

Lecce becomes new Energy minister

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King-Vaughan MP Stephen Lecce is the new Minister of Energy and Electrification. His cabinet post has been swapped with Todd Smith, who now becomes Education Minister. Lecce has served as Education Minister since 2019. Premier Doug Ford unveiled his renewed team last week that "will keep rebuilding Ontario's economy and deliver on the government's core commitments, including building Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, keeping costs down by fighting the carbon tax and training more people for rewarding careers in the skilled trades." As our province and economy continue to grow, this is the team that is working side-by-side with workers, businesses, labour partners, Indigenous leaders and every member of Team Ontario to rebuild our economy," said Premier Ford. "We're at an important moment in our province's history with clear choices. Our team is choosing growth and prosperity. We're choosing lower taxes and better jobs with bigger pay cheques. Let's get it done!" I am honoured to be appointed as the new Minister of Energy and Electrification. I will remain squarely focused on growing Ontario's clean, affordable and reliable energy supply to drive economic growth while standing strong against the Liberal carbon tax," Lecce said. "I congratulate the new Minister of Education Todd Smith and I thank Premier Ford for his confidence. "It has been an honour of a lifetime to serve in the Ministry of Education because we did the hard things that will have generational impacts for kids. "Thank you, to my family and my team, for believing in me. And, thank you to families in King-Vaughan for supporting me through this journey. "The Ministry of Energy and Electrification oversees the regulatory framework for electricity pricing and develops policies to mitigate energy prices for Ontario consumers and businesses. It supports energy efficiency and conservation and the growth of clean technology and innovation in the electricity sector. The ministry engages with Indigenous partners, local distribution companies, transmission companies and energy agencies in energy sector decisions. It also drives efficiencies and performance for consumers. In his role as Education Minister, Lecce and the government has put students first. Through updating the curriculum and more of a back-to-basics focus, students are being better prepared. Students were always top of mind for the minister. For the 2023-24 academic year, the Province is providing school boards with a record \$27.6 billion in total education funding; that includes an additional \$700 million in base education funding and we are adding 2,000 more teachers to classrooms across the province. Closer to home, the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) is projected to receive \$1,535,858,315 in base funding for the 2023-24 school year. Per pupil funding for the YRDSB has increased by 8.2 per cent since 2019-20. Similarly, the York Catholic District School Board is projected to receive \$601,396,918 in base funding for this school year. Per pupil funding for the YCDSB has increased by 10.1 per cent since 2019-20. In 2022, Lecce was re-elected with a healthy margin, some 57% of the vote.