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April 21, 2006

The Honourable Sandra Pupatello
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Pupatello:

On behalf of the Peel District School Board I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Ontario's new Minister of Education. Our entire board joins me in extending a very warm welcome to you and wishes you well in your new responsibilities. As you have stated, there is nothing more important to our province's future than the education of our students and we look forward to working in partnership with you in this endeavor.

I know with the legislature in session, you will be very busy and I commend you for committing to meet with as many education sector groups as possible. I have already contacted your office with a request to talk with you.

As you assume your responsibilities I know you are keen to hear about our issues and concerns. For some time we have been working with the former Minister and Ministry staff to develop a fair and equitable student transportation funding model. In recent months we have reached a critical point in the process of rectifying the funding deficiency in this area and in January of 2006 I corresponded with the Minister on this matter (attached).

Through the recently completed student transportation survey we have benchmarked our costs and service levels against comparable school boards in the province. Our analysis confirms that our student transportation service is operating efficiently and cost effectively.

Peel Board's concerns regarding the student transportation funding formula have been well documented and we have patiently cooperated with the Ministry to try to resolve this funding inadequacy.

We would like to continue to work with the Ministry of Education to resolve this matter, but there is some urgency to resolving this issue in this year. An operational review, to certify the efficiency of our transportation operations leading to an appropriate adjustment to our funding, is strongly supported by the Peel District School Board. I would urge you to proceed with this review immediately, so that any operational and funding recommendations will impact our 2006/07 budget and our 2005/06 financial results. If nothing changes, the Peel District School Board will incur a 2005/06 deficit of \$9 million.

On behalf of the Board, I am requesting an opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this matter more fully.

Sincerely,

Janet McDougald, Chair

c. Peel MPPs

Peter Ferreira, Chair, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

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