



September 3, 2019

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2A5

Dear Minister,

Today, the school year officially starts for more than 2 million children and young adults. Over 95 per cent of them will attend an English public, English Catholic, French public or French Catholic publicly funded school. Directors, superintendents, trustees, principals, vice-principals, teachers and support staff will be there to welcome those students and will spend the next 10 months working hard to engage, teach, counsel, motivate, assist and encourage them to achieve to their full potential in safe and inclusive environments.

In Ontario, our public schools are open and accessible to every student. International rankings confirm that our system is one of the best in the world. Bringing students of every faith, culture, religion, race, socio-economic background, learning ability and language together is what makes our system strong, successful and equitable.

This past summer, the group TeachON called on your government to provide public funding for independent schools. Doing so would not only take valuable resources away from our public system, but would undermine the intent and purpose of public schools. While some parents may choose to send their children to independent schools, that decision comes with a personal, financial responsibility to fully cover the costs of those alternate programs.

The role of government is to fund public schools. No public tax dollars should be used to fund private or independent schools. We strongly oppose any funding for schools outside of our four publicly funded systems. As Minister, we look forward to your statement endorsing the value and excellence of our systems, and firmly committing to funding only those public schools that are accessible and open to all students.

Sincerely,

Larry Hope
Chair, PCODE

Nancy Brady
President, OPC

Karen Edgar
President, OPSOA