November 23, 2004

Dear Teacher Candidate,

Congratulations on deciding to become a teacher! Your commitment is greatly appreciated, as Ontario needs highly trained and motivated teachers to deliver improved student achievement and excellence for all of its students.

At the same time, we understand the challenges that teachers face, especially new teachers. That is why we are working with our partner school boards and faculties of education to provide teachers with the tools and support needed to succeed.

As Minister, I have heard from the education sector that the present Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT), adopted by the previous provincial government in 2002, has made a limited contribution to readying new teachers for the classroom.

It is our ministry's view that the OTQT should be replaced with a better assessment mechanism that is relevant, convenient, and evaluates teaching skills and know-how in a meaningful way.

Our government is also exploring an induction program for first-year teachers, which could include mentoring, increased professional development opportunities, and other resources to supplement pre-service training. We plan on having some form of assessment to be done at the end of the first year of teaching.

Subject to regulatory amendments, there will be no OTQT administered in the spring of 2005.

There will be further consultation with the education sector about the new approach this fall. We will keep you informed of our progress.

A paper outlining our new proposals for teacher development is available at the Ministry of Education web site at <www.edu.gov.on.ca>. While visiting the web site, I encourage you to join OPEN, Ontario's Provincial Education Network, our e-mail network, so that you can access up-to-date information on current and upcoming education initiatives, and also provide me with your feedback.
Please accept my best wishes for success in your studies, and I look forward to working with you in our publicly funded education.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gerard Kennedy
Minister of Education