September 10, 2014

Dear Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Chairs/Co-Chairs,

As we welcome another school year, I want to thank you for all that you do to support the achievement and well-being of children and students in your school community.

I would also like to update you on some of the ministry’s recent work.

As you are aware, we recently released *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. This renewed vision builds on feedback we received from our partners throughout the education system, including parents and students. It reflects our government’s commitment to helping every learner build the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and thrive now and in the future.

In *Achieving Excellence*, we recognize and acknowledge that parents are a key part of our success in education. We know that good schools become great schools when parents are engaged in their child’s learning. We are committed to the success and well-being of every student and child. That’s why we continue to recognize and encourage a wide range of opportunities for parents to engage in their child’s learning.

This includes increasing parent engagement through ongoing communication about what their children are doing in school, and how parents, guardians and caregivers can further contribute to their learning and well-being. It also includes providing greater support to help ensure parents and guardians are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children’s education.

I encourage you to learn more by visiting ontario.ca/eduvision.

As part of our renewed vision, we continue to support parent involvement through the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants. On August 27, this year's PRO grants were announced with more than 2,200 projects approved. This year saw the highest number and percentage of approvals for school council applications since the beginning of the program, with over 98 percent of applications approved. The approval of over 100 regional/provincial grants represents the highest number of these applications approved in the program’s nine-year history.
The steady increase in approved grants demonstrates that more and more school council and PIC members are working to involve more parents in their children’s learning in support of student achievement and well-being through PRO grants. In response to your feedback, this year’s application period of over ten weeks gave applicants more time to develop their proposals.

We also continue to provide practical, easy-to-use tools and resources for parents, school councils, schools, PICs and boards that support parent engagement. During the PIC Symposium in April 2014, two new resources – the *We All Belong* storybooks and the *Building Healthy Relationships Tool Kit* – were introduced.

Building on the success of *We All Belong*, the storybooks were designed to be appealing, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate for parents and school staff to use. The storybooks will help foster parent engagement to support student achievement and well-being, and promote a whole school approach to safe, inclusive and accepting schools.

*Building Healthy Relationships* is a tool kit and guide that will support the role of parents in the whole-school approach and further involve them in their children’s education. This tool kit is a follow up to the *Building Parent Engagement - Parent Tool Kit, Teen Edition and Guide*, and it can be downloaded online at: [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html).

Again, thank you for your partnership and commitment to promote parent engagement. I wish you all the best in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Liz Sandals  
Minister

c: Directors of Education  
Board Chairs