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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Government's changes to education include \$309 million in hidden cuts that will "inflict damage" on students**

**TORONTO, ON** – Major cuts to funding for staff who support students in school are buried in today's much-ballyhooed announcement on changes to education, said the union that represents 55,000 education workers in the province.

Representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) shared their findings of \$309 million in cuts after their analysis of the background documents that were released along with today's education announcement by Minister of Education Lisa Thompson.

"The government knows what damage these cuts will inflict on children and their families, so it has tried to conceal them amid all the hoopla that surrounded their announcement," said Laura Walton, president of CUPE's Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU), which represents 55,000 education workers across the province.

"The Minister repeatedly assured us that not one teacher will lose their job – but much of the support that children get in school comes from other education workers, who are vital to the success of students in our public education system. These hidden cuts threaten that support."

The changes announced today include the [elimination](#) of sections of the [education grants](#) – sections that are used to provide services for students in need.

Gone are:

- \$235 million to fund special education to support children in need and at-risk students (included as part of Local Priorities Funding)
- \$63.6 million for extra staffing (Cost Adjustment Allocation)
- \$10 million in staffing for education workers (Human Resource Transition Supplement)

"The loss of this funding means a loss of the people on the front line – people who provide direct support and services to students," said Walton.

She pointed out another significant cut that was revealed separately today: the government's changes to the funding ratios for early childhood educators (ECEs). "The ratio changes will force school boards to choose between hiring ECEs or making cuts elsewhere."

CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn likened this announcement to "Pandora's box – there is so much in there that is harmful, including increases in class sizes, changes to hiring practices, changes to the Health and Physical Education curriculum, and so much more. But there is no question that all of these important matters – when lumped into one announcement – are there to try to hide cuts to funding that will simply cause more turmoil in Ontario's schools.

"In the coming weeks and months, we will hold Doug Ford's government accountable for these cuts and we will fight alongside Ontario's students, parents, and our allies for the high-quality education that our children deserve."

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