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## GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT THREATENS GOOD-FAITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Today, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce attempted to mislead the public by claiming the government was “introducing modest changes to current class sizes.” The announcement was full of untruths and misinformation.

### Correcting the record

During the press conference, the Minister falsely claimed that the government had always planned to fund Grades 9-12 at a class size average of 22.5 students in 2019-20. This is untrue. Every statement the government has made since announcing class size changes in March indicated that secondary schools would be funded at an average class size of 28 students, to be implemented over four years through attrition. School boards have been implementing the government’s plan by not replacing retiring teachers, which has resulted in courses and programs being cancelled, course selection being limited, teachers being reduced from full-time to long-term occasional status, and jobs being lost.

It is regrettable that a Minister of the Crown would purposefully spread misinformation in an attempt to blame education unions for the chaos this government has caused.

### Minister’s announcement hinders bargaining process

Today’s announcement came during a collective bargaining session between OECTA and representatives of OCSTA and the Crown. While OECTA was at the bargaining table willing to negotiate in good faith, the government made a public announcement that directly impacts on a key central bargaining issue. The Minister has claimed repeatedly that he wants “good faith negotiations.” Today’s announcement suggests otherwise.

### What this means for members

Nothing will change for members as a result of today’s announcement. There is no additional funding being provided to school boards. In March, when the government originally announced class size changes, they indicated that “changes in class size would be phased in, with attrition protection.” Today’s announcement effectively repeats this statement. Although the specifics remains unclear, based on current information, whatever staffing changes school boards have implemented are not likely to change.

# PROVINCIAL BARGAINING UPDATE

In addition, many members are still waiting for their teaching assignments, which limits their ability to prepare for the upcoming year. The government's announcement will not rectify this situation; it will simply add to the confusion.

## **Next steps**

OECTA is consulting legal counsel, and will pursue all available legal avenues to protect members.

Please continue to check your personal email or the Member's Area at [catholicteachers.ca](http://catholicteachers.ca) for updates on significant developments in the bargaining process, including information on any possible strike or ratification votes. Encourage fellow OECTA members to register their personal email address [HERE](#).

MT/fm