



207 Queen's Quay W.
Suite 404
Toronto, ON
M5J 1A7



March 9, 2009

Hon Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education
Mowat Block
22nd Flr.
900 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Wynne:

I am writing to you today about the possibility of the school year starting earlier this year. This issue is being decided upon by the local boards, but any such change requires the approval of your office. Such a change seems at first glance to be minor in nature; such a move however will have grave impacts on Ontario's tourism industry.

Tourism operators rely on student employees to assist with the running of their businesses; tourism is in fact the largest employer of students in Ontario. By starting the school year a week earlier, businesses will lose the access to these student workers, which will have a serious negative impact to their profitability. Given the tough economic times these businesses are already encountering, do we really need another barrier, this one supported by the very government they are turning to for assistance?

While losing access to these student employees is a major issue, the shrinking of the summer tourist season by one week will have even greater impact on our struggling sector. Even if the school year starts as scheduled, businesses in our sector will have a difficult time this summer. Take away one week from their season and there will be severe repercussions for our industry.

While I understand that you wish to leave local matters up to the local decision makers, this move has the potential to have such a negative impact to Ontario's tourism industry that it requires leadership at the provincial level. Attractions Ontario would request that you deny any requests to start the school year prior to the Labour Day weekend. I thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Troy Young,
Executive Director, Attractions Ontario

cc. Minister Monique Smith