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September 30, 1997

OPEN LETTER TO PARENTS AND CONCERNED COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Government of Ontario has recently introduced Bill 160, *The Education Quality Improvement Act*. It has made public promises about "putting students first." In fact, it called an information flyer distributed to all households in the province, *Putting Students First*. Teachers believe in and support quality education, high standards and rigorous curriculum. That's why they entered the teaching profession. However, Bill 160 has nothing to do with improving the quality of education. Bill 160 provides for the elimination of 6,000 to 10,000 teaching positions. Teachers know that a loss of such significance can only result in **larger class sizes**. Historically, teachers, through local decision-making processes, have maintained and protected lower class sizes. With Bill 160, the Minister says that he will "control" class sizes - not keep them low. A reduction of teachers cannot equal lower class sizes. And larger class sizes definitely do not mean better quality education.

The Minister of Education and Training says that he will ensure high standards. At the same time, the Ministry of Education and Training is cutting another \$1 billion out of the education system. Less money and fewer resources cannot result in higher standards. Replacing qualified, professional teachers with persons who are not qualified to teach can only result in lower standards.

This Minister is skilled at "doublespeak." He claims that he is listening to students, parents and teachers, yet he does not respond to their concerns. He says that he is improving the quality of education while his ministry is taking money and resources out of schools. He states that he is putting the students first when his actions will only result in a reduced quality of educational opportunity for our children and students.

Teachers are worried. Teachers fear that the government will starve publicly-funded schools so that they will not be able to offer a solid education to all young people. We foresee a real crisis - the failure of the education system. We cannot afford to risk our children's education and the future of this province. Join us as we fight to save publicly-funded education in your community.

Sincerely,



Marshall Jarvis
President

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

