

December 14, 2012

The Honourable Laurel Broten
Minister of Education
Office of the Minister
Mowat Block, 14th Floor
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Broten:

I am writing to follow up on suggestions at a recent meeting I had with tourism stakeholders. The Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) I met with discussed ways to address a decline in skiing in the area they represent, the counties of Grey, Bruce and Simcoe, an area where winter activities are important to the local economy.

I understand the number of school trips to the area has declined significantly and the RTO, which is marketing the region as a four-season destination, has suggested skiing and snowboarding could be built into school curriculum or encouraged for more school trips.

As my mandate includes sport and recreation and physical activity in Ontario, I also recognize the importance of these activities to the health of Ontarians, particularly children. Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions, along with diabetes, and encouraging children to engage in physical activity is our shared responsibility.

I have recently learned that the 2012-2013 SnowPass provided by the Canadian Ski Council allows Grade 4 and 5 children across Canada to ride and ski free up to three times at each participating ski site in the country. For more information, see www.snowpass.ca/index.cfm?dsp=PageView&PageL1ID=3.

The Regional Tourism Organization has a number of ski sites participating in the program, <http://snowpass.ca/index.cfm?dsp=PageView&PageL2ID=21>, and there is also a webpage for teachers at www.snowpass.ca/index.cfm?dsp=PageView&PageL1ID=18.

I am advised that many school boards are taking part in the program. I hope your ministry can consider ways to let school boards know about this program so that students can take advantage of the opportunity.

I look forward to continuing work with you to promote healthy active living and skiing and snowboarding as excellent sport and recreational activities for students in Ontario.

Yours truly,

Michael Chan
Minister

c: Mr. Paul Crysler, Chair, Board of Directors, RTO7

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport