

## **EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

### **Investing in Programs to Reach Every Student**

#### **Success for Students**

The McGuinty government is dedicated to building a vibrant, publicly funded education system to develop Ontario's students into the best-educated, most highly skilled workforce. It is continuing its plan for better student achievement and higher secondary school graduation rates by:

- Investing \$18.3 billion in Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding to school boards in the 2007-08 school year, an increase of \$781 million from last year, and of more than 17 per cent from 2003-04. By 2008-09, GSN funding will rise to \$18.6 billion;
- Average per-student funding will increase to an estimated \$9,669 by 2008-09, up \$1,749 or 22 per cent from 2003-04;
- Providing French-language boards with more than \$1 billion in 2007-08, an increase of \$73.5 million or 7.2 per cent from 2006-07;
- Investing \$28 million in 2007-08 for elementary specialist teachers, bringing the total to an additional 1,900 teachers over the last three years;
- Investing \$4.5 million to train almost 25,000 teachers and \$1.2 million to train vice-principals and principals to address bullying;
- Launching the Aboriginal Education Strategy and investing \$13 million to improve achievement by First Nations, Inuit and Métis students; and
- Providing more than \$4 million for school boards to buy arts materials and musical instruments.

The government's targeted investments and strategies are working and producing positive outcomes for Ontario students, as demonstrated by the major achievements to date:

- Higher test scores:
  - In the 2005-06 school year, 64 per cent of Ontario Grades 3 and 6 students met or exceeded provincial standards in reading, writing and math, up from 54 per cent in 2002-03.
  - The pass rate on the Grade 10 literacy test increased from 72 per cent in 2002-03 to 84 per cent in 2005-06 for English-language students;
- Smaller primary class sizes in all of Ontario's 4,000 elementary schools. In 2006-07, 65 per cent of primary classes had 20 students or fewer, compared to 31 per cent in 2003-04, and 93 per cent have 23 students or fewer;
- Increase in high school graduation rate, from 68 per cent in 2003-04 to 73 per cent in 2005-06. Ontario's high schools are on track to meet the government's 85 per cent graduation rate target by 2010-11;

- Introduction of the Good Places to Learn initiative – a school renewal program to help fund \$4 billion of much-needed repairs, renovations and new school construction around the province. Under this program, almost 6,800 school building improvement projects have been completed or are underway;
- Establishment of a working partnership with public education providers by bringing labour stability to public education in the province; and
- Increasing the number of teachers by providing funds to hire approximately 1,200 new elementary-school teachers this school year, bringing the total to 4,800 more elementary-school teachers since October 2003.

### **Reaching Higher in Postsecondary Education**

Under the Reaching Higher plan, the McGuinty government is investing a cumulative \$6.2 billion in the postsecondary education sector by 2009-10. The government is continuing to improve quality, access and accountability by:

- Raising total base operating grants to colleges and universities to \$4.0 billion in 2007-08;
- Announcing an additional \$390 million to postsecondary institutions for more classroom space, higher enrolments and more training;
- By 2007-08, supporting graduate education with \$170 million in additional funding and expanding graduate spaces by 12,000;
- Providing more than \$580 million in student financial aid through the Ontario Student Assistance Program in 2007-08;
- Increasing first-year undergraduate medical enrolment by 23 per cent by 2009-10 over 2004-05; and
- Committing \$55 million by 2009-10 to create more opportunities for francophones and those traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education.

Reaching Higher has already created positive change in postsecondary education by:

- Increasing full-time enrolment by 86,000 since 2002-03, a 22-per-cent increase;
- Increasing special access funding by \$20 million in 2006-07 for small, northern and rural colleges, bringing total funding to \$65 million;
- Re-introducing upfront grants, benefiting nearly 60,000 students and limiting student debt to \$7,000 per completed year of study. In 2006-07, 145,000 students are benefiting from enhancements over the last three years to student aid; and
- Capped tuition increases – following two years of tuition freezes – at an average of five per cent annually, or \$100 for 90 per cent of college students and \$200 for 70 per cent of university students.

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