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80 positions need to be filled - to help schools manage too-large classes or other unexpected pressures. This year, there is funding for just 28.5 spots.

And with 125 teachers not yet placed, "we have 125 sitting partially or fully on that recall list, with only 28.5 positions which may or may not be allocated," Wolfe said. Even if all 28.5 are filled, "there are still over 90 people who are either fully without a (full-time) position or, at best, in half-time positions."

Some teachers who worked full-time last year are already working as supply teachers. For each teacher lost, that is six classes not available to students, Wolfe added. "We could have 580 fewer classes, or 600 fewer classes" depending on final numbers, she said.

In the Halton District School Board, 26 teachers remain on the surplus list,

with another 31 forced to scale back to part-time positions, said Cindy Gage, president of District 20 of the secondary teachers' union.

Given the loss of teaching positions and now larger classes, she said "stacked classes" have become more common - especially in tech. (Stacked classes are those where multiple grades are combined into one.)

"Two schools cancelled Writer's Craft, which is an extremely popular Grade 12 English course," Gage also said. "It always runs - and they both had over 20 students in them, which in any other year would have run."

Help for struggling students has also been hit, she said. "In one school, the math support at lunch was cancelled because they didn't have enough teachers to do all of the supervisions."

Daryl Jerome, who heads District 21 in the

Hamilton-Wentworth public board, said all teachers there have ended up with jobs, though some have gone from full-time positions to long-term supply work, impacting their hours and benefits.

He said the board is down 100 permanent teaching positions in high schools. "At the end of the day, the board has been very creative about keeping the number of course options open as possible," he said.

It cut the number of teachers working as consultants, moving those educators back into the classroom.

While that protected classroom jobs, it has meant fewer professional supports and development for educators, he said.

The board has also resorted to more stacked classes - in some cases, three or four grades combined in one course such as physical education, Jerome added.

Some Northern boards have had to combine different grades and subject areas into a class "and they've had a lot of issues with stacking bizarre combinations" to keep courses going because of their lower enrolments, Jerome also said.

In a larger urban board like Hamilton, there is flexibility to "try to be creative with the money they have." Harvey Bischof, president of the provincial Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, said, "It's clear from the fact that there are still laid-off education workers and teachers in places all across this province that the Ford education agenda isn't good for anyone."

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By Cory Soal  
R.H.A.D.

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