

# Quick Study

ON EDUCATION ISSUES

May 2008. ISSN 1201-215



*Malkin Dare is the President of the Society for Quality Education, a think tank based in Toronto. The Society promotes school choice in order to improve student learning.*

## Summary

- Ontario school boards are greatly increasing the number of employees who earn more than \$100,000.
- At the same time, enrolment is declining across the province.
- The school boards' monopoly status makes inefficiencies inevitable.
- Ontario should introduce more school choice.

Permission is granted to reprint some or all of this text. The author is available for interview. Call Doretta Wilson, 416-231-7247.

**Text Word Count: 692**

## Let the Sunshine In

by Malkin Dare

The sun is shining a lot more on the Toronto District School Board these days – and that's bad news for taxpayers.

I am referring to the annual "Sunshine Report", which discloses the names of Ontario's public-sector employees paid \$100,000 or more.

Interestingly, a whopping 657 employees of the Toronto Board made this year's list. That's a lot of well-paid educators, especially given that four years earlier, the board had only 140 sunshiners – that's a hike of 360 per cent! This, of course, is the same Toronto District School board renowned for its financial woes and its chronic inability to balance its budget.

What really interesting however, however, is that as the number of \$100,000+ earners in the employ of the Board is going up, the number of students enrolled in Toronto schools is going down. In fact, during the past four years enrolment is down by almost 18,000 students.

Mind you, the Toronto Board is by no means alone in this regard. Other Ontario school boards have also seen their "Sunshine" numbers skyrocket.

The worst offender is Le conseil scolaire de district des écoles catholiques de l'est de l'Ontario, which increased its sunshiners by fully 1500 per cent, rising from two to 32 over four years. To be fair, this school board did add fully 558 students over the four-year period – a six per cent increase in enrolment.

Next in line is the Windsor-Essex District School Board which, despite a five per cent decrease in enrolment, increased the number of its sunshiners by 1275 per cent.

And so it goes.

Province-wide the average increase in sunshiners was 451 per cent. Student enrolment declines were common around the province as well, with an overall drop of two per cent. In other words, the number of generals increased dramatically, even though the number of foot soldiers dropped.

To put this in context, other Ontario government employees (hospitals, ministries, universities, etc.) increased their sunshine list members by an average of 112 per cent during the same period.

Of course, public servants are generally much better paid than average Canadians, and so it would be more meaningful to compare the rise in highly-paid educators to the salaries of ordinary Canadians.

Unfortunately, Statistics Canada data are available for only the first two years of the period in question. For what it's worth, in the two years from 2003 to 2005 the number of Canadians earning more than \$100,000 increased by only 28 per cent, compared to a 221 per cent hike in the number of education sunshiners during the same two years.

Expressed another way, in 2003 there were 2496 students for every member of the sunshine list, while by 2007 there were only 445 students. At this rate, it won't be long before there are fewer than 100 students per member of the education sunshine list.

Indeed, there are already two school boards who have managed this feat – Le conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales (with one sunshiner for every 70 students and Superior North Catholic District School Board with one sunshiner for every 84 students.)

Ontario politicians would be wise to keep this trend in mind when educators demand even more money.

The fact is that level of funding has very little relationship to student achievement. Sometimes when you pour money into an education system, it just goes into ever-higher salaries and other administrative costs. Just as paying more for gas doesn't result in superior car performance, so too higher education costs don't translate into more student learning.

How can this be?

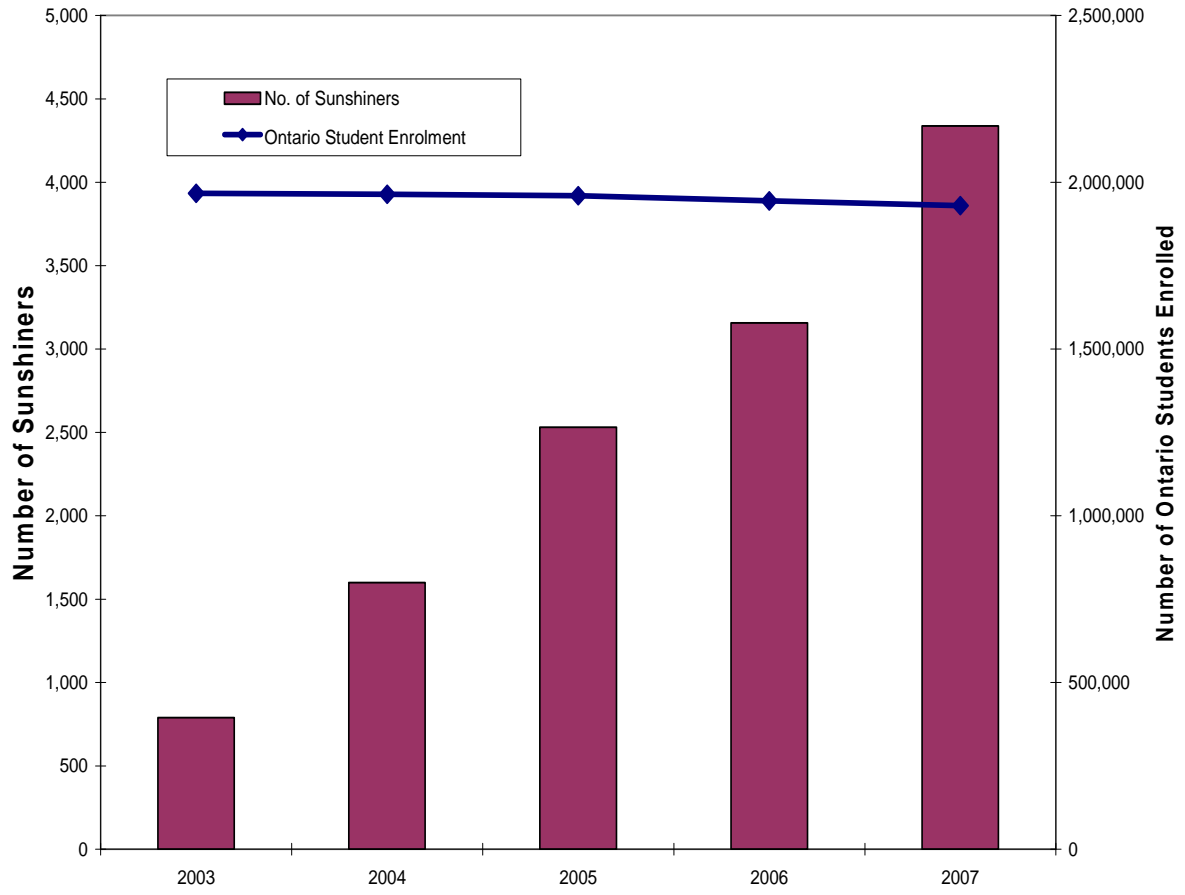
The reason for school boards' inefficient spending is that they enjoy a virtual monopoly over the provision of education services. Monopoly power always results in capture by the producer, with attendant rising costs and lowered production.

This is what has happened in Ontario's public schools. The answer is not to dole out even more money to the school boards and the unions.

The solution is to break the power of the education monopolies by encouraging competition from other providers, such as private schools and charter schools.

Then maybe the sun will shine a little more brightly for parents, students and taxpayers.

### Sunshiners Up 451% -- Student Enrolment Down 2%



## Ontario School Board Rankings - Number of Students Per Sunshiner - Ranked from Worst to Best

Ontario School Board	Sunshine List			Enrolment			Students Per Sunshiner	
	2003	2007	Increase	2003	2007	Inc/(Dec)	2003	2007
CSD catholique des Aurores boréales	1	9	800%	572	628	(10%)	572	70
Superior North CDSB	1	8	700%	794	669	(16%)	794	84
CSD du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	2	20	900%	2368	2228	(6%)	1184	111
CSD du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	1	13	1200%	1046	1508	44%	1046	116
CSD catholique Franco-Nord	5	22	340%	3266	2990	(8%)	653	136
Superior-Greystone DSB	3	13	333%	2490	1855	(26%)	830	143
Northwest Catholic DSB	2	8	300%	1293	1143	(12%)	647	143
CSD catholique des Grandes Rivières	8	41	413%	7971	6855	(14%)	996	167
CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest	5	33	560%	5823	6544	12%	1165	198
CSD catholique du Nouvel-Ontario	6	33	450%	7144	6784	(5%)	1191	206
CSD des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	5	33	560%	6372	6807	7%	1274	206
CSD catholique du Centre-Sud	6	51	750%	10799	11501	7%	1800	226
Bruce-Grey CDSB	3	15	400%	3698	3537	(4%)	1233	236
Northeastern CDSB	3	10	233%	2681	2526	(6%)	894	253
CSD catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	9	64	611%	15220	16189	6%	1691	253
Keewatin-Patricia DSB	6	20	233%	6094	5315	(13%)	1016	266
Huron-Perth CDSB	3	16	433%	4950	4608	(7%)	1650	288
Kenora CDSB	2	4	100%	1136	1160	2%	568	290
Simcoe Muskoka CDSB	10	71	610%	20916	20985	--	2092	296
Sudbury CDSB	3	21	600%	6811	6364	(7%)	2270	303
CSD des écoles catholiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	2	32	1500%	9218	9776	6%	4609	306
Algoma DSB	11	34	209%	12045	10706	(11%)	1095	315
Wellington CDSB	5	23	360%	7891	8124	3%	1578	353
Rainbow DSB	6	41	583%	15270	14494	(5%)	2545	354
DSB of Niagara	25	108	332%	42015	38687	(8%)	1681	358
CSD catholique de l'Est ontarien	4	30	650%	11973	10775	(10%)	2993	359
Rainy River DSB	3	7	133%	2778	2534	(9%)	926	362
Toronto DSB	140	657	369%	261786	243943	(7%)	1870	371
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	30	177	490%	69820	66219	(5%)	2327	374
Toronto CDSB	25	229	816%	88352	86115	(3%)	3534	376
Lambton Kent DSB	7	63	800%	26176	23777	(9%)	3739	377
Dufferin-Peel CDSB	39	215	451%	80993	82950	2%	2077	386
York CDSB	25	131	424%	48112	51350	7%	1924	392
Ham/Went DSB	13	124	854%	53691	50255	(6%)	4130	405
Waterloo CDSB	7	54	671%	22400	22198	(1%)	3200	411
Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB	4	27	575%	12193	11495	(6%)	3048	426
Ottawa CDSB	13	87	569%	38662	38030	(2%)	2974	437

Ontario School Board	Sunshine List			Enrolment			Students Per Sunshiner	
	2003	2007	Increase	2003	2007	Inc/(Dec)	2003	2007
<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>4338</b>	<b>451%</b>	<b>1966570</b>	<b>1929495</b>	<b>(2%)</b>	<b>2496</b>	<b>445</b>
Nipissing-Parry Sound CDSB	2	7	250%	3341	3122	(7%)	1671	446
Greater Essex County DSB	11	79	618%	36636	35242	(4%)	3331	446
Windsor-Essex CDSB	4	55	1275%	25881	24616	(5%)	6470	448
Durham CDSB	6	53	783%	24569	23921	(3%)	4095	451
Trillium Lakelands DSB	14	40	186%	19733	18236	(8%)	1410	456
Hast/PrinceEd DSB	6	37	517%	18585	17037	(8%)	3098	460
Ham/Went CDSB	8	60	650%	28174	27920	(1%)	3522	465
Niagara Catholic DSB	5	49	880%	23288	23060	(1%)	4658	471
York Region DSB	48	218	354%	96395	104361	8%	2008	479
Avon Maitland DSB	5	35	600%	18399	17152	(7%)	3680	490
Halton DSB	18	93	417%	43653	47921	10%	2425	515
Waterloo Region DSB	27	104	285%	56450	56503	--	2091	543
Durham DSB	14	121	764%	65006	66389	2%	4643	549
Lakehead DSB	5	19	280%	12637	10438	(17%)	2527	549
Peel DSB	24	253	954%	126413	139201	10%	5267	550
Simcoe County DSB	11	94	755%	52672	51921	(1%)	4788	552
Halton CDSB	11	48	336%	24830	26905	8%	2257	561
Upper Canada DSB	11	51	364%	33839	30457	(10%)	3076	597
Bluewater DSB	8	31	288%	20800	18642	(10%)	2600	601
Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario	5	22	340%	13953	13751	(1%)	2791	625
Peterborough VNC CDSB	5	22	340%	14049	14357	2%	2810	653
DSB Ontario North East	8	12	50%	8907	7972	(10%)	1113	664
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB	5	15*	200%	10425	10581	1%	2085	705
Upper Grand DSB	9	46	411%	32107	32481	1%	3567	706
Huron-Superior CDSB	3	7	133%	6000	5297	(12%)	2000	757
Renfrew County CDSB	3	6	100%	4919	4754	(3%)	1640	792
Renfrew County DSB	4	12	200%	11030	9841	(11%)	2758	820
Grand Erie DSB	12	31	158%	28478	26582	(7%)	2373	857
Near North DSB	3	12	300%	12525	11079	(12%)	4175	923
Kawartha Pineridge DSB	12	38	217%	38102	35272	(7%)	3175	928
Limestone DSB	5	21	320%	22141	20581	(7%)	4428	980
St. Clair CDSB	7	10	43%	11324	9934	(12%)	1618	993
Thames Valley DSB	15	67	347%	77708	73502	(5%)	5181	1097
London CDSB	8	19	138%	21036	20992	--	2630	1105
Thunder Bay CDSB	3	7	133%	7749	7860	1%	2583	1123

\*estimated