

Impact of Education Cuts

March 1997

The Tax Wash -

Welcome to Mike Harris's Ontario

- While the government continues to promote its restructuring of municipal and educational services, the truth of their scheme is becoming increasingly transparent. From the outset, the government claimed that downloading of social housing, long-term care, libraries and so on, to municipalities would be more than offset by tax relief for education.
- Now the government's own staff have admitted this is not the case. In fact, they now acknowledge that large urban areas will face increased tax loads under the new structure. And this is before we really even start.
- The fine print legislation imposing the new regime for social service cost-sharing, as well as the radically changed model for long-term care for seniors, has yet to be drafted.
- The Harris Mega-Week project is a sham. Its sole purpose is to fund the Conservative government's promised tax cut.
- In 1996, the provincial government was infuriated when school boards, faced with the prospect of either increasing class size or cutting programs, turned to their local taxpayers to replace the massive grant reduction from the province by increasing local property taxes.
- In addition, the government is determined to make all school boards dependent on provincial government grants, especially the public boards in Metro Toronto and Ottawa, which have traditionally been financially independent of Queen's Park.
- The government's solution? Control the entire funding system and at the same time relieve municipalities of the millstone of collecting education taxes.
- The result? No local control of education. The end of local governance structures. An attack on basic democratic and constitutional rights. Increased costs for municipal services. Higher income tax rebates for wealthier Ontarians.

Speak to your MPP

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Differentiated Staffing = Unqualified Staffing

- **What is differentiated staffing?**

Differentiated staffing means replacing individuals trained and certified as professional teachers with individuals who do not have the training required to be a teacher in Ontario's public schools.

- **Why is the Ministry of Education and Training considering differentiated staffing?**

Advocates of this say it will allow certified teachers to concentrate on classroom instruction instead of wasting time on "administrivia." However, the real reason for implementing differentiated staffing is to employ less qualified and therefore less expensive people in offering a lower quality of education.

- **What is the Ministry of Education and Training doing about differentiated staffing?**

There is a one-person "special project team" compiling information about differentiated staffing. So far, Ontario's teaching professionals have been left out of the ministry's research.

- **How will it affect students and their teachers?**

Individuals with no teacher training or qualifications could staff guidance services and the school library. Physical education, health education, career counselling, cooperative education, technical education, business education, art programs, and music programs may also be up for grabs. Because the government has not come clean on its overall vision for education in Ontario, parents, students and teachers are still in the dark about these changes.