



Tuesday May 07, 2019

Hon. Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 22nd Flr
900 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson,

The Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) is the voice of parents that promotes and protects publicly funded Catholic Education in Ontario. We seek to engage, advocate and enhance through the strength of our collective voice. Through our connection to home, school and church, OAPCE collaborates with local and provincial education partners to strengthen the parent voice.

It is from this position that we would like to clearly articulate to the Premier and yourself that as parents that represent thousands of taxpayers we wholeheartedly disagree with the recent changes and overall direction of this current government's approach to publicly funded education.

The New Vision for Education will result in;

1. Less time available for teachers to spend in and out of class supporting students who require extra help and guidance;
2. Less courses for students to choose from as they move through the system;
3. Less access to Guidance Counsellors, Educational Assistants, Therapists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Early Childhood Educators, and other important members of the education team;
4. Less professionals available to support students with special needs.

How will these gaps be filled?



Ontario's specialized programs like those leading to trades, the arts, special education and other important programs (e.g. Dramatic Arts, Music, Automotive Repair, Gifted, and Physical Education) are in jeopardy as Boards are forced to cut programs and services.

As taxpayers we recognize that to be fiscally prudent with the public purse there are difficult choices that need to be made. These difficult choices should not be made without open and transparent consultation with parents and the parent organizations such as ours. At our recent 80th Anniversary Conference in April where over 300 parents came and participated from several different regions in the province, this was the same sentiment shared by many parents,

At no time since coming into this role has anyone from your ministry offered respect to parents of this province and requested input and feedback on specific proposals being considered. Open "surveys" initiated by the ministry have failed to link publicly how the survey results have been factored into the current course of action, no real consultation relating to the recent decisions made on class size, e-learning, GSN's etc. Nor has this administration done as satisfactory job of ensuring that parents have a context and framework within which to provide feedback.

OAPCE is concerned that the changes this government is, and will, be putting in place will, and already have, negative impacts on our children, their education and the future of Ontario. The cuts to education funding your government is making today, will only be realized in years to come. How can you and your Ministry implement a plan that so directly undermines students, parents, teachers, and schools?

We respectfully ask for a fulsome conversation and invite you once again to our Board of Directors meeting, or a meeting in which we can attend at your office.

Sincerely,

Annalisa Crudo-Perri
President, OAPCE