

# **FUND OUR SCHOOLS**

## **Education Campaign Launch**



**March 7th, 2024**

There is an ongoing crisis in our publicly-funded schools in Toronto, and across the province. After more than six years in power, the Ford Conservative government has cut funding to our schools down to the bone.

While the Conservatives like to tell the story that they have funded schools more than any other Provincial Government in history, the reality is that since they took power in 2018, per-student funding for our schools has dropped by over \$1,200 after inflation. This means that each school is receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars less each year – resulting in fewer staff and less programming. In fact, per-student funding in Ontario is now among the lowest in the country.

The funding cuts have led to unsafe and stressful working conditions for all education workers who are already dealing with increasing violence and mental health issues post-pandemic. The funding cuts also means challenging learning conditions for students. This situation can not continue.

To fight back against Conservative cuts, leaders from Elementary Teachers of Toronto, OSSTF Toronto, and Toronto Education Workers /CUPE 4400 met with parent leaders and progressive school trustees. They agreed to work together on a campaign to address the problems in Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools – problems that need urgent attention.

The new FUND OUR SCHOOLS campaign will reconnect union members with each other and with their unions to rebuild hope and inspire members to fight back. The campaign and participating unions are asking union members working within schools to SPEAK UP and SPEAK OUT about the issues members are witnessing and experiencing in schools. Education workers will tell their first-hand stories about the impact of the cuts, and take action together.

Hearing each other's stories helps bring teachers and other education workers closer and overcomes the isolation many union members feel. The campaign is working to build connections, empower members, and raise hope to mobilize members to take a stand.

The campaign will also support education workers in helping the TDSB to demand more student funding. On Monday, April 2nd, we will rally at the Board office in North York to show support!

Finally, the campaign will also create community connections so that other workers – who are also parents, grandparents, and caregivers of students – can participate in demanding that Ford’s government FUND OUR SCHOOLS. Education is the foundation upon which our society is built, and education workers are the ones who make up that foundation.

To achieve these goals, we must:

- Have all affiliates support the campaign in every way they are able, including through informing and educating their members about the need to FUND OUR SCHOOLS and hold Ford’s government accountable
- Allow for all affiliates help to identify members living and working in Conservative ridings in Toronto, to put pressure on their MPPs to fund our schools
- Call for every affiliate mobilize some members to attend the April 2nd rally at the TDSB headquarters at 5050 Yonge St at 4:00PM