

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

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November 30, 2007

Dear Board Chair,

I am writing today to invite you to help our government develop the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) for 2008/09.

Much has happened since the last time I wrote to ask for your suggestions to advance our goal of building a responsive and accountable funding system that enhances student achievement. With your support and counsel, we announced a funding increase of \$781 million in March, plus an additional \$182 million in August, bringing the total education investment in the GSN to \$18.45 billion in 2007-08. We have introduced four new grants to better recognize student needs and we have added funding for more elementary and secondary teachers, more vice-principals and school secretaries, as well as more funding for education assistants and other education workers. In addition, we are also recognizing many of the financial pressures that you highlighted, such as rising costs for school supplies, school operations, transportation, and supply teachers.

Unlike previous years, we already know significant funding changes that we intend to make for 2008/09. Based on last year's consultation, in August we announced \$127 million in new funding for 2008/09 to better address actual costs in key areas you identified, such as English as a second language and Perfectionnement du français, school board administration, benefits, new schools in areas of localized growth, adult education, and funding for local priorities through the Program Enhancement Grant.

For this year's consultation, I would like you to focus on suggestions for allocating the funding already announced in the areas of benefits, special education, growth schools, and transportation, and on identifying pressures that have emerged since we last consulted on changes to the funding formula. I would also be interested to hear what is new or different from your submissions and suggestions last year, which we continue to refer to as we review our funding approach.

As was the case last year, I am committed to an early spring release of the 2008/09 GSN so that boards have the time they need to do their staffing and budget planning for the coming school year. To meet the early release date, I am asking trustee associations to submit their proposals for GSN changes to the Ministry by December 21, 2007. You may already have made your views known through your association. However, I would also welcome hearing from you by the December 21st submission date. Please send your proposals to Karen Maxwell, Director of the Education Finance Branch, at karen.maxwell@ontario.ca.

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Working together, we have made impressive strides in creating a responsive funding system that supports schools in all our communities and that reaches every student. We are committed to continuing to improve publicly funded education and I look forward to hearing your views on how we can build on our success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Wynne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education