



Subject: ECE Annual General Meeting



Date: May 05, 2022



Time: 5pm

AGM ECE CPAC Report

"NDP ENDORSEMENT" ANNOUNCEMENT:

It was announced via our District President, Terri Lyn Della Penta, in an email distributed on March 7th that our Local OSSTF office endorses New Democratic Party candidates Michael Mantha and Michele McCleave-Kennedy in the upcoming Provincial Election on June 2nd. Furthermore, Karen Littlewood, our Provincial OSSTF President, held a press-conference on April 21st at the local OSSTF office to announce Provincial OSSTF's support for both candidates. The best way to protect our rights and the rights of our members is to elect MPP's that are educationally friendly and who will continue to invest in education. Our District CPAC team meets weekly to plan and strategize how to engage members in the election process. Keep an eye out in your email and on our Facebook page for upcoming events!

EQUAL PAY DAY:

Doug Ford's Conservatives passed Bill 106 just before Equal Pay Day in April, closing off any lines for his government to address gender pay gaps and address systemic gender discrimination in professions. Wage increases are NOT the same as pay equity adjustments. Ford is using this Bill to avoid paying out court-won pay equity compensation for female dominant professions - which includes ECEs. Furthermore, Bill 106 doubles down and does not repeal Bill 124, which was the bill that suppressed our wages, locking us in at 1% pay increases. That's a double-whammy from Ford and it's clear he does NOT support seeing our profession have equal pay.

LOBBY DAY:

I was fortunate enough to lobby/speak with MPP Michael Mantha about our education platform and more specifically, advocate for kindergarten needs. MPP Ross Romano chose to not participate/ speak with us. I also met with Michele McCleave-Kennedy on a separate occasion and shared the same speech with Marit Stiles, the NDP Education Critic. Fortunately, we are seeing the OSSTF education platform points being taken into consideration in the NDP platform, which includes capping kindergarten classes at 26, increasing special education funding, adding more mental health supports/workers, ending violence against education workers, hiring education workers to address staff shortages, and ending hybrid learning.

Here is a copy of my speech and what I advocated for in regards to kindergarten:

Thank you for being here with us today, Mr. Mantha.

We need proper resources and funding for in-person learning, as we know that students learn best with adequate support in place, including sufficient allotments of certified Early Childhood Educators and Educational Assistants to support the classroom.

From a kindergarten perspective, we take a strong team approach, but often find that we do not have enough support (or any) for children who frequently enter our classrooms without identification for any behavioral or special needs. Students that do enter with an identified need tend to be grouped with multiple students to only one Educational Assistant, which is not ideal for their success and growth and creates safety issues along with educator burnout.

We are also seeing less outside agency support in kindergarten and a lack of early intervention due to government cuts. Algoma Public Health removed the Early Identification Program, limiting the ability to identify speech, autism, or other needs prior to children entering kindergarten. We need to open and expand on community-relevant opportunities at an early stage to allow for children to explore their community, gain experiences, and acquire proper support and resources at a time when hands-on learning and early intervention is vital.

We also need Smaller Class Sizes in order to improve on our learning conditions. Kindergarten sees some of the largest class sizes on average. I am currently teaching 28 students in a room suitable for 19 (it used to be a grade 1 room) and this is historically one of my smaller class sizes. I have had up to 34. Our daycare ECE counterparts working with ages 3 to 7 years in their programs see a ratio of 1 to 13 up to a maximum of 26.

We need to see a reduction in class sizes to assist in keeping smaller and rural schools open, which ensures more equal learning opportunities. This includes, again, having an adequate number of educators in a classroom to give more attention to specific student needs. On many occasions, I have had to evacuate a classroom of 30+ children into a hallway for their safety because a child was tearing apart a classroom due to inadequate support and availability of resources. Gaining proper support is critical to address the increasing number of unidentified or behavioral students who require extra support to regulate at an early age. Thank you for listening and I relinquish to the floor for my colleagues to speak to this point.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The month of May has a massive focus on the election. OSSTF election organizers have been working with local leaders to come up with ways and events to reach out to members and get organized. We want to make sure everyone votes and that everyone understands the weight of this upcoming election on June 2nd. The government in power after June 2nd will be the government we negotiate with. I'm not stating that electing the NDP, or Liberals, or Greens will be the end to all our problems. What I will state with absolute certainty is another 4 years with Ford's Conservatives will be the absolute decimation of our profession. On April 29th, the Ford Government released their spring budget, which also serves as their platform going into the election, and it included more underfunding to education.

Look at what is happening locally. Where is Ross Romano? He shows up for the photo-ops but is never at Queens Park to represent us with votes. Recently, he popped up locally to announce funding for an extension to HM Robbins but did not address the \$16.8 billion repair backlog for schools across Ontario after 4 years of blatant cuts to education from his government. Romano is absent for votes on bills that pertain to helping the North, including a lifesaving one on highway safety (which did not pass) and he failed Laurentian when he was the Minister for Colleges and Universities. He was also absent for the second reading (and voted against the third reading) of Bill 163 to create 'No Free Speech Zones' on public sidewalks near abortion facilities so women feel safe when making one of the most painful and difficult decisions of their life. Stopping women from making a choice about their body; their freedom. Yet, votes in favour of Ford enacting the notwithstanding clause to remove freedom of speech from unions/affiliations against his political party.

I have so many questions in unanswered emails for Mr. Romano; alas he's never in touch with his constituents to answer them. For instance, is he still "proud" of his bill that froze the minimum wage at \$14 an hour until 2020 and eliminated two paid sick days for workers? Is he still "getting constant complements" on it from "everybody back home" when he was never here? Does he still believe that a \$15 an hour minimum wage is "job-killing" and "no one is going to have a job because nobody is going to be able to afford to pay" employees that? Does he still feel as though he can compare children to cancer patients when he represents a riding with 567.3 new cases of cancer per 100,000 people per year? These questions alone are from a single speech Mr. Romano made in the Ontario Legislature during an October 31st discussion of the "Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018." I have plenty more questions beyond this, from what happened to the money he invested in Covid detecting underwear, to explaining the reasoning behind the "stealth downloading" in his government's 2019 budget (which was ultimately blamed as one of the main culprits for property tax increases into 2020). For those wondering, "downloading" is when the Provincial government dumps parts of their financial responsibilities onto municipalities for them to deal with. Therefore, cities across Ontario are now responsible for 20% of childcare costs (such as new spaces/builds) and 30% of its health care costs (and they did this entering a pandemic). As a result, Ontario is Canada's only province that doesn't fund 100 percent of health programs. Some of these cuts included a reduction in the number of Public Health Units across Ontario by more than 70%, reductions to provincial funding for food and water safety, infectious disease tracking and prevention, immunizations, prenatal training and safety, overdose prevention, safe needle and biohazard programs; just to name a few that have obvious direct impacts here in Sault Ste. Marie. Where is the accountability for our MPP Ross Romano in all of this? It's time to hold him and this government accountable.

Here's what you can do to help get rid of Romano, Lecce, and Ford:

- Make a donation – 75% of your donation is returned to you at tax time.
- No money? No problem. Volunteer to canvass; it's free and you do not have to talk to anyone!
- Like posts by the NDP government on social media platforms. Share the posts. Use hashtags in posts to create awareness: **#OSSTF**, **#FEESO**, **#ProPublicEd**, **#OntEd**, **#OnElxn43**, **#OnPoli**, **#IVote**, **#EduVote2022**, **#YourVoteYourVoice**, **#OurVoteOurVoice**
- Here are some memes I made in about 10 minutes that would only take less than 1 minute to share:

Finally found a house in my price range



We are stronger together so it is time to oust Doug Ford.

Thank you; Merci; Miigwetch; for being here today.

Jess