



**ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION**

Leading Education's Advocates

Ontario Public School Boards' Association
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Cathy Abraham
President

W.R. (Rusty) Hick
Executive Director

October 10, 2019

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Dear Minister Lecce,

On behalf of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), I want to thank you for speaking to our Board of Directors on September 28. We appreciate your willingness to meet with our members and for providing very pertinent and candid remarks.

You have made commitments to listening to the sector and many of the issues you raised resonated with our Board members, who are of course elected school board trustees. We would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of the areas that you addressed:

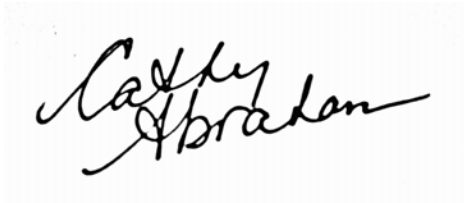
- With respect to e-learning you acknowledged that it does not work for all, and therefore in order to serve all students, there will need to be some adjustments/exceptions to its current fully mandatory outline. We welcome this indication of flexibility with regard to the initial implementation plans. We would appreciate knowing how OPSBA can take part in further consultations on this initiative.
- You also stated your strong and personal commitment to supporting mental health through your Ministry. OPSBA has been a leader in this area and we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to further our mutual understanding of how together we can best support the well-being of all of our students.
- We understand you were unable to speak in detail about things that are being discussed at the bargaining table, including the issue of class size. However, we would like to re-state our concern for the government's plan to move toward an average secondary class size of 28. In particular, we are concerned about the impact that such a move would have on the ability of boards to offer courses that students want and need in order to qualify for post-secondary opportunities. Specialty courses, including many in the area of STEM, as well as the Arts, have been reduced already and are at risk of further eradication from the offerings for students across our province. In order to meet the unique learning needs of each student, and to provide all students with a pathway to the trades, or college, or university, a wide array of courses at different levels is very, very important.

- With regard to infrastructure funding, you stated that you are aware of the repair and maintenance backlog. We look forward to transparent communications with school boards during the process of accepting capital projects. We would also like to see the number of capital requests be more closely based on the size of district school boards, as opposed to a set number per board.

Finally, you briefly mentioned the reference in the April budget to a Task Force, which we have been told will examine school board operations, focusing mainly on back office functions. When will your ministry be able to share the details and scope of this initiative?

Again, thank you for making our Board of Directors a priority and we look forward to receiving updates and information on the issues identified above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy Abraham
President
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.

cc:
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education