

Education in Ontario lacks transformational leadership at the top^[1]

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This week, Ontario's Minister of Education Stephen Lecce made a suite of education announcements. Unfortunately, he stopped short of providing key information about the funding for his education plan and how it can be implemented by September.

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 crisis, there is a lot of work ahead to ensure students receive the best education possible to prepare them for this uncertain and rapidly changing world.

My 11-year-old niece Nevaeh delivered a convocation speech for my nephew's digital convocation in June and left the students with a sage message: "While we may not know what learning will look like in the future, what we do know, is that it includes you at the centre of it, because you are our future."

Our education systems are best when we shape them to bring out the full potential of students first.

In order to achieve this, we need a minister of education at the helm who is a transformational leader with strong and mutually trusting stakeholder relationships. At the same time we need to support parents and especially mothers so they may contribute to our economic recovery in their respective fields of work. It is crucial that the minister, and their team, intimately understand the systems that they are tasked to lead.

We need an approach that centres students, educators, and parents in its development, each working together with policy-makers rather than forging separate paths and wasting precious time.

The current minister has deliberately sown distrust between the government and educators through combative language and approaches chosen during recent contract negotiations. The minister set an adversarial tone with the people he must now co-operate with toward creative solutions.

Should Education Minister Stephen Lecce choose to proceed in this fashion we are destined to fail the young people depending on us to deliver on their right to learn. Delivering on properly resourced education plans is the single most important thing we can do for the future of this country, province by province.

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