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OECTA PRESIDENT LIZ STUART RESPONDS TO MORE MISLEADING STATEMENTS FROM MINISTER LECCE

Yesterday, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce once again attempted to mislead the public about the government's education cuts. Despite being roundly criticized for these tactics over the past few weeks, Minister Lecce appeared on TVO's "The Agenda" and tried to downplay the dramatic increase in class sizes. He also suggested that teachers and education workers could avert the consequences of the government's plan by identifying other areas to cut. In effect, the Minister of Education said he expects teachers and education workers to pay for the crisis the Ford government has created in publicly funded education.

We understand why Minister Lecce has been taking up so much ink and airtime trying to do damage control. Ontarians are rightly upset about the loss of teachers and education workers, reduced supports, overcrowded classrooms, and limited course options that have resulted from the government's cuts. But the Minister's continued misrepresentations are disrespectful of everyone in the education community, and certainly are not helpful toward fostering rational and productive collective bargaining. If he is sincere about making a good faith effort to reach agreements as soon as possible, he would be wise to stop undermining the bargaining process by trying to avoid responsibility for the government's disastrous handling of our world-class publicly funded education system.

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