

PRESENTATION TO THE DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

September 6, 2006

By Tina DiVona
President
CUPE 2026

Good evening.

My name is Tina DiVona, president of Local 2026 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, currently representing 474 members who work for our children and staff, in this board of education and in our schools.

We are the secretarial, clerical and technical staff.

I would like to thank the board of Trustees for this opportunity to speak to you about the impact of budget difficulties, and to warn parents and the community about the impact of possible cuts to services.

I know the board realizes that we have suffered from an historic lack of funding, but this year's involvement of a "Special Advisor" appointed by the Ontario Liberal Minister of Education, has raised immediate concerns about cuts and how they would impact our schools, our children, and the community at large.

We hope that cuts within Dufferin Peel can be prevented and I would like to express our desire to work with you to make sure

our area Liberal MPPs understand that they are elected to change the situation that was created by our previous Conservative government.

The funding formula is still a serious problem for our board, and for other Boards of Education in Ontario.

Let me talk about what we lose when we cut staff.

School secretaries take registrations, deal with student's absences, budgets, staffing, and along with a ton of paperwork and expertise, we make sure the board gets the grant per capita funding that goes along with each student. We also look after students' needs and their safety and wellbeing. The school community would not be the same without us. We are the heart that makes the body work.

ICT, ensures everyone's computers are functioning properly, including library computers and computer labs.

The technological skills they have provide support to students, office, teaching and program staff. Our schools would not function properly without them.

Our secretarial and clerical staff works in payroll, purchasing, communications, reception, health and safety, health and wellness, planning, construction of buildings, maintenance, continuing education, summer school and night school. All of these services would be affected by cuts to anyone of these areas. We also look after paperwork for students' health needs and special health requirements, and assessing new immigrants and help them integrate into the school community.

In short, no matter where you cut, it will have an impact on the school community and more importantly on students.

We know that trustees face re-election in November, and parents will remind them that they need to protect schools and programs. I am also certain that parents will take issue with hearing constant excuses from the Liberal government.

Somehow there has to be a way to protect our school communities and to fund our board adequately. If the funding formula is the problem, then let's FIX it.

We need transitional funding. The government should provide it. As a parent and taxpayer, that is our fundamental right and our responsibility to our future generations.

In closing, I urge the Board and Trustees to do what it takes to prevent cuts to programs and staff in our schools.

Given our history of under-funding, it only makes sense to invest in our children, because their future should not be diminished by the failings of our Liberal government.

Thank you.