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**News Release**  
**Ontario Federation of Independent**  
**Schools – April 8 2009**

**School Group Takes Exception To**  
**Education Minister’s Irresponsible**  
**Characterization of Schools**

*Ontario Federation Of Independent Schools Reminds That Independent Schools*  
*Already More Stringently Inspected Than Public School Counterparts*

(Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario) – OFIS is disappointed with Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne’s, most recent charge that private schools are granting public school teens A-plus credits with little accountability. The Minister claims to be responding to warnings from public school principals of a two-tiered system in which richer students take or retake several subjects at private schools to get higher marks and ultimately gain an edge for university entrance and scholarships. OFIS believes that this unfair general characterization of independent education is inaccurate and incomplete.

“Independent schools that grant the Ontario Secondary School Diploma are already more stringently inspected than their public school counterparts,” says Barb Bierman, Executive Director of OFIS, “so the implication that independent school credits are not equivalent to public school credits is wrong and offensive. It undermines the whole provincial education system and threatens the credibility of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma which is one of the most respected diplomas worldwide.”

The Ontario Federation Of Independent Schools is a growing and increasingly diverse network of independent schools in the province and maintains high expectations of schools that become members. The association insists on membership criteria that mean schools consistently strive to serve their students better and be represented publicly in an increasingly positive manner.

“Public schools are always astonished when previously unsuccessful students succeed in an independent school,” says Bierman, “they never seem to consider that good teachers, individualized attention, caring administrators and an atmosphere that encourages parental involvement can make a huge difference in the lives of children.”

OFIS administrators say that their Ministry inspectors have shared with them how much inspection and assessment procedures for independent schools have significantly improved. This assertion flies in the face of what the Minister of Education is hearing from public school principals which may amount to no more than educational “sour grapes.” “If Wynne pursues this, it will only further waste taxpayer’s money and unduly harass good schools.”

OFIS will continue to protect its member schools against these efforts to discredit independent education and speak up to these offences to parents and students choosing these schools. “Just like the ‘School Information Finder’ fiasco, the Ministry of Education continues to make policy decisions and announcements on the fly,” says Bierman.

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