

Ontario announces \$500M for school, child-care projects ^[1]

Provincial school repair backlog was calculated at \$16.8 billion last September

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EXCERPTS

Ontario's government will spend nearly \$500 million this year to build and repair schools as well as create new child-care spaces across the province, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce announced Thursday.

That funding will both build and improve schools and create new licenced child-care spaces in Ontario, the province says, with spending planned for 37 school projects and 23 child-care projects.

In the end, the funding amounts to 15,700 new student spaces and just over 1,500 new licensed child-care spaces in schools, the province said in a news release.

"This is momentum, this is progress, this is what getting things done looks like," Lecce said during a Thursday morning press conference.

A CBC Toronto series from last September found that the province's total school repair backlog was, at that time, \$16.8 billion. Toronto schools alone accounted for more than 25 per cent of that number.

Krista Wylie, co-founder of the parent-led campaign Fix Our Schools, said she reacted to Lecce's announcement with "extreme skepticism and cynicism."

She said Ontario's schools have been dealing with underfunding for years, and disrepair is only growing.

"That's not good governance of our buildings," she said. "When we let things fall further into disrepair, it's going to ultimately cost far more, because reactive repairs obviously cost a lot more than proactively taking care of our capital assets."

The province says today's announcement is part of a commitment to provide \$14 billion over a decade to support school construction and repair.

Lecce also announced Thursday that the province has also created a "rapid build" pilot project for schools that will use "modular construction" in an effort to speed up school construction. Five schools from across Ontario have been selected for that project.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: child care infrastructure ^[4]

space creation ^[5]

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