



Underfunding flaw in education funding model

Unrealistic benchmarks continue to be the leading defect in the funding model, and it has created a huge deficit in school boards' school operations budgets. Funding of school operations is based on student enrolment and an arbitrary 'dollars per square foot' benchmark, so school operations funding declines when enrolment drops—even if no schools or classrooms are closed!

This benchmark has been so inadequate that a recent study estimates an annual school operations province-wide deficit of \$375 million since the funding formula was introduced eight years ago.

Fewer custodians Depleted reserve funds

Yet, despite the \$375 million yearly underfunding, securing adequate dollars for school operations does not rank high among school boards' priorities. Rather, boards deal with major school operations budget shortfalls by cutting custodial staff and depleting reserve funds to meet balanced budget legislation.

It's a strategy that compromises healthy and safe school environments for students and workers.

'Proudly committed to helping students succeed'



Dirtier schools

Fewer custodians also means dirtier schools. Alternate day or every third-day cleaning schedules are common ways school boards deal with too few custodians in a losing battle to keep schools clean and well maintained.

Sadly, both the McGuinty Liberals and Ontario school boards are ignoring the deplorable conditions of our schools. Cleanliness is on the decline, and flu and cold germs spread more easily, leading to more student absences and staff sick leave.

EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO SHOW THAT CLEAN, HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENT SUCCESS. A FUNDING MODEL PURPOSELY DESIGNED TO 'UNDERFUND' CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE HINDERS STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT.



Low morale, heavy workloads

Cuts to custodial staff, cuts to custodians' hours of work have increased and intensified the workload and duties of custodians. As a result, there are higher rates of physical injury, stress, burnout and low morale among custodians.

Schools less safe

Often called the 'eyes and ears' in our schools, custodians spot strangers in the building and other potential safety problems. With fewer custodians, schools are less safe.

Some school boards have contracted out custodial services to private operators. To make a profit, these contractors pay their workers low wages and no benefits. The result is high employee turnover rates and a revolving door of unfamiliar cleaning staff coming into school facilities that raises safety concerns for students.

The funding model — what needs to change?

- Elimination of the use of 'per-pupil' funding as the basis for the model.
- Setting realistic benchmarks that provide school boards with the needed \$375 million yearly in school operations funding to avoid annual deficits.
- Funding benchmarks that recognize the full cost of using school facilities for adult classes and community use.



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