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To Parents of Students in our Publicly Funded Catholic Schools:

I hope that the summer break has provided an opportunity for you to enjoy some rest, relaxation and quality family time. As the new academic year is upon us, I want to take a moment to share some brief thoughts for reflection.

I wish to thank you for saying “YES” to Catholic education, a cherished gift in our province that has a rich tradition of nearly 170 years. One third of Ontario’s students attend publicly funded Catholic schools. In our Archdiocese, classrooms in more than 500 schools bring together a diverse family of 270,000 students, inspired by our faith, and following the example of Christ in work and play. Your engagement in the life of your school and parish plays a critical role in strengthening the entire community. For all that you do, be assured of my gratitude.

I would also like to ask for your assistance in continuing to strengthen the close relationship of parish, home and school that is so significant in the faith formation of our young people. We cannot underestimate the profound impact each one of us can play in the process. I continue to be inspired by the people I meet - parents sharing with their children faith traditions passed down over generations, schools mobilizing to assist the vulnerable, students excelling in academics and extra curricular activities - in short, a family working together, inspired by our Gospel call to serve one another.

I also wish to draw your attention to our upcoming municipal elections, to be held on Monday, October 25, 2010. As we elect local councillors and school board trustees, I strongly encourage you to become engaged in this important democratic process. We know that municipal elections have a traditionally low voter turnout, and yet those elected to office will directly impact our day to day activities with important decisions on everything from public transit to garbage collection, recreation centres to our school boards.

It is particularly important that Catholics be registered as supporters of our publicly funded Catholic schools so that they can vote for our Catholic School Trustees. This role is immensely important for the good of Catholic education, and I urge you to assess the candidates very carefully. On October 25th, I encourage you to vote for a candidate who will worthily and effectively fulfil the vitally important mission of stewardship in Catholic education that is entrusted to each Catholic School Trustee.

May Our Lord abundantly bless you and your family.

+ Thomas Collins

Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Toronto