

# SCHOOL-WIDE STAFF AND RESOURCES

This report is an excerpt from the 2015 Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools.

Students' education—their acquisition of knowledge, their creative, social-emotional and citizenship skills, and their overall health and well-being—is supported by a wide range of staff, resources and programs in schools. Together, the people in schools—including classroom teachers and specialists, principals and vice-principals, itinerants and support staff, volunteers and community partners—create learning environments that give all students a chance for success.

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

This year, as in other years, most principals express great pride in their schools, but also report operating under challenging constraints.

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**We believe in and are passionate about our school, and when one of us succeeds, we all succeed. Our challenge is the size of the school related to the amount of support in the school. ... For me, the success of our school has been a labour of love. This year the challenges seem to be tipped more heavily than the rewards.**

*Elementary school, Peel DSB*

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Almost all schools (97 percent) have a full-time principal, but in elementary schools:

- Only 44% report having a vice-principal, and only 20% of those are full-time.
- Only 45% report having more than one office staff.

Two recent Canadian studies found that principals have a strong desire to work as instructional leaders—focused on classroom learning experiences—but struggle to find time and space for this work. Principals spend much of their day attending to building maintenance, behaviour issues, staffing, and ongoing communication about policy and programs, both locally and provincially.<sup>1</sup>

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**Faced with a time crunch, [principals] find themselves giving more attention to the managerial aspects of the job than to the educational ones, a situation that they regret but consider inevitable.**

*Alberta Teachers' Association, Leadership for Learning<sup>2</sup>*

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At the provincial level, the *Ontario School Leadership Framework* outlines school administrators' roles, stating that they are responsible for managing the day-to-day logistics, communicating the school's vision, modelling and creating school values, maintaining high quality social relations, and providing instructional feedback to teachers. Principals and vice-principals are also responsible for school improvement planning, healthy schools policy, and the new focus on students' well-being.<sup>3</sup>

In this year's survey, we asked principals where they felt they spent most of their time. By far, the most frequently chosen combination was 'Managing employee and safe schools issues' and 'Responding to system/Ministry initiatives and communications'.<sup>4</sup>

## FUNDING SMALLER SCHOOLS

Enrolment in Ontario's elementary and secondary schools has declined by more than 140,000 students since 2002/03.<sup>5</sup>

The decline in enrolment has an impact on funding, on the viability of small schools, and on school boards' capacity to apply economies of scale to support the range of programs, services and resources that all students need.

This year, in an effort to reduce the provincial deficit, the Ministry of Education is applying pressure to school boards to eliminate so-called empty space.<sup>6</sup> Boards will receive reduced "top up" funding, which was previously provided to cover maintenance and operating costs in schools that had enrolments below their Ministry-allotted capacity. The Declining

Enrolment Grant, intended to allow boards to gradually adjust to the per-pupil amounts in the education funding formula, will be cut in half.

Approximately two-thirds of a school board’s revenue, including the majority of funding for special education, is based on enrolment. As enrolment declines, boards lose revenue, and it becomes difficult for boards with a high number of small schools to provide specialized programs, extracurricular activities, or specialist teachers, such as teacher-librarians for elementary schools.

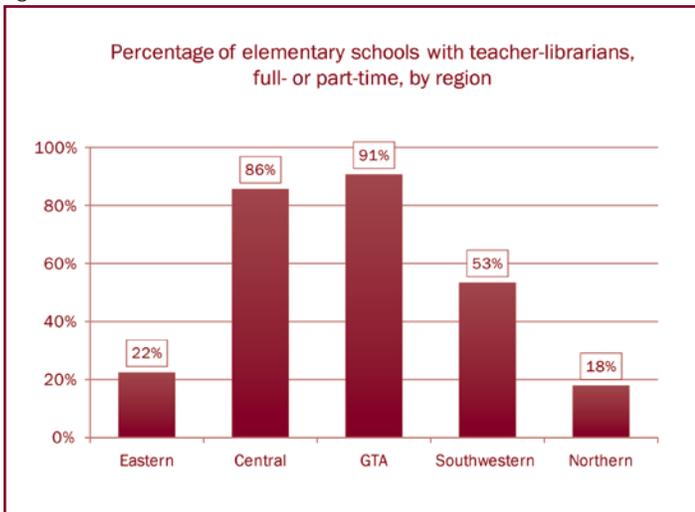
## SCHOOL LIBRARIES

**The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development...School libraries must have adequate and sustained funding for trained staff, materials, technologies and facilities.**

*FLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto<sup>7</sup>*

Teacher-librarians can play a vital role in supporting collaboration and integrated cross-curricular/classroom learning projects.<sup>8</sup> But not all schools have teacher-librarians, and many are part-time.

Figure 1



A 2006 study conducted by Queen’s University and People for Education found a relationship between higher scores on EQAO reading tests in grades 3 and 6 and having library staff. As important, the study found that in elementary schools with teacher-librarians, students were more likely to report that they liked to read and that they were good at reading.<sup>9</sup>

Over the last decade, the overall percentage of elementary schools with teacher-librarians either full- or part-time has stayed fairly consistent at approximately 60 percent, but the numbers have never returned to 80 percent, as reported in 1999.

Due to recently announced funding constraints, some boards have said they will be cutting elementary teacher-librarians completely.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of secondary schools with teacher-librarians has declined from 78 percent in 1999/2000 to 72 percent in 2014/15.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS REPORTING LIBRARY SUPPORT	Elementary	Secondary
Teacher-librarian (full- or part-time)	60%	72%
No teacher-librarian	40%	28%
A library technician (full- or part-time)	43%	44%
No library staff at all	8%	6%

## HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

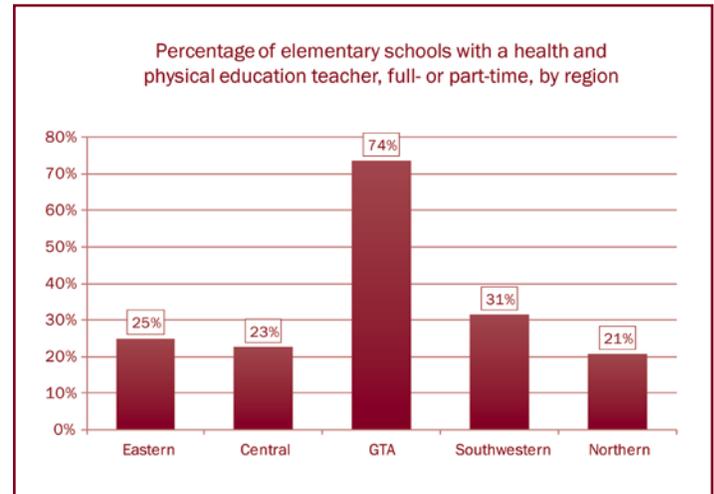
Ontario has extensive policy and curriculum that is focused on students' mental and physical health. For example, the Ministry of Education's *Policy/Program Memorandum 138* outlines a comprehensive approach to student health, including areas such as healthy eating and physical activity. In elementary schools, the policy mandates 20 minutes of daily physical activity (DPA) within instructional time. In addition, Ontario's comprehensive mental health strategy is shaped by key mental health principles such as diversity, equity, social justice, hope, respect and understanding.<sup>11</sup>

In November 2014, the province announced that it would work in partnership with *Active at School*, a coalition of private, public and not-for-profit organizations, and the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea), to implement programs that will ensure that all young people get 60 minutes of physical activity per day.<sup>12</sup>

All of these strategies are supported by research that shows early exposure to comprehensive health programs has a positive impact on students' short- and long-term health; may help to reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases in adulthood; and reduces the stigma attached to mental health problems.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the province's extensive school health policies, there continue to be gaps "on the ground." According to Ontario's Auditor General, while DPA is intended to be mandatory in elementary schools, neither the Ministry nor school boards monitor schools to ensure that all students receive it. In her 2013 report, the Auditor said that teachers and principals cite a lack of time, a focus on literacy, and a lack of space as reasons that it is difficult to implement the DPA policy.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 2



Specialist teachers have been shown to deliver more effective and consistent physical and health education programs than regular classroom teachers, and to provide the necessary leadership to build a health-promoting environment throughout the entire school community.<sup>15</sup> However, there is insufficient funding to ensure that most students have access to specialist health and physical education teachers in elementary schools.

In 2015:

- 42% of elementary schools report that they have a health and physical education teacher; just over three-quarters of those are full-time.
- Only 21% of elementary schools in northern Ontario have a health and physical education teacher, compared to 74% in the GTA.

## THE ARTS

Students' exposure to arts education can build their capacity for imaginative, flexible and critical thinking—all foundational skills for living productive lives as adults.<sup>16</sup>

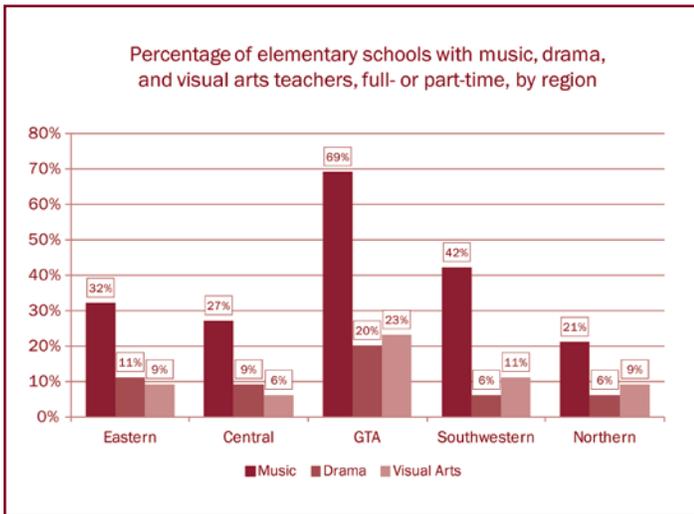
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...distinctive forms of thinking needed to create artistically crafted work are relevant not only to what students do, they are relevant to virtually all aspects of what we do, from the design of curricula, to the practice of teaching, to the features of the environment in which students and teachers live.

*Elliot Eisner, Stanford University<sup>17</sup>*

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Figure 3



The majority of elementary schools in our survey do not have access to specialist arts teachers. This lack of access is particularly true in regions where the majority of schools are small.

- 45% of elementary schools report having a music teacher, either full- or part-time. This percentage has held relatively steady over the last ten years.
- Only 25% of elementary schools have a full-time music teacher.

Of schools with grades 7 and 8:

- 15% report having a specialist visual arts teacher.
- 10% have a specialist drama teacher.

## NEXT STEPS

Ontario's Ministry of Education has articulated a vision for education that includes success in literacy and numeracy, high graduation rates, and goals for students' well-being.<sup>18</sup> It is vital that funding for education supports not only those goals, but also ensures that all students are supported to develop the broad skills and competencies they need for long-term success.

# NOTES

- 1 Alberta Teachers Association. (2009) Leadership for learning: The experience of administration in Alberta schools. Link: <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/PD-86-14%20Leadership%20for%20Learning.pdf>. Accessed April 23, 2015.  
Pollock, K. (2014). *The Changing Nature of Principals' Work, Final Report* (pp. 1-42). Ontario Principal Council. Link: [http://www.edu.uwo.ca/faculty\\_profiles/cpels/pollock\\_katina/OPC-Principals-Work-Report.pdf](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/faculty_profiles/cpels/pollock_katina/OPC-Principals-Work-Report.pdf). Accessed May 28, 2015.
- 2 Alberta Teachers Association. Ibid.
- 3 Institute of Leadership. (2012). *The Ontario Leadership Framework; A school and system leader's guide to putting Ontario's leadership framework into action* (pp. 1-28). Ministry of Education, Ontario. Link: [http://iel.immix.ca/storage/6/1345688999/Final\\_User\\_Guide\\_EN.pdf](http://iel.immix.ca/storage/6/1345688999/Final_User_Guide_EN.pdf). Accessed May 28, 2015.
- 4 The top three combinations of work that the principals chose were: Managing employee and safe schools issues and Responding to system/ministry initiatives and communication (38%); Managing employee and safe schools issues and Direct student support (12%); Managing employee and safe schools issues and Improving the instructional program (11%).
- 5 Ministry of Education, Ontario (2015) *School Board Funding Projections for the 2015-16 School Year*. Link: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1516/2015FundingEN.pdf>. Accessed May 28, 2015.
- 6 Eisner, Elliot W. (2002) 'What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education?', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, [http://www.infed.org/biblio/eisner\\_arts\\_and\\_the\\_practice\\_or\\_education.htm](http://www.infed.org/biblio/eisner_arts_and_the_practice_or_education.htm). Accessed April 24, 2015.
- 7 UNESCO/IFLA School Library Manifesto (n.d.). Link: [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/school\\_manifesto.html](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/school_manifesto.html). Accessed April 25, 2015.
- 8 Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario. Klinger, D.A.; Lee, E.A.; Stephenson, G.; Deluca, C.; Luu, K.; 2009.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Rushowy, K. (2015) *Toronto Catholic board cuts include teacher-librarians: Job called key to literacy, love of reading, while also providing teacher support and resources*. Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/03/25/toronto-catholic-board-cuts-include-teacher-librarians.html>. Accessed April 30, 2015.
  - Toronto public: Teacher-librarians in elementary and secondary schools.
  - Ottawa Catholic: No teacher-librarians in elementary schools; larger schools have full-time library technicians, smaller schools part-time technicians. Every high school has a full-time teacher-librarian and library technician.
  - Halton public: Elementary schools have a full- or part-time teacher librarian; high schools have a full-time teacher-librarian and full-time technician.
  - Halton Catholic: Library technicians in elementary schools; librarians in high schools.
  - York Catholic: Every elementary school has, at minimum, a half-time teacher librarian and half-time library technician. All high schools have a teacher-librarian and full-time technician.
  - York public: Teacher-librarians in elementary schools; both librarians and technicians in high schools.
  - Durham public: Teacher-librarians staff school libraries.
  - Durham Catholic: Teacher-librarians staff school libraries.
  - Peel public: Teacher-librarians in elementary schools; librarians and technicians in high schools.
  - Peel Catholic: Employs both teacher-librarians and library technicians.
- 11 Ministry of Education, Ontario (2013) *Supporting Minds, Educators Guide to Promoting Mental Health and Well Being*. Ministry of Education, Toronto, ON.
- 12 Ministry of Education, Ontario (2014) *Promoting Well-Being at School: Ontario Supports Program to Encourage Children and Youth to Get More Daily Physical Activity*, Link: <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/11/promoting-well-being-at-school.html>. Accessed: April 30, 2015.

- 13 Ferguson, B. and Power, K. (2014). *Broader Measures of Success: Physical and Mental Health in Schools*. In Measuring What Matters, People for Education. Toronto: November 8, 2014.
- 14 Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (2013) Annual Report: Chapter 4, *Healthy Schools Strategy*. Link: [http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports\\_en/en13/303en13.pdf](http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_en/en13/303en13.pdf). Accessed: April 28, 2015.
- 15 Bates, H. and Eccles, K. (2008) *Wellness Curricula to Improve the Health of Children and Youth, A Review and Synthesis of Related Literature*, Alberta Education, Alberta, Canada. Link: [https://education.alberta.ca/media/1113116/wellness\\_lit.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/1113116/wellness_lit.pdf). Accessed April 24, 2015.
- 16 Uptis, R (2014). *Creativity; The State of the Domain*. In Measuring What Matters, People for Education. Toronto: November 8, 2014.
- 17 Ministry of Education, Ontario (2015) 2015-16 Grants for Student Needs TECHNICAL BRIEFING March 26, 2015 Link: <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1516/BriefingSlideDeckEN.pdf>. Accessed May 28, 2015.
- 18 Ministry of Education, Ontario (2014) *Achieving Excellence: A renewed vision for education in Ontario*. Link: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/renewedVision.pdf>. Accessed May 28, 2015.



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