

Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37 Public Education Priorities for Change

Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 hosted multiple round tables and used an online Google Form to collect information from teachers, school staff, parents and community members about their concerns, expectations and priority changes for a vital future for public education in Alberta.

These activities are part of our Local's efforts to support and inform our provincial Association's current advocacy campaign to strengthen public education in the leadup to Alberta's coming provincial election.

This document is arranged in three parts:

- A. Priorities for Change – what we need to be able to do our best work with all students
- B. Next steps
- C. Concerns we heard from you to inform our Priorities for Change

We greatly appreciated and were informed by the insights of parents and community members in the roundtables, but we are not attempting to speak on their behalf in the recommendations in this document. Rather, these “priorities for change” are meant to summarize the concerns and priorities of teachers in the Edmonton Public Local, to be forwarded to our provincial Association as part of the current advocacy campaign.

Note: When referring to “public education,” this includes Public, Catholic and Francophone Schools.

(A) Priorities for Change – What We Need To Be Able To Do Our Best Work With All Students

As identified from this feedback, these are the top priorities for change that will support Local 37 teachers in order to do our best work with, and for, all of our students:

- class size limits and composition
- mental health professionals and supports
- modern curriculum with updated resources
- public tax dollars for public schools
- teacher workload expectations
- infrastructure needs
- English as an Additional Language programs supports
- school and classroom supports

Public Interest Alberta (PIA) recently released their **2023 Alberta Provincial Election Priorities for Change in K-12 Education**, and our members' priorities substantially mirror theirs. We found that PIA's priorities, descriptions and next steps captured the essence of what our members are demanding for the future of public education in Alberta and we have chosen to endorse their work, with some additional elements that are specific to the Edmonton Public context. One key addition was that our members identified "Infrastructure" as a priority that influences class size and complexity and have added that as a sixth priority.

We have included quotes from Edmonton Public Teachers at the end of each priority section so that their voices can come through directly.

We clearly heard that teacher's classroom conditions and workload expectations are at an unsustainable level, and that colleagues are "burning out" and leaving the profession at an unprecedented rate. Although the specifics of teacher workload expectations are not detailed here, it is the Political Engagement Committees' belief that by addressing these six priorities teacher workload expectations will also be alleviated.

Note: In each of the first five sections below, we have borrowed directly from PIA's Priorities for Change document (shown in *italics*), as the concerns expressed by Edmonton Public Teachers are almost identical, and because we fully endorse their analysis. The quotes at the end of each section are drawn from teacher's comments on our website survey. Section 6 (Infrastructure) is an additional priority drawn from concerns expressed by Edmonton Public teachers.

1. **Class size, composition and classroom learning conditions**
2. **Strengthening our system of public education under democratically elected school boards by reversing privatization in education**
3. **Curriculum and assessment issues**
4. **Supporting students and their learning**
5. **Early learning, children and poverty**
6. **Infrastructure**

1. Class size, composition and classroom learning conditions

Instead of improving, class sizes have grown much larger over the past decade in far too many schools. At the same time, the needs of students are increasingly more complex, while the varied supports necessary to meet the needs of these students are either diminishing or absent.

The primary cause of these unacceptable conditions is a lack of sustained and adequate funding by provincial governments. School boards are placed in a situation where they don't have adequate funds, and

they have consistently increased class sizes and reduced program supports in order to deal with their budget shortfalls.

We need to commit to substantially increasing financial supports for our Public, Separate and Francophone school systems in smart and effective ways in order to help them develop the full potential of all children regardless of their circumstances, and to better fulfill the promise of public education.

The provincial government must work with school boards and other partners to collect data and track changes in class size and composition to better inform decision making regarding class sizes, composition and adequacy of supports.

Priority Change: The provincial government needs to commit to systematically increasing funding to reduce class sizes and improve learning and teaching conditions over the next four years, and to embedding class size and composition into negotiated collective agreements with teachers and others who work in education.

Such collective agreements exist in multiple provinces and territories within Canada as well as in many other jurisdictions in North America. Class size caps must take complex student needs into consideration in the composition and class size limits. Phasing the class size reductions over the (usual) four-year life of the provincial government will allow school boards to hire the teachers and other staff necessary to bring about the smaller class sizes and increased supports. Having these conditions in collective agreements and fully funded will ensure that the improvements will occur in systematic ways, and will be sustained over time.

“I don’t think the public has a clear idea of the complexities of the modern classroom. Reduction in class size is something we have advocated for but it’s not just size alone. So many diverse learners are getting dumped into regular classrooms with little to no supports. I have seen it way too often. Especially now with the reduced funding and a shortage of EAs. We need to advocate for these students so ALL students can learn.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

“I think the number 1 priority needs to be adequate funding. It directly impacts the other dire needs of smaller class sizes, less student needs in each class, more access to mental health support for kids, etc. Our schools are in crisis. Our kids are in crisis.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

“I am a grade 9 math teacher. My classes are full with 35 students per class. I am responsible for them to be prepared for high school and for PATs. There is no time for one on one as the class is too full. Students are falling through the cracks. I do not eat lunch. I eat in my room and open it up for students to get the one on one help they might need. I also stay after school on my own time for 1 hour for homework club to again help students. This is all my own time and I am tired. I am tired of being devalued, tired of no one listening to the voices of those who educate children, tired of feeling that no one hears us. Education needs to change and the government needs to understand that teachers do know what is best for kids. I have studied for 6 years to be a teacher.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

2. Strengthening our system of public education under democratically elected school boards by reversing privatization in education

Not only have our public education systems (our Public, Catholic and Francophone school boards) been increasingly starved of necessary funding, but at the same time substantial funding has been systematically diverted to privatization efforts under the misleading narrative of “enhancing parent choice,” which has turned out to be a cover for “privatization by stealth.”

Alberta spends in excess of \$200 million per year providing subsidies to private schools – which are in direct competition with our public systems. (Some of these subsidies go to expensive, elite private schools, where annual tuition fees in some cases are in excess of \$20,000 per student.) Alberta’s growing number of charter schools are in reality private schools that are allowed to masquerade as public schools: they receive full funding, but are not accountable to democratically elected school boards and can choose or reject students – both key characteristics of private schools. Home schooling has also been increasingly subsidized by Alberta’s government.

The adverse consequences of diverting funds from the public system are well documented, having immediate and long-term impacts on the system. The \$200 million per year that is augmenting the private schools would be a boon to public school divisions as they struggle to meet the demands of increasing numbers of students with an ever-widening diversity of needs, all of whom have the right to quality, publicly funded education.

Priority Change: *Phase out all funding to private schools and homeschooling, and eliminate the category of charter schools.*

Over a four-year period, end funding to all private schools (with the exception of those providing services to high-needs students, which should be fully funded, and brought within our public education systems.) Reallocate the funding to our public systems.

The category and “experiment” of charter schools should be ended, and current charter schools should be given the option of operating as a regular part of our public education systems, or becoming a private school.

Parents may have a right to home school their children, but that choice should not be subsidized by the public. Strong regulations and oversight must be applied to home school programs and systems, to ensure the highest quality of education that follows the provincial curricula and that will allow for transition into the public school system or post-secondary programs of studies.

“I’d like someone to explain to me why we are using public tax dollars to subsidize private and charter schools for the most privileged of this province? Why provide public funds for private and charter schools that can exclude any student from attending when we have a world class public education system that welcomes every child in this province?”

- a concerned Edmonton Public Elementary teacher

3. Curriculum and assessment issues

The current situation with respect to curriculum in Alberta is best described as a national embarrassment, and a self-inflicted wound. The province's curriculum and assessment program that once received international acclaim has been debased and undermined by the current government's policies, which are clearly rooted in a combination of ideology, arrogance and incompetence.

The government's curriculum efforts have sparked unprecedented dismay and comprehensive criticism from across the education spectrum. Parents are upset, teachers have been shut out and have rejected the entire venture, and school boards have resisted piloting and implementation. Academic experts have criticized it for not being based on current research.

All curricula need revision over time, but the Alberta government's current program and approach cannot be salvaged – both the product and the process are fundamentally flawed and have destroyed the confidence of the profession, education experts and much of the public. It must be scrapped as a first step to initiating a very different but necessary process to create high-quality curricula that will support an excellent education for all Alberta students.

Priority Change: Abandon the government's current program of curriculum revision, and begin anew with a curriculum development process based on widespread and inclusive consultation, clear understandings of how students learn, systematic and informed decisions about current and future learning needs, and an implementation plan that has the support of those who will be engaged in its delivery.

A well-designed curriculum must also be grounded in educational research, be inclusive of multiple perspectives, respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and include the skills of critical and creative thinking to prepare students for an uncertain and ever-changing future.

There is widespread willingness among the wide range of individuals, organizations and groups who care about education – teachers, parents, administrators, academics, school boards and others – to work together in respectful, positive and constructive ways to develop and implement a first-rate K-12 curriculum that will meet the needs of students and society in the years ahead. In order to do so, we need a government willing to abandon this manifestly inappropriate program, and to commit to building new curricula through a process that has the confidence of those who are engaged in education and are affected by it.

"The new curriculum is awful and is developmentally inappropriate."

- Teacher & parent of student in Edmonton Public

"A curriculum that is relevant and age appropriate - that includes learning from the past to better the future, basic literacy and numeracy, life skills, respect and acceptance for all."

- concerned citizen

"I envision a curriculum based on the input of education experts, teachers, and community-led knowledge - ethnic communities, queer community, disability community, etc. Racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, Eurocentrism, and colonialism should never be found in our classrooms."

- parent of a student in Edmonton Public

“There needs to be a shift in curriculum that allows targeted supports for students at every grade level, up to high school, not just the 1st division students. With the pandemic, there is a vast chasm of learning that needs to be filled before the grade-level curriculum is even achieved.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

“The new curriculum needs work. We all know that.” - Edmonton Public teacher

“I’m currently implementing the new PEW curriculum. While some of it is good, other parts just make no sense and there are NO resources for it because it doesn’t make sense! Even the “resources” provided are ridiculous. There are no links, it’s just a list of what “might” work, and then it takes ages to track down or it costs money, which schools don’t have to spend.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

“The new/draft curriculum needs an overhaul. So many reasons. Other than the well-documented issues regarding age-appropriateness, racism, gender-bias, volume and lack of critical thinking, it also seems to have changes made that make no rational sense-just for the sake of change! Science, for example, is not cohesive within the grade, it’s like all the fun stuff was taken out and replaced with knowledge-based stuff that could easily be looked up rather than drilled into students’ heads. It’s so dry and will be challenging to teach and make interesting-which of course we will do because that’s what we do but why does it need to be so hard on us.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

4. Supporting students and their learning

In order to achieve the fundamental goal of public education, that is, developing the full potential of all children and youth, we clearly need to do much more than reduce class sizes to reasonable levels such as those recommended by the Alberta Commission on Learning in 2003.

Our students are increasingly diverse in their circumstances and needs, and their needs are increasingly urgent. Instead of better meeting those needs, the provision of these vital supports for learning has consistently declined over the past decade, particularly during the time of the pandemic when more than 25 000 educational support workers were initially laid off. Program Unit Funding, or PUF, was reduced by as much as 75% in some divisions resulting in the dismantling of valuable supports for preschool and kindergarten students with special needs.

The failure to provide these necessary supports, particularly in the case of high needs students, has led to frustration and guilt on the part of teachers and legitimate anger on the part of many parents. It is no exaggeration to say that this failure has compromised the education and ultimately the future of too many students. This situation is not only unnecessary but utterly unacceptable in a wealthy province such as Alberta, and it belies any claims of commitment to equity in education.

Priority Change: Commit to identify, provide and fully fund all appropriate supports for the learning needs of all students, in the form of teacher assistants and other specialized personnel and resources, at the classroom, school and system levels, over the four-year period of the government's mandate.

At the classroom level, the greatest need is for well trained and properly compensated teacher assistants/aides, especially in regard to high-needs students and those with learning accommodations.

In order to achieve equitable learning opportunities for all students in our classrooms, a wide range of other supports are essential, either at the classroom or school level. These include fully funded music and art programs, fully funded libraries with teacher librarians, and all program requirements (musical instruments, computers, playground equipment) funded by the government rather than through fundraising or school fees.

At the system level, all schools must have access to at least one dedicated mental health professional, as well as appropriate access to necessary paraprofessional supports (speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists and nurses) and food programs, especially for the most vulnerable. Schools and students flourish when the wrap-around supports are provided to support their success.

In addition, we need a dramatic infusion of resources to school systems to ensure that schools are built where needed, and systematically maintained and renovated in order to ensure safe and appropriate physical learning environments for all students and staff.

"This year, I have cried in my car on the way to and from school. I am crushed by the weight of having no time in the day to prepare for my lessons, mark, plan, and respond to parent emails. My quality of life has suffered so greatly that my partner expects me to come home in tears more than twice a week. I have never felt so disregarded as a professional."

- Edmonton Public teacher

"Four years ago we had a librarian half time, 17 Educational Assistants, a full-time pull-out reading teacher, a half-time pull-out math teacher and reasonable class sizes. Now we have no librarian, only 6 EA's, no reading pull-out, no math pull-out and our Grade 9 classes are at 38 students and climbing."

- Edmonton Public teacher

"At my school we often talk about how helpless we feel because, after Covid, we have so many kids totally checked out of school and/or are in trauma. Last year, when discussing my frustration at the lack of mental health access for some of my kids expressing suicidal ideations, she said to me, "There's no money. You are their counsellor. " That kind of expectation is not only completely unreasonable, it is dangerous. We need way more teachers and way more school counsellors."

- Edmonton Public teacher

"In-school, comprehensive, inclusive support must be made available for children with disabilities and/or complex learners, including autistic children. This includes the funding of Educational Assistants. To achieve equity, hybrid and accessible programming must be available to every child, without exception. Children with disabilities must have access to the support they need without sacrificing academic achievement."

- parent of a student in Edmonton Public

5. Early learning, children and poverty

A genuine commitment to providing an effective, appropriate and equitable education for all children means that we must pay special attention to at least two elements that have an enormous impact on many children – early learning, and the powerful, negative effects of poverty on the education and development of far too many of our children.

It has been clear for some time that the most important and productive investments in education are those made in early learning – investments that not only bring about long-term improvements in learning, but also in our social, economic, health and justice systems.

And yet, Alberta remains a laggard in early learning, despite recommendations from Alberta's Commission on Learning almost two decades ago strongly urging a move to full day kindergarten for all children, as well as making junior kindergarten available.

In terms of addressing the needs of children living in poverty, there have been positive developments due to increased resources for families by federal and provincial programs, as well as progress in providing accessible and affordable child care, again due to federal initiatives in partnership with the province.

But there is obviously an enormous amount of work yet to be done, poverty is still far too prevalent in too many families, and the effects of the pandemic and inflation are worse on families living in poverty. It has often been said that “poverty is the greatest learning disability,” and we must make a major commitment in this area in order to make a difference in children's learning where it is needed most.

Priority Changes:

- ***Reinstate and expand the PUF funding.***
- ***Expand Alberta's kindergarten program to include fully funded, full-day kindergarten accessible to all students.***
- ***Commit to building, implementing and funding a comprehensive, high quality early childhood education and care system accessible to all families, regardless of their ability to pay.***
- ***Systematically address the needs of children living in poverty through a comprehensive framework to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty in Alberta's families.***

In terms of early learning, the government must move to implement and fully fund a program of full day kindergarten available for all Alberta children, to be followed by the implementation of a program of junior kindergarten before the four-year term of the government is finished.

It also needs to continue to expand investment to ensure that a universal, affordable and high quality child care system (including after school care) is available to all Alberta families, and needs to support the professionalization and compensation of early childhood educators to improve quality.

We have learned a substantial amount about poverty reduction in recent years: now what we need is the political will and commitment of resources necessary to address the issues through comprehensive and well funded programs which enable, support and enhance local poverty reduction initiatives that are happening in municipalities across the province. It is also essential to work in partnership with Indigenous communities to ensure access to culturally relevant and appropriate services and programs.

Effective and sustained poverty reduction programs can potentially have the most powerful positive effects on the education of children who are most disadvantaged in Alberta's schools, and they must be a central feature of the programs of our province's government in future.

"We need so much more support in our classrooms! We have increasing numbers of students with learning challenges, bigger classroom sizes, a larger number of ELL students, more behaviour challenges, and less EA support than ever. Our students (especially special needs students) are not receiving the attention, help, and support that they deserve. Teachers are burning out from the expectations of providing a safe environment, positive learning experience, and helping students achieve growth academically, socially, and emotionally. I feel that the responsibilities/roles that are increasingly being thrust on teachers create a situation where we are destined to fail."

- Edmonton Public teacher

"I used to feel supported and honoured to be a teacher in Canada and Alberta. I always believed we were paid well and respected by our government and the general public. With this government this has changed. We are doing our best but when you walk around our schools, there is a tension that is palpable. We will always do what we do for the kids but we are losing hope that we are valued members of society."

- Edmonton Public teacher

"As a parent, I [feel] hopeless with what's happening with the education funding system in our province."

- a concerned parent in Edmonton

6. Infrastructure

Urban class sizes have ballooned in recent years, we need far more schools, and there is a dramatic need for much more maintenance and renovation. If the provincial government increases funding to hire more teachers, there is clearly not enough physical space in Edmonton Public Schools to house them. Our membership noted that class sizes can only be reduced with funding for more teachers and paraprofessionals in hand with an increased funding commitment to build new schools while renovating and expanding existing ones.

Priority Change: The Province must commit to building new schools while renovating and expanding existing public school infrastructure so every student is housed in a setting where their needs can be fully met.

Clearly, in order to achieve equitable learning opportunities for all students there needs to be much more physical space provided alongside the hiring of more teachers, and the funding must be both substantial and sustainable. Such long-term expenditures in infrastructure need to be seen as a necessary and wise investment in the future of public education, and the public good.

“Our outdated schools seem to be [continually] undergoing minor patch-type repairs.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

“If we are going to make class sizes a priority then we need to focus on infrastructure. Even if more teachers are hired to reduce class sizes, there is not enough physical space in most Edmonton Public Schools to host them. We need stable and reliable provincial funding to invest in building more schools and adding additional classrooms to existing schools now.”

- Edmonton Public teacher

(B) Next Steps

It is vitally important that we begin to have open and honest conversations about the complexities we are all facing in our day-to-day work with students. The public does not yet fully understand the complex student needs of our classrooms or the deteriorating conditions in which we are working. The coming provincial election offers an enormous opportunity to both inform the public about the need for changes and to advocate for the kind of changes and solutions that will dramatically strengthen public education.

What you can do:

- *Determine whether the party’s platform addresses these issues. If not, ask the candidate for their own views on these priority areas.*
 - *Communicate to candidates that strengthening our public education system is a top priority for you, and the candidate/party position on education issues will play an important role in your decision about supporting a candidate*
 - *If you agree with these priorities for action, arrange to meet with each candidate in your constituency (even those that you are unlikely to support – it is important for all parties to hear about voter concerns on these issues) and give a copy of these priorities to the candidate. Briefly review the proposals, and advise the candidate that you will return soon in order to learn which proposals for change the candidate agrees and/or disagrees with, and why.*
 - *If you find a candidate/party that is in favour of these directions, and if the issues are important to you, consider supporting the candidate by taking a sign, making a donation, or working on their campaign.*
-

(C) Concerns we heard from you to inform our Priorities for Change

We greatly appreciate the fact that so many Edmonton Public teachers took the time from their far-too-busy situations to express their concerns and priorities.

The following points briefly summarize the many concerns and suggestions that were expressed by teachers in their responses.

Class Size Limits That Consider Complexity of Classroom Composition

- Students needs cannot be adequately addressed in large classes
- Not enough time to do our best work with students
- Class sizes smaller than the [Alberta Commission on Learning](#)
 - > Junior kindergarten – Grade 3: 17 students
 - > Grade 4-6: 23 students
 - > Grade 7-9: 25 students
 - > Grade 10–12: 27 students
- Compositions should be considered - class with special needs of ELL should be smaller
- Increased behavioural, social-emotional and mental health needs
- Increased learner complexities with no additional supports no additional supports
- Mental health/trauma presents in classrooms; teachers are not mental health professionals
- Increased student anxiety
- Mandatory funded ELL pullouts for all students coded ELL especially those new to Canada
- Restoration of PUF funding
- Classroom conditions must be written into teachers' collective agreements (contracts)
- Timely access to additional testing/supports (SLPs, OTs, PTs, etc.) as right now it falls onto the plates of teachers

In School Mental Health Professionals and Supports

- Nurses and mental health supports at all schools
- Mental health support that extend out to families
- Schools where all individuals feel physically and mentally safe
- “Education on emotions”
- Resources to teach resilience
- Continuous Health & Mental Health curriculum from K-12 to aid in our children’s development into adulthood
- Many students are missing out on proactive care
- Limited number of Mental Health Capacity building (MHCB) Wellness coaches
- Destigmatization of mental illness must be prioritized; remove the implicit division between physical and mental health.
- We want children to be happy! When you are happy, you can do anything!

A New and Relevant Curriculum that's Designed with Teachers

- Curriculum that includes representation of all communities and cultures, anti-racism work
- Quality curriculum designed by stakeholders with input from teachers
- Create a concept based curriculum for the 21st century
- Curriculum that teaches students to problem solve rather than to regurgitate facts from memory
- Curriculum based on educational expertise not politics
- Anti-racism training and education for students and staff
- Local Indigenous languages should be taught
- Curriculum developed with teacher experts and built on 21st Century Skills
- Curriculum that considers pace and amount of outcomes required to be taught within a year
- Resources made prior to new curriculum implementation
- Curriculum based on research not politics
- Age appropriate curriculum

Increased Funding

- Abolish school fees including field trips, class materials and school supplies
- Transportation to and from school at no cost
- Funding for art programs
- Funded libraries complete with librarians
- Funding to improve and update resources
- Change the 'weighted moving average' funding model to be more equitable, sustainable, predictable funding
- Increased funding per student
- Provide a cost of living wage increase for all school staff
- Restore PUF funding
- Equipment and supplies that match the changing needs of today

Stop Diverting Public Taxes to Private and Charter Schools

- Alberta ranks **first** nationally in the amount of money we give to private schools (these schools are receiving per-student funding as well as grants that do not require public consultation), but Alberta only ranks **7th** in per capita allocations for students in public schools compared to other provinces.
- The misleading narrative of "parent choice" is clever way to divert substantial public funding away from public education into private coffers
- Alberta spends in excess of \$200 million per year providing subsidies to private schools that are in direct competition with our public system
- Within the next four years, eliminate the category of charter schools and give them the choice to be rolled into the public education system and receive public funding or be recategorized as private schools with no public funding
- Education should not be run as business
- Stop public dollars from subsidizing private and charter schools for the wealthy

- Why give public dollars to schools that do not welcome all students within their four walls but get to pick and choose? Public schools welcome all children and public dollars should go towards public education only
- Restore funding that has been cut in recent years

Teacher Workload Expectations

- Time for teachers to plan, prep and evaluate students within their day
- Too many administrative duties (i.e. meetings) instead of actual time to teach, plan and assess.
- Exhausted and burnt-out workers are not at their peak effectiveness.
- When new expectations are placed on educators, more time (such as release time) is required.
- Support when working with difficult parents; when you go to a doctor's office, there is a clear sign that no abuse will be taken
- Teachers are burning out from the expectations of providing a safe environment, positive learning experience, and helping students achieve growth academically, socially, and emotionally.
- The responsibilities/roles that are increasingly being thrust on teachers create a situation where we are destined to fail
- Not adequate prep time - a full day of prep before the first day of school and increased weekly preps
- Compensation for the extra time it takes to complete government required assessments
- Less expectations for professional learning and extra curricular activity
- More prep time during PD and other time periods
- Teachers are being called on to single-handedly solve all the issues in society as reflected in the children - COVID effects, economic issues for families, increased trauma and abuse, racial unrest, and so much more.
- We're excellent at what we do, but we cannot shoulder the responsibility of solving all these problems. We really need help.
- Needs of my students are so great that I am emotionally exhausted at the end of each and every day
- Can not possibly ever fill their buckets to the point where they are able to self regulate emotionally and behaviourally
- Not possible to program for and meet all of these children's needs, let alone plan and prep. learning opportunities for the rest of the class in the assignable time
- Physical and mental well-being are tested on a regular basis. This model of education is not sustainable.
- Fix the demands on teachers. Stop normalizing working through evenings and weekends.
- Get our prep time back in high school. We are drowning. Not only did they take our preps, they gave us an additional class of 35 students to look after.
- There is no time to be a good teacher. No time for emails, helping students, photocopying, collaboration, using the washroom etc.
- Increased demand on teachers to fulfill student needs above and beyond the realm of "teaching curriculum" - teachers are trained to educate students on a government mandated curriculum but the demands of the current classroom often make it difficult for teachers to do their job successfully.
- We are having to teach skills that we are not qualified to teach to students that need professional help from, say, a psychologist or counsellor

- Increasing demands on teachers to create multiple programs within each classroom for special needs, ELL students, refugees, and students working below grade level. This doubles our preparation and marking time as we need to make three to four versions of each assessment, give individual feedback, and then continue to plan a cohesive alternate program for many.
- Being expected to perform at "regular capacity" and start increasing all extracurricular demands to a pre-Covid time when we are working each day with less prep time and less support.
- Support/mentorship for new teachers- surviving and helping students achieve with the complex needs these days and a lack of EA support feels insurmountable for new teachers

Supports

- Supports should include: speech language pathologists, occupational therapists , physiotherapists and access should be timely
- Support needs to be equitable and consistent
- Proper funding to support inclusion
- Fully funded EA's for all students who need it
- Restore PUF funding
- Food programs in all schools
- High needs classrooms need to have two dedicated teachers
- Timely access to testing and results for those with special needs
- Intervention supports for, numeracy, reading and writing
- Nurses at every school
- Fully funded school libraries with teacher librarian
- No school fees
- Fully funded music & arts programs in all schools
- Free bussing
- Field trips, class materials, school supplies to be provided at no cost to families or teachers
- All schools should have a well-resourced library with a full time librarian

Infrastructure

- Space(s) for student learning to match enrollment (i.e. EPSB = approx 110k students)
- Updated facilities to inspire innovation in classrooms, especially with technology equipment and speciality technology for specific programs
- Public dollars to improve inundated public school buildings
- Gym space(s) for physical activity – very few opportunities for students to get active during the school day
- Updating school buildings for accommodations for accessibility, including gender neutral restrooms

EAL (English as a Second Language) Programs and Supports

- Refugees who just arrived in Canada and has no understanding of English yet
- Programs like MYLI are being cut increasing demands on teachers to create multiple programs within each classroom for special needs, ELL students, refugees, and students working below grade level

- Students may arrive (often very suddenly) in the classroom with little or no English
- More common with sometimes more than 1/4 to 1/3 of the students in a classroom not knowing English, not to mention other students who simply do not speak English as their first language.
- Supports offered generally include "use Google Translate", "label your classroom" or "have students help them".
- Larger number of ELL students who need support
- Canadian classrooms today are incredibly diverse

Time

- Ensure teachers have the time to support students, make family calls and be available
- Time during the day for teachers to be able to prep for their classes and do some of the admin tasks needed
- Time for teachers to plan for, and evaluate students within their day at least 3:1
- Where teachers are provided adequate time for prep
- Teachers need time to meet with parents
- Lowering teacher workloads to include more prep time
- Teachers should have more prep time 1 hour for every 3 hours taught
- Caps on both instructional time and assignable time
- For public school staff to be allocated time for clubs and teams so they can be available for all children

Inclusive Learning and Working Communities

- All children need to be included! No one left out and no one left behind
- Buildings where all individuals in a school feel physically and emotionally safe
- GSA in every school
- Safe spaces & Education around 2SLGBTQ community
- A place where all students feel they are seen, accepted and belong
- Mandatory anti-racism training & Education for students and staff
- Truth and Reconciliation calls to action 62-65
 - o Develop and fund
 - o Comparative religious studies
 - o Research
- A space where the diversity of all students is welcomed, recognized and celebrated
- Anti-Racism Education
- Indigenous Languages: local Indigenous languages should be taught
- Ensuring that schools are fully committed to anti-racism policies and practices
- School built to accommodate and update accessibility
- Gender neutral washrooms
- Hybrid/Inclusive spaces for disabled neurodivergent kids
- Ensuring that schools do more than pay lip service to Truth and Reconciliation