



THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

51 Stuart Street, Hamilton, ON L8L 1B5

Telephone: 905.308.9563

Email: info@ofhsa.on.ca

June 6, 2016

The Honourable Liz Sandals

Minister of Education

22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister:

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA) is a province-wide network of dedicated members, committed to informed and pro-active involvement in our homes, our schools and our communities to obtain the "Best for Each Student".

Members of OFHSA understand that a student's health, both physical and mental, is an important factor in their success as a student and in their adult life. Students spend a majority of their waking hours in school ten months out of a year under the watchful eyes of these caring adults. Teachers and staff members are in a unique position to bring awareness of issues to the attention of parents when problems with vision, hearing or speech have been identified.

Schools, as hubs in a community, are the key place to centralize access to community service programs and public health services that improve the health and well-being of students, families and the community as a whole. OFHSA has a policy calling for every publicly funded school in Ontario to have a Public Health Nurse on site, full-time.

A full-time school nurse would be available to students for counseling and referrals, the ideal consultant or facilitator for the "Comprehensive School Health" approach used in Ontario schools. Public Health Nurses have medical knowledge of the broad range of health issues students present: physical issues such as allergies and diabetes, and mental health issues, including the complex social / emotional challenges of today. Having a medical professional in the schools would eliminate the downloading of tasks, such as dispensing of medications, to administrators, office staff, teachers, EAs and ECEs. Though staff can opt for training to recognize the signs of health issues, including mental health concerns, a medical professional in each school would ease the responsibilities of school staff considerably.

We urge the Minister and Ministry to work co-operatively with the Minister and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to integrate one Public Health Nurse, on a full-time basis, in every school in Ontario to support a solid foundation for *Achieving Excellence* in our education system and the broader community.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Binns, President

CC: The Hon Kathleen O. Wynne, Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

The Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Child and Youth Services

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association

The Ontario Nurses' Association

The Best for Each Student

A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN HOME AND SCHOOL FEDERATION