

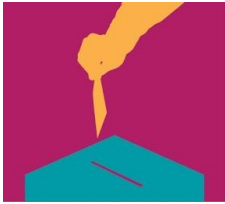
# BE A PUBLIC SERVICE VOTER

## ELECTION 2020 - EDUCATION

Education is a right, not a privilege. A strong public education system ensures that all children have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and develop to their full potential – regardless of their background or economic circumstances.

### The Sask. Party's Track Record

- In 2009 the Sask. Party government strips the ability of democratically elected school boards to set their own mill rate to address local priorities and ensure adequate funding.
- The Sask. Party government establishes a Qualified Independent Schools category in 2012, which provides per-student grants equivalent to 50% of the allocation provided to public schools. This change diverts resources away from the public education system and contributes to a surge in private school enrolment.
- In 2013 the Sask. Party government announces plans to use a \$635 million public-private partnership (P3) agreement for the construction of nine joint-use Catholic/public elementary schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville and Warman. A CCPA-Saskatchewan study finds that public sector workers are relied on to address deficiencies with the P3 schools.
- As part of its 2017 austerity budget, the Sask. Party government slashes funding for K-12 education by \$54 million. This results in funding cuts of 2.6% to 8.0% for 27 of Saskatchewan's 28 school divisions and layoffs across the province.
- In 2017 the Sask. Party government amends *The Education Act* to further restrict the autonomy of school boards and give more power to the Minister of Education.
- The provincial government restores the funding cut over subsequent budgets, but school divisions continue to be underfunded given increases in enrolment. Several school divisions resort to layoffs in 2020, including reductions in caretaking staff in the Prairie South School Division.
- Inadequate education funding, increased classroom sizes and a growing number of students with complex needs exposes more education workers to violent incidents. A 2019 survey of CUPE support staff finds that 40% experience violence on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.



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- The Sask. Party government creates a Provincial Response Team (PRT) of education stakeholders to help plan the safe re-opening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic but denies representation to CUPE's 7,000 support workers.
- The province releases its "Safe Schools Plan" on August 4, 2020, but it is panned for its lack of details, absence of mandatory masking and failure to commit additional funding for reduced class sizes and enhanced cleaning. The Sask. Party government responds to public pressure by delaying the start of the school year and committing an additional \$40 million in funding to address some concerns, but refuses to limit classroom sizes.

### What Saskatchewan Needs

- A significant increase in funding to school divisions to properly reflect increased enrolment and allow for the hiring of additional education assistants to address increasingly complex classrooms.
- Implement a violence audit of all school divisions in Saskatchewan to ensure compliance with occupational health and safety legislation and regulations.
- Provide school boards with more autonomy to address local priorities and concerns.
- Put a stop to expensive and secretive P3 school agreements.
- Immediately allocate more funding, including the first installment of the \$75 million in federal government Safe Restart funds, to ensure proper ventilation in schools, limit class sizes, and hire more custodians, teachers and other staff to ensure the safety of students and staff during the pandemic.

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