June 21, 2006

Dear Educators,

I am writing to you today to encourage you to participate in the Ontario College of Teachers’ election process, either as a nominee or as a voter.

Apart from family, you as teachers are the single most important influence in shaping the future of our children and our province. Every day, teachers across Ontario inspire students and colleagues with their innovation and their passion for teaching.

Because you play such a vital role in ensuring children have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve excellence, we are committed to supporting you. We believe that teaching is more than a profession; it is one of the highest callings and a matter of public service. That is why our government respects teachers, and wants to ensure that teachers have what they need to help students succeed.

On June 1, 2006, legislation to revitalize the Ontario College of Teachers was passed. This legislation and amendments to the College’s election regulations give classroom teachers the majority of seats on the College’s council. That means teachers like you—active, practising classroom teachers—will hold the majority of seats: 19 out of 37. The Ontario College of Teachers has put out a call to classroom teachers for nominations for these 19 seats on council. I urge you to consider running for one of these positions, or to consider nominating a fellow teacher.

The Ontario College of Teachers is an independent, professional body, charged with protecting the public interest in the teaching profession. Serving on the College’s council will give you insight into the largest self-regulatory body in the country. You will bring your classroom knowledge and experience to the discussion table. You will participate in making decisions about standards of practice and ethical standards appropriate for the teaching profession in Ontario. And you will help make a mark on your profession.

To nominate yourself or a colleague, simply download a copy of the nomination form from the College’s website, or use the copy in the special election edition of Professionally Speaking. You will need to complete a biography and find ten colleagues to support your nomination. A special elections hotline at the College has been set up to take you through the process. Please call 416-961-8800 or 1-888-534-2222 ext. 559 for a College staff member to take you through the process.
The deadline for nominations is July 14, 2006. Voting begins on September 5, 2006, and ends on October 24, 2006. I am sure that your school and board will support your participation in this process. And that is what’s important — your participation and involvement.

Again, I want to emphasize how much our government respects and values teachers and their daily work with students. We are making huge investments in supports for teachers and in the public education system, but it is nothing compared to what you give selflessly to students every day. We want a teaching profession firmly grounded in what classroom teachers know and do best. That is why classroom teachers will have a majority say on the council.

I encourage you to take part in the College’s election process by nominating a colleague or running for College council. Do take an active part in governing your profession, and help make a difference.

Sincerely,

Sandra Pupatello
Minister