

**Ministry of Education**

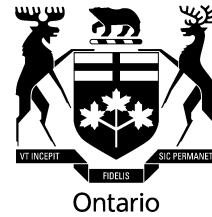
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**Ministère de l'Éducation**

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November 23, 2010

Dear School Board Chair,

It is my pleasure to announce a new award that recognizes exceptional contributions to safe schools in Ontario. The Premier's Safe Schools Awards will honour up to 10 teams that have done exceptional and innovative work in creating a safe and inclusive school environment.

Across Ontario, safe schools teams are working to promote a caring and safe environment at their school because they understand how important this can be to students' learning and well-being. This is your chance to celebrate these exceptional people and their achievements.

Every school has a safe schools team that is responsible for school safety. Teams include a student (where appropriate), parent, teacher, non-teaching staff member, community partner and the principal.

We are looking for safe schools teams that have demonstrated initiative, creativity and leadership. These teams have introduced initiatives that brought positive change to their school or school community. The following are some of the characteristics associated with a positive school climate:

- Healthy and respectful relationships are promoted among all members of the school community.
- Students are encouraged to be leaders and positive role models in their school; for example, to speak up about issues such as bullying.
- Parents and community members are actively engaged.
- Positive behaviour is reinforced, and students are given opportunities to develop relationships that are free from racism, discrimination and harassing behaviour.
- High expectations are emphasized to improve learning outcomes for all students.
- All cultures are respected and valued and, as a result, students, parents and staff feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

Anyone in the school or school community can nominate a safe schools team for a Premier's Safe Schools Award. Simply visit [www.ontario.ca/safeschools](http://www.ontario.ca/safeschools) for a nomination form. Hardcopy forms are also being distributed to every school and board in the province. The deadline for nominations is March 31, 2011.

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Award recipients will be recognized during Education Week – May 2 to 6, 2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leona Dombrowsky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Leona Dombrowsky  
Minister of Education