December 10, 2012

Dear Chair,

I am writing to inform you about the next steps associated with supporting students’ completion of secondary school in four years.

Over a decade ago, Ontario moved to four years of secondary school, but many students are still taking an additional fifth year. Last year almost 20,000 students who graduated in four years returned for at least a semester to earn additional credits.

Our goal is to shift the culture in our schools and encourage students to graduate on time. The vast majority of students should be able to earn the credits they need in four years, as they do everywhere else in Canada and the United States.

Students who want to take more than 34 credits after four years can do so. The ministry will fund the school board at a reduced rate for those credits beginning in September 2013. Within four years, students are able to take as many credits as they want; and at no time will students be charged.

However, we also recognize that not all students are the same. That’s why there will be some exemptions to the 34-credit funding threshold, for example, students with special education needs who have an Individual Education Plan. For more detailed information on the exemptions, or for more information, please contact Sandra Bickford at sandra.bickford@ontario.ca or 416-325-2564.

Your input on the proposed changes to board funding after the 34-credit threshold has provided us with valuable insight. We have incorporated your advice into our approach moving forward.

The ministry is also preparing resources to support better education and career/life planning for students, teachers, and parents. These resources will help each student better plan their pathways through school and move forward to the next stage in their lives.

We are releasing the first version of Creating Pathways to Success — a document that will help students in grades 10 to 12 plan their educational and career/life pathways. A second and more complete version will cover Kindergarten to Grade 12. This should be available in the spring of 2013.
We will work with your board and schools to support students in planning their educational pathways so they can complete all the credits they need in four years. By planning their courses and career/life options, students will be prepared for their next steps in life.

We look forward to continuing to work with you as we support student success.

Yours truly,

Laurel Broten
Minister