

#StudentsSayNo: Williams students plan walkout April 4

By Brock Weir

Students at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School are planning to make a statement next week on the Provincial Government's changes to the education curriculum.

In a show of solidarity with teachers, students are organizing a walkout on the afternoon of April 4.

?We are walking out to protest changes to the Ministry of Education that Doug Ford has announced; mainly funding cuts, increased class sizes, and mandatory e-learning,? say students Michelle Cai and Erica Li. ?These changes are detrimental to the wellbeing of students and teachers because the classroom dynamic will be impacted. The funding cuts will result in a loss of teaching positions and a lack of new school supplies. Class sizes will also increase, which will force teachers to pay less attention to individual students and schools to cut specialized courses.

?Parents should be aware that there will be negative consequences for their children's education. Another example of this is that four mandatory high school credits will have to be online. This method of learning does not work for every student and many students will struggle with learning the curriculum. Ford's policies will be harmful to not only us but others in the future.

?We are hoping to get the majority of students to walk out of class to join the estimated 100,000 students participating throughout the province. Most students at this school are opposed to these changes; it is important that we announce our opinions loud and clear. We just can not afford to stay silent and let Ford get his way.

?Through speaking with teachers, we have realized that getting this walkout organized will be difficult. Staff are not allowed to openly support the walkout. We are unable to make posters, give announcements, or host meetings. Instead, we've resorted to using the power of social media to spread the message to our peers. Like student organizers from other schools, we have made an Instagram account (@gww_saysno) to inform students about the issue as well as protest details. The response from our peers has been mostly positive. Many students are even reaching out to volunteer as grade representatives and student speakers. It has been inspiring seeing our school over the past few days come together to speak up. This movement will not go unnoticed. Ontario students are making it clear to Doug Ford that #StudentsSayNo.?