

January 25, 2023

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

The Honourable Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
14th Floor, 400 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7
Email: Monte.McNaughtonco@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce and Minister McNaughton

As your Ministry is aware, Ontario's public schools continue to face the highly concerning issue of violence in and around schools. This is not a new issue. It is a problem that teachers, education workers, students, parents and guardians, and communities have raised for many years. These concerns are also not confined to one part of our province. They affect schools and communities across all of Ontario.

Public schools should be the centre of communities; places where all students, staff, and community members feel safe and welcome. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) and its more than 60,000 Members believe that much more can be done to keep all who enter our school building safe. When I talk to teachers, education workers, parents, guardians, and community members across the province, they all agree that there needs to be an increased investment of attention and resources in order to help make our schools safer.

To that end, on behalf of the Members of OSSTF/FEESO, I ask that you do the following:

- Convene a meeting of stakeholders, including unions, school boards, and community groups, to develop a framework that includes short-term and long-term actions that address issues of violence in schools in all parts of Ontario;
- Provide training for all staff in schools, including administration and supervisors, on how to deal with violent incidents and prevention;
- Increase the number of qualified and trained professionals in schools to ensure students get all the supports and services they need, and to provide a high level of care;
- Establish an education sector regulation within the Occupational Health and Safety Act that meets the unique needs of educational environments.

I know that you recognize the importance and urgency of addressing this issue as soon as possible. We can all agree that it is imperative to work together to find solutions that address the root causes of violent incidents in schools and ensure that the supports students need are there when they need them. To this end, we need to take action immediately.

I look forward to hearing from you soon to discuss a way we can work together to make our publicly-funded schools better and safer for everyone in the education community.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Littlewood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "K" being a simple capital letter and "Littlewood" written in a more elaborate, flowing script.

Karen Littlewood
President, OSSTF/FEESO