on Sunday  
= 6,000 fewer school staff to support students**

In addition, the province's decision to introduce a new Language curriculum that education stakeholders did not get the opportunity to provide input into proves how little they understand the public education system and how much they undervalue educators. ETFO has not been consulted on any changes to the Language curriculum nor its implementation for September, nor has ETFO seen a draft of the new curriculum. Making critical curricular decisions without genuine and meaningful collaboration and consultation with all stakeholders is irresponsible.

Teachers know what is needed to boost literacy and numeracy skills, but they cannot deliver this with limited access to specialists who support the literacy development of students. Three hundred math specialists will have more of a challenge and will have to contend with the fallout of the introduction of the new Mathematics curriculum during the pandemic in 2020. It was rolled out without effective professional learning for teachers, nor the resources to support student success and curricular understanding. We see a pattern.

As well, introducing a standardized reading screener, while removing supports from students, shows how little the Ford government appreciates the complexities of teaching and learning. Critical school funding does not need to be spent on a screening tool and licenses when teachers are already well-equipped to assess reading ability.

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