



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

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April 16, 2018

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Stephen Andrews, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs

**SUBJECT:** **Summary of NDP Election Platform**

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### Overview

On Monday April 16, 2018, the Ontario NDP released its election platform for the general election in 2018. This memorandum summarizes issues of importance for Catholic school boards.

The title of the platform is "*Change for the Better*". The key elements include the following:

- Reform the education funding formula
- Increase hiring of teachers and educational assistants
- Cap kindergarten classroom sizes at 26 students
- invest \$16 billion to repair schools
- Eliminate EQAO testing
- Adjust rules related to education development charges
- Reform curriculum to instruct students' inclusive history, including Indigenous history, the history of Black Ontarians, our province's history with the Underground Railroad, and Caribbean and African experiences.

### Funding Formula

The objective of a reformed funding formula is to address three matters:

- violence in classrooms by giving boards and staff more resources;
- to curb class sizes and support our most vulnerable students;
- restructure special education funding on actual needs of students and not overall populations. This will mean overall funding increases for students with special educational needs.

## Capital Plan

- Develop a 10-year capital plan for schools that will specifically address repair issues;
- Adjust the rules around Education Development Charges so they can be used to fund new schools.

## EQAO

- Eliminate EQAO tests and administration and reinvest \$40 million in student mental health initiatives.

## Student Mental Health

- Hire 400 new mental health workers to ensure every high school has access to mental health supports.

## Students with Autism

- Develop a comprehensive autism-support strategy, in full collaboration with families, caregivers, people with autism and experts in the field.

## Labour Issues

- Enabling any workplace to unionize when 55% of workers sign a union card;
- Introduce first contract arbitration legislation to prevent possible delays;
- Increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, and index ongoing increases to inflation.

## Broadband Access Issues

- Create a 10-year \$1 billion fund for bringing broadband service to rural and northern Ontario and secure agreements with the federal government to match funding.

## Indigenous Issues

- Establish a true government-to-government relationship with Ontario's First Nations;
- Work with First Nations leaders to sign a cooperative, government-to-government accord;
- Implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## Education Tax Issues

- The platform states the NDP will introduce a uniform Business Education Tax rate and continue the Education Tax Reduction Plan adjusted to equalize rates.

## **Next Steps**

OCSTA will continue to monitor the election platforms and actions of the main political parties in the general election. OCSTA will also develop a comparative analysis of the key platform policies in terms of the key policy and education funding priorities articulated in our Finance Brief and Pre-Budget submission.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca). To review the platform document please click on the following link <https://www.ontariondp.ca/platform>.