

Ford Government Will Oversee Almost 200 School Closures

A provincial education watchdog group, the Ontario Alliance Against School Closures (OAASC), has requested that Premier Designate Doug Ford support a moratorium on school closures slated for June 2018 and beyond until a value for money audit is completed.

When the new Ontario PC government is sworn in on June 29th, they will be overseeing almost 200 school closures according to the OAASC.

OAASC spokesperson, Susan MacKenzie, said, “under the Wynne government, school boards voted to close 300 schools and nearly two-thirds of those closures would happen under the PC banner. When Mr. Ford is sworn in as premier on Friday, he has one day to stop an estimated 89 closures slated to occur this month.”

MacKenzie states, “the OAASC provided the PC party with an [extensive report](#) that clearly demonstrated that the capital cost of closing and consolidating schools is greatly out-stripping the savings in renewal needs.”

Last week, the incoming Ford administration ordered a government wide freeze on [discretionary spending](#) until it could get a true look at the state of provincial finances. MacKenzie believes this aligns with the OAASC request for a moratorium on upcoming school closures and said, “the new government will find efficiencies in discretionary education infrastructure spending, but they must immediately act on a moratorium on their first day of power.”

Another [OAASC report](#), shows that infrastructure spending currently allocated to the upcoming closures and consolidation of 188 schools will exceed \$1.2 billion. “We are relying on the incoming government to audit these capital education expenditures and determine what infrastructure projects can be halted so as not to burden the tax payer any further,” MacKenzie said.

MacKenzie also says the OAASC will hold Doug Ford to his promises outlined in his [Plan for the People](#) to restore accountability and trust. “When the PCs were in opposition, they spoke against school closures, so we expect them to follow through and provide students with education opportunities in their own communities, many of which are in PC ridings that will be hard hit.”

She adds, “many ongoing education infrastructure projects initiated under the Wynne government are over budget and not on schedule and students have been crammed into over-capacity schools in a poor state of repair. The glut of capital incentives to close schools is being recklessly spent. Mr. Ford can stop this bleeding by halting all closures June 2018 and beyond to complete his audit of the Ministry of Education and school boards. We’ve provided him with a good foundation on which to begin his audit.”

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