

Ministry of Education

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August 25, 2009

Dear directors, PIC chairs and parent organizations,

We are all aware of how important parent involvement is to student achievement, and we also know that the relationship between parents and their children's school impacts everything we do.

Our government has been working hard to strengthen parent involvement since we came into office, and I am committed to continuing our government's excellent record on strengthening parent involvement in our schools.

Strong and effective parent engagement begins with parents supporting parents at the local level. Our job in government is to provide the tools needed to help parents do that, and connect with them at the grassroots level. Consistent with this approach, we will be refocusing our resources where they will have the most significant impact, by strengthening the role of Parent Involvement Committees (PICs). The Provincial Parent Board (PPB) will not go beyond its current term, which ends August 31. I am grateful to PPB members for their contributions, and see this transition to a grassroots approach as part of the natural evolution of parent involvement, and where I believe we will have the best results.

This spring we introduced an amendment to the Education Act (Bill 177, Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, 2009) which, if passed, will allow me to require that every board in the province has a PIC, reinforcing the vital link between schools and parents. Going forward, we plan to host annual meetings with PIC chairs and school board directors to provide a forum for open dialogue on both the challenges and opportunities to enhance parent engagement in our schools.

We've also been supporting parent involvement through the Ministry of Education's Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants. Applications for PRO grants were made available in May of this year rather than in September — more than three months earlier than last year, and I understand that a number of applications have already been submitted. I have seen numerous exciting PRO grant projects since their inception in 2006, and I am looking forward to seeing the new parent engagement projects from the upcoming grant cycle. A list of the PRO grants approved for 2008-09 is posted on the ministry's website http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/PROGrant_%20schoolcouncil2008.pdf.

I am also pleased to inform you that a number of parent resources are available to support student achievement on the ministry's website. The *Parents' Back to School Guide* can be found under publications for parents at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/BacktoSchool.pdf>.

I hope that you have enjoyed the summer break. As we look forward to another successful school year, I remain as committed as ever to supporting and encouraging parent engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Wynne".

Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education