June 5, 2006

Dear Friends,

With the successful passage of the McGuinty government’s Student Performance Bill last Thursday, I would like to take the opportunity to share my excitement about what this means for greater achievement for all Ontario students. At this exciting time, I would also like to share with you some of the positive ways in which it will affect publicly funded education in Ontario.

This legislation is a significant tune-up that modernizes education by creating the conditions to improve student performance, support partnerships in education based on respect and promote openness to the public.

Everyone agreed that a one-size-fits-all approach in education was not working. We are moving forward by setting provincial outcomes to maximize our government’s education initiatives, fostering teaching excellence, removing barriers to greater student achievement and putting in place a strong foundation for consultation.

Our government is taking responsibility for education in Ontario and giving our partners in education the respect they deserve. This legislation will help build on the new era of respect and partnership already evident by giving more flexibility to boards so they can make decisions locally, and by empowering board trustees and student trustees.

Throughout the legislative process, our government remained open to consultation with our partners in education. To address their concerns, we made several significant changes. We feel confident that the new initiatives provide positive changes that will support students, teachers and trustees.

Now that the legislation has passed, there will be extensive consultations with school boards and other education partners to determine clear provincial education outcomes. And beginning in the 2006-07 school year, the ministry has mandated that all school boards will have the New Teacher Induction Program in place to provide new teachers with supports and mentoring during their first year. In addition, the Ontario College of Teachers will be conveying information to its membership on upcoming changes to the October election process that will establish a College respected by teachers and the public.
Paramount to this legislation is the shared desire to sustain momentum and progress in publicly funded education as various aspects of the act come into play over the next few months. I hope you’ll take a moment to review the attached news release and backgrounder which includes more detailed information on the legislation.

Thank you for your community-minded commitment to publicly funded education and to the well-being of our children and young adults. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the months to come.

Sincerely,

Sandra Pupatello
Minister