

## Ministry of Education

Minister

315 Front Street West  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

## Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8



April 13, 2024

### **To the attendees of the 85th Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education Conference:**

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario, I am pleased to offer warm greetings to everyone participating in the 85th conference of the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE). I thank you for the incredible work you do on behalf of students and families, and for taking the time to be here today.

This year's theme is "A Celebration of Change, Commitment and Catholic Education," and I believe we have much to celebrate. *The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act* (Bill 98) received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. The Act was designed and passed to ensure Ontario's publicly funded education system is focused on what matters most: teaching critical life-long skills like reading, writing and math, while delivering enhanced accountability and transparency for parents and families.

The Ministry of Education is moving forward with regulatory and policy reforms for the Act that focus on ensuring effective school board leadership, strengthening parental involvement and increasing transparency. Passing this much-needed legislation was a key step towards implementing many long-overdue actions to improve publicly funded education, but I will take this opportunity to highlight only a few.

Under the Act, school boards in Ontario will be required to publicly report the details of their professional development sessions, and school administrators will be required to provide detailed notice in advance to parents and guardians whenever guest speakers are invited into their schools.

To support parental involvement in their children's education, the Ministry has developed a parent-friendly resource with easy-to-access information. This webpage is intended to be a "one-stop shop" resource for parents with links to existing webpages and resources so parents have the information they need to make informed decisions.

The Ministry has also released a Student Achievement Plan Framework, which sets out goals and performance indicators for school boards to monitor student achievement, develop action plans and measure progress. Under the Act, school boards are required to publicly report on progress made toward achieving provincial priorities and meet with parents in the first two months and last two months of each school year to discuss these matters in more detail.

I am always encouraged when parents become actively involved in their children's education. The work you do is invaluable, and it is essential that we continue to support you in your efforts to create a nurturing environment for all our students.

Our government understands the critically important role that Catholic schools play in Ontario's publicly funded education system. I am a proud alumnus of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Elementary in Vaughan which is part of the York Catholic District School Board. I can confidently say that our Catholic schools provide the foundational education our students need while providing the guidance and support to better follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. We are committed to working with parents, educators, and school boards to ensure that every student has access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

As Minister my top priority is ensuring that Ontario's education system continues to focus on the priorities of parents. By emphasizing STEM learning; improving reading, writing, and math skills; increasing the accountability of school boards; empowering parents to speak their minds; building schools faster; and providing real-life hands-on learning opportunities to students, we are taking meaningful action to prepare your children for lifelong success.

This conference will allow you to connect with other engaged parents from across the province and engage in thoughtful discussions on the many ways we can continue to improve education in Ontario. I look forward to seeing the many positive contributions that will emerge from our collective efforts.

Please accept my best wishes for a productive and inspiring conference.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Lecce".

Hon. Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education