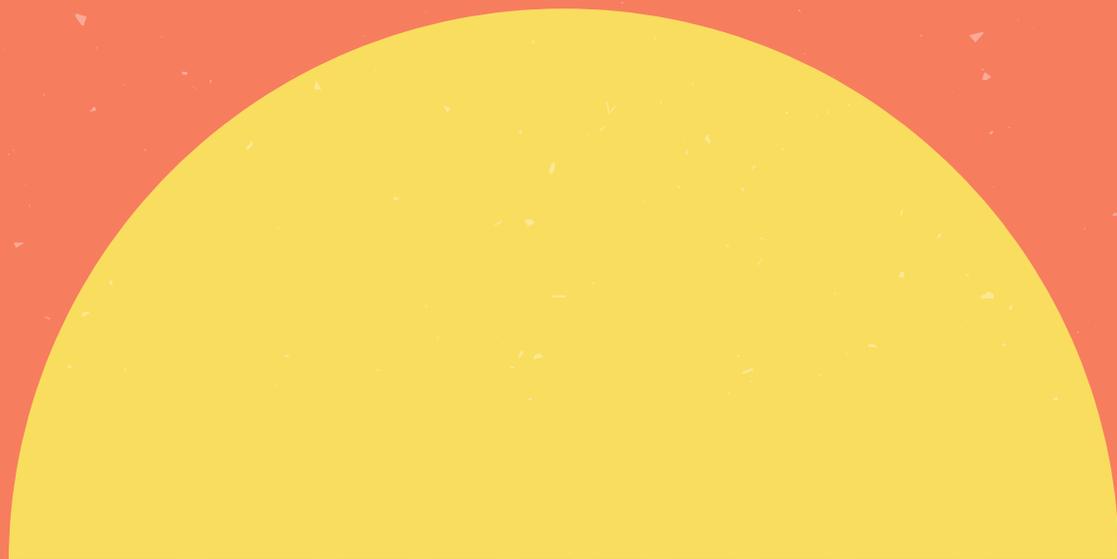


ACTION TOOLKIT



**YOUR GUIDE TO BUILDING POWER
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**School-Based
Outreach How-To**

01

05

**Outreach Talking
Points**

**School Advisory
Council Motion How-To**

09

10

**Template for SAC -
Opposing Cuts Letter to MoE**

**Template for SAC - Solidarity
Letter to Education Workers**

11

12

Petition

West End Parents for Public Education

School Based Outreach: How-To

Why Do school based Outreach?

Many parents and guardians are upset with the changes being announced to public education while others might not know what is being proposed. Many aren't sure how to resist these destructive changes and what they can do. The petition is a concrete step to take, a way to find out more and a way to build community and solidarity across the West End. By gathering signatures, we also gather a way to stay in touch with each other and communicate about further steps such as actions, meetings etc. We want to build strong school communities in Toronto, start organizing your first school outreach today!

Materials Needed

Download	<p>Petition: See attached or contact weppetoronto@gmail.com</p> <p>Outreach talking points: See attached</p> <p>Up to date Flyers: www.weppe.org</p>
Acquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 6-8 Poster Boards · 6-8 Hockey sticks or similar to mount posters · Markers · 4-8 Clipboards (see if your SAC has some you can borrow – the more the better so there are no line ups to sign) · working ballpoint pens · String · Duct or other strong tape · Volunteers – the more the merrier! People have lots of questions and this enables conversations- ask for volunteers on your school FB group, or through school council- or at pick-up time- whatever works! · Consider small table with snacks, drinks to engage in longer conversations

Planning

<p>1. School</p>	<p>Mobilize volunteers from the parent/guardian community or school advisory council to help</p> <p>Select a date that works for your volunteers. Conversations with recognized faces have a big impact and sustain ongoing involvement.</p> <p>Plan for a morning and capture drop off times for daycare if relevant for your school.</p> <p>Notify/Liaise with admin at school that a petition will be happening.</p> <p>Connect with teachers at the school to notify and ask to do a joint event with Education union materials or for teachers to support by sharing our materials and gathering signatures.</p>
<p>2. Resource Prep</p>	<p>Print 6 petitions and 10 petition signing pages (for a school of 400 students).</p> <p>Make posters – homemade posters show that this is a grassroots mobilization and can be tailored to the school context/specific concerns. For example “X school parents and guardians are fighting to protect public education”. Have a poster making party if you like...</p> <p>Set up clipboard with pens attached by string and bring back up pens.</p> <p>Print 30-50 flyers</p>

Day of Petition Logistics

<p>Location</p>	<p>Do a quick huddle with volunteers to review plan, take questions, etc.</p> <p>Have volunteers distributing flyers as parents/guardians approach the school.</p> <p>Closer to the school have volunteers with clipboards and petition.</p> <p>Sidewalk is a good location for both as it gets crowded and slows people down while they read posters (but obviously be aware to ensure you're not in the way of people rushing to make it on time!)</p> <p>Stay together in one area as a bigger group of parents collecting signatures gets more attention.</p> <p>If you have a table, set it up close to the petition signing area.</p>
<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Lots of parents don't know what is going on – give yourselves time to educate and make use of the flyers for those in a rush</p> <p>Openers:</p> <p>“Have you heard about the cuts to education funding?”</p> <p>“Would you be willing to sign a petition in support of fully funded public education?”</p> <p>“Are you concerned about the recent cuts to education funding?”</p> <p>“We're building action to resist these cuts and strengthen our schools.”</p> <p>“Parents are fighting back against recent education cuts, would you be willing to sign our petition/get involved?”</p> <p>“We're collecting signatures to fight back against the recent education cuts”</p> <p>Talking points (if people want to know more about the issues):</p> <p>The government ran on a platform promising better services for the people of Ontario. Instead, they are making major cuts to service we need most - including education. This is not what people voted for.</p>

	<p>As parents/guardians we know education was already underfunded - schools are falling apart, classes are too big, kids with special needs don't have adequate support. We don't accept the idea that we have to balance the budget at the expense of young people - education cuts need to be off the table. We need more money for education, not less.</p> <p>The government is vulnerable to pressure and we can make a difference - the parents of children on the autism spectrum who have pushed back against the cuts are showing us that we can fight back.</p> <p>In the past, governments have tried to divide parents and teachers. We know that we are all on the same side - teachers' working conditions are our children's' learning conditions. We plan to support teachers on the front lines of the fight against the cuts.</p>
Signing	<p>Confirm legibility of their email address.</p> <p>If they don't add email to sign up for WEPPE emails explain what further emails would be about – for example to find out about the forums, actions, rallies, etc.</p>
Follow Up	<p>Talk up the next event parents can get involved with – meeting or rally- while you interact with parents</p> <p>Thank volunteers by email after and ask for input about what worked and didn't.</p> <p>Send petition sheets back to WEPPE for central collection. We will add contact information for those that indicated they were agreeable to our email list and connect you with your own specific school parents and guardians.</p>

West End Parents for Public Education

Outreach Talking Points and FAQ

Who we are: local parents, many with kids in the school or arriving soon.

We have been following the news about education and are concerned about cuts to our already strained public system. We want to organize as parents to demand better schools in Ontario. Our goal is to build strong school communities.

What's actually going on?

First, we as parents already know. Classes are too big, schools are falling apart and kids who need the most support aren't getting it. We need smaller classes, more inclusive curriculum and investments in our schools.

Now, once again, education is being cut to balance the budget on the backs of Ontario's young people.

What has been announced:

Their messaging is constantly changing and they are not being honest about their intentions. It looks like they are hoping we are too confused to argue.

Here is what we do know:

- The loss of thousands of teachers, education assistants and support staff
- Crowded classes where kids receive far less one-on-one attention, and where teachers have less time to get to know and support each student
- Loss of grants and programs that support the most vulnerable students
- Fewer resources for students with special needs
- Threat to Full day Kindergarten program with both OCT and ECE
- Mandatory online learning courses for high school students that will further teacher losses and limit diverse course choices.

Analysts are predicting approximately 250 million in cuts per year over four years, to a total of 1 Billion dollars cut. This means 10,000 less teachers and other educators working with students across the province. At the end of 4 years. We already lost \$100 million when they cancelled cap and trade, and we've seen major cuts to funding for children with autism. And this is just year 1 of 4 so this is only the beginning if we don't stand up.

Threats were made to full day kindergarten, caps on elementary school and parents pushed back. So now they backed off somewhat, and are making high school classes even bigger instead. They are paying attention, but hoping to divide us as parents.

They keep talking about consulting parents, but we don't know any parents that would choose larger classes, less funding for kids with special needs and fewer resources for an already underfunded system.

Our plan

We are going to organize as parents and demand better for our kids. We are encouraging parents to build strong communities at each school to fight back. By using our toolkit and other school specific ideas, we are talking to every parent we know, signing petitions, calling MPPs, holding meetings, rallies, creative actions to show the government that education needs more money, not less. We are getting organized so we can act collectively and as powerfully as possible.

We will stand with education workers in their negotiations this summer. Issues such as class size, adequate staffing for full day kindergarten and supports for students with special needs are priorities in collective bargaining for teachers, and other education workers.

Responding to Questions:

We have a deficit crisis.

How can we afford to put more money into public schools?

The Ontario government has exaggerated the deficit to legitimize cuts. The problems we do have are **a matter of insufficient revenue, not overspending**. The Ontario government and municipalities are not collecting enough taxes to pay for the quality public services we depend on, such as health care and education. Of all the provinces, Ontario collects the second lowest revenue per capita and Ontario spends less per capita than every province but British Columbia. The Ford government has further cut the province's revenue base: cancelling the cap and trade program means \$3 billion less in revenues that could be used to pay for public services and infrastructure. They have also cut corporate taxes and a planned tax increase on Ontario's highest income earners, which together will cost \$2.1 billion in 2018-2019 and and \$3.7 billion annually in lost revenue.

For more information:

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. [The State of Ontario Finances: Cutting through the fog ahead of the 2019 budget.](http://www.policyalternatives.ca) www.policyalternatives.ca

The public system wastes resources.

Shouldn't schools be forced to find efficiencies?

Like all taxpayers, we want to see our money spent wisely. Our schools have still not recovered from the cuts made by the previous Conservative government in the 90's. We know many of our school buildings are crumbling. In particular, funding for special education, English Language Learners, and students at-risk has also suffered. Maintaining our world class education system requires ongoing investment. Ontario schools currently have more than a \$15.9 billion backlog in repairs alone. We see first hand that despite growing need, students have inadequate access to mental health supports, including access to guidance counsellors, social workers, and psychologists. At the elementary level, schools have fewer librarians and teachers specialized in music, art and physical education. Cutting \$1 billion more from public schools will have very serious impacts on the quality of our students' education. Kids today deserve the same quality education and clean, safe learning environments that served previous generations

For more information:

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario. [Understanding the Education Funding Formula. www.buildingbetterschools.ca](http://www.buildingbetterschools.ca)

People for Education. [2018 Annual report on schools: The new basics for public education. peopleforeducation.ca](http://peopleforeducation.ca)

But the government says changes will give us more choice in education, isn't that a good thing?

Fortunately in Ontario, we actually have a huge amount of choice in education. In Toronto alone, we have a wide range of programming including alternative schools, Specialized High Skills Majors in secondary schools, the International Baccalaureate program, Advanced Placement programs, and specialized schools for Arts, Sciences, Athletics and so on. Sadly the provincial government is using 'choice' as a code word for privatization.

I don't have kids in public school system.

Why should my tax dollars go to funding public schools?

Public education can raise lifetime earnings, lower crime, improve health and boost civic engagement (like voting or discussing politics). As a society we've seen the positive contributions that public education makes to community health. Our values determine the things that are important for the benefit of society as a whole, even if they are services we might not use directly. Additionally, a strong education system pays for itself. Students who've gotten a good education are much more likely to be able to contribute to the economy as adults.

Quick Backgrounder

This government ran on the platform 'For The People'. However, by targeting public education to balance the budget, they have shown us that young people are not included in the 'people' for whom this government claims to be working. Since July 2018 this government has:

- Cancelled \$100 million in funding allocated for school repairs due to cap and trade decision
- Cancelled the curriculum writing sessions to incorporate Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into school curriculum
- Removed the 2015 Health & Physical Education curriculum from kindergarten to Grade 8, reverting to the 2010 version
 - Launched a web-based "snitch line" for parents to report on teachers they suspect are not following the outdated curriculum
- Cut Education Programs by \$25 million (EPO); programs for at-risk youth, including Indigenous and racialized students, eliminated
- Announced possible removal of class size caps for Kindergarten and primary grades as well as the possibility that full-day Kindergarten (FDK) could be discontinued
- Announced new autism plan that underfunds children: it eliminates the waitlist for services while drastically reducing funding for each child. Families and children are not getting what they need.
- Announced hiring freeze and significant class size increases from Grades 4 to 12 claiming large class sizes will help build resilience in students

West End Parents for Public Education

HOW TO: Bringing motions Opposing Education Cuts and Supporting Education Workers to your SAC

Every school has a School Advisory Council (SAC). SACS are a great way to connect with other parents and to have strong parent voices in the school system opposing education cuts. SACS also have an official role in the provincial school system, so it is powerful to use this role to object to provincial education cuts.

1/ WEPPE has prepared two motions that can be passed by SACS. One motion is directed at the provincial government, the other is expressing solidarity with educators and support staff. SAC template letters can be revised to reflect any specific issues that may be relevant to the parent body at your school. Make them your own!

2/Any parent is welcome to attend SAC meetings. Any parent can raise an issue or motion to discuss and vote on at SAC meetings. Depending on the council by-laws at your school there may be different processes around raising and voting on issues.

3/Connect with your SAC chair or executive to put education cuts and motions on your next meeting agenda.

4/Bring information and flyers about education cuts along with the motions to your SAC meeting.

5/ If your SAC passes the motions make sure all school staff receive a copy of the motions via email and/or staff mailbox. Spread the word through the parent body, via word of mouth, the school newsletter, or posting on school bulletin boards. Many parents aren't involved in SACS but it is important parents in the larger parent body hear about the motions.

6/Mail and email minister of education motion against education cut and CC list on SAC motion template. Doug Ford - doug.ford@pc.ola.org

- Lisa Thompson - lisa.thompson@pc.ola.org

- Sam Oosterhoff - sam.oosterhoffco@pc.ola.org

: Dr. John Malloy, Director of Ed., Toronto District School Board- director'soffice@tdsb.on.ca

Trustee Robin Pilkey, Chair, Toronto District School Board - robin.pilkey@tdsb.on.ca

Marit Stiles MPP, Critic, Education- MStiles-QP@ndp.on.ca

Isabel Teotonio, Education Reporter, Toronto Star- iteotonio@thestar.ca

Ward 9 Trustee- Stephanie Donaldson- Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca

West End Parents for Public Education - Weppetoronto@gmail.com

7/Don't forget to tell us! To date 7 schools have passed motions against education cuts and curriculum changes and supporting staff. We want to track that growing list!

School Address

DATE

VIA EMAIL AND MAIL

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Mowat Block, 22nd Floor
900 Bay St., Toronto, ON, M7A 1L2
lisa.thompsonco@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister,

We, the **school name** School Advisory Council, are writing to express our concern regarding the changes to public education being proposed by your government. You have spoken often about the need for a Parents' Bill of Rights in Ontario's public education system, but we also believe that we, the parents and politicians, have collective *responsibilities* to our public education system. As a School Council, our purpose is:

through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (1)." Education Act
Ontario Regulation 612/00

Your government ran on the platform 'For The People'. However, by targeting public education to balance the budget, you have shown us that young people are not included in the 'people' for whom your government claims to be working.

High-quality, fully-funded and equitable public education is what we demand because it is what our kids deserve. Specifically, we want:

- A fully-funded public education system that includes low class caps, excellent needs-support, no mandatory e-learning, and well-maintained buildings.
- Funding that provides equitable enrichment opportunities across the system and reduces the burden on school-based fundraising.
- An inclusive curriculum and respect for the diversity of our students and educators.

The systems we need require more, not less, funding. We will press your government on these issues as part of our responsibility to hold the education system accountable. We will join voices with neighbouring schools to build strong support for the excellent education all students in Ontario need.

Sincerely,

, on behalf of the X School Council

CC: Dr. John Malloy, Director of Education, Toronto District School Board
Trustee Robin Pilkey, Chair, Toronto District School Board
Marit Stiles MPP, Critic, Education | Member, Standing Committee on Government Agencies
Isabel Teotonio, Education Reporter, Toronto Star
Caroline Alphonso, Education Reporter, The Globe and Mail

School Address

DATE
VIA EMAIL AND MAIL

Dear **school name** staff,

We, the **school name** School Advisory Council, are writing to express our solidarity with education workers at our school, and across the province. First, we want to acknowledge your hard work, teaching and caring for each of our children everyday. Thank you!

As parents, we are deeply concerned and angered about the recently announced provincial education cuts. We understand how seriously our children will be impacted by these cuts; from our youngest children entering kindergarten to our oldest children in high schools. We also know that working conditions for teachers and support staff will be greatly eroded by these cuts and that some educators and school support staff face losing their jobs.

As education workers prepare to enter contract negotiations in August 2019, we expect the Ford government will attempt to turn parents against teachers. We won't allow it. We believe our educators and support staff should be treated with respect. Your working conditions are our children's learning conditions. In the case of labour actions, parents will support educators and school support staff.

As parents we support High-quality, fully-funded and equitable public education, including:

- Low class caps, excellent needs-support, no mandatory e-learning, and well-maintained buildings.
- Funding that provides equitable enrichment opportunities across the system and reduces the burden on school-based fundraising.
- An inclusive curriculum and respect for the diversity of our students and educators.

As parents, we know our schools need more funding, not less. United we can effectively fight for the fully funded and equitable public education system all children deserve.

Sincerely,

on behalf of the X School Council
CC to Dr. John Malloy, Director of Education, Toronto District School Board
Trustee Robin Pilkey, Chair, Toronto District School Board
Marit Stiles MPP, Critic, Education | Member, Standing Committee on Government Agencies
West End Parents for Public Education- weppetoronto@gmail.com

