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News Release

**Ontario Federation of Independent Schools – June 16
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**New Education Plan Takes Parents Out of The
Equation – Schools Should Raise Kids**

OFIS Continues To Support Parents As The Primary Agents In Laying The Foundation For Healthy And Productive Lives For Their Children

(Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario) – OFIS has carefully examined the “*With Our Best Future In Mind*” report released this week by Dr. Charles Pascal and commissioned by the Ontario Government. While OFIS applauds the report that recognizes the need for enhanced parental leave opportunities that would enable parents to spend more quality time with their children during formative years, the report also encourages parents to abdicate much of their parenting roles to the province’s education system by mandating full-day junior and senior kindergarten.

“In a day and age where parents are looking for greater choice in child-raising and educational partners, this report seems to suggest parents should hand over their children to the government at birth and pick them up again when they graduate high school,” says Barb Bierman, Executive Director of OFIS, “and other than the plan to give parents more parental leave when their children are born and emphasizing the need to streamline current resources making them accessible to more parents, this report fails to put parents in charge of raising their children except to pay the many user fees for all the additional educational services to be added.”

The Ontario Federation Of Independent Schools is a growing and increasingly diverse network of independent schools in the province whose member schools employ a wide variety of educational alternatives and models that partner fully with parents in the academic, social, emotional and vocational development of their children. The association applauds its member schools for innovative and creative academic solutions while working closely with parents and supporting families in the 21st century.

“The report says that “our best future is where all our children are healthy and secure, emotionally and socially competent, eager, confident and successful learners and respectful of diversity and we at OFIS agree,” says Bierman, “but children are all of these things because they learn them first at home with their parents who, according to research, are the primary influencers in children’s lives until they hit high school. Suggesting that schools replace parents in procuring these values is offensive to the many parents who are merely looking for greater support to raise their children themselves.”

OFIS schools are well-known for their effective student-teacher ratios, their attention to individual learning styles, warm and caring teachers and innovative programming. A key factor to the success of these schools is that parents have chosen a school that is the best fit for their family so that home and school truly work together. “If children are being left behind at any age it is because one-size education in public schools does not fit all,” says Bierman, “and Ontario should be looking to Alberta and British Columbia for evidence of how government supported school choice successfully addresses many of the challenges this province faces.”

“Establishing a strong foundation in the early years , and building on it, is indeed the single-most powerful key to this province’s future but not by removing parents from the equation,” says Bierman.

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