

Ministry of Education

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December 16, 2004

Open Letter to Ontario Teachers in Publicly Funded Education

Dear Friends,

I am writing to confirm to you that the Ontario Legislature voted yesterday to repeal the Professional Learning Program or PLP and that this change became official with Royal Assent from the Lieutenant Governor today.

This means the requirement to take prescribed courses to maintain your certification with the Ontario College of Teachers is now eliminated. As you may know, the College of Teachers has already voted a reduction in its fees in anticipation of the lifting of the program.

It has taken from the spring until now to have the legislation passed for one reason — the McGuinty government has been determined to permit democratic debate and strictly limit the use of closure. We strongly believe that the needs of students, as well as those of teachers, are well served by the repeal of PLP and so have been very prepared to explain our reasons and hear the views of the other parties. If interested, you can find out more about the debates at www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/index.htm.

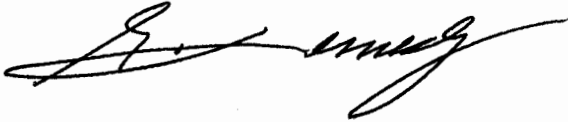
There is no “replacement” for PLP, because we see it as a flawed foundation from which to build. The McGuinty government does believe teacher excellence is key to progress in publicly funded education but, distinct from the last government, our assumption is that all Ontario teachers believe in this as well. In June of this year, we published a discussion paper outlining alternative approaches based on respect for teachers as professionals — that could include induction programs, mentoring for new teachers, increased professional development days and revised performance appraisal. We have also recently announced direct funding for teacher development.

I would very much like to hear your views on this proposed approach and the other initiatives the government is undertaking to strengthen publicly funded education. I also invite you to consider joining the online Ontario Provincial Education Network (OPEN) to give your input and perspective on an ongoing basis. You can reach me at minister@edu.gov.on.ca and our website at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

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As you enter a well-deserved break, please accept my best wishes to you and your family for a terrific holiday season and my thanks to you and your colleagues for all the tremendous work you are doing on behalf of students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard Kennedy", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gerard Kennedy, MPP
Minister of Education