

MEDIA RELEASE

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Educators Disappointed School Board is Favouring Surplus over Services

Hastings Prince Edward District School Board Trustees will be meeting to review and approve the proposed operating budget for the 2018-19 school year. The proposed cuts will have a negative impact on the services and programming that are available to students in both elementary and secondary schools.

While the senior administration is citing a directive by the Ministry of Education to deliver balanced budgets and establish a \$4 million surplus by the end of the 2018-19 school year, it appears that again the board will rely on budget lines that directly impact student success as a source of revenue and savings.

"Cutting staffing, school budgets, and other front-line services will absolutely have the greatest impact on student outcomes. We have seen the negative impact that cuts to school budgets have had this year, and it is a great disappointment to see the board continue to look for savings in areas that affect student outcomes the most," said Scott Marshall, President of the local OSSTF District 29 high school teachers' union.

"For the last 6 years, the board has chosen to cut front line staff as it struggles to achieve balanced budgets," said Laura Walton, President of CUPE Local 1022, the union which represents education workers such as custodians, secretaries, EAs and ECEs. "These cuts are focused on front line, we just aren't seeing the same cuts in other areas. Our members are proud of the work that they do ensuring the safety and success of all students. We work side by side with our teaching colleagues to ensure this success. The continuous cuts have created pressures where we are unable to provide the service levels that we aim to provide. With the latest proposal, which sees the reduction in 24 staff (including almost 14 EA positions) we are concerned with how the work will be accomplished and how safety will be maintained."

"Elementary teachers are concerned about the negative impact which cuts to front-line services have on our classrooms and students," said Local ETFO President Dave Henderson. "We are seeing a huge spike in the number of violent incidents which teachers and students experience on a daily basis. In a survey earlier this year, 90% of our members responded that violence was a growing problem both in terms of frequency and intensity. At the same time, members reported that they rarely or never have access to many front-line support services. The connection between these is obvious, yet the Board chooses not to spend money allocated to special education and guidance counsellors in ways which would support the classroom."

The unions representing the teachers and education workers have repeatedly reached out to Trustees with concerns ranging from violence in the classroom, morale, and service levels, with little to no feedback as to how the Trustees plan to ensure these ongoing concerns are recognized while continuing to be fiscally responsible.



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