

Ministry of Education

Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

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October 23, 2008

Dear Education Partners,

Part of rebuilding public confidence in education is about rebuilding Ontario's schools — something the McGuinty government has been doing since we came to office.

We are very proud of our record on school renewal. Under this government, the quality of school buildings across the province has improved significantly. We have invested in more new schools, more schools to replace those in the poorest condition and the proper maintenance and renewal of our schools. All this demonstrates pride throughout the surrounding community and ensures that our facilities are in good repair, putting less pressure on board renewal budgets.

The world economy has changed and this new economic reality is forcing governments around the world to re-examine their expenditures. In the government's Fall Economic Statement yesterday, we announced that we must delay the implementation of and slow down some spending due to the challenging economic environment. For education, this means that the School Renewal Allocation — excluding Good Places to Learn Renewal — will be limited to 80 per cent of the funding levels originally set for 2008-09.

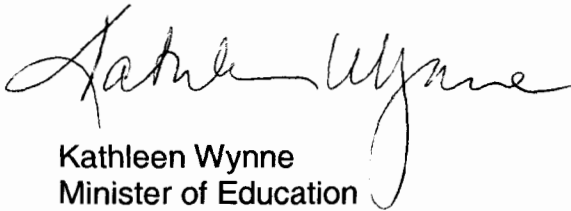
This constraint will require school boards to carefully plan and review their priorities for school renewal. We are asking boards to manage the pace of implementing their least urgent projects this year.

Boards will continue to have access to significant resources to address their renewal needs, including access to Good Places to Learn funding. The ministry expects to release Stage 4 allocations in the near future, which will support a further \$250 million in renewal projects, on top of the \$2 billion in funding for projects to address high and urgent renewal needs allocated to date. In addition, we have allocated \$670 million to replace 147 schools that are in the poorest shape, and decisions on other replacement schools are in process.

This was not an easy decision, and we recognize it will have an impact on your planning. However, action is needed given the tough economic times. Our priority is, and will continue to be, to make decisions that have the least possible impact on classroom learning.

We know that our publicly funded education system is well positioned to meet this challenge. We will continue to invest in our publicly funded education system, including our school buildings, to ensure our shared goal of improved learning opportunities for all our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathleen Wynne". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education