



**Canadian Teachers' Federation**  
**Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants**

## **CTF President's column**

### **Education funding: Finding our way forward**

Nine out of 10 Canadians favour increased funding for their province's or territory's public elementary and secondary schools. This broad base of public support has been revealed in interviews conducted between Feb. 18 and March 5, 2010, with 2,591 adults throughout Canada by Vector Research.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) National Issues in Education Poll, released at the 2010 President's Forum in Edmonton last July, also shows that if more money is to be spent on public education, Canadians believe that reducing class size should be the highest priority, with more than one in four respondents expressing this view. Improving the curriculum came in a close second. Efforts to help students feel more respected, welcomed and included, and more services for students with special needs were priorities for some 12 percent of those surveyed.

The CTF has conducted national polling for almost a decade, and results throughout the years have been similar: Canadians strongly believe that public education must be better funded. Turning that belief into action remains an elusive goal.

It is fair to say that each of us sees public education from our own perspective. To the parent of a child with special needs, the viewpoint may be one of obtaining better services. For the small business owner, it may be ensuring that the curriculum includes the literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills that result in an educated labour force.

Teachers bring their own lived experiences—and often their own financial commitment—to the debate.

A recent CTF survey showed the average Canadian teacher was out of pocket some \$453 for expenses on classroom materials or class-related activities in the 2008-09 school year. A similar survey, conducted by telephone five years earlier, estimated the amount spent per teacher at that time was an average of \$344.

Parents, students and other school community members also help to fill the financing gap. The survey indicates that 95 per cent of respondents noted their schools regularly conduct fundraising activities through sales, community donations, contests and admission fees to school-related activities.

As a teacher, I believe our public school system benefits when we are exposed to a wide range of opinions, beliefs and experiences. This is why CTF brought together teacher leaders from across the country for “The Funding of Education: Great Promise”, a forum that examined the issue through exposure to a diverse collection of viewpoints.

Rather than searching for specific solutions, the forum was a sharing of perspectives as we look at external forces for change, particularly in regard to funding. Speakers represented points of view on education finance, priorities and challenges. Canadians have expressed the will to move public education forward. Now it is a matter of finding our way.

*(Mary-Lou Donnelly is the President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation)*

### **CTF President's Forum daily bulletins:**

Monday, July 12, 2010: [http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Documents/Events/presforum/2010/PF2010News\\_EN\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Documents/Events/presforum/2010/PF2010News_EN_WEB.pdf)

Tuesday, July 13, 2010: [http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Documents/Events/presforum/2010/PF2010News-2\\_EN\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Documents/Events/presforum/2010/PF2010News-2_EN_WEB.pdf)

**View presentations on UStream:**

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/2010-president-s-forum>

**Canadian Teachers' Federation**

CTF President **Mary-Lou Donnelly**  
opening remarks  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8234133>

**National Education Association**

**Bob Kim**, Education Policy & Practice,  
on President Obama's *Race to the Top*  
initiative  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8237554>

**Education International**

**Bob Harris**, Special Advisor to the EI  
Secretary General , on *International*  
*perspectives in funding priorities*  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8238085>

**Canadian Teachers' Federation**

Secretary General **Calvin Fraser** on the  
Forum theme, *The Promise of Public*  
*Education*  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8252286>

**Dianne Woloschuk** (STF) and CTF  
Vice-President on *challenges* faced by  
teachers  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8253229>

**Susan Perry**, Professional  
Development staff officer, OECTA on  
*Merit Pay* research  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8239492>

**Fraser Institute and Canadian  
Centre for Policy Alternatives**

**Peter Cowley**, Education Researcher,  
Fraser Institute and,

**Bruce Campbell**, researcher, educator  
and writer, CCPA  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8234440>

**Assembly of First Nations**

**Karihwakeron Tim Thompson**, Senior  
Policy Analyst of Education on *Fulfilling*  
*the Promise of Public Education*  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8255621>

**Canadian Association for  
Community Living**

**Gordon Porter**, President of the CACL  
on *Special education*  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8256393>

**Halifax Regional School Board**

**Carole Olsen**, Superintendent on  
*challenges* faced by school boards  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8253061>

**Alberta Education**

**Keray Henke**, Deputy Minister of  
Education on *challenges* faced by  
governments  
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/8252662>

## **News releases**

[National Poll: Canadians favour increased education funding and evaluations by teachers over standardized tests](#)

[Teachers go out of pocket \\$453 on materials and activities for their students](#)