

**Ministry of Education**

**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Minister

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March 20, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to advise you that I have today released the report of the Declining Enrolment Working Group. The report, which is entitled *Planning and Possibilities*, can be found on the ministry's website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/enrolment.html>.

I want to thank the members of the Working Group for their hard work and dedication, which has resulted in this thoughtful and comprehensive report. The government will consider their recommendations carefully and I will consult with colleagues about some of the advice that calls for interministerial co-operation.

As *Planning and Possibilities* confirms, declining enrolment is a shared challenge that needs shared solutions, involving many partners in education. The report highlights the importance of ensuring that declining enrolment does not mean a decline in the quality of education, especially in the current economic climate and the resulting need to make the best use of existing resources. The government has provided adjustment supports for boards with declining enrolment every year since taking office. The Working Group's report confirms that the combination of ongoing and transitional support, which includes increased funding, new allocations, and re-alignments of funding to better match cost structures, has been effective in helping boards adjust to enrolment decline.

We intend to move as quickly as possible to consider recommendations of the report that are revenue neutral and to encourage more proactive planning and co-operation between boards and other community partners. The report urges that boards be more proactive in planning for and managing enrolment decline, and this is also the government's expectation. Efforts should include ongoing collaboration with other boards and local partners to find local solutions. We will work with the sector to encourage boards, municipalities, provincial ministries and other levels of government to work together on planning decisions for our schools.

Many partners in education participated in the Declining Enrolment Working Group's consultations, and I thank them for their contribution. This report reflects and confirms the spirit of partnership and shared commitment to student achievement that is a foundation of our publicly funded education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kathleen Wynne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Kathleen Wynne  
Minister of Education