

Ministry of Education

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



Dear Chairs,

Directors of Education are receiving a similar update from George Zegarac, Deputy Minister of Education, on the ministry's *Student Injury Prevention Initiative*. As school board trustees play a critical role in supporting provincial and school board health and safety priorities, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on some recent health and safety initiatives that our ministry is working on with its partners.

As you know, in May 2011, a tragic accident in a school transportation technology class took the life of an 18 year-old Ottawa student. In response, the Ministry of Labour conducted comprehensive, province-wide occupational health and safety inspections of elementary and secondary science and technological education classrooms and facilities. In 2012-13, the Ministry of Education provided \$9.9 million to school boards to assist with addressing the initial inspection results and health and safety concerns. A portion of this funding was directed to the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) to champion a culture of safety mindedness through the *Student Injury Prevention Initiative*. As part of this initiative, CODE issued *A Report on the CODE Student Health and Safety in Schools Project*, which makes a number of recommendations for the ongoing safety of students and staff in science and technological education classes.

A recent Coroner's Inquest into the May 2011 student fatality at the Ottawa Catholic District School Board has also resulted in recommendations intended to "prevent similar deaths in the future". On April 3, 2014, the inquest jury released 22 recommendations directed to Ontario school boards, the Ontario Council for Technology Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

As an immediate next step, the Ministry of Education will be working with school boards and other education partners to review all of the CODE and Coroner's Inquest recommendations in order to formulate a comprehensive injury prevention strategy. As this work is being done, we will continue our support of the *Student Injury Prevention Initiative* by allocating \$3 million in additional funding to school boards. CODE will continue in its role of coordinator and will work with school boards.

As trustees, your continued efforts to increase awareness of student injury prevention through policy development and community partnerships are greatly appreciated. Your strategic and financial oversight will also help us to realize our collective goals for improved student safety and well-being, and increased public confidence in our school system.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and partnership as we strive to improve safety in Ontario schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Sandals". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Liz" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sandals".

Liz Sandals
Minister