Ministry of Education

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Ontario

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Dear colleagues,

I am writing to inform you that the Minister of Education's Task Force on Senior High School Mathematics has provided their recommendations to the Minister. The task force members concluded, and the ministry is in agreement, that calculus should remain a part of the senior secondary school mathematics curriculum.

The Task Force chaired by Dr. Thomas Salisbury, a Professor in York University's Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and Deputy Director of the Fields Institute, and composed of members with a wide range of expertise, provided important insights on what skills and knowledge are required for students to reach their greatest potential.

Discussions with leaders in many different industries confirmed that mathematics is deeply embedded in today's workplaces. By studying mathematics, students learn to reason logically, think critically, and solve problems – key skills in the 21st century.

The Task Force determined that the current Advanced Functions and Introductory Calculus course "is overloaded with content and does not leave enough time to build reasoning and problem-solving skills." At the same time, they concluded the current Geometry and Discrete Mathematics course, which includes the study of vectors, is unsustainable, with declining enrolment.

Their recommendation is to transfer some curriculum content from Advanced Functions and Introductory Calculus, and the study of vectors in Geometry and Discrete Mathematics, into a new course to be called Calculus and Vectors. This course would replace Geometry and Discrete Mathematics in the secondary school curriculum. A revised Advanced Functions course would still be available to prepare students for a broad range of postsecondary destinations.

The ministry has accepted this task force recommendation. We believe it will provide Ontario secondary school students with a more challenging and relevant curriculum that will ultimately engage more students. The work of this task force has been very successful, and represents a new approach, expanding on the ministry's existing curriculum review process.

This revised Grade 12 mathematics curriculum, including calculus, will be ready for implementation by September 2007. The ministry is currently working on the development of textbooks and supports, and intends to release further information about the revised Grade 12 mathematics curriculum by September 2006.

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We are confident that the new mathematics curriculum for Grade 12 students will promote success for all students, and meet the needs of future leaders in the knowledge-based industries that drive economic growth in the global economy.

To read the full Task Force report, please visit <www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

We will keep you informed of developments in this area as they occur.

Sincerely,



Ben Levin

c: George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister

Dr. Thomas Salisbury
Chair, Minister's Task Force

Wendy Hayes, Task Force member
André Ladouceur, Task Force member
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