

# PANDEMIC-ERA EDUCATION A REAL LEARNING CURVE

**KUDOS TO ALL THOSE WHO'VE ADAPTED TO THESE CHALLENGES, WRITES TED ARNOTT**



**TED ARNOTT**  
Column

With regular in-person resuming in our schools this month, students, parents and teachers all deserve special mention and acknowledgement.

While schools were closed, every student missed their friends and teachers, and struggled to stay focused to online lessons. Some faced insurmountable obstacles, because of problems at home or inadequate or unavailable internet or technology.

Parents struggled as well. Many were working from home, while simultaneously supervising more than one child, with multiple schedules and devices. Organizing this for months at a time was stressful beyond imagination.

Teachers faced challenges they had never experienced before. Teaching online meant learning new technology and improvising to make a television studio in their homes, and then teaching to a screen.

The provincial government's decision to close schools earlier this year was based on the advice of public health officials.

However, it continues to be controversial, and whether it was the right call and how it was managed will be debated for years to come.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Education released guidelines for the safe reopening of our schools. The guidelines are available at: [www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-health-and-safety-measures-schools](http://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-health-and-safety-measures-schools). The recommendations continue to evolve, as new questions emerge and new scientific knowledge is provided by public health officials.

Opposition MPPs will offer their critique, and the government should listen to constructive ideas to ensure students and staff are safe, while making the educational experience as normal as possible.

A few years ago, I worked with Irvin Studin on a proposal to encourage the teaching of more internationally important languages (as 'third languages') in our schools. He now heads the Institute for 21st Century Questions, a leading Canadian think tank.

In a recent Globe and Mail article, Studin argues that going forward, keeping the schools open should be viewed as a social imperative, that excellence and normalcy must be the goals, and an extraordinary effort must be extended to help students who've fallen behind to catch up.

We have learned many lessons in our fight against COVID-19, and together we can pass this test too.

*Ted Arnott is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills. He can be reached at [ted.arnott@pc.ola.org](mailto:ted.arnott@pc.ola.org).*

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## SNAPSHOT



Anne Philpott photo

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## FINANCIAL PLANNING TOUGHER FOR WOMEN

**GENDER INEQUALITY PRESENTS UNIQUE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES, WRITES PETER WATSON**



**PETER WATSON**  
Column

In a perfect world there would be no difference to the financial challenge between men and women. That is not the case.

Women are often underpaid compared to equally qualified men. Earning less money translates into a reduced ability to save for the future.

Childbearing is the sole domain of women, but also they are more likely to remain out of the workforce if the decision is for one parent to stay at home with the children.

If an elder parent needs family assistance, often the woman assumes that re-

sponsibility.

COVID-19 was a perfect example of women being at a disadvantage.

People started working from home, children were not at school, and depending on their age, needed assistance with online learning.

If one parent was forced to leave their job because of this reality, it was more often the woman.

Women taking time out of the workforce miss earning an income and fall behind men in gaining valuable work experience.

Women typically live longer than men.

If a family runs low on money during retirement, chances are it will be the widow who lives her final years with insufficient funds.

Financial planning is customized to the circumstances of each client.

It's recommend you consider the financial risk that is more applicable to women.

*Peter Watson is registered with Aligned Capital Partners Inc. (ACPI) to provide investment advice. Investment products are provided by ACPI. ACPI is a member of the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada. The opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of ACPI. Watson provides wealth management services through Watson Investments. He can be reached at [www.watsoninvestments.com](http://www.watsoninvestments.com).*

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