

**Despite Escalating Strikes versus Strong Rhetoric and  
Compensation for Parents of Displaced Children,  
Ontario's Teachers Unions Strengthen Public Opinion  
Hand in War of Attrition with Ontario Government**

**A DART & Maru/Blue Poll**

**For Public Release February 10, 2020**

*This public opinion survey is branded as the **DART & Maru/Blue** Voice Canada Poll. Both firms are non-partisan and comprised of well-known national veteran survey/research professionals who have worked together for decades.*

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# Despite Escalating Strikes versus Strong Rhetoric and Compensation for Parents of Displaced Children, Ontario's Teachers Unions Strengthen Public Opinion Hand in War of Attrition with Ontario Government

February 10, 2020 – A new **DART & Maru/Blue** Poll conducted for Sun Media finds that after having weathered two months of battle between the Ontario government and its teachers' unions, the government has a weaker hand than it did at the outset – despite all the rhetoric and strike action – and it doesn't appear they will win this war of attrition in the public domain.

This sentiment comes during an ever-increasing escalating strike action by both the elementary and secondary teachers, and a compensation package for parents to attend to their children when the schools are closed.

*The survey was conducted among 597 randomly selected Ontario adults who are members of Maru/Blue's Online panel on February 6, 2019. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population, according to Census data. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The results are compared to a poll undertaken on December 4, 2019. The precision of this **DART & Maru/Blue Voice Canada** Poll is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. In this case, both polls are accurate to within +/- 4.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontario adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population.*

Despite the Education minister's valiant attempt to frame the issue as a clash over wages, two thirds (63% +1) of Ontarians continue to believe **this dispute is about the government's imposed expanded class sizes and mandatory student online credits – not because of a disagreement over an increase in teacher compensation (37% -1).**

Further, pounding the turf every day and characterizing that the teachers are going on strike to protect their jobs and advance their wages, using students as pawns to get their way, really hasn't moved the end zone posts: public support for that claim has actually *weakened* (48% +5) somewhat with those who disagree having taken a slim majority lead (52% +4.)

The public continues to believe that whatever the dispute it is about it **should be resolved by appointing an "independent third-party"** to determine a solution like the CUPE negotiations earlier this year (78% +1) and has drawn a line in the snow: if either the elementary or secondary school **teachers go out on a *full-blown strike*, a majority (58% -4) believe the government should move quickly to rule them back to work** versus a minority (42% +4) who disagree.

The union strike action to date has not crossed that *full-blown* line, yet, but the cumulative actions of the strikes may conveniently give the government some justification to bring down the hammer, especially as it appears the government is not making any headway with public opinion:

**Most (46% +8) blame the Ontario government for the current situation** versus the teacher's unions (24% -3), while one in six blame both (18% -3) and a small portion (11% -3) blame neither of the parties.

**Who is acting in the best interests of taxpayers? "Neither"** (37% -7), followed by those who support the government (32% -1), the teacher's unions (28% +9), and a fraction (3% -1) for both.

**Who is being fair and reasonable? The teacher's unions** (42% +11), followed by "Neither" 30% (-11), the government (25% +3), and a fraction (4% -2) for both.

**Who has acted responsibly? The teacher's unions** (40% +8) followed by "Neither" (34% -6), the government (21% -1), and a fraction (6% n/c) for both.

**Who is acting in the best interests of parents and students? The teacher's unions** (45% +8), followed by "Neither" (39% -6), the government (18% -2), and a fraction (4% -1) for both.

**Who is being realistic? The teacher's unions** (40% +6) followed by "Neither," (34% -3) and the government (25% -1) and a fraction (4% -2) for both.

**Which side deserves support "for whatever they are trying to do": The teacher's unions** (46% +9) garner the most support compared to the government (24% +1) – while one quarter (26% -9) support neither of the parties, and a fraction (4% -2) express support for both.

Even with a good taste of rotating strikes by both the elementary and secondary teachers unions, **a greater majority** than in early December (57% +6) of Ontarians indicate they're prepared to **lend their support to the teachers** to protest the Ford government via a strike for a week – but this is also opposed by a significant minority (43% -6).

And finally, even with a **majority of the public** (61% -3) who agree with the sentiment that they're "**sick and tired of every few years the teacher's unions going on strike and disrupting so many lives**" (versus 39% -3 who apparently aren't), a similar majority (60% +1) **don't believe the Ontario government should permanently ban the right of teachers to strike**, compared to a minority (40% -1) who think otherwise.

## Methodology

*These are some of the topline findings of a **DART & Maru/Blue Poll** conducted for Sun Publishing/Postmedia created and analyzed under the direction of veteran pollster John Wright, who is a Partner of **DART C-Suite Communicators**. Data was collected by Canada's national survey sample research provider **Maru/Blue** using their **Voice Canada Omni Online** curated panel.*

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**Visit <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/> for the written release and detailed tables.**

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**DART** C-Suite Communicators is independent and not tied to any political organization.

*It is a partnership founded by veteran pollster **John Wright** and communications specialist **Victoria Ollers**.*

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