

## TWO REQUESTS AT BUDGET HEARINGS

### Education funding formula review and integrated funding, focus of People for Education's submission

for immediate release

Toronto (February 2, 2010) - Today at Queen's Park pre-budget hearings, People for Education asked the Premier to fulfil his promise to review the education funding formula this year. The group also suggested that integration of services and funding for programs for families and children would result in savings.

#### Immediate review of funding needed

According to Annie Kidder, Executive Director of the organization, "The Premier promised in 2003, and again in 2007, to review the funding formula by 2010. In one 2007 interview, he said: 'We've set 2010 as the date for formal review...'"

"Well, it is 2010, and despite patches, adjustments and refinements over the years, the funding formula has not kept up with all of the changes that have occurred since 1997. Enrolment has declined dramatically since then, but we still have funding that is, in many cases, based on 1997 school sizes. Much of the funding for students at risk is based on 1991 and 2001 census data. And everyone agrees schools would be more effective if they acted as hubs of their communities, but there is **no** funding for hubs in the formula."

#### Integrated funding and full implementation of Early Learning Plan will create savings

The group acknowledged the province's deficit struggle, but proposed that focusing on long-term change would bring about long-term savings. The group made a number of recommendations:

- Move forward with all aspects of *With Our Best Futures in Mind*, the report from the Premier's Advisor on Early Learning, to allow schools to act as "one stop shops", providing coordinated and integrated services for families, children and youth. Economists examining the long term cost/benefit of investment in programs for young children have found that for every \$1 spent, as much as \$17 is saved.
- Establish a provincial integration framework for all programs and services for families, children and youth. The framework should include not only a funding mechanism, but also a range of outcome measures for student success, student and community engagement, community health, integration of services and equity of outcomes.
- The funding formula review should include:
  - An examination of research on optimal school size;
  - an investigation of the impact of a community hub model on things like overall health promotion, neighbourhood viability, youth violence and poverty reduction; and
  - the development of policy and funding to support and promote integrated planning and schools as community hubs.

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