

MORE THAN 150 HALTON PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS DECLARED "POTENTIALLY REDUNDANT"

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An "unprecedented" number of Halton public high school teachers have just been declared "potentially redundant."

On Tuesday, 154 classroom teachers were notified that they may not have a teaching job this fall.

"We knew it was coming because we had been in discussions with the board (Halton District School Board), but this isn't normal or business as usual; it's unprecedented especially for Halton," said Cindy Gage, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) District 20 teachers' bargaining unit president.

"If the government hadn't put forward the change in the average funding for classrooms, we would have no potentially redundant teachers

at this time, and we would actually be hiring teachers because our enrolment is up I think almost 500 students."

Gage put the blame squarely on the province's decision to increase average secondary school classroom sizes from 22 to 28 students, as part of its new vision for education announced in March.

"It's going to affect the students adversely; obviously, it's going to mean less one-on-one attention in a classroom and their course selection is going to be detrimentally affected."

Despite low morale, "we are hopeful because the 'consultations' the government has told us, are open until May 31 on this decision."

OSSTF members have met with Halton MPPs in recent weeks to voice their concerns, she said.

"We've told them what this is going to do to the student learning environment in schools to lose all of these teachers. Also, who is going to run the extracurricular activities?"

"Obviously, I am concerned for my members, but it is (also) about the students. People need to understand what this is going to do to the student learning environment in the classroom and in the school. I want the public to know this is not business as usual in Halton. It's unprecedented to have this many teachers declared potentially redundant and there shouldn't even be any. This is very bad news for students in Halton region."

A rally has been organized for Friday, May 3 from 4 to 5 p.m. outside Milton MPP Parm Gill's office, 400 Main St. E., Unit 206. District 20 members

will be joined by members of other unions including CUPE, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and the NDP riding associations of Milton and Burlington, said Gage.

"This is very bad news for students in Halton region."

- Cindy Gage, OSSTF District 20 teachers' bargaining unit president



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