December 11, 2006

Dear Colleague,

Today, the ministries of Education and Health Promotion announced the Healthy Schools Recognition Program and issued a Healthy Schools Challenge, encouraging schools – students, teachers, administrators, parents and community partners - to find ways of making our schools healthier in 2006/07.

This letter is a follow up to the “Foundations of a Healthy School” package provided to you recently. Today, we want to share a few important details about the Challenge and encourage all Ontario schools to participate in this worthwhile initiative.

Quick facts relevant to all Ontario schools regarding this Challenge include:

- To accept the challenge, schools must commit to implementing at least one more activity / program to make their students and schools healthier this school year;

- To register, school administrators need simply complete the Healthy Schools Challenge acceptance form and deliver it to their school board;

- When schools accept the challenge, they will receive a “Healthy Schools Pledge” from the ministries, recognizing their effort to have a healthier school. Once the pledge is signed by the principal, school council chair and a student representative (if applicable), it can be displayed as a public declaration to become a healthier school;

- At the secondary school level, $1,000 is being allocated per school to help better engage the creativity of students in developing a healthier school environment;

- Schools are encouraged to consult with staff, students, parents and the community on the activities they might commit to. The ministries have compiled a variety of tools and resources that will help school leaders research and plan their Healthy Schools activities; and

- All participating schools will be publicly recognized for their participation in the Healthy Schools Recognition Program with the award of a pennant for proud display in their school.

All the information and tools necessary to accept the Healthy Schools Challenge are available online: see the “Healthy Schools” section on the Ministry of Education’s website – www.edu.gov.on.ca – or click on the Healthy Schools link on the Ministry of Health Promotion’s website at www.mhp.gov.on.ca.
The Healthy Schools Challenge is an opportunity to improve student success by creating a healthy learning environment through the input and efforts of the wider school community. We thank you and wish you great success with the challenge.

Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Minister of Education  
Province of Ontario

Honourable Jim Watson  
Minister of Health Promotion  
Province of Ontario