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July 17, 2007

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

Dear Minister Wynne:

Kathleen

I am writing as a follow-up to our meeting of June 12, 2007, your letter of June 27, 2007 and our telephone discussion of June 28, 2007. Thank you for the time you are taking to discuss our funding challenges with us. Our Board regards these issues as significant and as you know, we believe the current funding model does not adequately address the needs of Peel District School Board students. We believe that Peel is different than most school boards in the province in that we have the highest growth rate of all school boards; we have a high cultural and economic diversity within our student population; we have much larger than average schools; and our region is experiencing the highest rate of immigration in Canada.

When we spoke, I mentioned to you that I would be meeting with the trustees on June 28th to review your response to the Peel District School Board's ongoing funding shortfalls. At that meeting, the board members expressed their continuing frustration regarding Peel's \$124 million below-average per pupil grant allocation including the significant transportation funding gap and the loss of funding provided for principals and vice-principals.

First of all, let me assure you that, along with our Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board colleagues, we are moving forward as quickly as possible to review and implement the recommendations of the student transportation effectiveness and efficiency review. Peel staff have been in ongoing discussions with your staff in connection with the progress we have made and the timing of a follow-up review so that we will receive additional in-year funding as early as possible in 2007/08. I also understand that staff have been in communication with the Ministry and have accepted your offer of funding assistance to conduct routing exercises on our transportation system and that this work will begin next month.

Trustees

Janet McDougald, Chair
Ruth Thompson, Vice-Chair
Valerie Arnold-Judge
Beryl Ford
David Green
Steve Kavanagh

Brad MacDonald
Suzanne Nurse
Don Stephens
Allison Van Wagner
Jeff White
Rick Williams

Director of Education and Secretary
Jim Grieve

**Associate Director,
Instructional Support Services**
Judith Nyman

**Associate Director,
Operational Support Services**
Wayne McNally

On the matter of funding for vice-principals, we realize that an unintentional error occurred when the Ministry introduced the school foundation grant in the 2006/07 GSN. We understand that the intent was to ensure adequate principal and vice-principal support in small schools but, as previously mentioned to you, this change in funding for principals and vice-principals resulted in a loss of grant in the amount of \$4 million for Peel. It is our view that given the extraordinary impact of this oversight, this funding should be restored immediately this fall.

I also understand that there has been further communication regarding funding for Parenting and Family Literacy Centres and safety devices for elementary schools. While staff has been informed that we will receive additional funding and have submitted to the Ministry-requested information regarding these initiatives, there has been no formal confirmation regarding these funds.

We welcome your latest invitation to meet with you and ministry staff later this summer to continue our discussions regarding the issue of per-pupil funding in general. We feel that there are needs that relate to urban schools, large schools, rapidly increasing enrolment and immigration that are not fully reflected in the current funding model. As well, we are prepared to participate in a Ministry led discussion with other growth boards. I will be contacting your office shortly to confirm dates for these meetings.

Sincerely,



Janet McDougald
Chair
Peel District School Board

c. Trustees
Peel MPPs
OPSBA

Ministry of Education

Minister

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June 27, 2007

Janet McDougald
Chair
Peel District School Board
5650 Hurontario Street
Mississauga ON L5R 1C6

Dear Ms.  McDougald,

Thank you very much for meeting with me on June 12th, 2007, regarding some of your concerns about funding for the Peel District School Board. I believe we had a very constructive discussion that will inform this government's plans for education over the next four years. I hope we can continue to work together cooperatively as this government embarks on an ambitious new mandate to continue to improve supports for school boards and for our students.

On the issue of transportation, I committed to support your board in its efforts to examine the efficiency of its current routing system. I also indicated that the results of this study, combined with progress being made by your board and your coterminous board in developing a consortium structure, will enable the government to review your board in 2007/08 as soon as your board is ready. This would allow us to provide additional funding to reflect what is expected to be a higher consortium rating. This funding would flow in the 2007/08 school year. As a result, I have confidence that your staff will be able to ensure that transportation services will continue through the school year.

Our reform of transportation funding is driven by the goal to ensure boards like Peel are appropriately funded for transportation after years of inequity. However, we are also under clear direction from the Auditor General to ensure that boards are accountable for providing efficient services in exchange for additional funding.

On the issue of per-pupil funding in general, I would be pleased to facilitate a more in-depth conversation with your trustees and staff and my staff regarding the funding formula. It is true that boards with rural schools, small schools and declining enrolment receive additional support because of their diseconomies of scale. Having visited schools around the province, I can say with confidence that Peel has among the best schools and programs. This is a testament to the excellent work of your trustees, board staff and all your education workers.

While we grapple with the issue of small schools and declining enrolment, we are also turning our attention to the particular challenges of large schools and schools with growing enrolment. In our meeting, you made a strong case regarding the need for additional vice-principals. That issue has been raised by your colleagues at other boards as well. I am interested in discussing this and your other cost pressures further.

Your staff has also raised questions regarding the pilot projects for Parenting and Family Literacy Centres. We acknowledge Peel's dedication to early childhood education and improving school readiness. We also acknowledge that Peel has existing centres with a similar mandate. Our pilot project is intended to support and evaluate a specific model of parenting centre that operates at a low cost, which we call a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre (PFLC). This project recognizes existing PFLCs and creates new PFLCs in locations determined by a needs analysis conducted by the Ministry. Due to Peel's previous work in this area, it would also be beneficial to our research to evaluate Peel's existing model and to support the board in operating several PFLCs. Please let me know if this is something that interests you.

Your staff also expressed concern regarding funding for safety devices for elementary schools. I have asked our Ministry to review that situation and consider possible options to address obstacles that were encountered in the past.

The insight of Peel trustees and staff is of great value to me and the Ministry. I look forward to continuing our conversation.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education