



The 2004 Elementary Tracking Report

People for Education

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The 2004 Elementary School Tracking Report

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People for Education is a not-for-profit parents' group working together to support public education in Ontario's English, French and Catholic schools.

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Executive Summary and Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A strong public education system offers all children, regardless of income, race, language, or religion, access to the education they need to become participating citizens. Public education holds within it the capacity to overcome generational cycles of poverty, change the destinies of immigrants and refugees, and create a sense of societal cohesion where few are excluded.

Resources for publicly-funded schools level the playing field for children. Children without books at home can find them in well-stocked school libraries. Children whose parents do not speak English can learn the language from specialist teachers in public schools. Music lessons, special education programs, counselling, and even school-based nutrition programs give children an equitable chance at future success. The People for Education Tracking Project examines the programs and staff that allow our publicly-funded schools to achieve these goals.

People for Education's Tracking Project is unique to Ontario. No other province in Canada has an ongoing parent-driven project using volunteers to keep track of the effects of policy and funding changes on schools. Since the start of this project, parents have collected seven years of school-based data on resources, programs and staff in schools. Next year, parents in British Columbia will launch their own Tracking Project, based on the People for Education project in Ontario.

Declining Trends Continue

This year we were surprised to find a continuing decline in many areas, despite some funding increases in 2002/03. The dwindling number of schools with specialist teachers and support staff continues to raise concerns across the province. We are also troubled by the worsening ratio of special education students to special education teachers and the on-going decrease in the number of full-time administrative staff. Support for public education continues to be strong in Ontario despite concerns about the loss of staff and programming. Parents consistently expressed pride in their schools and praise for their staff. They demonstrated a willingness to perform hundreds of hours of volunteer work, and to raise millions of extra dollars to ensure that their schools continue to thrive.

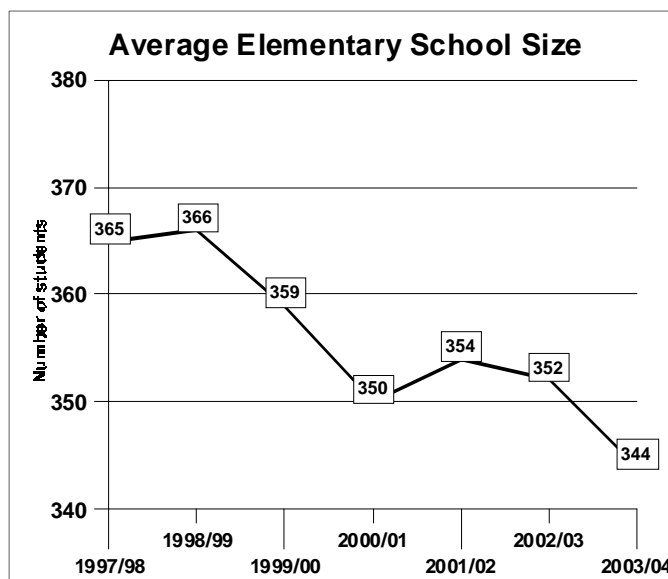
Per Pupil Funding Creates Gaps

Resources and staff in Ontario public schools continue to decline because they are funded by a prescriptive per pupil formula. The formula outlines basic programs and services for all students, but the inherent uniformity of this approach does not encompass the diversity of needs and costs across this large province. As a result, the formula cannot provide true equity, which is its stated goal.

Two factors compound the formula's underlying flaw. First, the per pupil benchmarks do not reflect the actual enrolment numbers of most Ontario schools. Second, funding levels do not match the real costs of salaries and services in most boards.

Declining Enrolment

The average enrolment in elementary schools has declined nearly every year since we began tracking. This is particularly problematic because funding is based almost exclusively on enrolment numbers. Unless there are substantial changes to the funding formula, soon only the very largest of Ontario's elementary schools will have teacher-librarians, guidance teachers or full-time vice-principals.



Enrolment is declining in nearly every board outside the suburban Greater Toronto Area due to lower birth rates and a decrease in the number of families settling in rural areas. Declines in resource-based industries in northern Ontario have forced many families to move south, and most new immigrants to Canada settle in suburban areas.

Contrary to popular belief, the so-called "flight" of students to private schools is not a major factor in enrolment decline.

Ministry of Education figures and data from the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools show the percentage of students in private schools has increased to only 5% in 2003 from 4% in 1996.

Actual Costs Exceed Present Funding

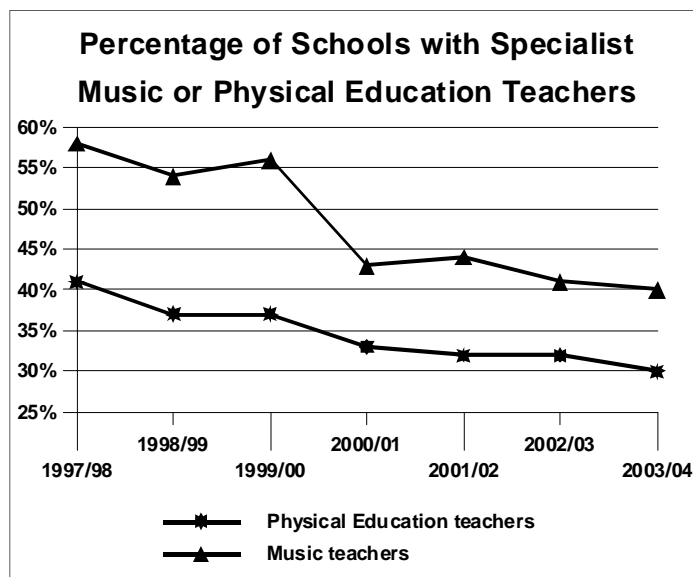
School boards report that they pay as much as 10% more in salaries and benefits than the funding formula presently provides. Teacher salary allocations in Ontario are \$255.4 million *less* than boards actually spend. To make up for this funding gap, boards are forced to cut specialists, close schools, or limit non-core programming like extra-curricular activities and arts enrichment.

There are also a number of fixed costs for schools that are not reflected in a per pupil based funding formula. Schools need heat, light and maintenance whether they have 300 students or 500. In the report from the Education Equality Task Force, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski recognized that all schools, regardless of their size, need principals, secretaries, custodians and, in schools with grade 8 students, guidance counsellors. Our research shows that, in many boards, most of the schools do not have enough students to generate funding for these staff.

Specialist Teachers and Programs

This year's report highlights continuing losses in the areas of music, physical education, guidance, design and technology, and family studies. Fewer students have access to music programs taught by specialists, or to high quality physical education programs and guidance teachers. Our research also shows family studies and design and technology programs are being cut completely. The number of schools with ESL teachers has

declined by 24% across the province, but the number of schools with ESL students has increased by 10%.



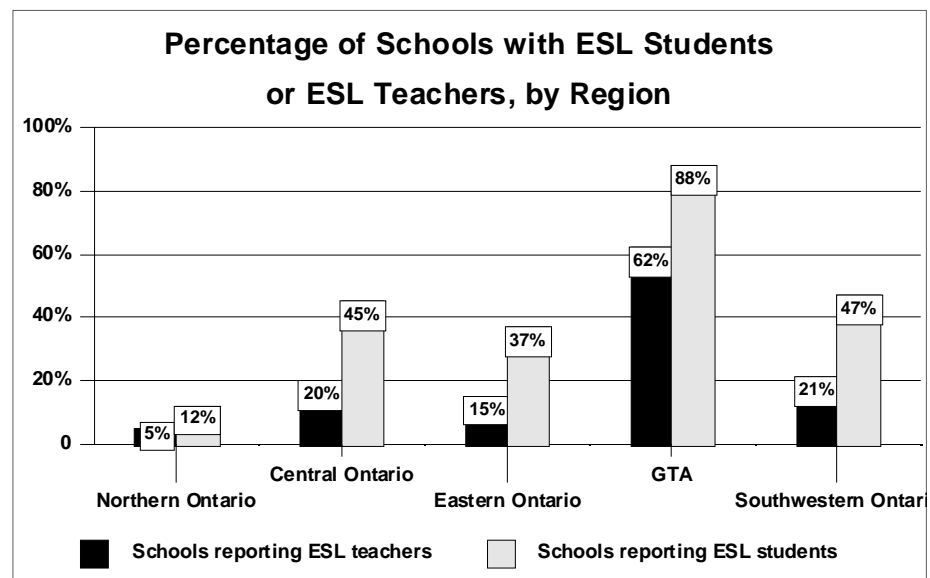
There is a renewed emphasis on literacy skills in the province, but this year's report shows Ontario's elementary students have less access to a proven support for literacy. Research shows that well-stocked school libraries staffed with teacher-librarians have a positive effect on reading and writing scores.

This year, schools have fewer teacher-librarians, fewer of them are working full-time and nearly one-quarter of school libraries are open only part-time.

Regional Discrepancies

Per pupil funding was implemented in order to provide equitable funding across the province. However, this system of funding does not provide equity in areas where most of the schools are small, and it has a limited capacity to provide extra resources for areas with a disproportionate number of students at risk.

Our data show wide variations in access to staff and programs across the province. These regional discrepancies appear to be based more on average school sizes than on sound research or local board policies. Students in northern Ontario are less likely to have regular access to psychologists than students in the rest of the province. In southwestern Ontario only 18% of schools have physical education teachers, compared to the provincial average of 30%. Seventy-six per cent of Ontario's English as a Second Language students live in the Greater Toronto Area. Eighty-eight per cent of GTA schools reported ESL students but only 62% of the schools had ESL teachers.



In every other region, there are also schools with ESL students but no ESL teachers.

Renewed Education Policy

Our research has tracked many changes in Ontario schools over the last seven years. There is a higher proportion of special education students in today's schools and more students who speak English as a second language. Schools are smaller, they have fewer staff and many of the specialist programs that enrich and broaden our children's education beyond basic literacy and numeracy have disappeared.

Ontario schools need a broad education policy that outlines the fixed costs for every school, regardless of size, determines the programs and staff that must be available in every school and has the flexibility to recognize and support the diverse needs of different communities.

Highlights from the Report

School Size

The average number of students per elementary school has declined by 6% since 1997. Because the funding formula is directly tied to enrolment, even this small decline has had a negative effect on staffing for many schools.

- Only 40% of elementary schools have sufficient numbers of students to generate funding for a full-time principal, although 87% reported having them, in many cases providing them by making cuts to other staff and services.
- 87% of schools reported a full-time principal compared to 94% in 1997/98.
- 16% of schools reported a full-time vice-principal, a decline of 45% since 1997/98.
- The number of schools with more than one secretary has declined by 22% since 1997/98.

Class Size

Class sizes have remained fairly stable since 1998/99, when the government introduced legislation mandating an average class size of 24.5 in elementary schools. But because the legislation mandates an average and not a cap, 42% of classes in 2003/04 had 26 students or more.

Textbooks

This year marks the first time since the introduction of the province's funding formula that the benchmark for textbook funding has increased.

- 62% of schools reported classes where students must share textbooks, compared to a high of 69% in 2001/02 and 62% in 1997/98.
- 66% of schools reported having textbooks that were worn or out-of-date, a decline of 13% since 1997/98.

Specialist Teachers

The Ontario curriculum has mandated requirements for the arts and physical education. However, there is no funding designated for specialist teachers in music, physical education, visual or performing arts, design and technology, or family studies. Despite evidence that strong music and physical education programs have an effect on students' achievement, physical health and overall engagement in learning, the number of schools with specialist teachers in these areas has declined dramatically since 1997/98.

- The number of schools with music teachers, either full- or part-time has declined by 31% since 1997/98.
- The number of schools with physical education teachers has declined by 27% since 1997/98.

Specialist guidance teachers in senior elementary schools are expected to counsel students, provide teacher advisory programs, and assist students with education plans, but the funding formula presently provides funding for one guidance teacher for every 5,000 elementary students.

Design and Technology and Family Studies programs prepare students for hands-on technology programs in secondary school and provide practical skills training. These programs have been cut in most boards because there is no funding for the specialized rooms the programs require and because the courses are not in the curriculum.

- The number of schools with grades 7 and 8 classes that reported having guidance teachers has declined 36% since 1998/99.
- The number of schools with family studies or design and technology teachers has declined over 60% since 1998/99.
- The ratio of students to full-time guidance teachers increased from

1,473 students to one teacher in 2000/01 (first year data available) to 2,030 students to one teacher in 2003/04.

Library

The staff and accessibility of school libraries in Ontario continues to decline despite research demonstrating the positive impact on student literacy of a well-equipped school library staffed by a qualified teacher-librarian.

School boards receive funding for teacher-librarians at a rate of one full-time librarian for every 769 students. Only 2% of elementary schools in the province have that many students.

- Since 1997/98 the number of schools with a teacher-librarian has declined by 30%.
- The number of schools with a full-time teacher-librarian has declined by 80% since 1997/98.

Special Education

The percentage of the student population receiving special education services has increased by nearly half since 2000/01. Yet staffing has not increased proportionately: each teacher is serving an average of 10 more students. The number of students province-wide waiting for special education services has increased for the fourth year in a row. There are approximately 43,000 students on waiting lists, an increase of 24% since 1999/00.

All students do not have equal access to special education services. Students in the north do not have regular access to psychologists. In southwestern Ontario, the ratios of special education students to special education teachers are the highest in the province.

- There is an average of 10.9 students per school on waiting lists for special education services.
- The average ratio per school of special education students to special education teachers was 33.8 students to one teacher, compared to 22.4 students per teacher in 2000/01.
- The number of schools reporting regular access to psychologists has declined by 45% since 1997/98.

English as a Second Language Programs

Under the Constitution, responsibility for immigration is shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government supports language training for adults and community-based settlement services, but it provides no support for ESL programs for children.

Since 1999/00, the number of schools with ESL students has increased by 10%. The number of schools with ESL teachers has declined by 18% over the same period.

- 24% of schools report having ESL students but no ESL teachers, more than double the number in 1999/00.
- 39% of schools report ESL programs, a 33% decline since 1997/98.

Parent Volunteers and Fundraising

Parent volunteers contribute the equivalent of nearly 1,600 full-time jobs province-wide in volunteer hours. Their services include helping on field trips, working in school libraries, coaching sports teams, and assisting in literacy programs. They raise approximately \$39 million province-wide for visiting artists, field trips, playground equipment, classroom supplies, and textbooks. But the distribution of fundraising and volunteer hours is not even across the province.

The top 10% of fundraising schools in our survey will raise a total of \$2 million, while the bottom 10% will raise only \$94,000. Schools in the top 5% of contributions of volunteer hours reported as many hours as the bottom 80% together.

- Schools reported an average of 137 volunteer hours per month.
- The median amount fundraised per school has increased from \$5,000 in 1998/99 to \$8,000 in 2003/04.
- 60% of schools reported fundraising for basic school supplies such as textbooks, computers and classroom supplies, compared to 65% in 1997/98.

School Buildings

More than half of Ontario elementary schools are over 40 years old. As buildings age, they require more frequent repairs, upgrades or replacement of electrical, plumbing and heating systems, roofs and windows. The cost

to clear up the backlog in repairs to Ontario's school buildings has been estimated at \$5.6 billion.

In the 2002 report of the Education Equality Task Force, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski recommended an increase of over \$400 million in annual funding for school maintenance, repair and renewal of school buildings. To date, approximately \$80 million has been allocated. An additional annual grant of \$200 million will be available in 2005/06, leaving a shortfall of \$120 million from the Rozanski recommendations.

- 35% of schools in this year's survey report their buildings require renovations or general upgrades that were not approved.
- 50% of schools reported that general upgrades like roof repairs, new furnaces, paint, or carpet replacement were complete or in progress.

Community Use of Schools

Schools are the focal point for many neighbourhoods, yet there has been a 13% drop in the number of schools reporting that the community uses their school building for events like sports activities, ratepayers' meetings or after-school classes.

Increased user fees and reduced access to schools promote inequity by making physical and recreation facilities too expensive for the families who need them most.

A recent report from Parks and Recreation Ontario found that the current funding formula does not support other government policy related to the benefits of recreation and physical activity, including policies outlined by the Early Years Strategy, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Public Safety and Security.

- The percentage of schools reporting fees for community use has more than doubled since 1997/98.

Busing

Since 1997, the overall cost of transportation has risen by more than 25%, but provincial funding for busing has increased by approximately 12.6% over the same period.

Boards make up for this funding shortfall either by making cuts in other areas, by busing students in shifts so that some begin school very early, or by cutting back on the number of buses, thus compelling students to ride on buses for extended periods of time.

- This year, the longest reported one-way bus ride was one hour and forty minutes – meaning some students are on buses for more than three hours per day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>School Staff</i> | <p>1. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funds teachers at a rate that reflects actual salaries and benefits; • outlines and funds the staff and programs that should be in every school, regardless of size; • ensures lower class sizes in all schools, particularly in kindergarten and primary grades; • provides funding for one full-time principal for every school; • provides funding for one full-time secretary for every school; and • ensures equitable access to vice-principals and educational assistants in all schools. |
| <i>Specialist Teachers</i> | <p>2. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides funding for physical education teachers and music teachers; and • ensures adequate designated funding for boards to offer specialist guidance, visual and performing arts, design and technology and family studies teachers in schools with grades 7 and 8. |
| <i>Library</i> | <p>3. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that school libraries are staffed by teacher-librarians, open full-time and have adequate acquisitions budgets. |
| <i>Textbooks</i> | <p>4. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides funding for textbooks, classroom materials and teachers' manuals that reflects inflation and rising costs. |
| <i>Special Education</i> | <p>5. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides funding for a sufficient number of special education teachers |

and educational assistants to allow boards the flexibility to make local choices about how to deliver special education programs.

*Professional
Support
Services*

6. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:

- reflects actual salaries for psychologists, social workers, speech language pathologists and youth workers, and
- ensures that school boards with small populations have access to the services of these professionals.

*English as a
Second
Language*

7. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:

- provides ESL/PDF instruction until students are proficient in English or French; and
- secures the support of the federal government to develop national standards and federal transfer funds for the provision of second language instruction and other essential services to immigrant children.

*School
Buildings*

8. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:

- implements the remaining Education Equality Task Force recommendations for school renewal, new pupil places and deferred maintenance and replacement of schools too expensive to repair.

*Community Use
of Schools*

9. People for Education recommends the implementation of education policy that:

- recognizes and funds community use of schools, either through the Ministry of Education, another provincial ministry, or through municipal grants.

Transportation

10. People for Education recommends the implementation of a transportation policy that:

- is tied to fuel costs;
- ensures that no student spends more than 1.5 hours per day on the school bus; and
- includes a funding policy for the transportation of special education students.

Findings

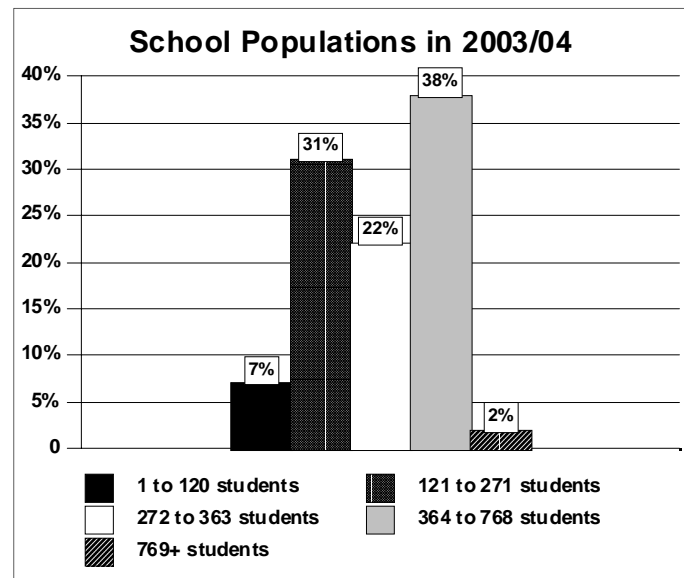
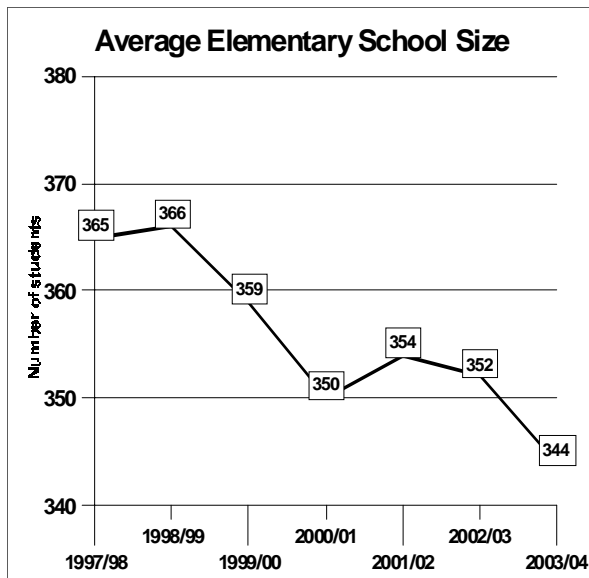
SCHOOL SIZE

“As our school population shrinks, so does staffing. With fewer staff there is less flexibility to meet student needs with extra support.”

*K-6 school,
Toronto District School
Board*

The average number of students per elementary school has declined by 6% since 1997. Enrolment is critical when staff is assigned to Ontario schools because the Foundation Grant in the funding formula gives school boards funding for staff on a per pupil basis. The formula establishes the number of students needed to generate administrative staff, specialist teachers, and educational assistants at a higher level than the enrolment of most schools. In 2003/04, only 40% of elementary schools had sufficient numbers of students to generate funding for a full-time principal.

Many school boards choose to keep schools open and viable by providing administrative staff such as principals and vice-principals to schools with too few students to generate the funding. Boards provide this staff by making cuts in areas like textbooks, classroom supplies and maintenance. Similarly, boards make cuts in other areas to provide funding for teacher-librarians, educational assistants and guidance counsellors. These positions are funded at per pupil levels that are much higher than the enrolment of the majority of schools.



Funding Formula Per Pupil Allocation for Elementary Schools		
Staff	Number of students required to generate funding	Percentage of elementary schools with sufficient enrolment to generate staff
1 full-time principal	364	40%
1 full-time vice-principal	1,333	0%
1 full-time secretary	272	61%
1 full-time teacher-librarian	769	2%
1 full-time guidance counsellor	5,000	0%
1 full-time educational assistant	5,000	0%

Administrative Staff

This year, only 40% of schools had sufficient enrolment to generate funding for a full-time principal, but 87% of schools reported having one. In many cases, boards provide this staff by making cuts in other areas.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- none of the schools had sufficient enrolment to generate funding for a full-time vice-principal, while 16% reported having at least one; and
- 61% of schools had sufficient enrolment to generate funding for a full-time secretary, while 94% reported having at least one.

Declining Enrolment

Enrolment is declining in nearly every board outside the suburban Greater Toronto Area. Birth rates are lower across Ontario, and fewer families are settling in rural areas. The decline of resource-based industries in northern Ontario has forced many families to move south, and most new immigrants to Canada settle in suburban areas.

Our 2003/04 survey shows that the average number of students per elementary school has declined by 6% since 1997.

Actual Costs and Funding Formula Benchmarks

School boards report that they pay as much as 10% more in salaries and benefits than the funding formula presently provides. There are also a number of fixed costs for schools that are not reflected in the per pupil funding formula. Schools need heat, light and maintenance whether they have 300 students or 500. Boards make up for funding gaps by cutting specialists, limiting programming like extra-curricular and enrichment activities, and closing small schools.

“We are a small rural school that is strongly supported by our community, but as a small school experiencing declining enrolment, we cannot provide enough staff or special programming for students due to the funding model.”

*JK-8 school,
Avon Maitland District
School Board*

School Closings

Research on school closings in Ontario shows that in the ten years between 1985 and 1995, an average of 23 schools closed per year. From 1999 to June 2004, the average increased to 46 schools per year.¹ Sixty per cent of the schools closed were too small to generate funding for full-time principals.

In the 2002 report from the Education Equality Task Force, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski recommended increased funding to ensure that small schools in single-school communities had sufficient staff, including a principal, a secretary, a custodian and, in schools with grades 8 and up, a guidance counsellor. This recommendation has not been implemented.

In 2003, the government implemented a new formula for rural and northern schools. Because the new funding is based strictly on the distance between schools, it did not provide relief for school boards with high numbers of small schools.

In May 2004, 44 school closings were scheduled, and at least 13 more were confirmed for 2005.² Most of the schools closing are small, and a number of them are schools in single-school communities.

Endnotes

1. People for Education, “School closings continue despite moratorium,” (Media Release, May 3, 2004).
2. Ibid.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

“As principal, with no vice-principal or administrative assistant, my job has become increasingly more difficult and time-consuming. With the bureaucratic paperwork, I never have any time to get into the classrooms where I would like to be.”

*K-8 school,
Trillium Lakelands
District School Board*

Every school needs a principal and a secretary. Because the funding formula assigns staff on a per pupil basis, many schools fall far below the enrolment needed to generate these essential positions. In theory, boards should be able to balance the staffing needs of small schools with the funding generated by large schools. However, there are many boards in which the majority of schools are small.

This year, only 40% of elementary schools have sufficient numbers of students to generate funding for a full-time principal, although 87% reported having one.

Before funding was increased in 2003, some boards coped with the lack of funding for principals by assigning one principal to two schools (twinning). However, boards said they found this practice unworkable. Principals responsible for two schools spent too much time travelling and were less available to both staff and parents. Since the funding increase, some boards have reintroduced full-time principals to their schools.

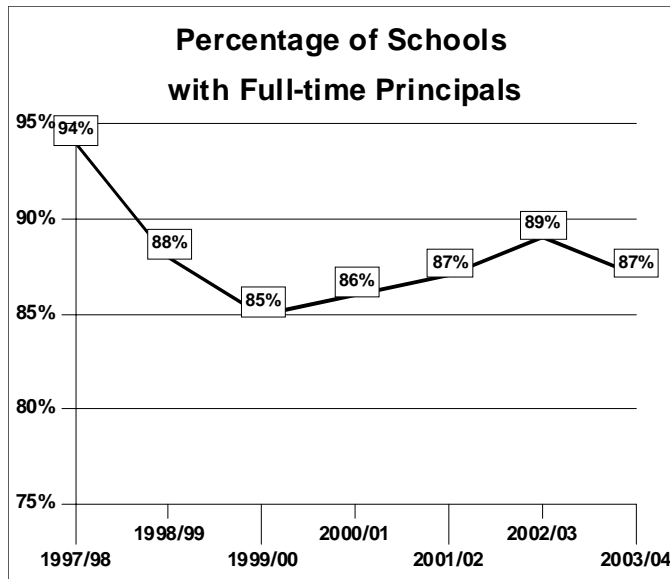
Principals

“I’m concerned that being a ‘teaching principal’ does not serve the school or students, but again, our board’s hands are tied. Very few schools are large enough for funding for a full-time principal.”

*JK-8 school,
Avon Maitland District
School Board*

Principals in Ontario schools oversee instruction, discipline and the management of the school. They supervise the teaching and non-teaching staff, conduct performance appraisals, manage the school budget, oversee the safety and physical condition of the school building, and work with the school council and parent community. One or more vice-principals may be assigned to assist with these duties.

Principals are advised and assisted in their duties by supervisory officers. These board staff provide program leadership and planning, allocate staff, oversee regional policies and planning of facilities, and co-ordinate special education. There has been a 50% decrease in the number of supervisory officers since 1995, making the duties of principals increasingly onerous.¹

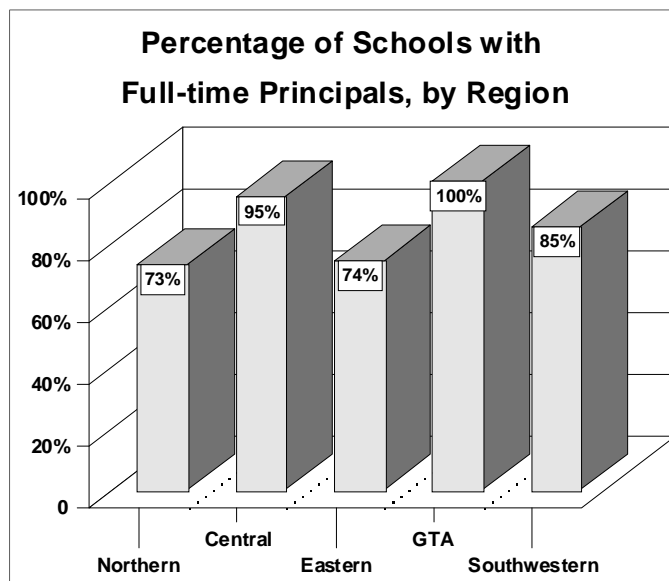


In our 2003/04 survey:

- 87% of schools reported a full-time principal, compared to 94% in 1997/98; and
- 13% reported a part-time principal compared to 6% in 1997/98.

Regional Variations

The number of schools reporting a full-time principal varies by region. While 100% of schools in the Greater Toronto region and 95% of schools in central Ontario reported a full-time principal, the figure drops to 73% in northern Ontario and 74% in eastern Ontario.



"We have only one administrator and there is no supply coverage for a principal designate when the principal is out of the building. The designate teaches full time and must leave his/her class to attend to problems as they arise. The Special Education Resource Teacher or Child Youth Worker must cover the designate's class."

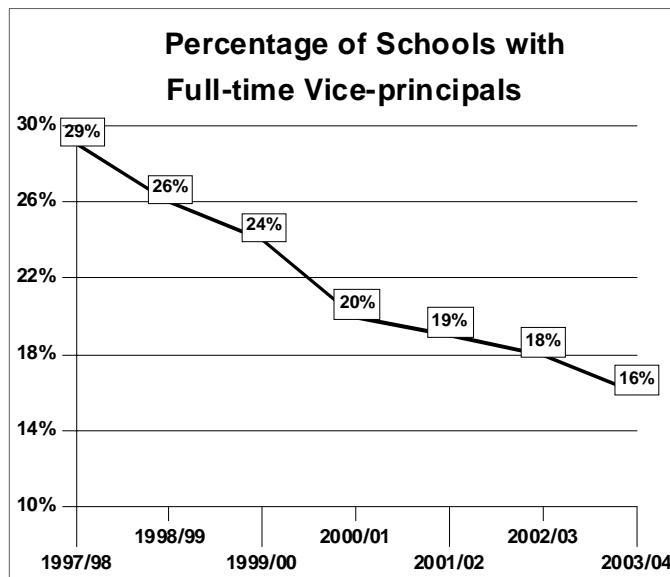
*K-8 school,
York Region
District School Board*

Vice-principals

Although no schools in our 2003/04 survey had enough students to generate funding for a full-time vice-principal, 16% of schools reported having one. However, in 1997/98, before the funding formula was introduced, 29% of schools reported having a full-time vice-principal.

In 2003/04:

- 43% of schools reported having a vice-principal, for some or all of the time, compared to 54% in 1997/98;
- 25% reported a part-time vice-principal, the same as in 1997/98; and
- 16% reported a full-time vice-principal, compared to 29% in 1997/98.



Office Staff

The office is the hub of the school and school secretaries are at the centre of that hub. Secretaries take care of everything from payroll to scraped knees. They maintain school files, co-ordinate purchasing and community use of schools, and may be responsible for the safe arrival program. The funding formula provides one secretary for every 272 students. In 2003/04, 39% of schools were too small to generate funding for a secretary.

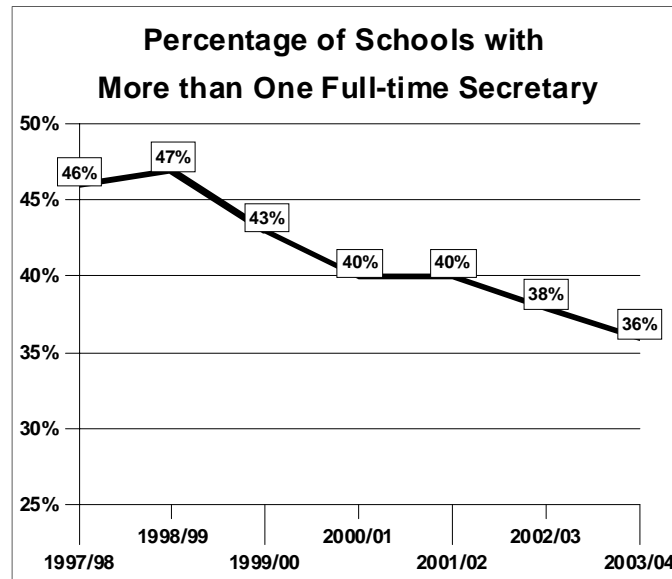
In 2003/04, our survey shows that 61% of schools had sufficient enrolment to generate funding for a full-time secretary and 94% reported having at least one.

In 2003/04:

- 94% of schools reported at least one full-time secretary, compared to 81% in 1997/98;
- 36% reported more than one full-time secretary compared to 46% in 1997/98; and
- 6% reported a part-time secretary, compared to 10% in 1999/00 and 6% in 1997/98.

“Our school secretary is the heart of our school. She knows every child in the school well, and she looks after all the injuries and the problems. She coaches sports and is essential to most of the events happening at the school.”

*JK-6 school,
Toronto District
School Board*



Endnotes

1. Frank Kelly, Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education. In conversation, May 14, 2004.

CLASS SIZE

“Our concerns, being a JK-3 Primary School, are huge class sizes. More and more children are having difficulties with learning, and if our teachers aren’t able to give them the time and attention due to a large class size, students will suffer.”

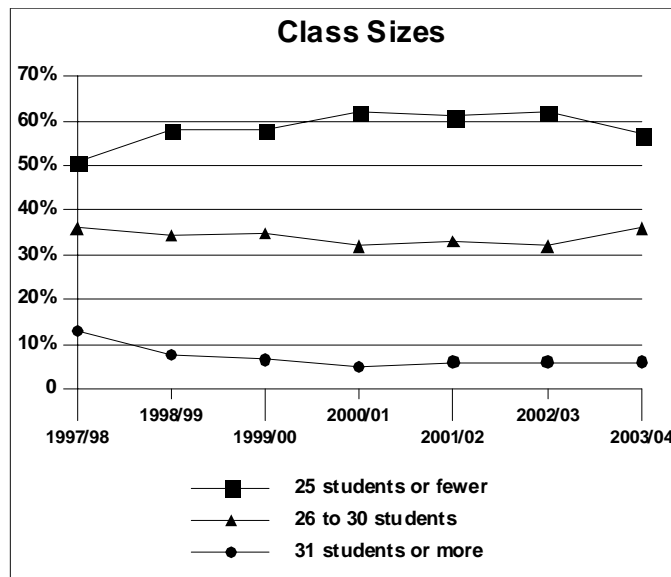
*JK-3 school,
Catholic District School
Board of Eastern
Ontario*

Class size is mandated by the *Education Act*. At the elementary level, the Act requires each school board to have an average of 24.5 students per class.¹ In the primary division the average class size must not exceed 24 students. This board-wide average does not include special education classes.

Since the maximum number is an across-the-board average and not a cap on individual class sizes, there can be a wide range of class sizes depending on the subject area, the grade and the size of the school.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 57% of classes had 25 students or fewer, compared to 51% in 1997/98;
- 36% of classes had 26 to 30 students, unchanged since 1997/98; and
- 6% of classes had 31 or more students, compared to 13% in 1997/98.



"This is a medium-sized French Immersion/English track school, which means we don't have enough students to have full grades on their own. As a result we are forced to use split grades. This year we had a 1/2 and a 2/3. It is unfortunate to have a split grade at such an early age, particularly when students are learning to read."

*K-8 school,
Catholic District
School Board of
Eastern Ontario*

Split Classes

This year, for the first time, we asked schools if they had split classes with three or more grades in them. Six per cent of schools reported that they did. However, in northern Ontario, 14% of schools reported classes with three or more grades.

Regional Variation

In northern Ontario, 70% of schools reported classes of 25 students or fewer. The eastern, central, Greater Toronto, and southwestern regions all reported that between 55% and 59% of their classes had 25 students or fewer.

Benefits of Small Classes

Research on class size shows that investing in small classes in the early years results in significant long-term benefits to students. The Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio Study shows that students assigned to small classes of between 13 and 17 students were less likely to fail a grade level and performed better on all tests. Students in these small classes were found to have better grades in their high school courses and were taking more advanced courses than students from the other two cohorts. They were also less likely to be suspended than peers who started school in larger classes.² While the study found that all students significantly benefited from participation in small classes, the greatest advantages were found for minority, inner-city students from low socio-economic backgrounds.³

In April 2004, the provincial government announced that it would begin reducing class sizes from junior kindergarten to grade 3 in time for the 2004/05 school year.

Endnotes

1. Ministry of Education, *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER E.2 Section 170.1. <http://192.75.156.68/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90e02_e.htm#BK142>
2. Health and Education Research Operative Services (HEROS), *The State of Tennessee's Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Project: Summary*. <<http://www.heros-inc.org/star.htm#Summary>>
3. HEROS, *STAR Follow-up Studies, 1996-1997* (HEROS, September 2, 1997). <<http://www.heros-inc.org/newstar.pdf>>

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

There has been a significant decrease in the number of schools with specialist teachers since we began our survey in 1997/98. There are also dramatic differences in access to specialist teachers from one region of the province to another.

Funding for Specialists

Music, physical education, visual and dramatic arts, and some elements of design and technology and family studies are all mandatory topics in the elementary curriculum. However, there is no designated funding in the provincial funding formula for specialist teachers in these subject areas.

Boards may require regular classroom teachers to deliver curriculum in these subject areas, or they may fund specialist positions in other ways. Funding can be provided from the classroom teacher portion of the Foundation Grant, or may be generated through the preparation time allocation for each regular classroom teacher.

Each classroom teacher is entitled to preparation time to use for preparing lessons, marking, or meeting with parents. In schools with large numbers of students, there may be sufficient numbers of teachers to generate enough preparation time to pay for one or more specialist teachers. Funding for preparation time amounts to funding for approximately one teacher for every ten classroom teachers. Smaller schools are at a disadvantage with this formula because they may not have enough teachers to generate the preparation time needed to provide specialists. Even large elementary schools must make difficult choices between funding different programs.

Physical Education

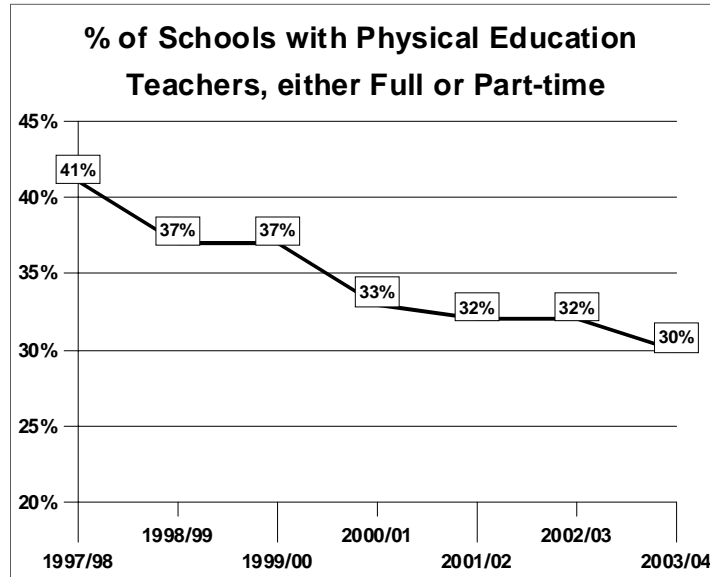
There has been a steady decline since 1997 in the number of schools with physical education teachers. This decline continues despite research indicating that a well-developed physical education program has a positive impact on the health and well-being of students.

"We currently are a small school, so we lack in our music and library time and extra activities. But we are a 'community school' and that is very nice. So a lot is put on the parents to make up for the shortcomings of our school."

*JK-6 school,
Halton District
School Board*

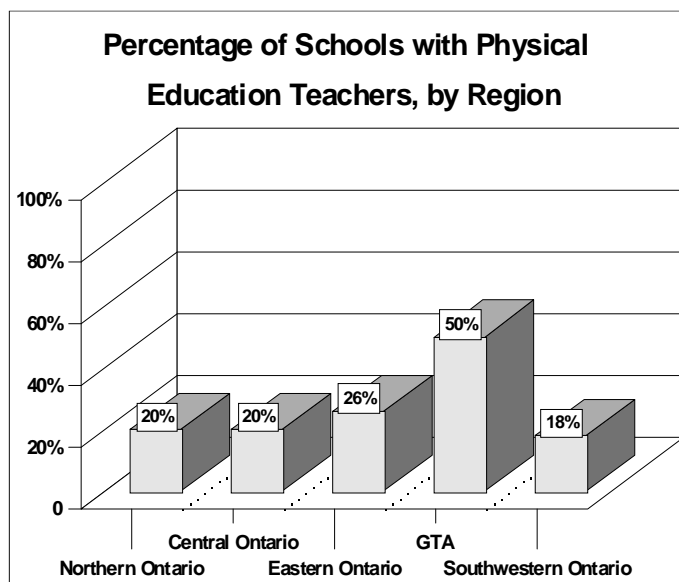
In our 2003/04 survey:

- 30% of schools reported having a physical education teacher, either full- or part-time, compared to 41% in 1997/98; and
- 16% of schools reported having a full-time physical education teacher, compared to 18% in 1997/98.



Regional Differences

Students across the province do not have equal access to physical education teachers.



Access ranged from a low of 18% of schools in southwestern Ontario to 50% of schools in the Greater Toronto Area, where there is a greater concentration of large schools. Large schools have enough staff to allow boards to generate specialist teachers through preparation time funding.

“We know that 54% of Ontario’s children aren’t active enough. The one place all kids have a chance for physical activity is in their local schools. All levels of government must do more to ensure that our children are provided with the resources they need to improve their health.”

*Dr. Sheela Basrur,
People for Education
press conference,
May 2002*

Physical Education, Fitness and Achievement

Recent research shows that obesity in children has tripled over the past 20 years. One in three Canadian children is now overweight.¹ In addition, the 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) shows that as many as 82% of Canadian children may not have been active enough to meet international guidelines for optimal growth and development.² There is a growing body of research that shows that physical education programs are key to turning these trends around.³

But physical education has an impact on more than physical health. Increased opportunities for physical activity lead to improved academic test scores as well.⁴

It should be noted that not all physical education classes are equal. An Ontario study found that in situations where regular classroom teachers must deliver the physical education curriculum, gym periods may be missed, and many classroom teachers do not have the knowledge or skills to deliver a program of vigorous physical activity. The report recommends adequate teacher training, support, and resources to improve the status of physical education and, in turn, the health of children.⁵

Music

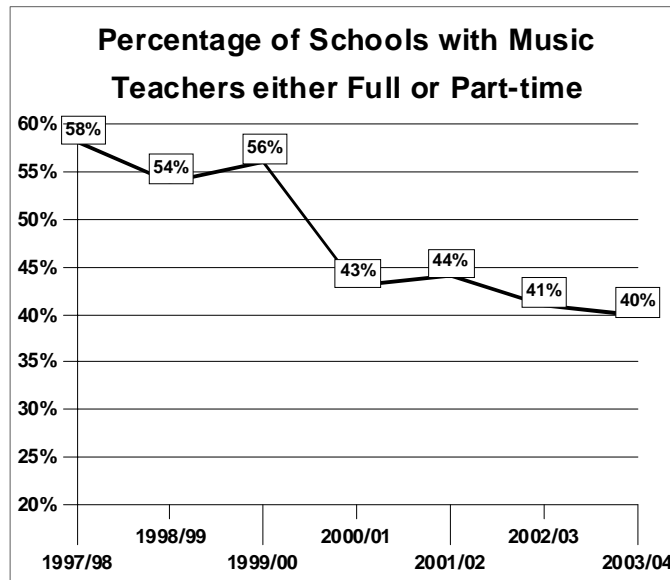
To teach the Ontario elementary music curriculum properly, a teacher must be able to read music, understand musical terms and think conceptually about music. Without specialist teachers, the music curriculum cannot be delivered at more than a rudimentary level.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 40% of schools reported having a music teacher, either full- or part-time, compared to 58% in 1997/1998;
- 14% reported having a full-time music teacher, relatively unchanged since 1997/98; and
- 21% reported having an itinerant music teacher, virtually unchanged since the question was first asked in 2000/01.

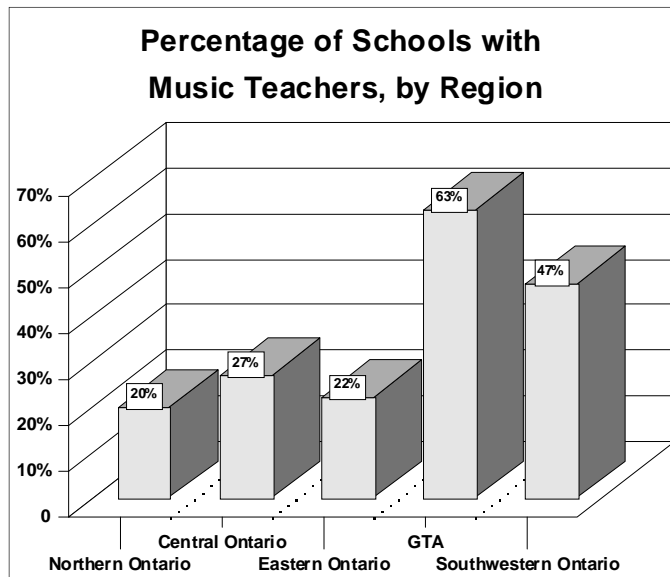
“The School Council and parents continue to support the music and athletic programs in the school. We are fortunate that staff have the skills to provide these programs for students. Our school is recognized for its athletic, music and academic programs.”

*JK-8 school,
Simcoe County District
School Board*



Regional Differences

Students across the province do not have equal access to music education. In northern, eastern and central Ontario, approximately one-quarter or fewer of all schools reported having music teachers. These figures represent a dramatic contrast to the 47% of schools in southwestern Ontario and 63% in the Greater Toronto Area that reported music teachers.



Impact of Music

Research has shown that music studies have a positive impact on cognitive, academic, and social development.

A study of elementary school students involved in a program called “Learning Through the Arts” found that children in the program scored higher on math tests of computation and estimation than students in control schools, regardless of socio-economic background.⁶ The study’s findings also suggest that “involvement in the arts contributed to engagement in learning.”

A study by the National Assembly for Music Education showed that those who participated in arts programs showed significant increases in self-esteem and thinking skills.⁷

Endnotes

1. Ipsos Reid, *Kids, Food and Obesity* (Ipsos Reid, November 2003).
<<http://www.angusreid.com/pdf/products/KidsProspectus.pdf>>
2. Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *2002 Physical Activity Monitor*.
<<http://www.cflri.ca/cflri/pa/surveys/2002survey/2002survey.html>>
3. J. Sallis and T. L. Mckenzie, “Physical Education's Role in Public Health,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 62 (1991): 124-37.
4. J. F. Sallis, T. L. Mckenzie, B. Kolody, M. Lewis, S. Marshall, and P. Rosengard, “Effect of Health Related Physical Education On Academic Achievement: Project Spark,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 70 (1999): 127-34.
5. K. Woods and G. Kerr, *Barriers to Ontario Children Receiving Quality Physical Education* (May 2001).
<<http://www.ophea.net/Ophea/Ophea.net/articleItem.cfm?RSID=2147102896>>
6. Rena Upitis and Katharine Smithrim, *Learning Through the Arts* (2003).
<<http://www.ltta.ca/discussionzone/press/LTTAjun03-ResearchReport.pdf>>
7. MENC, The National Association for Music Education, “Benefits of Music Education,” *Music Education Facts and Figures*, (Spring 2002).
<<http://www.menc.org/information/advocate/facts.html>>

GRADE 7 AND 8 SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Guidance, Visual and Performing Arts, Design and Technology and Family Studies teachers are found primarily in schools that include grades 7 and 8. The following data are based on schools which include those grades.

Guidance

Each year, the curriculum requires students to produce an annual education plan and, in grade 8, to choose between applied and academic streams for high school. Despite this requirement, guidance teachers who are trained to help with such tasks continue to be in short supply.

In 2003/04, the funding formula allocation for guidance teachers was increased from \$11 to \$12 per student, resulting in a \$1.3 million increase province-wide.¹

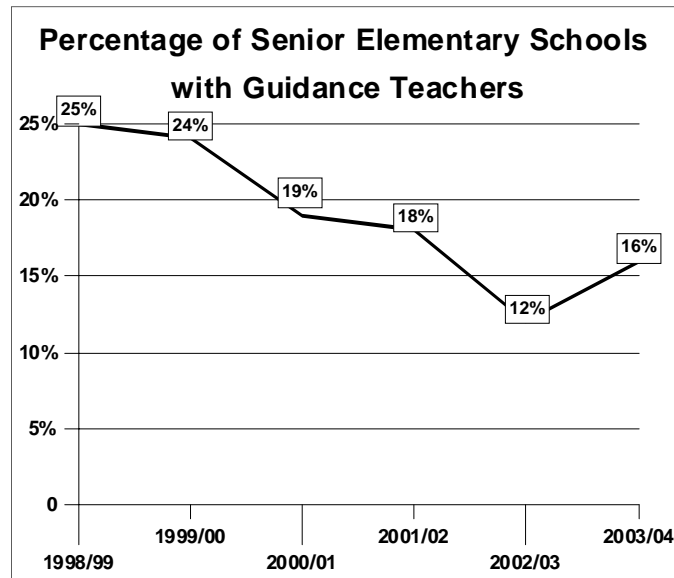
Despite this increase, more than two-thirds of Ontario school boards have no guidance teachers in their elementary schools at all, according to the Ontario School Counsellors' Association. Information compiled by the Association, using Ministry of Education statistics, shows that only 19 of 72 boards have guidance counsellors.² Although the funding formula funds one guidance teacher for every 5,000 students in elementary schools, the funding is not protected, and may be used for other expenses or to reduce class sizes. In 2003/04, the average student-to-staff ratio was one guidance teacher for every 2,030 students, compared to one to 1,473 in 2000/01.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 16% of schools reported having a guidance teacher, compared to 25% in 1998/99, the first year the question was asked.

"We thought that it would be good to get the parents in the school to perhaps provide some of programs that were given in the past, like sewing classes, music classes, woodworking (basic) so that students would have an opportunity to learn a basic skill."

*K-8 school,
Limestone District
School Board*



Design and Technology and Family Studies

In April 2004, the Ontario government announced nearly \$18 million in funding for apprenticeship training programs in order to address the shortage of skilled workers. The funding is intended to help colleges update classrooms and equipment, develop new training materials, and provide alternative programs such as distance education. Announcing the funding, Premier McGuinty said, "Our government is committed to building a strong and prosperous economy by developing our single greatest advantage: our people. These apprenticeship programs will provide Ontarians with more opportunities to enter challenging and well-paid careers in skilled trades."³

"We're concerned about the loss of instrumental music programs, technology and family studies at the elementary level."

*JK-8 school,
Limestone District
School Board*

Despite the government's stated commitment to skilled trades at the community college level, most students in elementary schools no longer have access to courses that might expose them to these career choices. Design and technology and family studies courses are not funded under the funding formula, nor are they included in the Ontario curriculum, yet a small number of schools continue to offer these programs.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 8% of schools reported having a design and technology teacher, compared to 22% in 1998/99; and

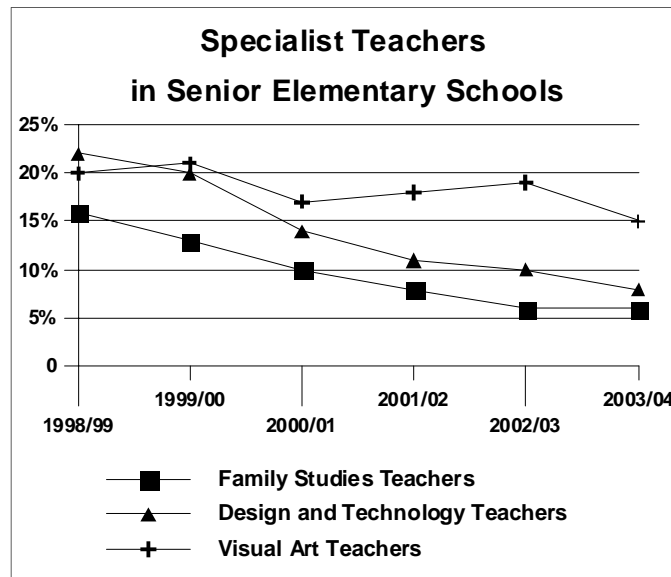
- 6% of schools reported having a family studies teacher, compared to 16% in 1998/99.

Visual and Performing Arts

Visual and performing arts are included in the Ontario curriculum but few schools have specialist teachers dedicated to providing instruction in these subjects.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 15% of schools reported having a visual arts teacher, compared to 20% in 1998/99; and
- 5% of schools reported having a performing arts teacher, compared to 6% in 1998/99.



Endnotes

1. Ministry of Education, *Student-Focused Funding: 2003-04 Technical Paper: Foundation Grant*. <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html>>
2. Ontario School Counsellors' Association, *Elementary Guidance Revised Estimates: 2003-2004* (letter to People for Education, March 30, 2004).
3. Ministry of Education, "McGuinty government helps build highly skilled workforce. Expanded Apprenticeship Programs: A Real, Positive Change For Ontarians," (news release, April 13, 2004). <<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/apprenticeship041304.asp>>

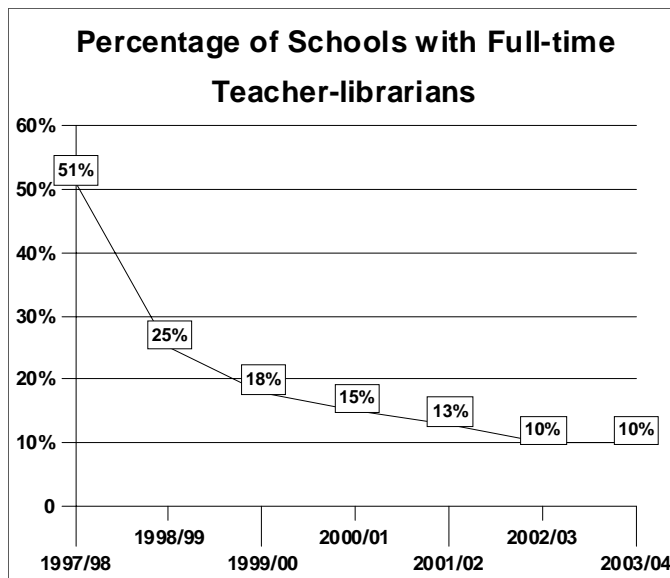
LIBRARY

The funding formula provides funding for one full-time librarian for every 769 elementary students in a school board. In 2003/04, only 2% of Ontario elementary schools had sufficient enrolment to generate funding for a full-time teacher-librarian. Forty-two per cent of elementary schools had no teacher-librarian, continuing the decline first observed in 1997/98. The number of schools reporting that their libraries were staffed by lower-paid library technicians, with no teacher-librarians, increased again this year and has more than doubled since 1998/99.

This decline in school libraries continues despite decades of research demonstrating that “school libraries and qualified teacher-librarians go well beyond providing young people with access to reading materials. They also have a positive effect on reading proficiency, educational attainment overall and academic achievement in subject content areas.”¹

Teacher-librarians

Teacher-librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to select learning and literacy materials for the school and teach research and literacy skills



to students. They develop and manage library collections to include current Canadian resources, and co-ordinate author visits and other literacy activities designed to familiarize children with Canadian books.²

Funding for teacher-librarians is not protected. Most teachers earn as much as 10% more than boards receive in funding for salaries and benefits from the province. This means that boards are often forced to use money allocated for teacher-librarians and other specialists to pay for staff such as classroom teachers, principals and vice-principals or other specialist teachers.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 56% of schools reported having a teacher-librarian for some or all of the time, compared to 80% in 1997/98; and
- 10% of schools reported a full-time teacher-librarian, unchanged from 2002/03, but a significant drop from 51% of schools in 1997/98.

"We are concerned about our school library and special literacy programs, (i.e., All-Star reading) disintegrating due to small amount of teacher-librarian time. Our collection is becoming disorganized but the program is valiantly being maintained to a small extent."

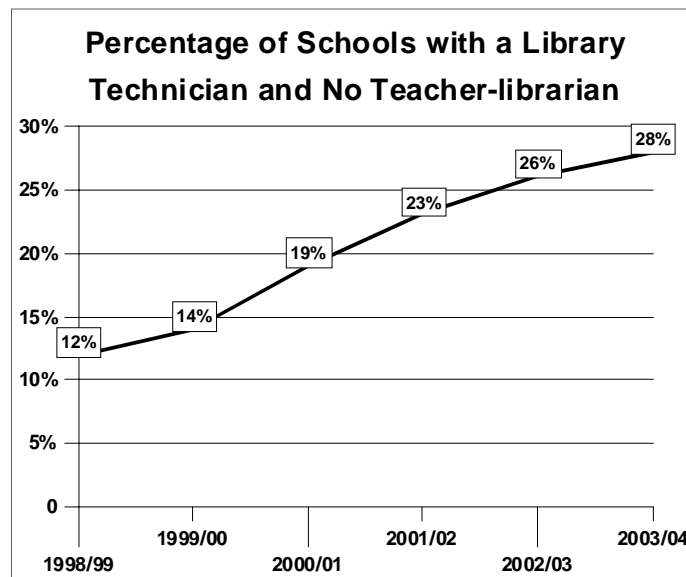
*JK-6 school,
Grand Erie District
School Board*

Library Technicians

Library technicians maintain the library collection and catalogue and manage the circulation of the library's resources. While they perform an important role, they are not teachers. They are not trained to collaborate with teachers to select learning materials that support the curriculum, to enhance the collection or to provide instruction to students. Survey results this year show an increase in the use of librarian technicians, who are paid between \$25,000 and \$30,000³ while teacher-librarians' salaries range from \$40,000 to \$70,000.⁴

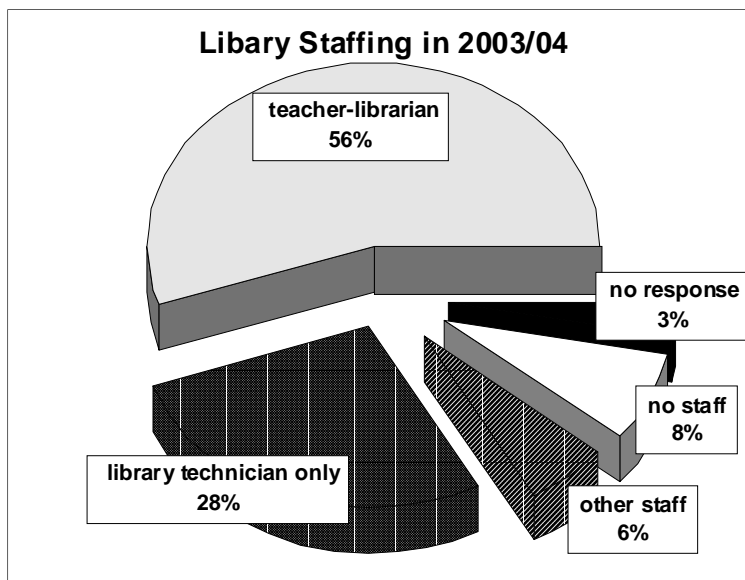
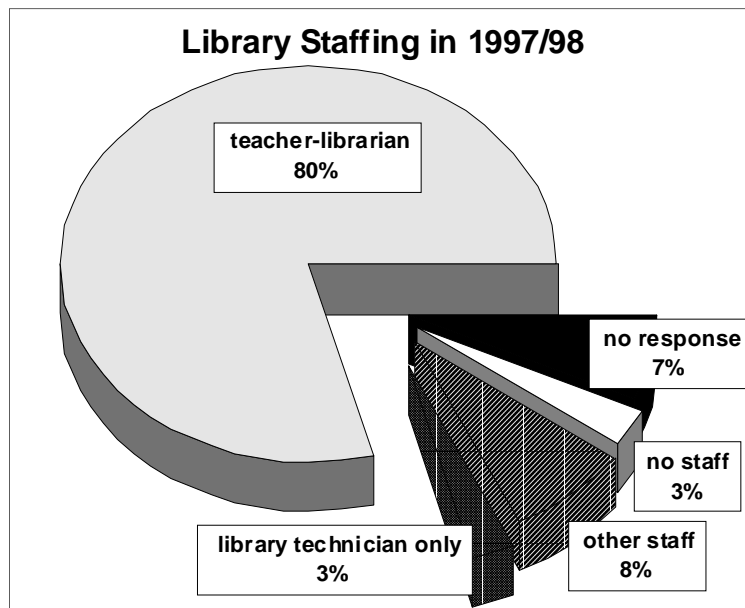
In 2003/04:

- 34% of schools reported having a library technician, compared to 16% in 1998/99, the first year the question was asked;
- 72% of library technicians worked half-time or less, compared to 79% in 2001/02, the first time the question was asked; and
- 28% of schools reported a library technician and no teacher-librarian, compared to 12% in 1998/99.



"Our librarian now teaches French as well and is not available. "

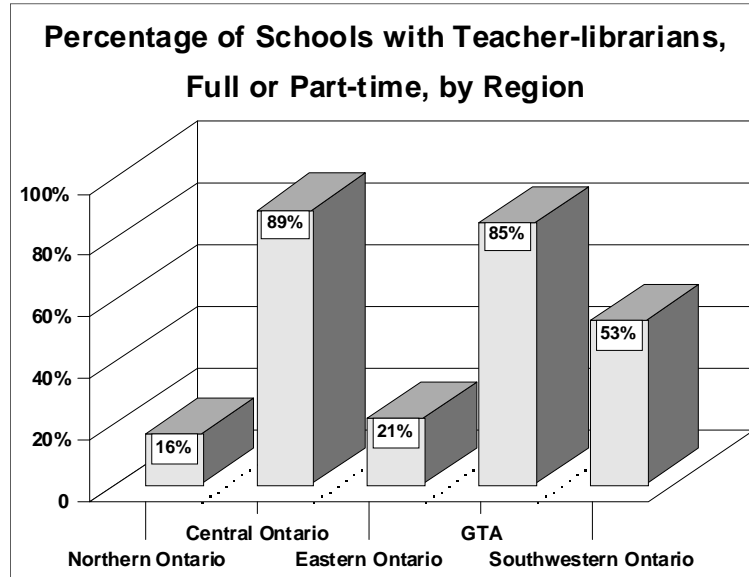
*K-5 school,
Peel District School
Board*



Regional Differences

Our survey revealed striking differences from region to region. Many school boards in eastern, northern and southwestern Ontario have chosen not to fund teacher-librarians in elementary schools at all. Teacher-librarian-to-student ratios range from a high of one teacher-librarian for every 1,908 students in southwestern Ontario to one teacher-librarian for every 756 students in central Ontario.

In central Ontario, 89% of schools were staffed with a teacher-librarian, compared to 16% in northern Ontario. No schools in eastern Ontario, fewer than 1% in northern, and 2% in southwestern Ontario reported having a full-time teacher-librarian, compared to 22% in both central Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area.



“Our library is open all day because of extremely supportive and efficient parent volunteers.”

*JK-8 school,
Dufferin-Peel Catholic
School Board*

Volunteers

For the fourth year in a row, there was a decrease in the percentage of schools reporting the use of volunteers in their libraries.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 37% of schools reported volunteers working in the library, compared to 41% in 2002/03 and 49% in 2000/01.

Hours

The average number of hours that libraries are open each week has not changed significantly over the seven years of our study. This year, school libraries were open 25 hours per week, on average, compared to 26 hours per week in 1998/99.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 19% of schools reported having libraries that were open more than 30 hours a week, compared to 32% in 1998/99;

- 57% of schools reported having libraries that were open 21 to 30 hours per week, compared to 37% in 1998/99;
- 15% of schools reported their libraries were open 11 to 20 hours a week, compared to 25% in 1998/99; and
- 9% of schools reported their libraries were open 10 hours a week or fewer, compared to 7% in 1998/99.

Open and Staffed by Teacher-librarians

“Our library is open all week but with no teacher.”

*JK-8 school,
Bluewater District
School Board*

This year, for the first time, we asked schools to tell us the number of hours that libraries are open *and* staffed by teacher-librarians. Schools reported that libraries were open *and* staffed by a teacher-librarian for an average of 15.8 hours per week.

Although 76% reported having libraries that were open 20 hours a week or more, only 26% were open and staffed by a teacher-librarian for 20 hours a week or more.

In 2003/04:

- 6% of schools reported having libraries open and staffed by a teacher-librarian more than 30 hours a week;
- 20% reported being open and staffed for 21 to 30 hours a week;
- 43% reported being open and staffed for 11 to 20 hours a week; and
- 31% reported being open and staffed for 10 hours or fewer a week.

Collections

This year, average library collections have increased in size.

Our 2003/04 survey shows:

- the average number of library books per school has increased to 7,850 books, from an average of 7,353 books in 2001/02, the first year the question was asked;
- the average number of books per student has risen to 29, compared to 23 books per student in 2001/02;
- the top 25% of schools reported an average of 31 books per student compared to the bottom 25% which had an average of 13 books per student; and

- 53% of the schools that reported fundraising raised money for library books, compared to 56% in 1998/99.

Comments from the Surveys

This year, as on past surveys, many schools reported a decrease in the time spent by their teacher-librarians in the library. Some schools reported that their teacher-librarians had taken on additional part-time teaching assignments or administrative duties. Some commented that their libraries were open full-time, but are often left unstaffed.

Benefits of School Libraries

Research shows that well-equipped school libraries staffed by teacher-librarians contribute to the creation of “capable and avid readers, learners who are information literate, teachers who are partnering with the teacher librarians to create high-quality learning experiences.”⁶

In a recent study of over 1,700 school libraries in Florida, “there was a direct correlation between the amount of time a library was professionally staffed and the number of students in the school who read at grade level; test scores were more than 20% higher in elementary schools with a full-time professional librarian and assistant than in schools with only part-time staff.”⁷

A study of school libraries in Colorado found that collaboration between library specialists and teachers is a key factor in improving student achievement. “Test scores rise in both elementary and middle schools as library media specialists and teachers work together. In addition, scores also increase with the amount of time library media specialists spend as in-service trainers of other teachers, acquainting them with the rapidly changing world of information.”⁸

“With budget reductions and a decreasing roster of teacher-librarians, fewer Canadian materials find their way into our elementary and secondary schools. It is hard for publishers to market to high schools, and the decline in teacher-librarians is linked to depleted collections.”

*Ken Haycock*⁵

Endnotes

1. Ken Haycock, *The Crisis in Canada’s School Libraries: the Case for Reform and Re-Investment, A report for the Association of Canadian Publishers* (June 2003): 12.
2. Canadian Coalition for School Libraries, “Join the Coalition that’s put School Library Reform on the Political Map.”
<<http://www.peopleforeducation.com/librarycoalition/CCSLbrochure.pdf>>
3. Jobs in Education. <http://www.jobsineducation.com/new_pages/Job%20Seekers/jobs/school_boards/tcdsb_lib_tech_jan29_04.html>

4. Canadian Teachers' Federation, "*Salaries and Fringe Benefits.*"
<<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/>>
5. Haycock, 32.
6. Ibid., 10.
7. Donna Baumbach, *Florida Media Study: Key Findings* (updated Jan. 2004).
<<http://www.sbac.edu/~media/research.htm>>
8. Keith Curry Lance, Marcia J. Rodney and Christine Hamilton-Pennell, "How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards" (Colorado: Colorado Department of Education, Library Research Service, 2000).
<<http://www.lrs.org/documents/lmcstudies/CO/execsumm.pdf>>

TEXTBOOKS

"It would be nice for students not to have to share textbooks in the bigger classes."

*JK-8 school,
Rainy River
District School Board*

This year marks the first time since the introduction of the province's funding formula that the benchmark for textbook funding has increased.

In 1997, the provincial government set its textbook budget at \$75 per elementary school student per year. This benchmark remained unchanged for the next five years and additional one-time grants were needed to help offset the costs of providing materials for the new elementary curriculum.

In his 2002 report on the funding formula, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski recommended that textbook benchmarks be raised by 10.3% to reflect increases in the Consumer Price Index from 1997-2002.¹ The government responded with a promise to implement this recommendation over a three-year period.

During the 2003/04 school year, there was a 10% increase to the benchmarks for textbooks and learning materials, computers, and classroom supplies.² This change amounted to an increase in the budget for textbooks from \$75 per student in 2002/03³ to \$77 per student in 2003/04. Similar increases have been promised for the next two years.⁴

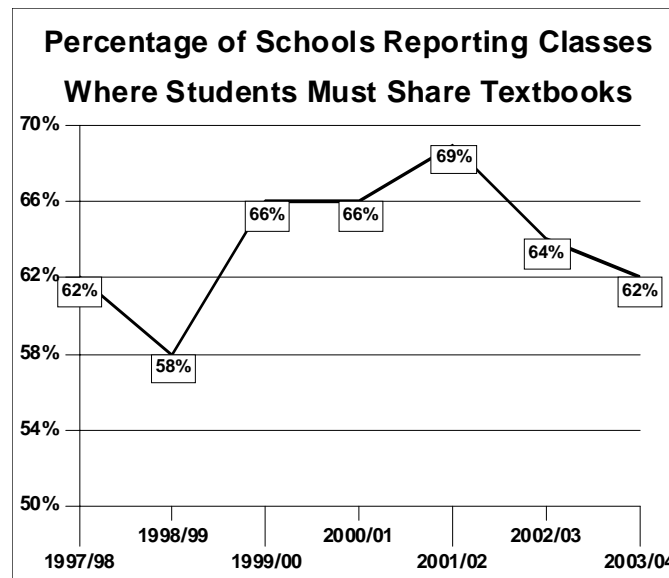
"There are not enough funds for textbooks. We give generous financial support through the school council's fundraising but it's too bad there aren't funds coming from the government."

*K-6 school,
Waterloo Region District
School Board*

This increase in funding was not always reflected in the responses received from schools this year concerning the quantity and quality of their textbooks. In schools that reported fundraising, 14% raised money for textbooks, compared to 24% in 2001/02, and 21% in 1997/98.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 62% of schools reported classes where students must share textbooks, compared to a high of 69% in 2001/02 and 62% in 1997/98; and
- 66% of schools reported having textbooks that were worn or out-of-date, compared to 76% in 1997/98.



Endnotes

1. Education Equality Task Force, *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement* (Toronto: Education Equality Task Force, 2002) 100, Appendix J, Table J:2.
2. Ministry of Education, *Student-Focused Funding: Parents Guide* (Spring 2003).
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/parents/parents.html#foundation>>
3. Ministry of Education, *Student Focused Funding. Technical Paper 2002-03* (Spring 2002): 7. <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/e0203tech.pdf>>
4. Ministry of Education. *Student Focused Funding. Technical Paper 2003-04*.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html#foundation>>

SPECIAL EDUCATION

“The percentage of special education students is very high; it is difficult to serve them efficiently. We need resources and qualified, competent personnel. Evaluation and identification processes are very long.”

*K-3 school,
Conseil Scolaire de
District du Centre
Sud-ouest*

This year, an average of 15.6% of the elementary students represented in our survey received special education services. Once again, there has been an increase in the average number of special education students to one full-time special education teacher. For the fourth consecutive year, the number of students waiting for special education services has risen. Of the nearly 600 schools that provided written comments, approximately one in five said that there were more special education students, many with higher needs, including mental health needs.

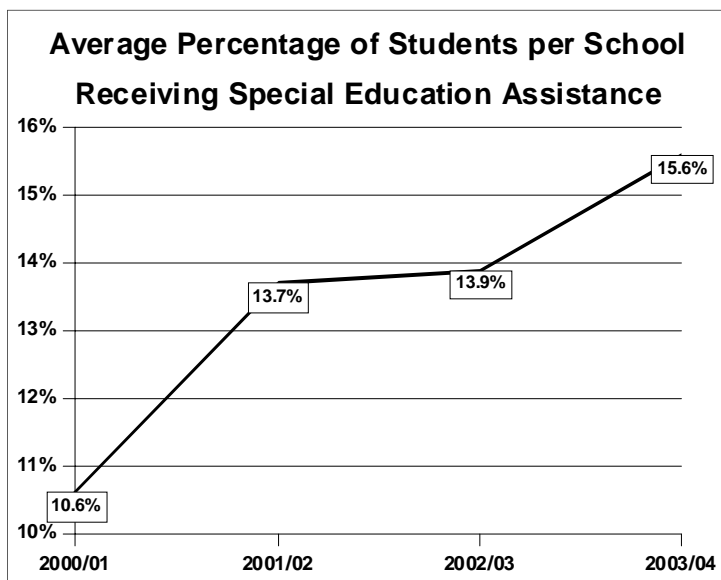
Students and Staff

To be legally entitled to special education services in Ontario, students must be identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC). The committee will review students’ educational assessments and may require a psychological, speech language or health assessment to make a correct identification or placement decision. However, students who have not been formally identified by an IPRC may receive remedial assistance or may have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that

outline specific learning goals and appropriate special education programs and services.

Our 2003/04 survey shows:

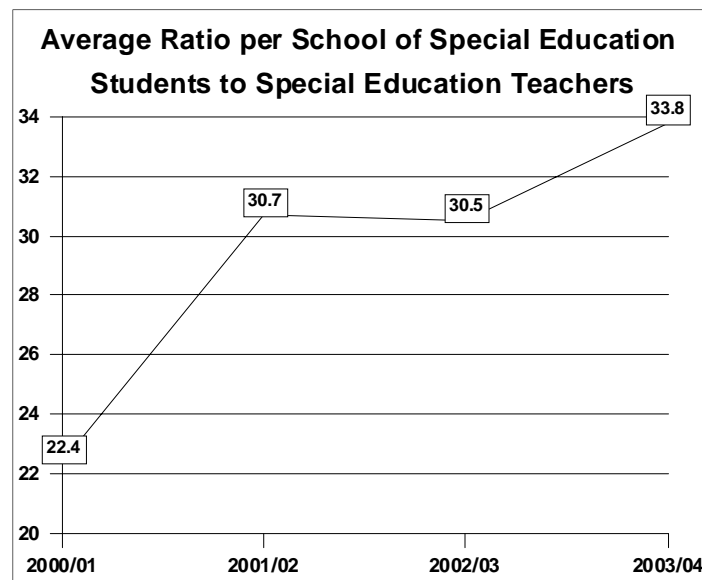
- 99% of schools reported having special education programs;
- in schools reporting special education students, an average of 15.6% of the student population received special education services, compared to 10.6% in 2000/01; and
- an average ratio of 33.8 special education students to every full-time special education teacher, compared to 22.4 students per teacher in 2000/01.



“We have fewer staff and higher needs so we must focus on the more serious needs first, and some students receive minimal service only.”

*JK-8 school,
Ottawa Carleton
District School Board*

The percentage of students receiving special education services has increased since 2000/01. It is not clear whether there are more special needs students, more students being formally identified, or more students being identified to make up for cuts in areas like ESL. (Where schools cannot provide ESL services, students may be supported by special education programs.) Some schools commented that more IEPs were being developed to provide accommodations or exemptions for the Education Quality Accountability Office (EQAO) tests.



Regional Variation

Special education students across Ontario do not have equal access to special education teachers. Our survey shows that elementary schools in all parts of Ontario had average ratios of 30 students or more per special education teacher compared to 23.3 in the Greater Toronto Area.

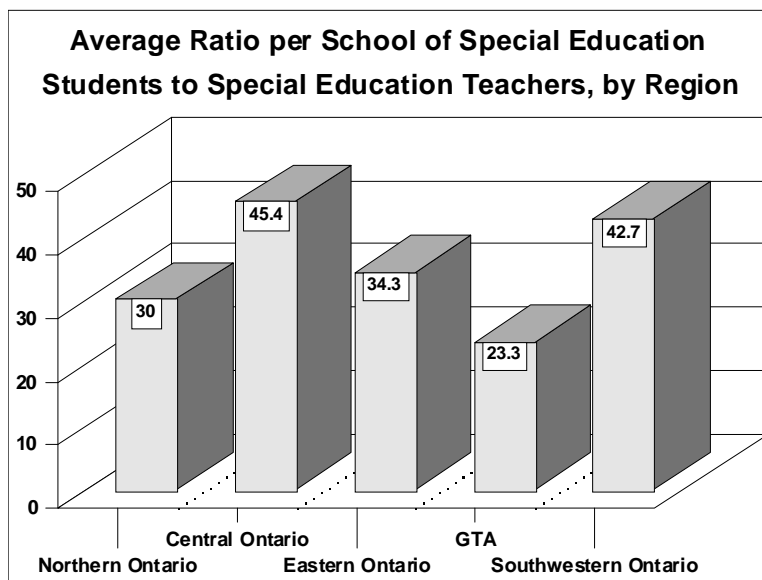
The difference in the GTA may reflect the fact that urban boards have higher populations and generate larger SEPPA amounts for their special education budgets. In addition, they have concentrated populations that can sustain congregated special education classes, which have their class sizes capped according to Ministry of Education regulations (see Appendix B).

Historically, large urban boards had many more special education programs than boards with less concentrated populations. These programs were funded with money raised through municipal taxes. When the funding formula was introduced, boards were no longer permitted to raise taxes

but many tried to retain existing special education programs. Even with the more equitable funding provided by the funding formula, small boards were unable to afford to set up the range and number of programs once offered in urban centres.

“A reduction in Educational Assistant staff from last year has had a serious impact on what we can do for special students.”

*JK-8 school,
Grand Erie
District School Board*



Educational Assistants

Some educational assistants work in special education classes and may be assigned to assist in a regular classroom with individual special needs students under the supervision of special education staff.

“There are fewer Educational Assistants and we have to make sure they work with the ISA students who provided the funding for them.”

*JK-8 school,
Simcoe County District
School Board*

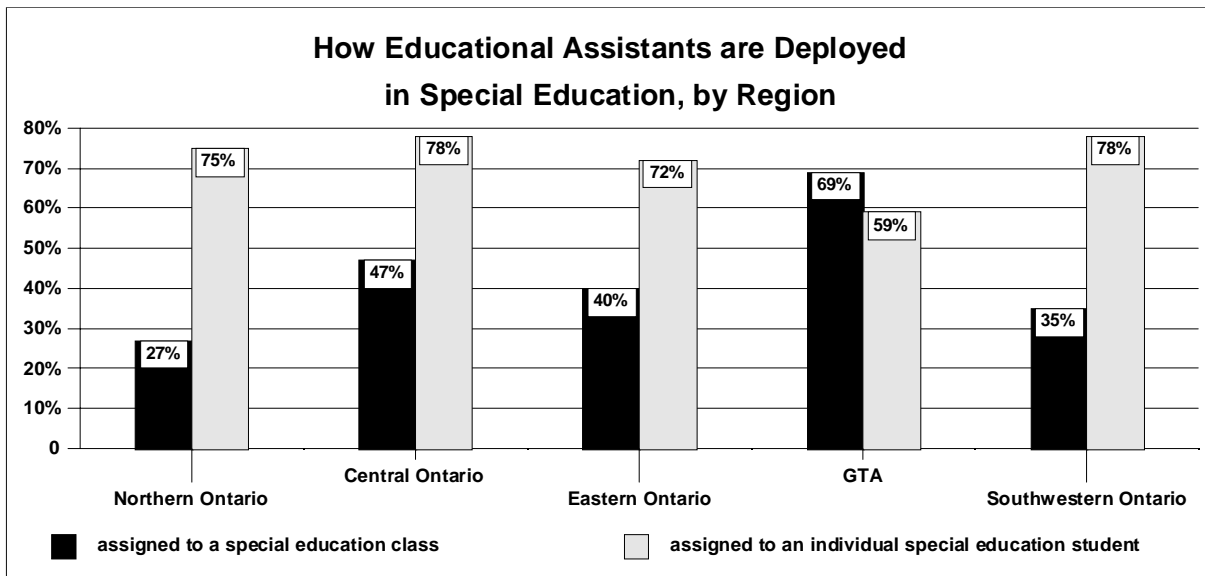
In our 2003/04 survey:

- 71% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to individual special education students, compared to 66% in 1999/00; and
- 47% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to special education classes, relatively unchanged compared to 1999/00.

Regional Variations

More than 70% of schools outside the Greater Toronto Area reported having educational assistants assigned to special education students, compared to 59% in the GTA. In the GTA, 69% of schools have educational assistants assigned to special education classes, while fewer than half of

schools in other areas have assistants in special education classes. In northern Ontario only 27% of schools report assistants in special education classes. These variations may reflect different models of serving special education students.



Funding for educational assistants may be generated by Intensive Support Amount (ISA) claims filed for individual special needs students. Boards may choose to assign the educational assistant to the class in which the student is placed instead of to the individual special needs student.

Placements and Programs

The term placement is often used interchangeably with program. The program is the plan identified in the IEP and may include reference to a placement – the physical space in which the program is delivered. The Ministry of Education requires boards to maintain a range of placements. IPRCs recommend placements that best meet an exceptional student's needs and respect the parents' wishes.

Boards may also have a range of programs such as Learning Centres, Reading Recovery, SERT (Special Education Resource Teachers), or literacy programs that are provided for students who need remedial help but may not have been formally identified as exceptional students.

In our 2003/04 survey, schools reported the following programs, with many schools reporting more than one category:

“The Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) role continues to be overwhelming with so much paperwork. In my school I am principal .5 and SERT .5. It’s impossible to meet student needs.”

*JK-8 school,
Avon-Maitland
District School Board*

Resource Teacher, (e.g., SERT, MART);
Learning Centre/Remedial;
Literacy;
Learning Disability;
Gifted;
General Purpose;
Behaviour;
Developmentally Delayed;
Mild Intellectual Delay;
Autism/Communication Disorders;
Physical (including deaf/hard of hearing, blind/low vision);
Speech Language; and
Multiple Exceptionalities.

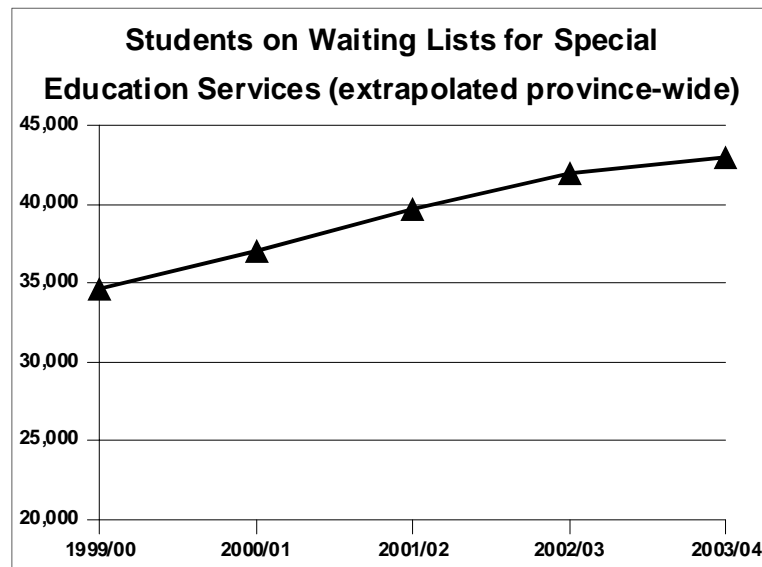
Waiting Lists

We asked schools how many students were waiting for assessment, IPRC or placement. In our 2003/04 survey, schools reported:

- an average of 10.9 students per school on waiting lists;
- 68% of students on waiting lists were waiting for assessment;
- 23% of students were waiting for IPRC; and
- 10% of students were waiting for placement.

When the total number of students on waiting lists for special education services is extrapolated to the total number of elementary schools in Ontario, it means that province-wide approximately 43,000 students are waiting for service.

In 2002, the Education Equality Task Force recommended that the Ministry of Education fund school boards for all ISA claims approved during the 2003/04 comprehensive review process. Dr. Rozanski estimated that the annual cost of funding all approved claims will be approximately \$250 million.¹ Despite the fact that the recommendation has been implemented, waiting lists continue to rise. This may be due to an overall increase in the percentage of special education students.



Comments from the Surveys

In our survey, we asked schools how, if at all, special education had changed in the last year. Nearly 600 schools provided comments. Approximately one in five schools had received additional teaching or support staff. One-third of the respondents reported that staffing had remained the same, been reduced, or that the mode of service delivery had been changed.

A number of respondents commented that cuts to lunchroom staff, the lack of substitutes for absent educational assistants, and higher class sizes all had an impact on the overall safety of the school. Many high needs students could not be adequately supervised in class or during the lunch hour. In some cases, schools commented that for safety reasons, more children were being sent home.

Several schools commented that their principals and vice-principals were assigned to deliver special education. This resulted in fewer scheduled meetings for staff to assess and review the needs of special education students and less consistent programming for students.

A few schools commented that waits for assessment and support services had become shorter since the ISA claim process had ended (see Funding below). However, these comments were outweighed by those that said

there were more requests for assessment and support, longer waits and less service available. As in other years, there were comments about extensive paperwork that took time from students.

Funding

Two special education grants supplement the Foundation grant to provide funding for the additional costs of delivering special education programs and services.

“Many children are missing out on the chance to learn vital skills because of inadequate funding, physical inaccessibility, cumbersome and time-consuming accommodation processes, and negative attitudes and stereotypes towards students with disabilities.”

*Ontario Human Rights Commission*³

The Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) is based on a board’s total enrolment and is funded at the rate of \$562 for each JK to Grade 3 student and \$424 for students in Grade 4 to Grade 8.² The SEPPA grant pays for a range of programs and services including remedial and congregated classes, psychologists, social workers and educational assistants. The Intensive Support Amount (ISA), which provides funding for a very small number of high needs students, is combined with the SEPPA amount to fund all special education services. For more information, see Appendix B.

Funding for special education was increased by \$250 million in December 2002 in response to recommendations made by the Education Equality Task Force. In 2003/04, the SEPPA component of special education funding increased slightly when salary benchmarks were increased.

Despite these increases, declining enrolment may have a serious impact on the range and quality of special education services. Most of the funding for special education is generated by the SEPPA grant, which is based on the total enrolment in a board and not on the number of students who are identified with special needs. Our survey shows that a greater proportion of the student population is receiving special education services, but this increased need is not addressed by the per pupil method used to calculate the SEPPA grants.

Ontario Human Rights Commission Report

A 2003 Ontario Human Rights Commission report examined the barriers that students with disabilities face in Ontario schools. The commission recommended that school boards should:

- determine ways in which more timely accommodations can be provided to special needs students;

- provide interim accommodation for students awaiting completion of professional assessments; and
- use discretion in the application of the *Safe Schools Act*.⁴

The report recommends that the provincial government:

- ensure that students with disabilities have access to sufficient funding to ensure equal access to education;
- better co-ordinate special education service delivery among different ministries;
- review the adequacy of resources provided to school boards; and
- establish programs to recruit specialized professionals currently under-represented in the special education system.⁵

Endnotes

1. Education Equality Task Force, *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement* (Toronto: Education Equality Task Force, 2002): 57.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/task02/report.html#lor>>
2. Ministry of Education, *Student-Focused Funding: 2003-04. Technical Paper*. <<http://mettowas21.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html#enrolment>>
3. Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Give students with disabilities the opportunity to succeed, Ontario Human Rights Commission tells education providers," (press release, October 27, 2003). <<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/index.shtml>>
4. Ontario Human Rights Commission, *The Opportunity to Succeed: Achieving Barrier-free Education for Students with Disabilities* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2004): 73.
5. Ibid. 75-76.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Province-wide, there are approximately 43,000 students on waiting lists for special education services and there are dramatic regional differences in the availability of these services.

“There is a reduction in support services, (i.e., Educational Assistants, Special Needs Assistants, board personnel such as counselling and attendance, psychology) while an increasing number of students require additional support.”

*JK-6 school,
Toronto District School
Board*

Psychologists, social workers, speech language pathologists, child and youth workers, and other professional support staff may conduct assessments of students, provide resources and support to school staff, and offer direct service to special needs students. Funding for these professionals is provided in the Foundation Grant, and supplies one professional for every 769 students at an average annual salary that is considerably lower than the actual salary range in most boards.*

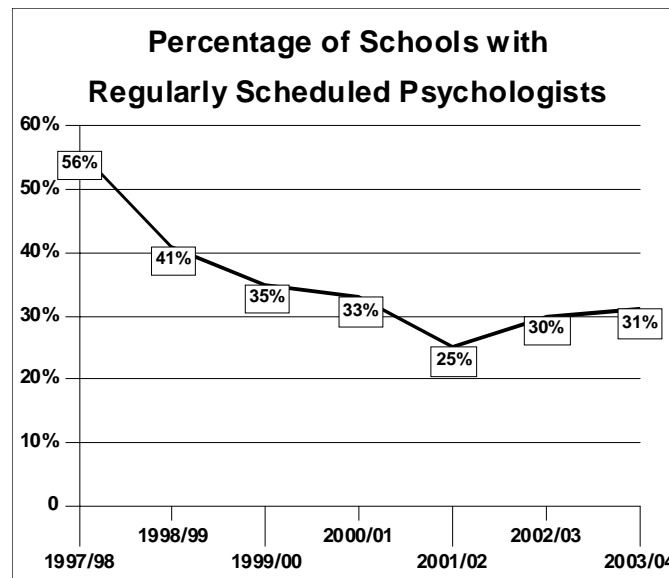
Boards may set different priorities about which professional services to provide or they may use the funding allocated for these positions for other expenses. The regional differences in access to services may reflect different priorities, or may be the result of the per pupil funding model, which sets the per pupil ratio at a level higher than the enrolment of most schools.

In 2001, the Ministry initiated a review of the Intensive Support Amount (ISA) component of special education funding. Many of the professional support staff, particularly psychologists, were occupied with filing ISA claims and were not available to provide direct service to students and staff. This year, the majority of the claims have been filed, making professional staff more available to students.

Psychologists

Psychologists assess students and make recommendations to teachers, parents, students and the Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) for appropriate program modifications and placements. They may provide additional consultation to parents and teachers.

* The Foundation Grant funds professional support staff at an average salary of \$46,347 per year. Yet actual salaries for psychologists and social workers in one board, for example, range from \$44,000 to \$71,000.¹



“Our school gets to prioritize the psychological Assessments. Each school is given between 5-7 assessments a year.”

*JK-6 school,
York Catholic
District School Board*

In 2003/04:

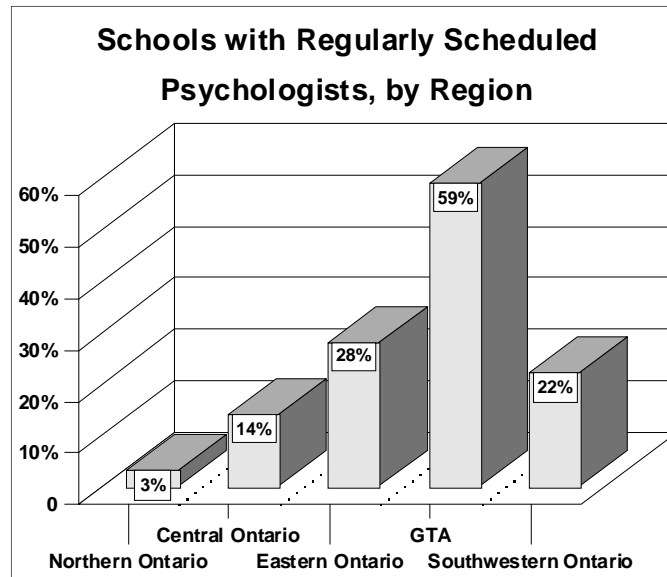
- 31% of schools reported having the regularly scheduled services of a psychologist, compared to a low of 25% in 2001/02, and 56% in 1997/98;
- 59% of schools reported having access to a board psychologist on an on-call basis, compared to 52% in 1999/00, the first year the question was asked; and
- 10% of schools did not have access to board psychologists, compared to 8% in 1999/00.

The average number of hours regularly scheduled psychologists were available to provide service to students was 13.4 hours per month in 2003/04, an increase from a low of 10.6 hours per month in 2001/02 and compared to 12.7 in 1998/99. This increase may be due to the completion of the ISA review.

Regional Variation

Access to the services of board psychologists varied dramatically across the province. In northern Ontario, 36% of schools reported that the services of a board psychologist were not available, compared to only 2% of schools in the Greater Toronto Area. Only 3% of the schools in northern Ontario reported that the services of a psychologist were regularly

scheduled. In the Greater Toronto Area, 59% of schools reported having regularly scheduled psychologists available.



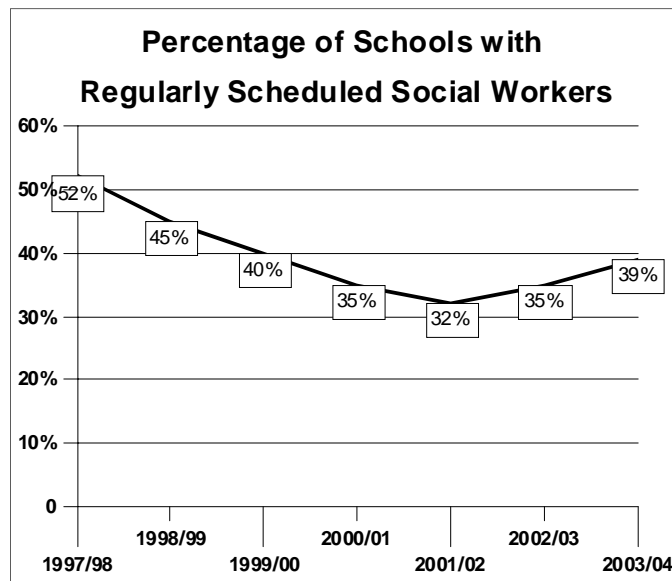
Social Workers

Social workers provide counselling for students, families, and groups within a school setting. They provide consultation to teachers, referrals to community services, and co-ordination of services.

There has been a slight increase in the number of schools reporting the regularly scheduled services of a social worker since 2001/02, but an overall decline since 1997/98.

In 2003/04:

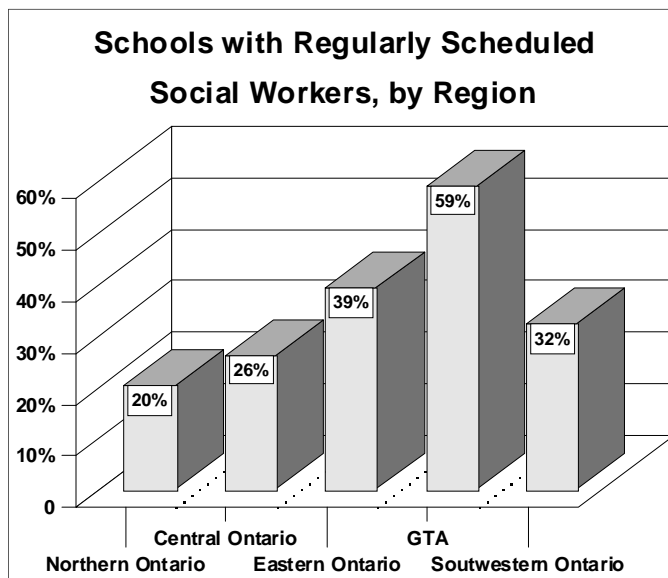
- 39% of schools reported having the regularly scheduled services of a social worker, compared to 52% in 1997/98;
- 41% of schools reported having access to the services of a social worker on an on-call basis, compared to 37% in 1999/00; and
- 20% of schools reported that the services of a social worker were not available, compared to 19% in 1999/00.



In schools that reported having regularly scheduled social workers, they were available an average of 15.8 hours per month, compared to 15.1 hours per month in 1998/99.

Regional Differences

Access to the services of social workers varied widely in schools across Ontario:



- 59% of schools in the Greater Toronto Area reported that the services of a social worker were regularly scheduled; but
- only 20% of schools in northern Ontario reported that the services of a social worker were regularly scheduled.

Speech Language Pathologists

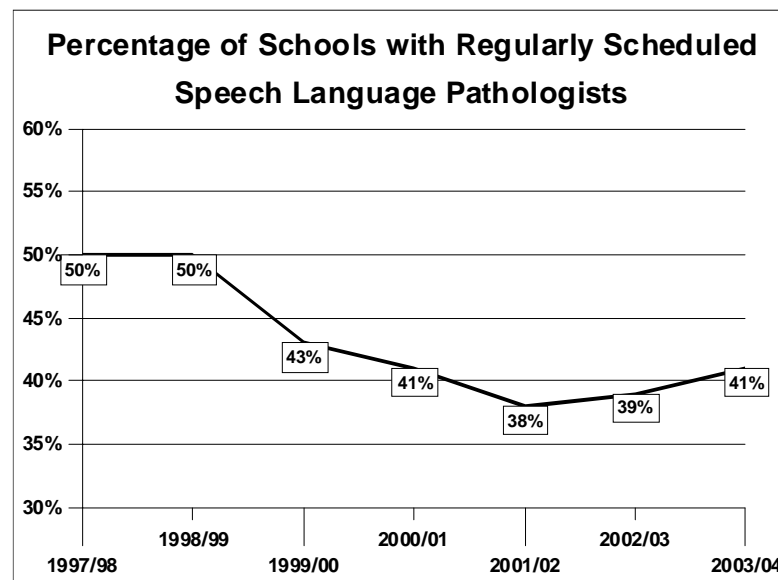
Speech language pathologists provide assessment and treatment for children who have communication disorders. They educate and counsel students, families, and teaching staff regarding students' speech and language development.

"We are concerned about the lack of special education resources, specifically speech and language, child and youth counsellors who are in the schools and readily available for pro-active approach."

*JK-5 school,
Halton District School
Board*

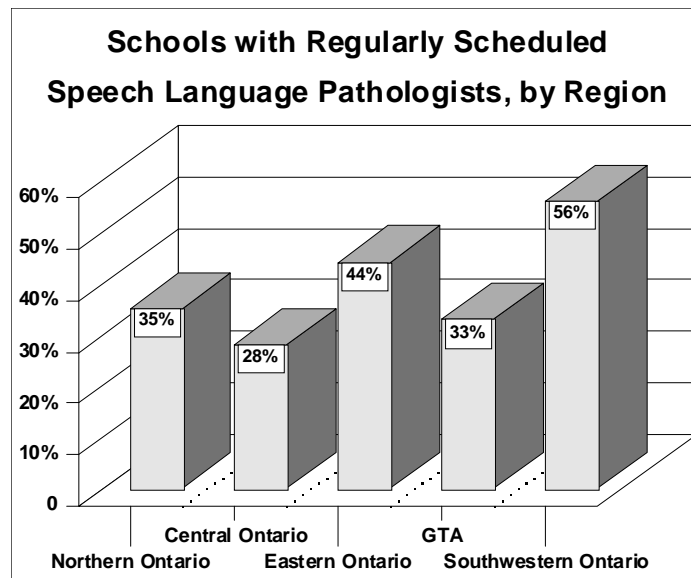
In 2003/04:

- 41% of schools reported having the regularly scheduled services of a speech language pathologist, compared to 50% in 1997/98;
- in schools reporting regularly scheduled hours, speech language pathologists were available an average of 11.8 hours per month, compared to 10.2 hours per month in 1998/99;
- 54% of schools had access on an on-call basis, compared to 49% in 1999/00; and
- 6% of schools reported that speech language pathologists were not available, compared to 3% in 1999/00.



Regional Differences

The availability of speech language pathologists varies widely across Ontario, with 56% of schools in southwestern Ontario reporting regularly scheduled services compared to only 28% in central Ontario, 33% in the Greater Toronto Area, and 35% in northern Ontario.



“Schools are experiencing an increase in children with special needs and children requiring behaviour modification. We need a full-time child and youth worker to help us re-direct these inappropriate behaviours. The IPRC and IEP process is far too long and we do not have sufficient support.”

*JK-8 school,
Northeastern Catholic
District School Board*

Youth Workers

There has been an improvement in the number of schools reporting regularly scheduled access to youth workers. This change may mean that boards are choosing to provide youth workers instead of other staff such as psychologists or social workers.

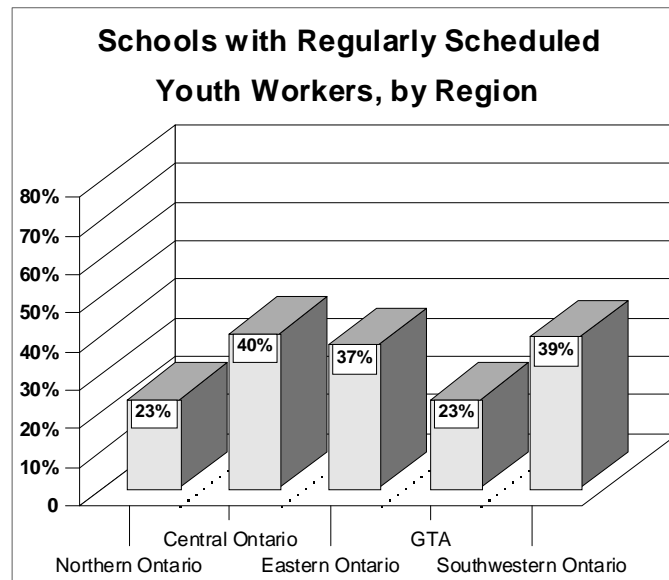
Youth workers provide treatment and prevention of psycho-social problems in children and adolescents, as well as relationship problems between youth and among family members. They may also be employed in special education classes or assigned to work with individual students.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 32% of schools reported having the regularly scheduled services of a youth worker, compared to 24% in 2000/01;
- 27% of schools had access on an on-call basis, compared to 24% in 2000/01;
- 41% of schools reported that youth workers were not available, compared to 40% in 2000/01; and
- in schools reporting the regularly scheduled services of a youth worker, they were available for an average of 59.3 hours per month, compared to 61.4 hours per month in 2000/01.

Regional Variation

Twenty-three per cent of schools in the Greater Toronto Area and northern Ontario reported regularly scheduled youth workers, compared to all other regions, where between 37% and 40% had regularly scheduled access.



Comments from the Surveys

A few schools commented that waits for assessment and support services had become shorter since the ISA claim process had ended. However, these comments were outweighed by those that said that there were more requests for assessment and support, longer waits and less service available. As in the Secondary School survey, schools commented that more IEPs were being developed in order to exempt or accommodate students writing the EQAO tests. Several respondents commented that limits had been placed on the numbers of assessments that schools could request each year. In some schools, parents were seeking private assessments to avoid waiting lists.

Endnote

1. Jobs in Education, <<http://www.jobsineducation.com/new>>

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

"We had a decline in the number of kindergarten assistants, cut from 2 full-time to 1 full-time. Therefore, 4 classes must share 1 assistant. Next year it will be cut to .5."

*JK-6 school,
Toronto District School
Board*

Educational assistants work in kindergarten classes, special education classes, or may be assigned to assist in a regular classroom with individual special needs students under the supervision of special education staff. They may also be assigned to ESL students, large classes, French Immersion classes, or may rotate throughout a school as needed. Most boards do not require educational assistants to have any specific training, although some provide ongoing professional development for these employees.

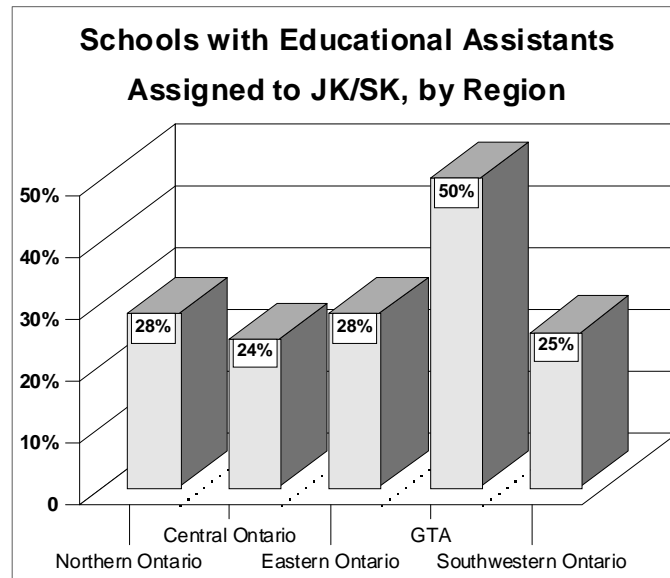
The Foundation Grant provides funding for one educational assistant for every 5,000 students, but boards may also receive funding for these staff from other special purposes grants, including the Learning Opportunities, Early Learning and Special Education grants.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 71% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to individual special education students, compared to 66% in 1999/00;
- 47% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to special education classes, relatively unchanged compared to 1999/00;
- 33% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to kindergarten classes compared to 39% in 1999/00;
- 23% of schools reported educational assistants assigned to other duties compared to 24% in 1999/00; and
- there was an average of 3.66 educational assistants per school, compared to an average of 3 in 2001/02.

Regional Differences

Approximately one-quarter of schools outside the Greater Toronto Area reported having educational assistants assigned to kindergarten classes, compared to half of schools in the GTA.



Comments from the Surveys

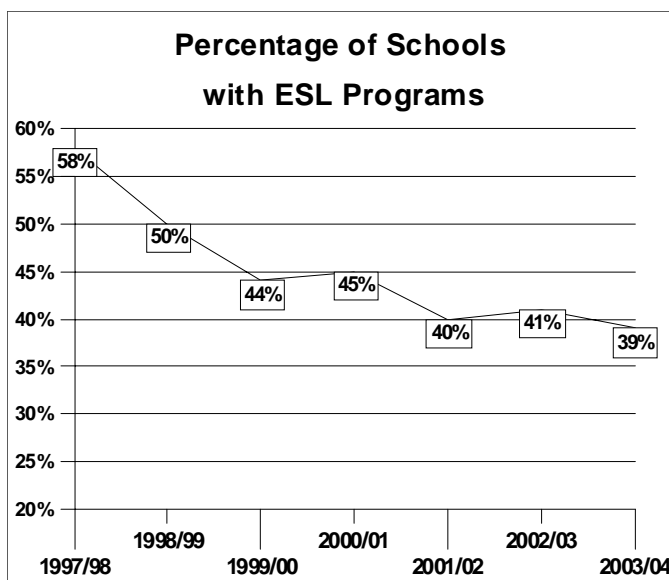
Of the schools that commented specifically on educational assistants in kindergarten, some schools commented that the number of educational assistants had increased because of larger class sizes (as many as 30 students) or the introduction of a special needs child into the kindergarten class.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Under the Constitution, immigration is a shared federal-provincial jurisdiction. The federal government provides funding for health and social assistance through transfer payments, and supports community-based settlement services through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Although it supports language training for adults, the federal government does not provide funding for ESL programs for children, and there are no national standards for ESL delivery in schools.

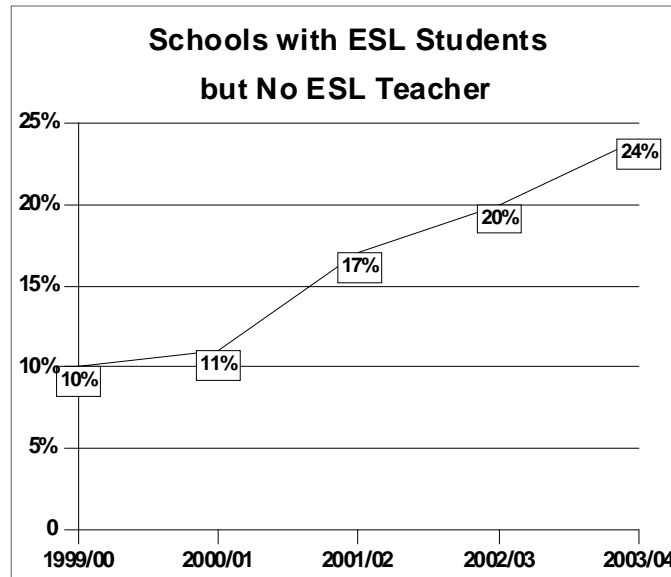
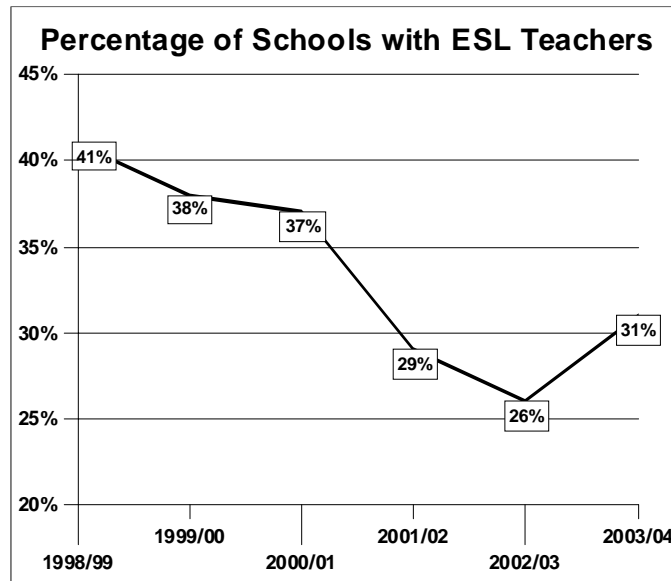
Despite a significant increase in immigration to Ontario, our research shows that Ontario schools reporting ESL programs have declined by 33% since 1997/98.

In our survey, English-language schools were asked how many ESL students were in the school, and French-language schools were asked how many Actualization linguistique en français (ALF) and Perfectionnement du français (PDF) students were in the school. Schools were also asked if they had an ESL or ALF/PDF program, and how many ESL or ALF/PDF teachers they had. Programs may be delivered in a number of ways: by an ESL teacher, a regular teacher, an educational assistant or by volunteers.



In English-language schools in our 2003/04 survey:

- 39% of schools reported having ESL programs, compared to 58% in 1997/98;
- 53% of schools reported having ESL students, compared to 48% in 1999/00; and
- 24% of schools reported having ESL students but no ESL teacher, compared to 10% in 1999/00.



Greater Toronto Area

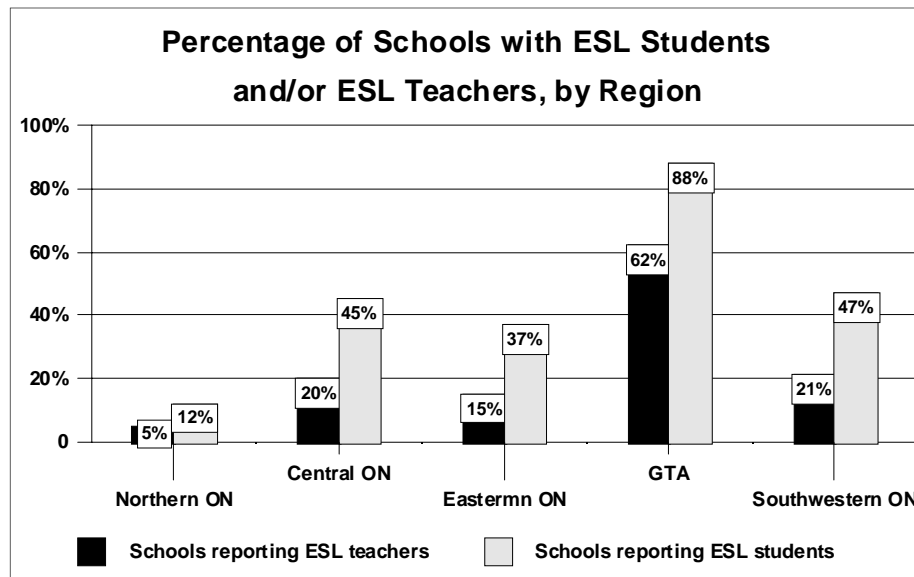
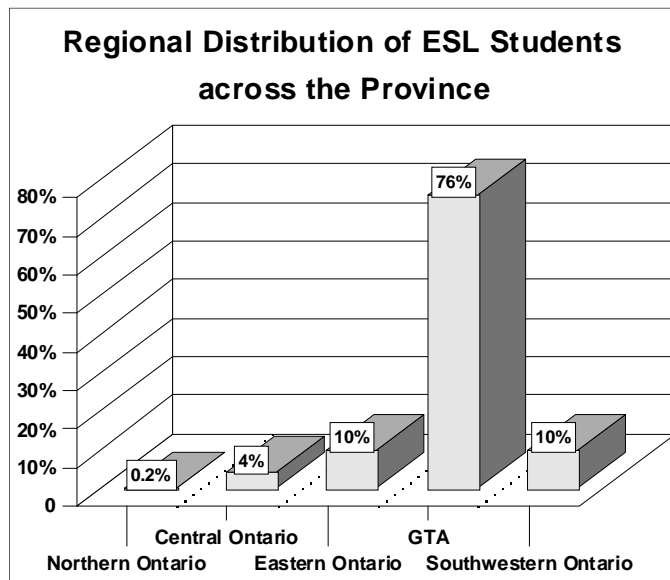
Newcomers to Ontario tend to locate in urban areas. Seventy-six per cent of all ESL students reported in our survey attend school in the Greater Toronto Area.

In our 2003/04 survey:

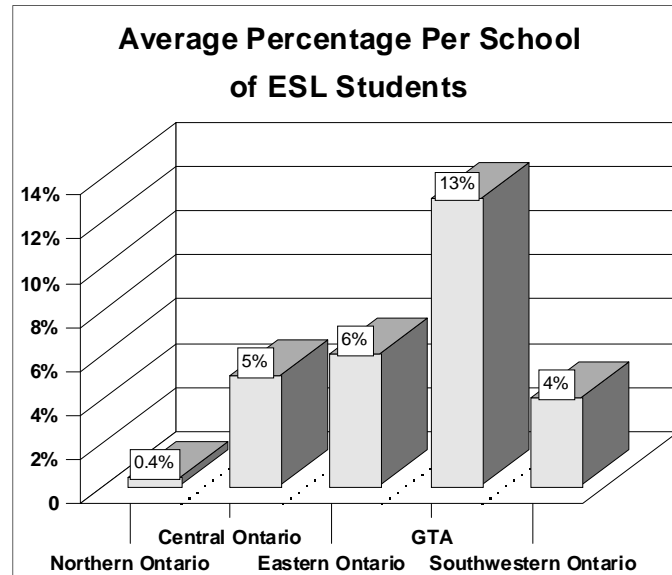
- 88% of schools in the Greater Toronto Area reported having some ESL students, compared to only 12% of schools in northern Ontario;
- an average of 13% of the school population in the GTA were ESL students, compared to less than 6% in any other region; and
- the number of ESL students in GTA schools ranged in number from 0 to 620.

“We have a volunteer who provides ESL support once a week.”

*JK-8 school,
Bluewater District
School Board*



In every region, there are schools with ESL students but no ESL teachers.



“ESL continues to be delivered by an itinerant Educational Assistant.”

*K-6 school,
Upper Grand
District School Board*

Comments from the Surveys

From survey comments, it would appear that children are receiving ESL support through widely varying delivery models across the province. Children in boards or schools with low numbers of ESL students seem to be more likely to receive little help, itinerant help or support from classroom teachers (who may not have ESL training), or parent volunteers.

French as a Second Language

For the first time this year, we examined the ALF/PDF programs separately from the ESL programs.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 60% of French language schools reported some ALF/PDF students;

- 60% of French schools reported ALF/PDF programs; and
- 14% of the school population were ALF/PDF students.

Immigration

Statistics Canada reports that in 2002, 152,831 immigrants arrived in Ontario.¹ In the Greater Toronto Area – where 76% of ESL students in the province live – the foreign-born population in 2001 reached 2,032,960, a 15% increase since 1996.² Over three-quarters of all immigrants to Canada come from countries where English is not the first language³ and 37% of all immigrants to Ontario are under the age of 19.⁴

“50% of students qualify for ESL, but the actual number is higher.”

*K-5 school,
Peel District School
Board*

Eligibility and Support

ESL funding is based on the number of students in a board who meet the provincial criteria. Students must be:

- born in countries where English is not a first or standard language, or
- Canadian-born students who speak a language at home other than English.⁵

The Language Grant funds students for three years of ESL support regardless of their ability to function in English. Experts recommend that for students to become proficient in English, a much longer period of support is required.

Most English language learners need **at least five years** to become academically proficient in a second language. Many students need much longer. For example, most Canadian-born children of immigrants with first languages other than English or French do not catch up to their English- or French-speaking Canadian-born peers in academic achievement and language development until age 13.⁶

The Ontario ESL curriculum resource material states: “ESL/ELD students ... need to be given time to develop their skills in English before their achievement can be assessed according to the criteria used for other students.”⁷ It continues: “[S]tudents may require *from five to seven years* to develop the ability to understand the academic language used in textbooks and to use English to express the increasingly complex and abstract concepts encountered in the higher grades.”⁸

Funding

English school boards receive funding for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Skills Development (ESD) through the Language Grant. French-language school boards receive funding for programs comparable to ESL/ESD programs: Actualization linguistique en français (ALF) and Perfectionnement du français (PDF).

This funding to boards does not have to be spent specifically on ESL support. Schools that receive an ESL teaching allocation may use that position partly or fully to meet their class size mandates or to maintain specialist teachers.

As well as actual ESL instruction, school boards may provide services such as translation, parent outreach programs, multilingual resources, reception and assessment centres, and first language assessment. These services are not funded by the provincial funding formula.

In December 2003, the government announced an increase of \$17 million to the ESL and PDF components of the Language Grant.⁹ This new money was not in place at the time of our survey and is \$48 million less than the increase recommended by Dr. Rozanski.

Endnotes

1. Statistics Canada, "Table 051-004 – Components of population growth, Canada, provinces and territories, annual (Persons)".
<<http://cansim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/CNSMCGIEXE>>
2. Statistics Canada, "Proportion of foreign-born population, census metropolitan areas."
<<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo46b.htm>>
3. Statistics Canada, "Immigrant population by place of birth and period of immigration: 2001." <<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo25.htm>>
4. Statistics Canada, "Place of Birth of Respondent, Sex and Age at Immigration for Immigrant Population for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census – 20% sample Data: Ontario."
<<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/95F0359XIE2001004.htm>>
5. Ministry of Education, "New Funding for ESL and Literacy Programs."
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/eslfund/esl0304.html>>

6. Elizabeth Coelho, *Adding English: A Guide to Teaching in Multilingual Classrooms*, (Toronto: Pippin Publishing Co., 2003): 14-15.
7. Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum. Grades 1-8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development – A Resource Guide* (Toronto: The Queen's Printer, 2001): 6.
8. *Ibid.*, 11.
9. Ministry of Education, "New Funding for ESL and Literacy Programs."
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/eslfund/esl0304.html>>

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Volunteers continue to take part in many facets of school life. Seven years of data from our Tracking Project suggest that most schools rely on the participation of volunteers.

We asked schools to estimate their volunteer hours and to tell us what volunteers do in their schools.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 98% of schools reported some volunteer hours every month, up from 92% in 1997/98, the first year of our survey, but virtually unchanged since 1998/99; and
- schools reported an average 137 volunteer hours per month, relatively unchanged compared to 1997/98 when the average was 130 hours per month.

"The school has a great student and parent community, and there are many parents who volunteer their time at the school. We are a very fortunate school community!"

*JK-8 school,
London District
Catholic School Board*

The two most common school volunteer jobs were supervising students on class trips and helping out in the classroom. Other specific activities undertaken by volunteers include: school council, fundraising, libraries, breakfast programs, pizza and hot dog lunches, lice checks, coaching sports teams, tutoring, assisting with anti-bullying, anger management and early literacy programs, driving students to other schools for sports events, and membership on school improvement committees. In some schools, volunteers help to direct traffic as students are dropped off and picked up before and after school. Yet not all schools have the same capacity to recruit volunteers.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 50% of schools reported 60 or fewer volunteer hours per month;
- 5% of schools reported over 400 volunteer hours per month – the equivalent of approximately three full-time jobs in each of those schools;
- 1% of schools reported at least 1,000 volunteer hours a month;

- the top 5% of schools generated as many volunteer hours as the bottom 80%; and
- several schools commented that they could not begin to count their volunteer hours.

Impact of Parent Involvement

In 1994, the Royal Commission on Learning noted that “parents vary in the degree to which they want to be involved in their children’s schools, and also differ in the type of involvement they want to have. On balance, it appears that only a small minority of parents want to participate in school governance or decision-making.”¹ In addition, the Commission noted that “there is little or no evidence that local parent councils improve learning.”²

“The School Council and parents continue to support the music and athletic programs in the school. We are fortunate that staff have the skills to provide these programs for students. Our school is recognized for its athletic, music and academic programs.”

*JK-8 school,
Simcoe County District
School Board*

However, research indicates that there are ways that parents can contribute to “higher student achievement, higher aspirations, better attendance, improved attendance, improved classroom and school climate, and more positive relationships between parents and teachers.”³ These contributions include:

- following the child’s progress at school and helping at home with homework and projects;
- attending various school performances and sports events; and
- acting as a volunteer in the classroom.⁴

“Research strongly suggests that such activities have a more direct and positive impact on the student’s progress than does active participation in parent organisations, valuable though this may be for the school in general.”⁵

Endnotes

1. Royal Commission on Learning, *For the Love of Learning: Making It Happen*, (Toronto: Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 1994): 106.
2. Ibid., 108.
3. Ibid., 107.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

FUNDRAISING

Schools raise money for everything from playground structures, to textbooks, choir vests and library shelving. In 2003/04, 95% of the schools reported that they were engaged in fundraising. Sixty per cent of schools raised money for basics like textbooks, computers and classroom supplies. The median amount that schools raised has increased substantially since 1998/99.

“The school community is very committed and fills in where needed and able because of cutbacks. Fundraising for essentials is still a priority. Most of our school council’s money is spent on textbooks, supplies for classrooms, etc.”

*K-6 school,
Upper Grand
District School Board*

In our 2003/04 survey:

- the 712 schools that reported fundraising said that they plan to raise a total of \$7.1 million;
- extrapolated province-wide, school communities will raise an estimated \$39 million; and
- the median amount raised was \$8,000 per school, the same as in 2002/03, but up from \$5,000 raised in 1998/99.

The survey results show a great disparity in the capacity and ability of school communities to engage in fundraising activities. Parents’ plans for fundraising for the year ranged from \$0 to \$100,000. The top 10% of fundraising schools planned to raise a total of \$2 million while the bottom 10% expected to raise only \$94,000.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 71% of schools planned to raise less than \$10,000;
- 16% of schools planned to raise \$10,001 - \$19,999;
- 13% of schools planned to raise \$20,000 or more; and
- the top 10% of schools raised as much money as the bottom 58%.

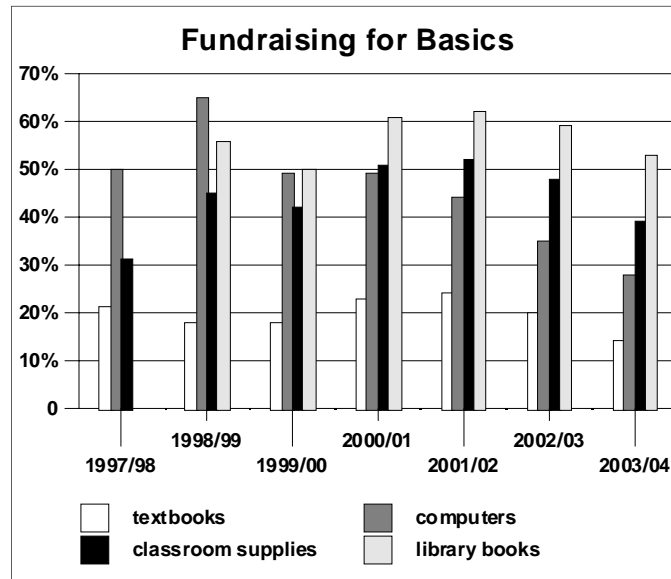
Fundraising for Basics

We asked schools whether they raised money for textbooks, computers and/or software, and classroom supplies. This year, there was a decrease in the number of schools reporting fundraising for these resources.

In 2003/04:

- 60% of schools reported fundraising for textbooks, classroom supplies, and computers, compared to 65% in 1997/98; and
- 18% of schools stated specifically that they would not be raising money for these necessities, compared to 31% of schools in 1997/98 that did not fundraise for basics.

In addition, 53% of schools reported fundraising for library books, compared to 56% in 1998/99, the first year the question was asked.



We asked schools to report how much money they would raise for textbooks, computers and classroom supplies.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- amounts that schools expected to raise for textbooks, computers and classroom supplies ranged from \$0 to \$40,000; and
- an average of \$5,288 per school will be raised for textbooks, computers or classroom supplies, compared to an average of \$3,580 in 2002/03.

Comments from the Surveys

Schools provided nearly 600 comments about school fundraising. In addition to fundraising for basics like textbooks, computers, classroom supplies

and library books, schools raised money for a wide range of activities and resources. Some stated emphatically that they have a policy of not raising money for essentials. Most schools said they raised money for several projects each year.

“As a small school experiencing declining enrolment, we cannot provide enough staff or special programming for students due to the funding model. We rely heavily on fundraising.”

*JK-8 school,
Avon Maitland District
School Board*

More than half of the schools that provided comments plan to raise money for field trips. Some said the money was for buses, admission fees or subsidies for students to attend field trips. A few planned to raise money for out-of-town trips for graduating students.

Close to one-third said they will raise money for enrichment activities, including visiting performers, scientists in the schools, speakers, clubs, author visits, and storytelling. An almost equal number will raise money for playground structures, playground and recess equipment, outdoor games, and for greening the schoolyard.

Athletic equipment, uniforms, fees for sports facilities and the costs of referees was a priority for one in five of the schools that commented, while one in ten will raise money for musical instruments, instrument repairs, art supplies, and for student music or drama performances.

One in five said they were fundraising for specific items such as a new scanner, a video camera, books to support literacy or enrichment reading programs, shelving for libraries, pianos, toys for kindergarten classes, refrigerators, fans, laminators, and walkie-talkies.

Students directly benefit from fundraising for student awards, agendas, graduations, and food and nutrition programs such as breakfast clubs and financial aid.

A small number of schools said they raise money to pay for lunchroom supervisors and to pay for supply teachers to provide release time to teachers.

SCHOOL BUILDING

“Replacement windows have been requested for over 10 years. Once again we have been left off the list for repairs this year.”

*JK-8 school,
Durham District School
Board*

For the first time, the greatest number of concerns expressed in the survey focused on the physical state of school buildings. As buildings age, they require more frequent repairs, as well as upgrades to and replacement of electrical, plumbing and heating systems, roofs and windows. More than half of the schools in our 2003/04 survey are over 40 years old and 35% reported needing renovations or general upgrades that were not approved.

The Education Equality Task Force found an extensive backlog in repairs to school buildings resulting from many years of inadequate funding for school renewal. According to Dr. Rozanski, the cost of repairs needed in schools is approximately \$5.6 billion and growing.¹

We asked schools to tell us how many portables they have and whether repairs/renovations were:

- completed or in process,
- scheduled, or
- required but not approved.

“We try very hard to keep up the appearance of the school, but with so many years of cuts things are starting to wear. We need to have the school painted, but we can’t afford the \$16,000 estimated cost, and that is just for the hallways. The building becomes hot in June, September. Our field is a mess and there are many days that we can’t use it.”

*K-6 school,
Toronto District
School Board*

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 24% of schools reported that renovations or additions were complete/in process or scheduled, compared to 23% in 2000/01;
- 16% reported that renovations or additions were required but not approved, relatively unchanged since the question was first asked in 2000/01;
- 50% of schools reported that general upgrades to roofs, furnaces, paint, carpet, furniture, etc., were complete/in process, compared to 29% in 2000/01; and
- 29% reported that general upgrades to roofs, furnaces, paint, carpets, furniture, etc., were required but not approved, relatively unchanged since 2000/01.

We also asked whether schools had portable classrooms.

"We have asked for over \$550,000 of upgrades this year – we received \$4,500 worth!"

*JK-8 school,
York Region
District School Board*

In 2003/04:

- 43% of schools reported having portables, compared to 47% in 1997/98;
- schools reporting portables had an average of 3 per school, unchanged since the question was first asked in 2000/01; and
- the number of portables per school ranged from 0 to 20.

Funding Changes

"Our school is well-designed yet in need of new windows, interior and exterior paint, playground improvements, new intercom phones, and a new roof."

*7/8 school,
Toronto District
School Board*

When the funding formula was introduced in 1997, the benchmark for heat, light, maintenance, and cleaning was set at \$5.20 per square foot, based on a formula of 100 square feet per elementary student.² This was below the 1997 average cost of \$5.65 per square foot for boards in the north and in major urban areas.³ Some additional funding to allow for features like wide hallways and large foyers was added in 1999. In March 2003, the salary component of the benchmark was increased to make it \$5.44 per square foot for the 2003/04 school year.⁴ There is no flexibility in the formula to allow for things like greater heating and snow removal needs in the north or the higher cost of living in urban areas.

In the December 2002 report of the Education Equality Task Force, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski recommended updating the operations benchmark costs to heat, light, insure, clean and maintain schools from the original \$5.20 per square foot to \$5.81 per square foot. He estimated the cost of the increase at \$165 million.⁵ He recommended that an additional \$250 million be allocated for school renewal and deferred maintenance.

"We have many leaky windows in the 1997 addition."

*JK-8 school,
Ottawa Carleton
District School Board*

In March 2003, the provincial government agreed to provide \$25 million for the 2003/04 school year for deferred maintenance and school renewal costs. It also allocated \$25 million to replace schools that are too expensive to repair.⁶ Province-wide, school boards identified 273 schools in the worst condition and the province has approved funding to replace 34 of these.

In May 2004, the government announced a \$200 million amortization fund that school boards will be able to use to pay down the principal and interest on \$2.1 billion in financing for badly needed school repairs and renovations.⁷ Funds will be available in 2005 once boards provide detailed repair plans.

Endnotes

1. Education Equality Task Force, *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement* (Toronto: Education Equality Task Force, 2002): 40.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/task02/report.html#renewal>>
2. Ministry of Education, *Student Focused Funding: Pupil Accommodation Grants 2003-04* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, Spring 2003): 12.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/e0304pupilacc.pdf>>
3. Hugh Mackenzie, *Telling tales out of school: How the Ontario government is(n't) funding Education in Ontario. Alternative Budget Technical Paper #5* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, May 2003): 11.
<<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/on/oab2003-education.pdf>>
4. Ministry of Education, *Student Focused Funding*, 12.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/e0304pupilacc.pdf>>
5. Education Equality Task Force, *Investing in Public Education*, 98.
6. Ministry of Education, *Student-Focused Funding: 2003-04 Technical Paper*.
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html#pupil>>
7. Government of Ontario, "McGuinty government to rebuild Ontario's crumbling schools." (news release, May 25, 2004).
<<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/RebuildSchools052504.asp>>

CUSTODIANS

“We have a clean, bright, attractive school environment due to our hard-working custodial team.”

*K-8 school,
Upper Grand District
School Board*

“Caretaking was cut last year. We currently have a 4-hour cleaner and one full-time chief. The 4-hour cleaner cannot accomplish the required cleaning in this time and staff turns over every few months. Our current 4-hour person does not do overtime, so evening meetings are discouraged. When they do occur, no cleaning takes place, as he arrives to lock up only. The school has never been so poorly cared for.”

*JK-6 school,
Toronto District
School Board*

Custodians are funded as part of the School Operations allocation in the Pupil Accommodation Grant. Boards are given \$5.44 per square foot to heat, light, maintain and clean schools, based on a formula of 100 square feet per elementary student, with some additional funding to allow for features like wide hallways and large foyers.

In our 2003/04 survey:

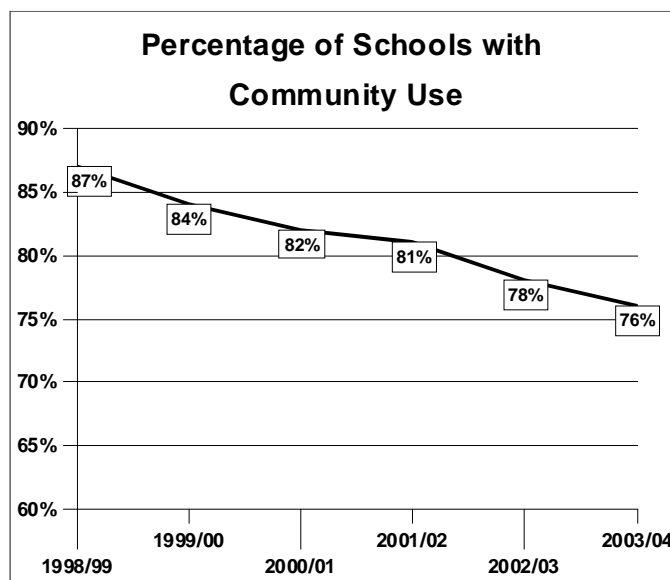
- 97% of schools reported at least one full-time custodian, unchanged since 2000/01; and
- 74% reported more than one full-time equivalent custodian, compared to 79% in 2000/01.

Many boards have well over the designated 100 square feet per student. Special purpose rooms, such as those designated for child care, family studies, design and technology, computer labs and art, do not qualify for funding.

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

In a brief to the Education Equality Task Force in 2002, Parks and Recreation Ontario stated that the current funding formula does not support other government policies related to the benefits of recreation and physical activity, including policies outlined by the Early Years funding strategy, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Public Safety and Security.¹

School buildings and schoolyards are the hub of activity for many communities. Their classrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, meeting rooms, playing fields and swimming pools are used for countless educational, recreational and civic uses. These include local events and meetings, continuing education programs, sports clubs and competitions, seniors' programs, childcare, fitness programs, and election polling centres. But schools are becoming unaffordable for many groups. This year, 68% of schools reporting community use reported charging user fees, compared to 32% in 1998/99.



In our 2003/04 survey:

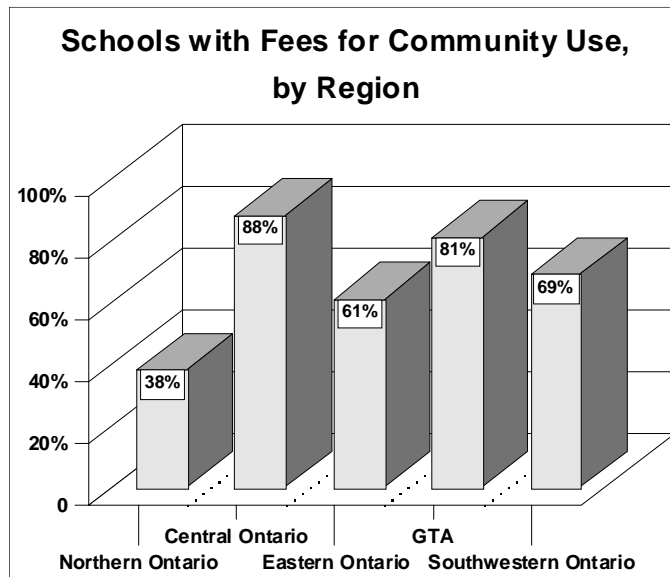
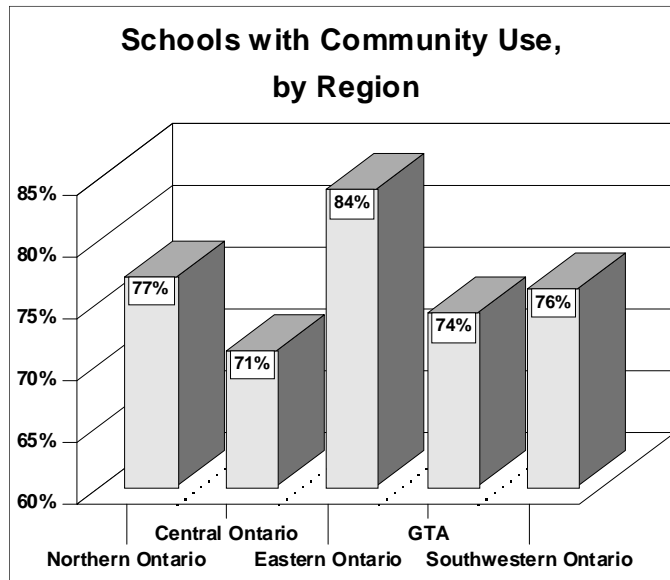
- 76% of schools reported community use, compared to 87% in 1998/99; and
- 20% of schools reporting user fees reported the fees had increased since last year.

Prior to the introduction of the funding formula, many school boards were able to offer their facilities for use by community groups free of charge or at a nominal fee. Because the funding formula makes no provision

for community use of schools, most boards now charge fees or have increased fees to cover the costs of custodial services and the use of equipment. Schools are now too expensive for many groups.

Regional Differences

Community access to schools varies significantly across Ontario. Although more than 70% of schools in each region provide community access to schools, the percentage of schools charging fees ranges from a high of 88% of schools in central Ontario to a low of 38% of schools in northern Ontario.



Schools as Community Centres

Schools are a focal point for many neighbourhoods. They provide green space, meeting space, opportunities for volunteering, and safe places for children to engage in physical and recreational activities. Increasing user fees and reduced access to schools promote inequity and make physical and recreation facilities out of reach for families who need them most.

The United Way Task Force on Public Space noted that neighbourhood schools are ideally suited as centers of learning and community life.² Responding to the City of Toronto's recommendations for a community safety plan, the Toronto District School Board launched a pilot project in April, 2004 to keep five schools across the city open and available to community groups at no cost. Critics of the plan noted that the board was not receiving any additional funding from the Ministry of Education to bear estimated costs of \$1.5 to \$2.8 million for maintenance, staffing and security.³

On April 15, 2004, the government of Nova Scotia amended its Education Act with a new provincial policy on community use of schools. The policy allows young people up to the age of 21 to use publicly owned school facilities for physical and recreation activities without rental fees. They will only pay for direct additional costs including extra custodial services if they don't clean up, replacement of any supplies or equipment that are used or damaged, or staff needed to supervise activities or open and close the school.⁴

Childcare Spaces

We asked schools if they had school-based childcare and how many spaces they had.

In 2003/04:

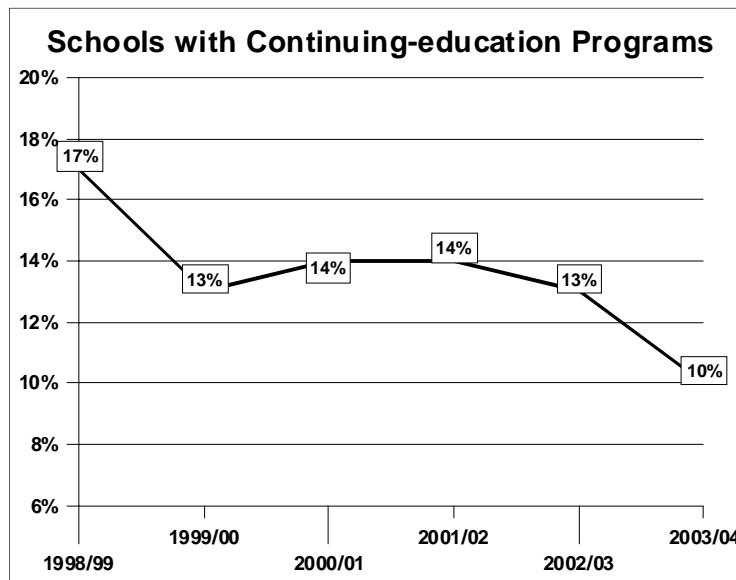
- 32% of schools reported having childcare programs, compared to 27% in 1998/99; and
- the average number of childcare spaces was 37, compared to 39 in 2001/02.

Continuing Education

Since 1998/99, there has been a steady decline in the number of schools reporting that they have continuing education programs.

In 2003/04:

- 10% reported that they have a continuing education program, compared to 17% in 1998/99.



Endnotes

1. Parks and Recreation Ontario, *Affordable Access at Risk, A Brief to the Ontario Education Equality Task Force from Parks and Recreation Ontario* (September 2002).
<<http://www.lin.ca/lin/resource/html/ac908.pdf>>
2. United Way Task Force on Public Space, *Opening the Doors: Making the Most of Community Space* (Toronto: United Way Task Force on Public Space, 2002).
3. Toronto District School Board, "TDSB responds to Mayor David Miller's Community Safety Plan," (news release, April 20, 2004).
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/communications/newsrelease/2004/april/april_20.htm>
4. Nova Scotia Department of Education, "Young Nova Scotians to Get Affordable Use of Schools" (press release, April 15, 2004).
<<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20040415005>>

BUSING

School buses are a key component of our education system. More than 800,000 Ontario students – about 45% of the school population – are eligible for busing. Without school buses, some of them would have difficulty attending school.

We asked schools to report whether students were bused, and the length of bus rides.

In our 2003/04 survey:

- 89% of schools reported that some students are bused;
- 97% reported their shortest one-way rides are under 30 minutes;
- 32% reported their longest one-way rides are under 30 minutes;
- 50% reported their longest one-way rides are 30-59 minutes; and
- 18% reported their longest one-way bus rides are one hour or more.

The longest reported one-way ride was one hour and forty minutes.

Busing by Region

Busing data varies somewhat from region to region. The percentage of schools reporting that some students are bused ranged from 79% in the Greater Toronto Area to 96% for northern Ontario. The percentage of schools reporting that their longest ride is over 45 minutes ranged from 26% in central Ontario to 47% in eastern Ontario.

Financial Pressures

Busing numbers have not changed very much since 2000/01 when we first began asking questions about transportation. However, bus operators and school boards continue to face major financial pressures.

In the Education Equality Task Force report of 2002, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski reported that since 1997:

“There is no single costing model used by school boards or the Ministry to determine the cost of operating a 72-passenger school bus in various geographic regions of the province. That has been our goal for the past six years.”

*Richard Donaldson,
Executive Director,
Ontario School Bus
Association*

- the price of fuel had increased by 9.6 %;
- maintenance costs had risen by 11.7%; and
- the overall cost of transportation had risen by 17.5%.¹

According to Richard Donaldson, Executive Director of the Ontario School Bus Association, costs have increased an additional 8% since 2002,² resulting in an overall increase of 25% since 1997. Dr. Rozanski recommended that the government increase spending on transportation by \$80 million. Twenty million dollars was added to the transportation budget in response to the Task Force report. A further \$20 million was added in the 2003 budget. At press time, the government had not announced when the remaining \$40 million dollars would be released.

Moreover, bus operators and school boards are still waiting for a new transportation funding model that is tied to actual needs and costs. In June 2003, the government announced that a new funding model would be in place for the 2004/05 school year. The Ontario School Bus Operators Association felt this was a step in the right direction, however, at press time the government had not announced its plans for transportation funding.

Endnotes

1. Education Equality Task Force, *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement* (Toronto: Education Equality Task Force, 2001): 102.
2. Richard Donaldson, Ontario School Bus Association (correspondence, May 21, 2004).

COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

"This is a wonderful rural school in a small Ontario community. In many ways, it is the heart of this community and reflects solid, positive family values. However, to some extent, we have been forgotten. My staff have an amazing ability to do a great job with very little. I just got this school its first paint job in 40 years! We have no water many days! Our gym is way too small for most sports. But still we score well in provincial testing and I graduate well-rounded citizens. I just wish they had some of the 'city' perks!"

*JK-8 school,
Thames Valley
District School Board*

Participants in our survey were asked to comment on their schools and tell us what pleased them most, and what concerned them most. Close to 400 schools responded with written remarks.

As in past years, the greatest number of positive comments were about satisfaction with school staff. More than one-quarter of all comments praised the teaching staff, support staff and administration. This has been the same for years.

Comments about community and parental support stood out this year. Close to one-quarter of the comments described the support that the school received from fundraising and volunteers. And, for the first time, a number of respondents commented favourably about the physical condition of their school. Some reported new facilities, new additions or renovations and upgrades.

Although there were some positive comments about the physical building, for the first time, the overwhelming number of concerns focused on the physical state of the school. This has always been listed as a major concern in the comment section, but over the last few years the number of comments expressing concerns about the school buildings has increased.

Concerns about special education and either the loss of or need for staff had the next highest number of comments. The comments about special education were made in addition to the nearly 600 comments provided in the special education section of the survey.

Other concerns included: inadequacy of funding, the state of school libraries, school closures, fundraising, class sizes and concerns about declining enrolment. Schools also commented on the loss of music programs, the lack of textbooks, concerns about split grades, busing and student safety.

Methodology

METHODOLOGY

This is People for Education's seventh annual survey of resources in Ontario elementary schools. The survey examines the quantifiable programs, resources and staff in Ontario schools and acts as an information tool, allowing parents to track changes in their children's schools.

Each year since 1997/98, parents and parent groups across the province have worked to ensure regional representation and a high response rate.

Surveys were mailed with an explanatory covering letter to every Ontario elementary school in December 2003. Translated surveys were provided to French-language schools. Reminders were faxed before the deadline at the beginning of February. To ensure a high level of reliability, schools that participated in the previous year were also phoned and solicited directly for their repeat participation.

Survey responses were generated at the school level by school councils in co-operation with school staff. Surveys were returned by fax or mail. Schools were guaranteed anonymity for their individual responses except where permission to quote specific responses was obtained. Only compiled data is released.

This year's sample of 802 schools equals 20% of the province's elementary schools and 21% of its students. Schools from 70 of the province's 72 school boards participated including:

- 31/31 English-language public school boards;
- 27/29 English language Catholic school boards;
- 4/4 French-language school boards; and
- 8/8 French-language Catholic school boards.

See the chart on page 89: "Number of participating schools per school board."

Fifty-nine per cent of schools in the sample participated last year. The schools represent the following combinations of grade levels:

- 60% of the respondent schools are Kindergarten-8;

- 23% are Kindergarten-6; and
- 17% have some other form of grouping (i.e., Kindergarten-5, Grade 7-8).

Geographic Regions

Schools were sorted according to their postal codes into geographic regions. The distribution of respondent schools is representative of the distribution of the population.

Region (postal code)	Percentage of schools in survey	Percentage of schools in province
Eastern (K)	20%	19%
Central (L)	23%	28%
Toronto (M)	21%	18%
Southwestern (N)	24%	19%
Northern (P)	13%	16%

For the first time we are including the regional area of Greater Toronto in our comparisons. The Greater Toronto region includes all the schools in Toronto (M postal code) and schools in the regional municipalities of Durham, Peel, Halton, and York (all part of the L postal code). The region listed as central Ontario in the report includes all the schools in the L postal code, less the schools in the Greater Toronto region.

School Size

In order to be sure that shifts in school populations were not influencing year-over-year changes, schools were also categorized according to school

Size of School	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02	2000/01	1999/00	1998/99	1997/98
1-120	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%
121-271	31%	28%	30%	31%	31%	30%	29%
272-363	22%	23%	22%	21%	20%	21%	21%
364-768	38%	41%	41%	41%	42%	42%	45%
769+	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

size. This year's sample has remained essentially consistent with previous years' samples.

Calculations

Calculations have been rounded to the nearest whole number where necessary, and so do not always add up to 100%. Where appropriate, comparisons by school size, region, or year-over-year are noted.

Where a question has changed since year one, comparisons are made to the first year the question was asked the same way as in 2003/04. Where significant shifts were found in year-over-year comparisons, the trends were confirmed by a comparison with the smaller sample of repeating schools. Some results, such as fundraising totals, were extrapolated to include the total number of elementary schools in Ontario, using average amounts as the basis for the calculation.

Student-to-staff ratios were calculated for schools which reported both the total number of students and the full-time equivalent for staff positions. To more accurately depict student-to-staff ratios in elementary schools, this year we are reporting the mean of the student-to-staff ratio of each school. Previously, staff ratios were calculated by using the total numbers province-wide of students and of full-time equivalent staff positions

POLLARA, a public opinion and marketing research firm, verified our data. In some cases the proportion of schools in certain school boards was either under-represented or over-represented. Weighting was applied by POLLARA. Data results from the weighted sample were found comparable. Extrapolations were also confirmed by POLLARA using the weighted sample.

The number of individual responses is reported for each survey question as N in the chart below. The number of schools responding by board is in the chart that follows. Copies of the French and English 2003 Elementary Tracking Surveys are in Appendix C.

Number of Schools (N) Responding per Survey Question 2003/04	
Survey Question	Number of Schools Responding
School Overview	802
Class Size	791
Specialist Teachers	767
Grade 7 & 8 Specialists	520
Library	802
Textbooks	771
Educational Assistants	774
Special Education	802
Professional Support Services	802
ESL	785
Volunteer Participation	785
Fundraising	779
School Building	794
Community Use	773
Busing	786
Custodians	773
Comments from the Survey	362

Number of Participating Schools, per District School Board

District Board of Education	Number of schools	District Board of Education	Number of schools
Algoma DSB	8	London District Catholic SB (#38)	9
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic	16	Near North DSB	10
Avon Maitland DSB	15	Niagara CDSB	5
Bluewater DSB	19	Nipissing-Parry Sound CDSB	5
Brant/Haldimand-Norfolk CDSB	6	Northeastern CDSB	3
Bruce-Grey CDSB	5	Northwest CDSB	0
CDSB of Eastern Ontario	6	Ottawa-Carleton CDSB	8
CSD catholique Franco-Nord	4	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	23
CSD catholique de l'Est Ontarien	2	Peel DSB	38
CSD des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	4	Peterborough Victoria Northumberland CDSB	7
CSD des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	4	Rainbow DSB	6
CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest	7	Rainy River DSB	4
CSD catholique Centre-Sud	4	Renfrew County Catholic DSB	10
CSD catholique de Centre-Est de l'Ontario	9	Renfrew County DSB	8
CSDC des Aurores Boréales	1	Simcoe County DSB	22
CSDC des Grandes Rivières	4	Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB	3
CSD de Nord-Est de l'Ontario	1	St. Clair Catholic DSB	11
CSD du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	1	Sudbury Catholic DSB	4
CSDC du Nouvel-Ontario	6	Superior-Greenstone DSB	6
DSB of Niagara	16	Superior North Catholic DSB	4
Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB	9	Thames Valley DSB	30
DSB Ontario North East	12	Thunder Bay CDSB	5
Durham DSB	13	Toronto CDSB	16
Durham Catholic DSB	2	Toronto DSB	128
Grand Erie DSB	14	Trillium Lakelands DSB	15
Greater Essex County DSB	18	Upper Canada DSB	16
Halton CDSB	2	Upper Grand DSB	24
Halton DSB	21	Waterloo Region DSB	21
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	11	Waterloo CDSB	0
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	3	Wellington Catholic DSB	4
Hastings and Prince Edward DSB	8	Windsor-Essex Catholic DSB	5
Huron-Perth Catholic DSB	5	York Catholic DSB	9
Huron-Superior Catholic DSB	5	York Region DSB	13
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	22	School Authorities	12
Keewatin-Patricia DSB	1	Total Schools Participating	802
Kenora Catholic DSB	2		
Lakehead DSB	6		
Lambton Kent DSB	11		
Limestone DSB	15		

Appendices

APPENDIX A: FOUNDATION GRANT

Foundation Grant - ELEMENTARY	# staff per 1,000 students		average salary + % benefits	\$ per pupil for supplies and services	\$ allocation per pupil
Classroom Teacher Class size: 24.5:1	Classroom Teacher	40.82	54,079+12%		\$2,472
	Supply Teacher			88	88
	Staff Development			11	11
Teaching Assistants		0.20	23,966+16%		6
Textbooks and Learning Materials				77	77
Classroom Supplies				79	79
Classroom Computers				44	44
Library and Guidance Services	Teacher Librarian	1.30	54,079+12%		79
	Guidance Teacher	0.20	54,079+12%		12
Professional/Para-Professional Supports		1.33	46,347+14.8%		71
Prep Time		4.08	54,079+12%		247
In-School Administration	Principal	2.75	84,125+12%		259
	Vice-Principal	0.75	76,767+12%		64
	Department Head	0.00			
	Secretary	3.67	30,072+18%		130
				6	6
Classroom Consultants		0.48	74,444+12%		40
Local Priorities Amount					200
TOTAL FOUNDATION GRANT		55.58		\$305	\$3,885

Ministry of Education. *Student-Focused Funding: 2003-04 Technical Paper, Foundation Grant*. (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2004). <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html#foundation>>

APPENDIX B: SPECIAL EDUCATION

Funding

Two special education grants supplement the Foundation grant to provide funding for the additional costs of delivering special education programs and services.

Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA)

The Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) is based on a board's total enrolment. It is intended to pay for the entire range of programs and services, from psychologists, social workers, and educational assistants to remedial and congregated classes. The SEPPA amount provides:

- \$562 for each JK to Grade 3 student,
- \$424 for students in Grade 4 to Grade 8 student and
- \$274 per pupil for secondary school students.¹

Intensive Support Amount (ISA) funding

The Intensive Support Amount (ISA) provides funding for a very small number of high needs students who meet a strict set of criteria. Boards submit ISA claims for each individual high needs student. When the grant process is fully implemented, boards will receive funding in proportion to the total number of claims approved. The money is pooled with SEPPA funding, rather than being assigned to individual students. There are four levels of ISA funding.

ISA 1

- covers the incremental cost of an individual student's equipment needs in excess of \$800 in the year of purchase.

ISA 2 and 3

- address the cost of providing intensive staff supports;
- eligible ISA Level 2 files are funded at \$12,000 per file; and
- eligible Level 3 files are funded at \$27,000.

ISA 4

- provides funding for programs for students receiving their education in facilities such as hospitals, children's mental health centres, psychiatric institutions, detention and correctional facilities, community living/group homes, and other social services agencies.²

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Each student identified as exceptional by an IPRC must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students who have not been formally identified by an IPRC may also be given an IEP. An IEP identifies the student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate special education programs and services. It also identifies the methods by which the student's progress will be reviewed. The IEP describes in writing:

- the strengths and needs of the student,
- the special education program and services that are needed, and
- how the student's program and services will be delivered.

Special education students may require an individual program that differs in "content, process, outcomes, and evaluation strategies from the program of most other students. Accommodations may include reducing the workload, simplifying tasks and material, and providing more time for learning and the completion of activities. Curriculum expectations may need to be modified."³ Individual classroom teachers use the IEP to enable them to modify their programs and evaluation tools, such as EQAO tests for exceptional students.

Maximum Enrolment in Special Education Classes

The maximum enrolment in special education class depends on the exceptionalities of the students and the services available to the teacher. However, enrolment in a self-contained class cannot exceed the following numbers of students for each class:

- (a) emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted, severe learning disabilities, or younger than compulsory school age with impaired hearing, eight pupils;
- (b) blind, deaf, trainable retarded, or with speech and language disorders, ten pupils;
- (c) hard of hearing, with limited vision, or with orthopaedic or other physical handicaps, twelve pupils;
- (d) educable retarded children, twelve pupils in the primary division and sixteen pupils in the junior and intermediate divisions;
- (e) gifted, twenty-five pupils in an elementary school class;
- (f) aphasic or autistic pupils, or with multiple handicaps for whom no one handicap is dominant, six pupils; and
- (g) different exceptionalities, sixteen pupils.⁴

Endnotes

1. Ministry of Education, *Student-Focused Funding: 2003-04. Technical Paper*.
<<http://mettowas21.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0304/tech/technical.html#enrolment>>
2. Ibid.
3. Ministry of Education and Training, *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12. Program and Diploma Requirements 1999* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1999).
<<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/oss/oss.html#5.4>>
4. Ministry of Education, *Education Act*, R.R.O. 1990, REGULATION 298, s. 31.
<http://192.75.156.68/DBLaws/Regs/English/900298_e.htm#P372_54506>

