

WANTED: A RENEWED VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

People for Education Annual Report
on Ontario's Public Schools 2009



THE
ANNUAL
REPORT ON
ONTARIO'S
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS
2009

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DATA FROM THE SURVEY

If specific research data from the survey is required, it can be provided for a fee. Elementary school data has been collected since 1997, and secondary school data has been collected since 2000. Please contact info@peopleforeducation.com.

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People for Education is a registered charity working to support public education in Ontario’s English, French and Catholic schools.

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HIGHLIGHTS: QUICK FACTS

DECLINING ENROLMENT

- 34 of Ontario's 72 school boards now have fewer than 12,000 students.¹
- 146 schools are closing or recommended to close.

CLASS SIZE

- 98% of Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes have 25 students or fewer, an improvement from 89% in 2005.
- 78% of elementary schools report they have split-grade classes, an increase from 74% last year.

FUNDRAISING, FEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- The percentage of elementary schools raising more than \$20,000 per year has more than doubled since 2001.
- 63% of secondary schools charge fees for labs and course materials.
- There are over 100,000 volunteers working in Ontario's schools.
- Overall, Ontario schools and parents raised \$595 Million in 2007/8 through things like fundraising, fees, vending machines, and corporate and charitable donations.

THE SCHOOL OFFICE

- 51% of elementary school principals have five years experience or less.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Approximately 15% of students require some form of special education support. Funding for Special Education assumes a rate closer to 12%.
- Since 2003, there has been a 29% decline in the total number of elementary and secondary students on waiting lists for special education services or support.

LIBRARIES, READING AND LITERACY

- 49% of Grade 6 students say they "like to read."²
- Only 55% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian, most of them part-time, compared to 80% in 1998.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 7% of schools with Grades 7&8 have a Design and Technology teacher, compared to 22% in 1998.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

- Some urban/suburban schools report that over 90% of their students require ESL support.
- Elementary schools with ten or more ESL students, 22% have no ESL teacher, an increase from 14% in 2000.

THE ARTS

- 46% of elementary schools have a Music teacher, compared to 58% in 1998.
- 54% of secondary schools charge fees for art classes and 23% charge fees for music classes.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 40% of elementary schools have a health and physical education teacher.
- Athletic fees in secondary school cost from \$0 to \$500.
- 36% of secondary schools charge fees for physical education.

EDUCATING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

There is a tidal wave of change approaching Ontario's publicly-funded education system.

Enrolment is declining at an unprecedented rate, the population of our schools is increasingly diverse, business and community leaders say we require more innovators and creative thinkers, and advances in technology are laying the groundwork for fundamental change in nearly everything we do.

At the same time, policy-makers, community and business leaders and academics are discovering the possibilities inherent in recognizing the interconnectedness of our social structures: Education is the number one determinant of health; housing and mobility affect educational success; poverty is the number one predictor of risk in education; education is the one sure route out of poverty; mental health is linked to youth disengagement; and physical health is linked to academic success.

The state of our environment, our economy, our health care system, our education system, and our ability to undertake effective planning are all linked to one another. In a world where information is accessible in seconds and where it is not just the economy that is global, it is time to ask some fundamental questions about the way we "do" education.

Our educational model has looked pretty well the same for the last 160 years. If anything, over the last few decades, the model has become more, rather than less, restricted.

It's time public education caught up to the reality of the 21st century.

For too long Ontario has been operating without a vision for education that is truly forward-thinking.

Our current provincial goals for education consist of targets for provincial test scores in reading, writing and math, a targeted graduation rate, a reduction in the achievement gap between low-performing and high-performing students and increased public confidence in education. Shouldn't there be more to it than that?

This report identifies some possibilities for higher aspirations for our education system: Schools as centres of strong, inclusive communities; policy and services that recognize the integrated nature of learning and success; creativity fostered as the driving factor for innovation; libraries in schools as hubs of learning and curricular cooperation; and education as an incubator for environmental, social and economic breakthroughs.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education will review Ontario's Education Funding Formula. In this report, we identify some of the over-riding policy decisions that must be made before we reduce the conversation to a matter of dollars.

These are challenging times, but they are also times filled with opportunity.

Strong schools linked to strong communities have the potential to be centres of change, innovation and equity. By working together and by demanding vision from our leaders, we can make that happen.

DECLINING ENROLMENT

“effectively addressing declining enrolment today... [is] an investment that will enhance [students’] opportunities and help them contribute to the social health and economic development of the province.”

Declining Enrolment Working Group³

Ontario will have 140,000 fewer students in 2012 than it had in 2002.⁴

Enrolment decline is a phenomenon across the country, the result of a decline in the birth rate.⁵ Even our substantial immigration rate does not offset the general aging of our population; proportionally, we have more seniors and fewer young people.

Some have suggested that enrolment in private school is one of the causes of enrolment decline in publicly-funded schools. But a report from the Ministry of Education’s Declining Working Group shows that the proportion of students in private school (5.7%) has increased very little in the last few years.⁶

DECLINING ENROLMENT AFFECTS PROGRAMS

Boards and schools receive much of their funding based on numbers of students. But the per pupil amounts in the provincial funding formula were developed in 1997 and have changed little since, despite dramatic decreases in average school enrolments.

As a result, declining enrolment can mean reductions in the number and variety of programs schools can offer, an increase in the number of multi-grade classes, and a reduction in specialized teaching staff.

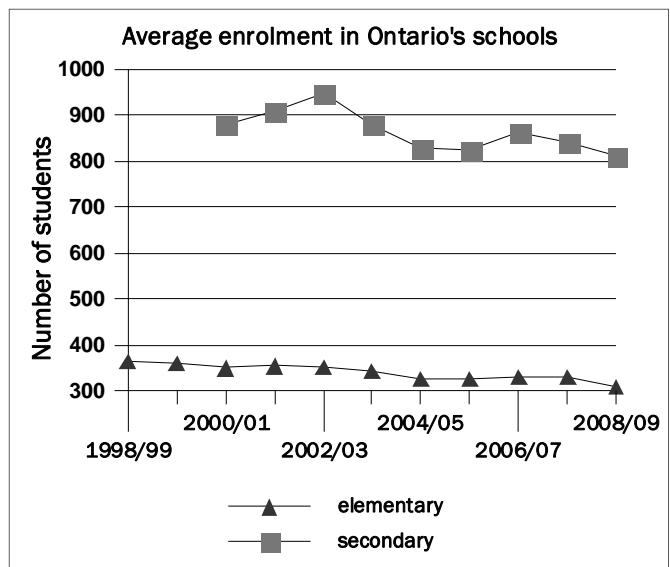
SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Closing schools is often the only solution open to boards faced with declining enrolment. In 2008, 16 schools closed. There are currently and additional 146 schools either closing or recommended to close across the province. A total of 40 new schools will be built to replace them.

Over 150,000 Ontario students attend schools that are either closing or threatened with closing.

QUICK FACTS

- 34 of Ontario’s 72 school boards now have fewer than 12,000 students.⁷
- The average elementary school now has 310 students, compared to an average of 365 in 1997/98.
- There are 812 students in an average secondary school, compared to a high of 947 students per school in 2002/03.
- 16 schools closed in 2008, and a further 146 are slated or recommended to close.
- 145 additional schools are undergoing accommodation reviews for possible closure.



The Declining Enrolment Working Group, appointed by the Ministry of Education, made a number of recommendations that focused on the need for both long-term, coordinated planning, and support for integration and partnerships. The recommendations, if implemented could save some schools from closing, and will provide direction for the Ministry of Education and other ministries when the provincial Education Funding Formula is reviewed in 2010.

SCHOOL SIZE

Average school sizes vary across the province, with Northern schools being among the smallest.

There has been a tendency to assume that fewer, larger schools are more economical and are able to provide a better education. The argument goes that in a larger secondary school there can be more course choices, and in a larger elementary school, more possibility of specialty programs like music, health and physical education.

But is there an optimal school size?

Extensive international research shows that students seem to be more successful in smaller high schools. The graduation rates are higher, students are more engaged and more likely to participate in activities, even though smaller high schools have fewer activities.⁸

Research also shows that students in disadvantaged communities are significantly more successful in both smaller elementary and secondary schools. The optimal size appears to be under 400 students in elementary schools and between 600 and 900 in secondary.⁹

WHAT SCHOOLS TOLD US...

As a small school with declining enrolment, it is difficult to maintain staffing to offer the course selection students need. The Ministry should provide extra staffing to small secondary schools particularly in rural areas like ours.

Secondary School Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB

It is extremely difficult to be a school with declining enrolment in the North. The MOE provides less funding as enrolment declines but we have to teach complete curriculums. We can't teach half a science lab because our budget has been reduced or rent half a bus at a cheaper rate to save money. Being in the biggest geographical board we still have the greatest distances to travel with less money. The unique challenges of the North are forgotten.

Secondary School, Superior-Greenstone DSB

School closure is a topic that upsets parents and community members. Our enrolment is down this year which makes everyone nervous. Our parent group is fundraising to build a reading garden at the front of the school; they hope that the school will be here for a long time to come. Being on the school closure horizon creates its own problems. Moving ahead is hindered by 'what if'. Smaller rural schools need stability to improve. Provincial funding needs to address the stability issue so that there is security and trust.

Elementary School, Thames Valley DSB

NEXT STEPS

In 2010, the Ministry of Education, will review Ontario's Education Funding Formula. Declining enrolment provides an opportunity to "re-think" the use of school buildings.

People for Education recommends:

before the review of funding, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with ministries such as Children and Youth Services, Health, Health Promotion and Municipal Affairs examine research on optimal school size; investigate the impact of a community hub model on things like overall health promotion, neighbourhood viability, youth violence and poverty reduction; and develop policy and funding to support and promote integrated planning and schools as community hubs.

CLASS SIZES AND SPLIT GRADES

"Class size reduction...is not a magic bullet" The Canadian Education Association⁴⁰

Parents and teachers love small class sizes. But class size and its effects have also been the subject of extensive debate.

THE CLASS SIZE DEBATE

The Canadian Education Association (CEA) conducted a review of research on class sizes and found there was disagreement among academics about whether and how class size reduction works. But overall the research did show that reducing class sizes *can* "help to improve student achievement on standardized tests, increase student academic engagement and decrease negative social consequences" *if* the policy has "clear goals, selecting design elements carefully, targeting students most in need of individualized attention and emphasizing promising teaching strategies."¹¹

The review also found that class size was one of many significant factors that should be taken into account when reviewing strategies to improve student success. Others included differences in the quality of teaching and learning, such as student characteristics, leadership practices, teachers' expertise, school resources, and the curriculum.

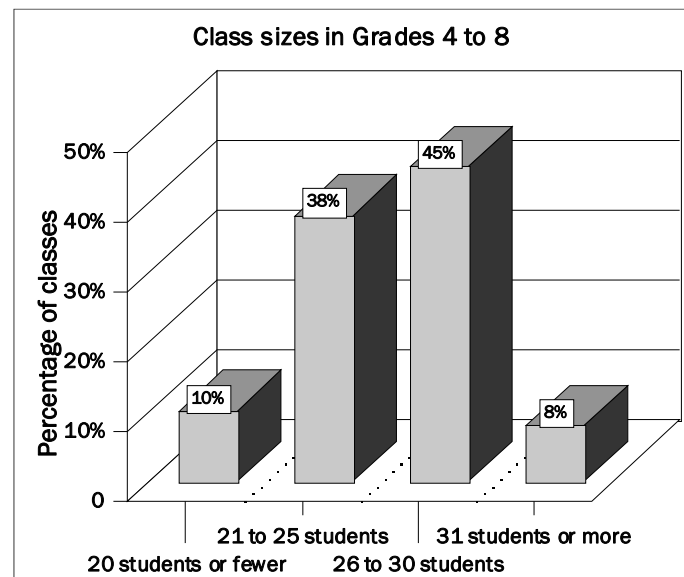
The Canadian Council on Learning has written that smaller class sizes have the greatest benefit in the primary grades, but also cautions that class sizes should be reduced carefully, monitored, and that the cost benefit ratios be determined.¹²

PRIMARY CLASS SIZE CAP

Class sizes have declined substantially over the last 10 years in Ontario. The decline comes as a result of policy to reduce class sizes in primary grades and declining enrolment overall. In 2005, the province introduced a cap on class sizes in the primary grades. The policy states that 90% of a school board's Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes must have no more than 20 students, and the remaining 10% must have no more than 23.

QUICK FACTS

- 98% of Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes have 25 students or fewer, an improvement from 89% in 2004/05.
- 48% of Grades 4 to 8 classes have 25 or fewer students, a slight improvement from 45% in 2004/05.
- 78% of elementary schools report they have split-grade classes, a slight increase from 74% last year, the first year this data was collected.



As of 2008/09, the province has invested over \$1 billion to pay for an additional 5,100 additional primary teachers and capital projects to build or renovate classrooms.

The rapid reduction in primary class size has caused some organizational and space difficulties in some boards, particularly those with growing populations and those with a high number of very small schools.

SPLIT GRADE CLASSES

One of the unintended consequences of hard caps on class size has been an increase in the number of split grades. Three quarters of schools reported they had split grade classes. On average, 30% of classes had two or more grades. But in some boards the percentage is much higher. In an average Northern Ontario elementary school, for example, 55% of the classes are split.

Many have raised concerns about the number of split grades in Ontario, but it is worth remembering that even in straight grades there are a wide range of students. Nevertheless, demands placed on teachers in split level grades can be challenging. One academic study found that “the teaching load is heavier in multi-grade classes” and that “the demanding nature of multi-grade teaching reduces the quality of instruction.”¹³ But other studies have found little difference between the educational outcomes in split-grade classes.

WHAT SCHOOLS TOLD US...

Small class size has made an incredible difference to the learning/behaviour/attitude of our students. We would like to see Junior class size caps in the very near future.

Elementary School, Halton DSB

We have many split grades with a very high number of needs—behavioural and emotional (family issues). This makes our classes very mixed and very challenging

Elementary School, Halton CDSB

NEXT STEPS

The Ministry of Education has committed to reviewing the Learning Opportunities Grant, a grant intended to support students whose socio-economic status puts them at risk of struggling in school. One of the things the grant was originally intended to fund was smaller class sizes for student at risk.

People for Education recommends :

before reviewing the funding formula, the Ministry of Education examine research on class size and socio-economics; the effects of split grades; and the impact of hard caps for class sizes.

FUNDRAISING

Ontario schools raise nearly \$600 million per year.¹⁴

Almost every publicly-funded elementary and secondary school council in the province raises funds for various reasons, ranging from school trips, to team uniforms, to library books, computers, and even upgrades to the school building or grounds.

FUNDRAISING POLICIES

In recent years many school boards have changed their policies to allow fundraising for capital projects and to allow for recognition of corporate and private donors—with signage, naming rights, or in one case, paint colours.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education released a plan to create a “fundraising policy [that] will guarantee school councils control over funds raised and limit fundraising by ensuring education essentials are provided by the system.”¹⁵ Thus far, no such policy has been implemented.

THE DRIVE TO FUNDRAISE

School boards must now report to the province on all fund-raised money and other “school-generated” funds, such as vending machines, school fees, charitable donations and donations from businesses.

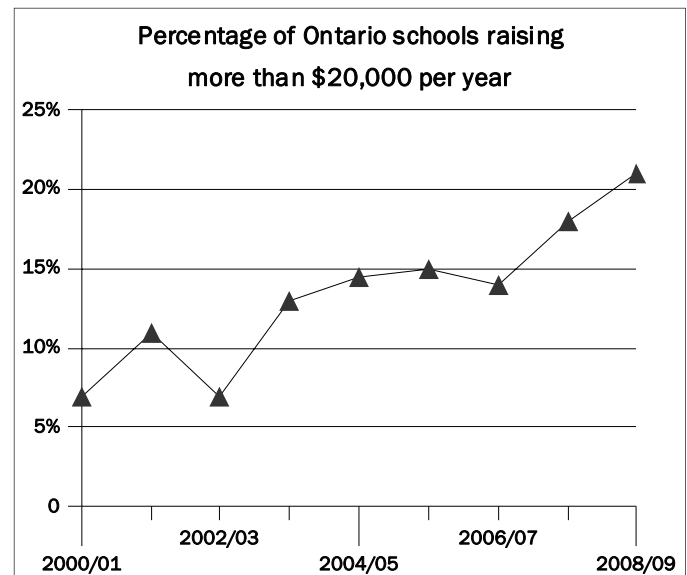
In their 2007/08 audited financial statements, boards reported raising a total of \$595,000,000; virtually the same amount as last year.

Funding that the school itself generates is often used to augment school budgets, to pay for everything from classroom supplies to new science labs.

The amounts parents raise cover an extremely wide range – from \$0 to \$124,000 per school; with the top 10% of fundraising schools raising the same amount as the bottom 72% put together. And the average amount raised per school has increased fairly steadily over the years.

QUICK FACTS

- 87% of Ontario school councils fundraise.
- The percentage of elementary schools raising more than \$20,000 per year has more than doubled since 2000/01.
- 57% of schools raise funds for sports.
- 8% of schools raise funds for renovations or additions to their schools.



Fundraising continues to increase for a number of reasons—some economic, and some attitudinal. In some cases, parents are raising funds for things no longer funded by school boards or the province, such as playground equipment (46% of schools) and musical instruments (35% of schools). In many cases, parents are raising money for arts enrichment (37%) that schools can no longer afford. Boards can no longer respond to parents' expectations by raising taxes to pay for things parents want in their children's schools. This, coupled with a consumerist shift in society, has led parents to assume that if they want it, they have to pay for it themselves.

GROWING INEQUITIES

While fundraising has been common-place in Ontario schools for many decades, the growing amounts raised are cause for concern. Some affluent neighbourhoods have the capacity to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for their public schools; other neighbourhoods, where parents' incomes are lower, raise little if any money.

As a result, some students have access to enriching arts programs, well-stocked libraries and extra classroom supplies, while others—often the students whose families are less likely to be able to afford the extras—go without.

WHAT SCHOOLS TOLD US...

We organize an annual fundraising event where all staff, parents and students participate. This year we raised about \$24,000, but this will not cover all our expenses. So we also are arranging a Bingo in an effort to increase the money we have raised. We are a small school and we want to offer everyone a chance to participate in all the sports teams, committees and activities, but this costs our school a great deal of money. So in addition, we also have an activity fee of \$50 per student which helps to cover the costs of certain activities. *Secondary School, CSDC du Nouvel-Ontario*

It shocked me to realize the materials that school fundraising was purchasing (a/v equipment, gym equipment). In my view this should not be incumbent on the community to provide for, as in essence this leaves economically challenged communities with an inferior school compared to their affluent counterparts. This is wrong and needs to be addressed. *Elementary School, School Council, Dufferin-Peel CDSB*

NEXT STEPS

Fundraising is a reality in schools across the country, and fundraising activities can be an effective method for engaging parents and school communities, but high levels of fundraising lead to inequities among schools.

People for Education recommends:

the Ministry of Education develop provincial fundraising policy that has equity as its foundation, and that includes guidelines for corporate involvement in schools; guarantees for essentials in every school and clarity about private funding for capital projects and naming rights.

THE SCHOOL OFFICE

“The job of school leaders has changed radically as countries transform their education systems to prepare young people for today’s rapid technological change, economic globalisation and increased migration.”

Improving school leadership, OECD¹⁶

In half of Ontario’s schools, principals have five years experience or less.¹⁷

The leadership provided by a school’s principal is fundamental to the “culture” and the success of a school.

Over the years, the role of the principal has expanded substantially. It now includes an ever-increasing amount of managerial and administrative work, active participation in school councils, mandated planning and reporting, increased time supervising students, and accountability for standardized test scores and graduation targets. All of this is in addition to the principal’s academic role as the lead teacher in a school.

VICE-PRINCIPALS AND OTHER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The percentage of elementary schools with vice principals has declined significantly since 1998. Vice-principals perform an array of jobs—from coordinating busing and special education, to overseeing discipline and the school’s Safe Schools strategies. Without them, principals must perform these tasks.

School secretaries and administrative assistants are often the public face of the school. They interact with parents, take care of sick students and manage all of the school’s paperwork. In 1997, 46% of elementary schools had more than one office staff; this year 36% had more than one.

With increased accountability to both the province and to school boards, principals report they have increasing amounts of paperwork, more reports to submit and more mandatory meetings to attend. Administrative assistants, with adequate time, assist with much of this work.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Over the last decade there have been a number of Ontario studies flagging concerns about the role of principals.

A Brock University study found that “principals were faced with a tension between managerial demands versus instructional

QUICK FACTS

- 88% of elementary schools have a full-time principal, a slight decline since last year.
- 97% of secondary schools have a full-time principal.
- 38% of elementary schools have a vice-principal, full- or part-time, a slight decline over the last year and a 30% decline since 1997/98.
- 96% of both elementary schools and secondary schools have in-house custodians. The remaining 4% out-source the custodians.

leadership.” The report found it was difficult for principals to find the time to be equally effective in both areas.¹⁸

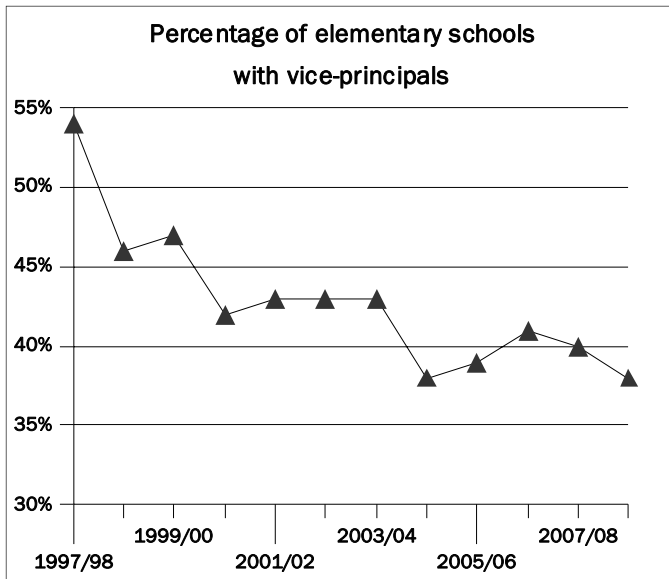
Other reports noted that it was difficult to recruit new principals at least in part because working principals found there was inadequate time to work with students, inadequate in-school staff support, and inadequate time to manage the number of changes to provincial policy and curriculum.¹⁹

The 2007-2008 EQAO principal questionnaire shows that 51% of elementary school principals have five years of experience or less.²⁰ This relative inexperience overall means there are fewer mentors for new principals and principals have less historical knowledge to rely on as they adjust to transforming roles.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

In response to the pressures facing Ontario principals, the Ontario government launched the Ontario Leadership Strategy in 2008.

The goal of the program is to attract the right people to the role of principal and to help principals and vice-principals develop the skills required to be instructional leaders. The strategy includes mentoring for new principals, dissemination of research on effective school leadership practices, a new principal performance appraisal policy, and the inauguration of an Institute for Educational Leadership. The government invested \$4 million to support the mentoring program.



WHAT SCHOOLS TOLD US...

Having only one secretary means that when she goes for lunch the Principal is the only person in the office. (The VP is only here some days). *Elementary School, Peel DSB*

Supervision continues to be a concern. The supervision caps for elementary teachers continue to put a great deal of stress on the entire school, especially administrators. It is prohibiting us from providing adequate supervision. The school is not unsafe, but the amount of supervision done by the administration and non-teachers is putting a great strain on the system. *Elementary School, Rainbow DSB*

This school's enrolment is declining. I have been assigned to this new school and although our enrolment went from 498 with a half-time Vice Principal, it's now 450 with no VP. The special education caseload is huge and I can't manage all the board's, parents', staff's, let alone students' expectations by myself. I feel as though I have to fail before more support is put in place. *Elementary School, York CDSB*

NEXT STEPS

International research shows that it is the school leaders who are responsible for building an effective, inclusive and enthusiastic culture in a school.

People for Education recommends:

working with the Institute for Educational Leadership, principals and school communities, the Ministry of Education clearly define the role of school principal and then ensure that school administrators have adequate support to carry out that role.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn the more places you'll go."

Dr. Seuss, "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!"

Reading attitudes and abilities don't just affect a student's capacity to succeed in school, they have an impact far beyond school life.

Facility with reading affects economic success later in life, it connects readers to their culture and their community, and it is a vital component of civic engagement.²¹

School libraries have an impact on students' reading habits, enjoyment and skill.²²

ACCESS TO LIBRARIES IS UNEVEN AMONG SCHOOLS AND ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Last year, the Ministry of Education began working with the Ontario School Library Association to develop new policy for school libraries. To date, there is no provincial policy to ensure that all students have access to fully-functioning school libraries.

Because funding for librarians is provided on a per pupil basis (funding for one teacher-librarian for every 764 elementary students and every 909 secondary students), smaller schools are much less likely to have teacher-librarians.

In areas with a high number of small schools, such as Northern and Eastern Ontario, less than 20% of elementary schools have any teacher-librarians staffing their school libraries (full- or part-time), compared to Central Ontario and the GTA, where schools are larger and over 80% have teacher-librarians at least part-time.

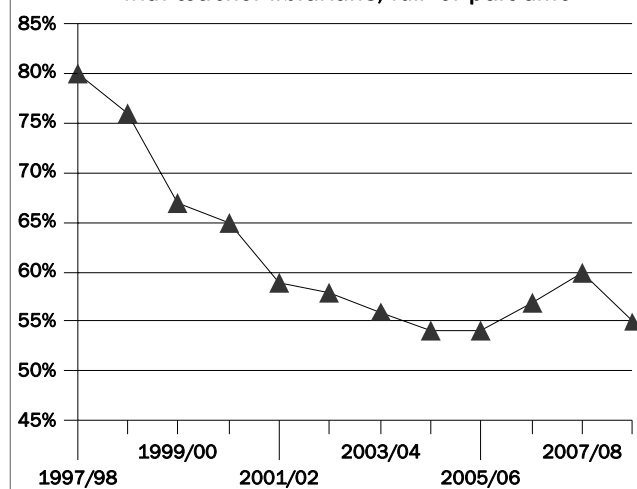
READING ENJOYMENT ON THE DECLINE

According to student surveys administered by the EQAO, the percentage of Grade 3 and Grade 6 students who say they "like to read" has declined fairly steadily since 1998. On 2008 standardized tests, 49% of Grade 6 students said they liked to read, compared to 55% in 2002. On Grade 3 tests, 59% reported they like to read, compared to 68% in 2002.²³

QUICK FACTS

- Results from the EQAO survey of students in Grade 6 show only 49% say they "like to read."²⁴
- Students in schools with teacher-librarians are more likely to report they like to read.²⁵
- Only 55% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian, most of them part-time, compared to 80% in 1997/98.
- Just over half of secondary schools have a full-time teacher-librarian.
- 39% of elementary schools have a library technician.
- Nearly half the school councils in Ontario report parents fundraise for school libraries.

Percentage of elementary schools with teacher-librarians, full- or part-time



Long-term international studies of young people show that reading enjoyment and the diversity of materials students read have a strong and positive effect on results in mathematics, science and reading tests.²⁶

TEACHER-LIBRARIANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A Queen's University/People for Education study has shown that the presence of a teacher-librarian in a school has a direct and positive impact on the percentage of students who report they like to read.²⁷ A more recent study of exemplary school libraries found a potential for libraries to act as learning hubs in schools—where teachers can cooperate across grades and curriculum, and where teacher-librarians can support classroom teachers with information and professional development.²⁸

BOOKS AND MATERIALS FOR LIBRARIES

For the past few years, the province has provided additional funding for acquisitions for school libraries. But publishers have raised concerns that schools without trained library staff are more likely to purchase materials that are heavily marketed or come in sets, and less likely to purchase Canadian books or materials that add to the overall needs of the school.²⁹

WHAT SCHOOLS TOLD US...

...the librarian is often used in the kindergarten classes.

Elementary School, Rainbow DSB

We are extremely lucky to have an extraordinary parent volunteer in our library, but I truly believe we should have teacher librarians to support strong instruction in classrooms.

Elementary School, Board name withheld

We are growing in size and shrinking in staffing. The extra programming (music, phys-ed, library and extra curricular) are taking the hit. We can only deliver so many subjects and extra curricular opportunities well. We've had to filter.

Elementary School, DSB Ontario North East

There is one librarian for 25 schools.

Elementary School, Waterloo Region DSB

NEXT STEPS

True literacy is not just about mastering the *mechanics* of reading and writing. True literacy includes the joy of reading, the ability to understand what is read, and the capacity to make connections through reading and literature. Research over the last three decades shows an inarguable link between libraries and true literacy.

People for Education recommends:

the Ministry of Education develop policy and vision for students that includes supported, functioning school libraries, accessible throughout the school day and staffed by trained teacher-librarians and library staff.

THE ARTS

“...culture provides the social basis that allows for stimulating creativity, innovation, human progress and well-being...[it is] a driving force for human development...[and] a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life.” The United Nations Development Program on Culture³⁰

Culture contributes over \$20 Billion to the Ontario economy.³¹

In Ontario, there is strong and detailed arts curriculum, but there is no funding specifically dedicated to the arts in schools. Students’ access to arts programs depends, for the most part, on the size of their school, the ability of their parents to fund-raise, and, in secondary school, the flexibility of students’ schedules and their capacity to pay fees.

FUNDING FOR THE ARTS

In elementary schools, funding for specialist teachers comes from teacher preparation time. By contract, every teacher must have preparation time during the school day to prepare lessons, contact parents and work with other teachers. During that time, another teacher covers the class. Thus, funding for preparation “time” is actually funding for other teachers.

Over the last five years, contract negotiations have resulted in increases to preparation time. As a result, there is sufficient funding for an average of 2 full-time specialists per school. But that funding must be divided among a range of specialists, including core French teachers, literacy teachers, and music, physical education, guidance or other specialist teachers.

THE IMPACT OF ARTS EDUCATION

In the 21st century, adaptability and creativity are considered essential skills.³²

According to the European Union, “Creativity is a driver for innovation and a key factor for the development of personal, occupational and social competences and the well-being of all individuals in society.”³³

Educators and thinkers over the years have outlined the influence of the arts on students’ ability to learn, on their capacity for articulate expression and creative thinking, and on their facility to solve complex problems.³⁴ For many students, schools provide their first, and for some, their only, experience of the arts.

QUICK FACTS

- 46% of elementary schools have a music teacher part or full-time, an improvement since 2002/03, but still well below the 58% of schools reporting music teachers in 1997/98.
- 54% of secondary schools charge fees for art classes and 23% charge fees for music classes.
- 20% of schools with Grades 7 & 8 have a visual arts teacher.

Percentage of Elementary Schools with Music Teachers, Full or Part-time

