

MEDIA RELEASE

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2012 Ontario Budget Undermines Eight Years of Progress in Education

(Toronto) – When Minister Duncan introduced his budget today, he referred to contract negotiations in the education sector and said, “if no agreement can be struck to protect Ontario’s progress in education and health care, we are prepared to propose necessary administrative and legislative measures to protect the public from service disruptions...Respect will be our watchword when it comes to these negotiations. Respect for our public-sector partners. Respect for the collective bargaining process.” Ken Coran, President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), responded that “today’s budget is not about respect and it threatens to undo eight years of collaboration, open dialogue and progress in education.”

OSSTF/FEESO shares the government’s view that education is the best investment in Ontario’s future. We also agree that partners meeting collaboratively to tackle difficult issues is the best way to create successful outcomes. However, for the first time, an Ontario budget threatens collective bargaining rights.

For the first time, an Ontario budget threatens the most successful public pension plan in the world, one that is controlled by a joint partnership agreement. These actions do not equate to respect and collaboration. They undermine and demoralize.

Coran concluded, “We have seen that imposing legislation upon workers, and not negotiating with them in good faith, leads only to further discontent and distrust. I call upon the government to honour what it has stated about the collective bargaining process – respect it and the workers who make Ontario’s education system one of the best in the world.”

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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