



*Office of the Chair of the Board*

February 2, 2024

**SENT BY EMAIL**

Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Ontario Minister of Education  
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor  
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Hon. Minister Lecce,

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) takes pride in its pivotal role bridging the crucial gap between child care operators and the education system. Regrettably, our optimism has been overshadowed by your decision to renege on the promise to fund child care spaces in schools.

While we acknowledge the letter from the Deputy Minister dated November 21, 2023, expressing Ontario's commitment to delivering high-quality, affordable child care and early years programs, we are deeply disappointed by the Ministry's expectation for us to identify projects to forego. We hoped the Ministry would recognize that integrating child care spaces in schools facilitates a seamless transition from early learning into the broader education system, and alleviates the stress families face when planning for their child's care and educational journey, fosters a stronger connection with the school community, and reduces the emotional strain associated with finding child care providers in proximity to their child's respective school.

In 2017-2018, 18 child care projects were approved by the Ministry of Education and 2 child care projects were approved in 2021. Upon approval, staff proceeded with pre-qualifications, procurement of qualified consultants, and engagement with impacted school communities and stakeholders. Additionally, [as you know, some child care projects are tied to gym additions](#), and we did not receive approval of funding until July 2021. During the pandemic, we experienced significant delays in response times and obtaining approvals from the Ministry of Education and the City of Toronto. Child care funding allocations approved by the Ministry of Education in 2017 and 2021, never supported true costs associated with development. Furthermore, costs have been exacerbated by inflation and material delivery times arising from Covid. As such, the proposal to offer 25% per project is inadequate to cover the shortfall.

It is disheartening for families to discover that their schools, initially designated for child care spaces, will not be available because your government is backing out of the necessary funding required for these previously approved child care projects. The government's decision to abandon progress in public education, hindering families' ability to transition seamlessly from early learning, contradicts its pledges to integrate services for enhanced efficiency. As such, we will not forego any previously approved child care projects and expect the province to fulfill their promise to families.

Schools are not merely structures; they are woven into the social fabric of communities, offering families a comprehensive support system throughout their educational journey. They serve as hubs for community gatherings, celebrations, and, most importantly, as safe places for children to develop essential skills during their formative years.

To ensure families can continue benefiting from a seamless transition, we urge the Ministry to reconsider its decision. We anticipate a timely response and remain available for discussion to address this matter promptly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Crawford', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nancy Crawford  
Chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)

CC: TCDSB Trustees  
Dr. Brendan Browne, TCDSB Director of Education  
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