

Public Statement  
of  
***One School System Network***  
by  
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A week today Ontario will elect its government. That government will not speak for the people of Ontario.

Why?

Because the people of Ontario once again have been cheated by politicians unwilling to speak up for what the people want - a one non-sectarian school system.

The Conservatives, as everyone here knows, have just climbed down from imminent political collapse by fudging their position on extending public funding to yet more religious schools.

Why did they do that?

They did it because 70% of the people in Ontario, probably a higher fraction amongst just Conservatives, are adamantly opposed to Tory's proposal.

And with analysis of voter preference polls, by several respected sources, showing that Tory's Conservatives would be lucky to get 30 seats, the will of the people won out - there will be no party voting for extended funding in the new Legislature.

The One School System wants to pick up on something that Mr Tory said on Monday.

He said the school funding issue should be de-politicalized.

OSSN agrees with him.

However the real problem - the great mismatch between the desire of the public and public policy - has not been addressed by the Liberal or NDP parties.

All their policy does is deliver the current system of special funding of Catholic schools past the election and into the sanctum of absolute power with a Liberal majority, or Liberal-NDP coalition.

Both parties are being hypocritical in the extreme.

Both are hoping that their double talk and dervish dancing will confuse enough people long enough to carry their support for continued civil rights violations past another election.

Who say's the civil rights of the majority of Ontarians are being violated?

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association says so.

CCLA wants a Constitutional amendment on school funding.

But what can be done about it?

The Toronto Star has suggested a blue-ribbon committee to examine the question of school funding.

OSSN agrees.

Our only provisos about any committee is that it be fairly composed, and be, or report to a Legislative Committee.

As well, OSSN insists that, if the final recommendation to the House of Assembly is not to proceed to achieve a constitutional amendment to end public funding of religious schools, the Legislative recommendations be voted on in a single-issue referendum, with a 60% threshold.

Polls taken by OSSN, from Windsor to Ottawa, using the 1997 Newfoundland referendum question, demonstrate that neither continued nor extended funding of religious schools can attain even that weak level of public support.

In summary, Mr Tory has heard the anger of the people about extended funding to religious schools.

His political rivals have no reason to crow - the people don't support what they are proposing either - and will want an open and honest debate on the entire issue of school funding after the election.

OSSN calls for a cease-fire to be arranged between all parties - inside and outside the Legislature after October 10<sup>th</sup> - to move forward in good will to form a Legislative Committee to examine the issue of public funding of religious schools and make recommendations which the people can vote on in a one issue campaign.

The people of Ontario have waited since 1855 to have their say on this matter.

Perhaps the lesson of this election campaign to everyone is that the school funding issue will not go away until the people of Ontario finally have their say.

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