

STANDING TOGETHER

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Political Action Bulletin of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Durham Teachers' Local

Election Time Again

Education is one of the big issues in the October 10th Provincial Election. And it is not just about the money. A big part of this election is ideas, how we see our province in the future.

The whole idea of Public Education will be debated but under the disguise of many other things. While no politician is going to stand before the voters and speak against public education, if you listen very carefully, the Progressive Conservative Party wants to change the face of education in this province forever.

John Tory wants to "expand" the public system. This sounds strange coming from a party that did everything it could to limit public education when it was in power for eight years. The Conservative Party attacked every part of our public system, from how the floor cleaning was paid for, to what teachers studied in university.

If the Tories had remained in power it was their plan by 2006 to pay parents \$7000.00 in a tax credit for every student not in a public school. This was their commitment to public education.

The new 2007 Tory plan is not to take everyone out of public education, it is now to put everyone in. Public money would now flow to every private and so called faith based school. Every group with a spare room and twenty chairs could be a school funded by the public. The result would be the same as previous Tory plans, the crippling of Public Education in Ontario. Money would bleed away from the system that has served this province for over a century. It would be damaged beyond recognition.

And this is where the battle of ideas begins.

Like Mr. Harris before him, Mr. Tory believes in unfettered capitalism. Public

assets should be sold, be they schools, or water or roads. Everything should have a price and its value should be realized in the market place. The rich should get richer and the poor should try harder. Quality education should be bought by those who can afford it. This is the mean face of the Conservative Party. Mean Mike Harris had a hard time hiding that face but the smiling John Tory is quite willing to fool you if you let him.

When we cast our vote in October we must remind the Tories and Mr. Tory that teachers never forget.

Gerard O'Neill

2nd VP ETFO Durham



Policy Matters

John Tory's election platform slogan states that Leadership Matters. So does good policy. Good policy in public education does not involve taking money out of a system still recovering from being mutilated by the axe wielding of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

Tory's plan to fund faith

based schools will do exactly what Eves tried to accomplish, by pushing forward with a Harris plan to give tax breaks to parents for students to attend private schools of their choice. Ontarians didn't buy it and promptly sent the Conservative Party packing with only



25 seats (out of 107) in the 2003 election!! Ontarians need to see Tory's new plan as it is... a different spin on the same issue, giving money that is desperately needed by the public system, to parents of children attending private schools.

David Mastin, Chair

Political Action Committee

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Who is Running ?

Oshawa

NDP- Sid Ryan

Liberal - Faelyne Templer

Conservative- Jerry Ouellette

Ajax - Pickering

NDP- Reid Scott

Liberal - Joe Dickson

Conservative- Kevin Ashe

Pickering - Scarborough East

NDP- Andrea Moffat

Liberal - Wayne Arthurs

Conservative- Diana Hall

Durham

NDP- TBA

Liberal - Betty Somerville

Conservative- John O'Toole

Whitby - Oshawa

NDP- Nigel Moses

Liberal - Laura Hammer

Conservative- Christine Elliott

Haliburton-Kwartha Lakes-Brock

N.D.P.- Joan Corrigan

Lib.- Rick Johnson

P.C.- Laurie Scott

Green- Doug Smith



ETFO Endorses MMP Referendum

VOTE YES FOR Mixed Member Proportional System

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMPAIGN SUPPORTING ELECTORAL REFORM

We have an historic chance on October 10, 2007 to achieve what we all need more than anything else in our political arena: a modern voting system.

The Ontario referendum on electoral reform opens the door, at long last, to a more hopeful politics: more voter choice, fairer election outcomes, better representation, and more party accountability.

Under the proposed MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) system all voters matter equally, very few votes are wasted, local representation is guaranteed, and parties will generally get the share of seats in the legislature they actually deserve – no more, no less.

Other countries have found in

proportional voting a strong tool to promote the election of women and minority candidates. Parties put forward candidate lists with an appealing diversity of accomplished men and women from various occupations and groups.

By voting yes on October 10, we will affirm the most fundamental democratic value – all citizens are equal – and its natural companions – fair representation for all and true majority governments.

VOTE YES for MMP is multi-partisan campaign to make this important reform happen.

We welcome people from all backgrounds and every political party.

For more information on VOTE YES for MMP, including details on how to help, volunteer and donate, visit

www.VoteYesForMMP.ca or contact us at info@voteyesformmp.ca or call 416-410-4034.



**Vote for
MMP**

**Oct. 10th
referendum**

**More choice.
Fairer results.
Stronger
representation.**

Just In Case You Forgot

Beginning in 1995, the teaching profession suffered eight years of relentless attacks under the provincial Tories. Teachers defended themselves and public education. We need to ensure that following the October 10th election we don't have to begin that fight again.

To gain a full understanding of the impact of eight years of Tory rule, it is best to analyze their record on education. Listed below is a series of "reforms" the Tories implemented to public education.

1) Bill 30, *Education Quality and Accountability Act*, (1996). - established province wide testing of students in grades 3, 6, 9 and 10. EQAO initial budget of \$15 million ballooned to over \$50 million in 2002.

2) Bill 31, *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, (1996).
- established the Ontario College of Teachers to regulate the profession
- majority of the council are non-classroom teachers;
- annual fees have increased from \$90 to \$134.

3) Bill 34, *Education Amendment Act*, (1996).
- repealed the provision that required school boards to offer junior kindergarten;
- \$525 million was cut from elementary and secondary education, including 50% from kindergarten.

4) Bill 160, *Education Quality Improvement Act*. (1996); - all-encompassing bill that permitted the Cabinet to determine class size through regulation, abolished the ability of school boards to raise taxes, gave cabinet the power to set

local mill rates, removed administrators from teacher federations and reduced the number of Professional Development days from 9 to 4 per year.

5) Bill 104, *Fewer School Boards Act*, (1997); - reduced the number of school boards and capped the salary and number of trustees on school boards.

6) *Student Focused Funding Formula* (1998); - funding incorporating a very narrow definition of classroom, cutting \$672 million from education;

- resulted in a loss of teachers, and programs (e.g. special education, music, and library).

7) *New Standardized Report Cards* (1997-8); - introduced with limited training, insufficient technical support and numerous software glitches.

8) *New Elementary Curriculum* (1998); - implemented with inadequate resource material, training and supports; - curriculum expects teacher to cover a large quantity of work, leaving less time to assist students with difficulties.

9) *Province-Wide Standardized Testing* (1997); - time-consuming and strenuous standardized testing for grades 3, 6, 9 and 10; - Grade 3 and 6 testing cost \$9.2 million annually to administer and grade.

10) Bill 74, *Education Accountability Act*, (2000); - had provisions, if enacted, to make extracurricular activities mandatory.

11) *Teacher Testing and the Stability and Excellence in Education Act*, (2000-1); a mandatory recertification program for all teachers, prescribing the completion of 14 courses every 5 years.

12) Criminal Background Check, (2001); teachers required to have a criminal background check and annual offence declaration.

13) *Private School Tuition Tax Credit*, (2001); - when fully implemented over 5 years, would be worth over \$3,500 per student and cost taxpayers \$500 million annually..

14) *Quality in the Classroom Act*, (2001); - established a flawed model for Teacher Performance Appraisals including parent and student input; - required that teachers complete an Annual Learning Plan and new faculty graduates complete a Teacher Qualifying Test.

15) Supervisors Appointed to Three Takeover Boards, (2002); - Supervisors appointed for the Ottawa-Carleton, Toronto and Hamilton-Wentworth school boards, after trustees passed deficit budgets; - supervisors unable to balance the budget even after cuts to programs and classrooms.

Teachers and the education system cannot afford more years of frontal attacks and aimless initiatives.

If elected the Tories plan on banning teachers right to strike, implementing their tax credit for private schools and implementing a massive privatization of public services. It would be the demise of public education as we know it.

Teachers can not afford to let this happen!

Tom Lazor is ETFO-Durham's Treasurer and a teacher-librarian at Lord Elgin P.S.



Coming Events

PROVINCIAL ELECTION DAY

October 10th, 2007

Make Sure You Vote
To Defend Public Education

ETFO Durham Teachers' Local Fall Dinner
Thursday, November 8, 2007

Le Gala Banquet Hall, Whitby
Cost \$20.00 per person
6:30 Cash Bar
7:30 Dinner

Call to register: 905-666-1122

Teachers' Pension Information Session

Thursday, Thursday October 18th, 2007
4:00— 6:00 p.m.

Presentation begins at 4:30

Refreshments provided

ETFO Office, 603 Palace St., Whitby

Call to register: 905-666-1122

Committee Meetings

Political Action Next Meeting

Sept. 12th, 4:30 ETFO Office

New Teachers Next Meeting

Sept. 18th 4:30 ETFO Office



ETFO's Response to the Liberal Platform

For Immediate Release - September 6, 2007

Elementary teachers are encouraged by the high priority given to education in the Liberal election platform, David Clegg, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) said today.

"We applaud the government's commitment to continue to rebuild our education system by investing an additional \$3.1 billion annually by 2011," said Clegg.

"The Liberal platform is progressive and builds on what we have advocated in the past," said

Clegg, citing reduced class sizes in grades 4-8 and more individualized arts and skills technology programs for grades 7 and 8 as long-time ETFO priorities.

Clegg added that elementary teachers also welcome the government's commitment to increase English-as-a-Second Language funding, complete its plan to cap class sizes at 20 children in the primary grades, and develop and fund a full-day pre-school program.

"We are pleased to hear that the government recognizes the need to close the gap in supports for elementary

students. There is no question that our *Close the Gap* campaign has attracted attention and response. We are hopeful that all political parties will have taken the same position by the end of the campaign."

"We will continue to work closely with the government and encourage them to target funding in the early years of student learning so Ontario's children have the skills and knowledge that lay the foundation for a lifetime of educational success."



People for Education Survey Results

2007 survey results:

Elementary and secondary school fundraising ranged from \$0 to \$400,000 per school.

The top 10% of fundraising schools raised more than the bottom 80% put together.

77% of secondary schools report raising revenue outside their school budgets from local business and corporations, community and alumni associations, bingos, vending machines, etc.



2007 survey results:

89% of elementary schools and 97% of secondary schools have a full-time principal, a result that has remained fairly steady over the last five years.

The percentage of elementary schools with a vice-principal, full- or part-time, has increased



slightly over the last two years, but has declined by 24% since 1997/98.

Only 74% of Northern elementary schools have a full-time principal, a decline from 80% last year.

2007 survey results:

46% of elementary schools have music teachers, continuing a slight upward trend established last year, but still below 1997/98 levels when 58% of schools had these specialists.

There are significant differences in schools' budgets for arts programs, and many schools rely on parents to supply the funding. This year, 17% of secondary schools and 54% of elementary schools report fundraising for arts enrichment in their schools. 58% of secondary schools charge fees for Art classes, and 29% charge fees for Music classes.