



August 22, 2019

RESPONSE FROM OECTA PRESIDENT LIZ STUART ON EDUCATION MINISTER'S CLASS SIZE ANNOUNCEMENT

The announcement today by Minister of Education Stephen Lecce is an insult to students, families, teachers, education workers, and all Ontarians. The government is deliberately misleading Ontarians about what is happening in the publicly funded education system, while attempting to cast blame on teachers and others who have expressed genuine concerns. This is yet another example of a desperate government trying to avoid public outcry about their dismal record.

Today's announcement does not change a thing. The Ford government is proceeding with its plan to increase class sizes, including funding secondary classes for an average student-to-teacher ratio of 28:1 across the province. When the changes were announced in March, it was indicated that they would take effect this coming school year. This was confirmed when the 2019-20 education funding formula was released in the spring. This is the basis on which school boards have been planning for this year, resulting in courses and programs being cancelled, supports being lost, and teachers' and education workers' jobs being eliminated.

If the government was planning a different course of action, they could have told Ontarians about it months ago. Instead, they have been content to allow chaos and confusion to unfold. Now, in the midst of collective bargaining with teachers and education workers, the Minister of Education is trying to distract Ontarians and deflect blame for the anxiety the government has created among everyone in the education community.

Catholic teachers have always said that we are prepared to engage the government in genuine discussions about how our schools work, and what our teachers and students need to succeed. But we will not stand for the Minister of Education playing games with the truth or the integrity of our world-class publicly funded education system.

Liz Stuart, President of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association