

# CASE | Coalition for Alternatives to Streaming in Education

**May 31, 2019**

## **Submission to the Ministry of Education – Class Sizes Consultation**

The Coalition for Alternatives to Streaming in Education (CASE) is a diverse group of organizations, community groups and individuals committed to promoting student success and to ending the practice of streaming in public schools. For the last five years, we have worked to engage communities, parents and youth most affected by streaming in education by understanding the impacts it's had on their lives, and raising awareness on the inefficiencies and high costs tied to this practice.

As the Ministry of Education is seeking feedback on the current proposed changes to class sizes, in our submission we offer our feedback on three of the government's key goals:

**1. Student Achievement: Success and well-being of every child:**

With an increase in class sizes in kindergarten and elementary school, the success and well-being of children who come from low-income households is at-risk. As teachers will be accommodating more students in classrooms, access to resources for support and time with teachers will be limited.

Research shows that students experiencing high levels of motivation, trust, support, and expectations from teachers experience higher, self-esteem and are more likely to succeed in school (Croninger & Lee 2001). With more children requiring support from fewer teachers, children can develop a sense of isolation from the education system which impacts their well-being at the early stages of their developmental and educational journey.

**2. Fiscal Responsibility: Delivering services in an effective and efficient manner.**

Research by economists has shown that investing in education will reduce social costs and promote economic growth in the long-run (Heckman, 2013) .

In addition, with a lack of support in larger classrooms, students may remain in school longer than they should. This not only creates an increase in costs for the province but will result in fewer students graduating with the skills to be economically secure and contributing members of society.

**3. Evidence-based Decision Making: Grounded in sound policy, inter-jurisdictional scans, and empirical research.**

Research has shown that current practices in schools, such as academic streaming lead to inequitable outcomes for students in our education system. A report published by the Ontario Secondary School Federation (2019) found that with the new average for class sizes in place, school boards will face the challenge of accommodating the same number of students in 25% less classrooms available. To meet this requirement, schools may have to cancel course options and combine students learning and different levels of applied and academic classes into the same classroom. Therefore an increase in class sizes specifically in secondary school, will exacerbate rather than factor such policies and evidence-based practice that are stifling student success in Ontario.

In concluding our submission, we urge the government not to increase class sizes as this will affect students with diverse experiences and learning needs in our province. In doing so, we hope that the Ministry of Education can take the steps to ensure an equitable education for all students in Ontario. Thank you for considering these recommendations and listening to the voice of the community to improve public education.