



EDUCATION

Continued investment in publicly funded education is vital to Ontario's future prosperity. In the 2010 Ontario Budget, the government will build on the achievements of the past six years and continue to invest in three core educational priorities:

- Supporting higher levels of student achievement
- Reducing gaps in student achievement so that all students are provided with an opportunity to attain their goals
- Increasing confidence in publicly funded education.

Education Funding

To reach every student and further strengthen the education system, funding to school boards will increase in 2010-11 and will continue to rise in future years. Education sector spending is projected to rise to \$21.4 billion in 2010-11, a \$0.7 billion increase over the previous year. It is projected to rise to \$22.3 billion in 2011-12, and to \$23 billion in 2012-13, an 11.5 per cent increase since 2009-10.

This focused investment is showing real results in smaller class sizes, better student achievement, improved graduation rates and healthier schools that are integral to the communities they serve.

Child Care

In 2006-07, federal funding under the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement was terminated. In response, the province decided to allocate the final federal payment of \$253 million (received in 2006-07), as \$63.5 million annually over the remaining life of the agreement up to 2009-10.

The McGuinty government is disappointed that the federal government has declined to ensure stability in the child care sector. Ontario is stepping in with an investment of \$63.5 million a year to permanently fill the gap left by the federal government, preserving approximately 8,500 child care spaces and helping 1,000 child care workers keep their jobs.

Full-Day Learning Program

Full-day learning is an important part of the McGuinty government's Open Ontario plan to increase student achievement, build a stronger workforce and help break the cycle of poverty.

On October 27, 2009, Premier McGuinty announced that Ontario would move forward with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, as part of the province's strategy to increase student achievement and reduce the drop-out rate. The government is investing \$200 million in 2010-11 and \$300 million in 2011-12 in full-day learning, including capital investment to support implementation.

Full-day learning will give Ontario's youngest students a stronger start as they benefit from an integrated day at school.

The government is introducing full-day learning in phases. In September 2010, nearly 600 schools will offer full-day learning for up to 35,000 children across Ontario. Four- and five-year-olds will learn under the guidance of a teacher and an early childhood educator. Parents may also enroll their child for extended hours, for a reasonable fee, before and after regular school hours. The goal is to fully phase-in the program by 2015-16.

At full implementation, the program will employ up to an additional 3,800 teachers, 20,000 early childhood educators and benefit about 247,000 children.

Achievements Since 2003

Investing in Student Success

Literacy and Numeracy

Since 2003-04, the government has taken great strides towards helping students improve their reading, writing and math skills. These programs have helped more students achieve the provincial standard on province-wide tests — 67 per cent met the provincial standard in the 2008-09 school year, up from 54 per cent in 2002-03.

Annual investments to improve literacy and numeracy in 2009-10 totalled \$95 million, approximately \$19 million more than in 2008-09.

The government has implemented a number of initiatives to help more young students excel in reading, writing and math. These include:

- More than 3,150 elementary specialist teachers are being funded as of 2009-10. These teachers help students improve reading, writing and math skills – and boost student achievement in areas such as music, the arts and physical education
- Student Achievement Officers work with principals, teachers and board leaders to improve student reading, writing and math skills
- The Schools on the Move program identifies elementary schools that are succeeding in challenging circumstances and encourages them to share their literacy and numeracy strategies with other schools. Over 140 schools have joined the network since its 2006 start.

Graduation Rates

Since 2005, the government's Student Success Strategy has been helping students in Grades 7 to 12 tailor their education to their individual strengths, goals and interests. The graduation rate increased to 79 per cent in 2008-09, from 68 per cent in 2003-04. This means that an additional 11 per cent or 16,500 more students are graduating each year compared to 2003-04.

Many programs have been established for students pursuing university, college, apprenticeships or the workplace after graduation:

- Specialist High Skills Majors allows students to focus on a future career through classroom courses, workplace experiences and sector certifications
- Expansion of Cooperative Education allows students to count hands-on learning towards two compulsory high school credits
- E-Learning provides students with online courses and allows teachers to share resources across the province

- Dual Credits count towards a student's high school diploma as well as a college certificate, diploma or apprenticeship certification.

Support is also being provided to struggling high school students so they can get back on track to graduate:

- The Elementary to Secondary School Transition Program helps students succeed in high school through customized timetables and other programs
- Student Success Teams (including the principal, student success teacher, guidance counsellor, special education teacher and other educators) provide extra attention in every high school to students who need it.

More than \$300 million was invested in 2009-10 to help students graduate and move on to college, university, apprenticeships or the workplace.

Primary Class Sizes

Students from junior kindergarten to Grade 3 are receiving more individual attention from their teachers. The government's goal to reduce the size of primary classes has been achieved:

- 90 per cent of classes now have 20 or fewer students this year compared to 31 per cent in 2003-04
- 100 per cent of classes now have 23 or fewer students this year compared to 64 per cent in 2003-04.

Excellence

A recent study found the province's 15-year-old students were achieving excellent results in science. The Programme for International Student Assessment put Ontario at the top, along with Finland and Hong Kong.

Another international study gave Ontario's education system high marks for excellence. Ontario's Grade 4 students were among the highest-achieving participants in an international assessment of reading skills — the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Communities and Schools

As a component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the government is making investments to ensure that schools are an integral part of the communities they serve, including:

- Investing \$38.5 million during the 2009-10 school year to make it easier and more affordable for people to use schools after hours. Since 2005-06, average rates charged to community groups decreased by 43 per cent due to the province's \$90 million investment. The number of participants grew by 46 per cent
- Establishing 21 more Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in 2009-10, for a total of 144 centres that help children in high-needs neighbourhoods prepare for school through play-based learning
- Providing more than 15,500 children and youth in Grades 1 through 12 with access to safe, active and healthy after-school activities through the After School Initiative at more than 270 sites across the province

- Serving an additional 100,000 students during the 2008-09 school year through the expanded Student Nutrition Program, increasing the total number of students served to 500,000 annually
- Reaching out to schools in disadvantaged communities to increase parent engagement; the number of Parents Reaching Out Grants awarded to these schools in 2009-10 increased by 354 per cent from last year.

Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth

Under the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), which takes effect July 1, 2010, public service bodies (including publicly funded educational institutions) will be able to claim rebates for the provincial portion of the HST they pay on some of the things they buy. These rebates are intended to keep the education sector, as a whole, fiscally neutral relative to the Retail Sales Tax the sector is currently required to pay. School boards will receive a 93 per cent rebate of the provincial portion of the HST they pay and 68 per cent of the federal portion.

To further support this sector, temporary restrictions on certain input tax credits will not apply to educational institutions.