

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

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September 2, 2010

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back. I hope you had an enjoyable summer vacation.

In anticipation of another productive school year, I want to thank you for your ongoing commitment. Everyone at the Ministry is looking forward to our continued partnership that ensures Ontario's students succeed.

Together I know that we will continue to work towards our core priorities which remain:

1. high levels of student achievement,
2. reduced gaps in student achievement, and
3. increased public confidence in publicly funded education.

Back-to-school is an exciting time of year, every year. This September is especially significant as we open our school doors to our first class of full-day kindergarten students.

In addition Ontario is hosting the *Building Blocks for Education: Whole System Reform* international summit. Currently, we have delegations registered from Australia, Britain, Canada, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Russia, Thailand and the U.S.A. This summit will allow us to learn from our international colleagues and showcase all that has been achieved in Ontario education, thanks to you.

At the Summit, we'll be sharing this week's very encouraging provincial EQAO results that show 68 per cent of students in Grades 3 and 6 are achieving at or above the provincial standard — a 14 percentage point increase since 2002-03. English-language Grade 9 math scores have increased by at least 16 percentage points in the same period.

A very multifaceted approach to student success has been implemented and is contributing to this success. As I have said before, standardized tests are not the sole indicator of student achievement but they do provide us with a snapshot of student achievement at a particular point in time to ensure our approaches remain effective.

For parents and the ministry, teachers' appraisals of student work will always be an integral part of our education system. However, parents also want to know how their children are doing based on objective measures of achievement in relation to the Ontario curriculum. By analysing both provincial assessment results and teacher evaluations, we acquire a more thorough understanding of how and why our students are succeeding.

This Friday, the Ministry of Education is launching an advertising campaign about full-day kindergarten with a 30 second TV ad airing in English and French.

The TV ad shows "play-based learning" activities through a series of steps as the children work together to build a class project guided by a teacher and early childhood educator. The commercial ends by directing viewers to [ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://ontario.ca/kindergarten) for more details.

The web addresses [ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://ontario.ca/kindergarten) and [ontario.ca/earlylearning](http://ontario.ca/earlylearning) now direct visitors to the same re-designed pages that feature new visuals and easier navigation. There will also be a fact sheet for parents with information in 17 languages (to be available by mid-September).

Besides English and French TV, the full-day kindergarten campaign includes the following elements:

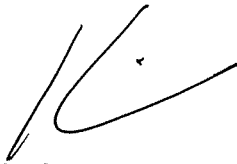
- Additional TV versions for Omni TV in 11 languages which will air mid-September
- Online advertising in English and French – starting mid-September
- Multicultural print campaign in 17 languages – starting mid-September

If you have additional questions about the TV, online or print ads, please contact my communications director, Murray Leaning at [murray.leaning@ontario.ca](mailto:murray.leaning@ontario.ca).

I'm glad we are kicking off the school year with good news and exciting initiatives.

Have a safe and successful year.

Sincerely,



Kevin Costante  
Deputy Minister