

Trustees urged to pass deficit school budget to stem job losses arising from Liberals' faulty funding formula

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NORTH BAY, Ont. – Parents, school board workers and unions affected by proposed cuts that will result in the loss of 50 Educational Assistant and support staff jobs are urging trustees of the Near North District School Board to pass a one per cent deficit budget when they vote on their budget tomorrow night. They say that this is the only way to stem job losses arising from the Liberal government's faulty funding formula for schools.

"If Kathleen Wynne can give Toronto the go-ahead for a one per cent deficit budget, then the Near North Board should be accorded the same—we don't need a double standard in this province," said Sid Ryan, Ontario President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Ryan was referring to a decision by the Education Minister to allow the Toronto District School Board to run a deficit. Near North Board trustees voted on June 27th to hold off ratifying their budget until July 10th, to see if the Toronto District School Board would pass a deficit budget and defy provincial government guidelines that all boards must pass balanced budgets.

"North Bay and other northern towns cannot afford to lose any more good jobs as a result of bad Liberal policies," added Ryan. "A one per cent deficit amounting to \$1.2 million on the Board's current budget of \$125 million would help save school board jobs that will be cut if the trustees vote for the budget that is currently being proposed."

Fifty jobs, including Educational Assistants, office and clerical staff secretaries, and custodial workers will be lost if the trustees vote for the current proposal, according to Jim Wilson, President of CUPE 1165.

"Instead of cutting jobs, our Trustees need to send a message to the Liberals that, until they fix the faulty education funding formula, school boards like Near North will continue to find themselves in crisis," said Wilson. "We appreciate the efforts of trustees Jay Aspin, Randy Sheppard, David Thompson, Eunice Saari, Colleen Goupil and Kathy Hewitt to have the Board reconsider the proposed budget in order to save these jobs."

Parents and school board workers plan to rally in front of the Near North District School Board offices at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 10th, just prior to when Trustees meet to reconsider and vote on the Board's budget.

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