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Federal Government steps in to fill funding gap for school reopening plans

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Toronto, ON – ETFO welcomes today's announcement from the Federal government that they will be stepping in and providing a significant investment to help reopen our public schools safely. Ontario will be receiving up to \$763.34 million through the new Safe Return to Class Fund.

The Ford government has repeatedly failed to provide a properly-funded plan to ensure the health and safety of students, educators and their families when schools reopen this fall.

“School boards must have immediate access to this funding and be given the flexibility to determine when it is safe to reopen their schools by the Ministry of Education. The federal and provincial governments must now ensure these funds flow straightaway so that school boards can implement revised plans,” said Sam Hammond, President of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

“We need to ensure that this funding is made directly available to school boards with a mandate to reduce class sizes to allow for proper physical distancing, ensure proper ventilation in all classrooms and implement health and safety protocols that protect all students, educators and other staff and their families.”

Hammond added, “Tens of thousands of parents and educators have written to their MPs asking them to intervene, given the failure of the Ford government and their tremendous lack of leadership on this issue. Today, we see the results of that advocacy. If the Ford government cannot be part of the solution, at the very least they need to get out of the way and stop being part of the problem.”

ETFO is committed to continuing to work with school boards, parents, educators and the broader community to advocate for a safe and healthy return to school for educators and students in every board across this province.

ETFO represents 83,000 elementary public school teachers, occasional teachers and education professionals across the province. Its Building Better Schools education agenda can be viewed at BuildingBetterSchools.ca.