

5 Things Friday



What your government did for you this week.

Education Equity Action Plan

Ontario is making the education system fairer and more inclusive for all students by identifying and eliminating systemic barriers through Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan. This is a new, three-year strategy to reduce systemic barriers and ensure that all students in Ontario can reach their full potential including:

- Introducing a renewed approach to Grade 9 in which all students are better able to explore pathways to work, college, apprenticeship and university.
- Identifying and addressing disparities in suspension, expulsion and exclusion rates amongst certain student populations.
- Enhancing other school and classroom practices to ensure they reflect and respond to student and staff diversity, including more culturally relevant teaching resources, curriculum and assessment.
- Enhancing diversity in hiring and promotion, and tying accountability for equity to the performance appraisals of principals, vice-principals and directors, to ensure that the diversity of teachers, staff and school system leaders reflects the diversity of students.
- Collecting and analyzing demographic data to more precisely address the systemic barriers to student success.
- Applying an equity, inclusion and human rights perspective to internal organizational structures, policies, programs and practices.

Low-Carbon Vehicles



Ontario is helping businesses buy low-carbon vehicles and technologies that reduce emissions and foster sustainable development - and the province is seeking public input. The new program will provide rebates towards the purchase of alternative-fuel vehicles and fuel-saving techniques, making it more affordable for local businesses to own and operate greener vehicles. Eligible vehicles and devices being considered under the program include electric and natural gas-powered trucks, aerodynamic devices, anti-idling devices and trailer refrigeration units.

Investing in Student's Well-Being

Ontario is investing in new and expanded well-being programs for students across the province funding initiatives that boost the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of Ontario students. This will also help make schools more inclusive, safe and welcoming learning environments. These initiatives included funding for active transportation, doubling funding for school boards to support local well-being priorities, increasing funding for School Mental Health ASSIST and new and expanded programming to support staff well-being and violence prevention in the classroom.

Employment in Ontario

Employment in Ontario increased by 31,000 in August, the second straight month of job growth, and the unemployment rate fell to 5.7 per cent, the lowest level it's been since January 2001. Employment in Ontario was up 107,000 in the first eight months of 2017, compared to the first eight months of 2016. The province's unemployment rate has been below the national average for 29 consecutive months. The employment increase was led by gains in sectors such as finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, information, culture and recreation and transporting and warehousing.

Public Accounts of Ontario

Ontario released the Public Accounts of Ontario, showing that Ontario's deficit for last year was \$991 million - \$3.3 billion lower than projected in the 2016 Budget and \$0.5 billion lower than the interim projection in the 2017 Budget. This is a result of growth in revenue that exceeded growth in program expense, and lower than forecast interest on debt. Ontario is on track to balance the budget this year.

