

News Release Communiqué



Ministry of Education Ministère de l'Éducation

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMS TVONTARIO

New Digital Technology, TFO Autonomy And Greater Educational Focus To Modernize TVO

TORONTO — The government is modernizing TVO by converting to digital production and distribution, committing to an independent TFO network, and redefining educational content, Education Minister Sandra Pupatello announced today.

“I support the new strategic agenda announced today by TVO,” said Pupatello. “It responds fully to the government’s expectations and puts TVO in a strong position to exploit new technology so it can be as relevant as possible to Ontarians.”

“We are revitalizing TVO so that it can deliver on its educational mandate using up-to-date technology. TVO can now embrace new multi-platform possibilities to engage its audience, not just reach them,” added Pupatello.

Minister Pupatello also expressed confidence in TVO’s ability to make the appropriate programming decisions necessary to realize its strategy.

Among the initiatives at TVO to be financially supported by the government over the coming years:

- A transition from analog to digital technology
- A new multi-platform distribution strategy
- New customer-focused educational content aligned with ministry priorities, including learning outside the classroom for children and parents.

The switch to digital is expected to be completed by September 2007. This transition will require new resources and the hard work of all current TVO staff as well as extensive organizational development. These changes will occur over the next two years without layoffs and will enable TVO to better respond to consumer demand for digital multi-platform content.

The ministry will provide the capital funding to realize this vision and transitional funding for each of the next two years to enable the organization to equip its employees with the necessary tools, skills, training and information to participate fully in the digital world.

“TVO’s new strategic agenda responds directly to the increasingly competitive media marketplace and clear ministry priorities,” said TVOntario CEO Lisa de Wilde. “Our goal is to open up as many opportunities as possible for the people of Ontario to have engaging

experiences with our educational content. Today, we celebrate the start of a new digital era for TVO, and I am very grateful to the Ontario government for its support and financial commitment."

Minister Papatello and Minister Madeleine Meilleur, Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, also announced that the government will transform TFO into a separate, stand-alone organization with its own board, management and budget. The TVOntario board of directors has been asked to prepare a plan to create an independent organization, including operating and capital budgets and transition costs, and to identify options to achieve digitization capabilities comparable to those envisioned for TVO. The government has asked the board to report by December 15, 2006.

"The autonomy that TFO has acquired today further strengthens and consolidates the institutional foundations of French Ontario," said Meilleur. "TFO is dedicated to becoming one of the most powerful tools for the development of Ontario's Francophone community not only in the area of education, but also in the area of cultural, economic, and social development."

This revitalization of TVOntario is just one example of steps the government has taken to provide Ontario families with better learning resources. Others include:

- New books and other materials were purchased for school libraries through two government grants totaling \$32 million between 2004-06.
- New textbooks and supplementary learning resources were purchased by schools through a \$44 million government investment in 2005-06.
- Over 800 Ontario students from 11 school boards participated in the ministry's e-learning pilot project last semester. This September, there will be at least 30 school boards involved.
- Increased annual funding of \$50 million was provided for Aménagement linguistique en français, of which \$6.5 million has been allocated to increase the unique course offering in French language secondary schools.
- An increase of \$34 million for 2006-2007 has been allocated to enhance student success in French-language schools, so that primary grade class sizes continue to decrease, student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics continues to improve, and more students get their high school diploma.

"Ontario will prosper in the future because we are giving today's students the multi-media learning tools and resources they need to prepare for a technology-driven world," said Papatello.

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To view today's news conference, log on to www.tvontario.org

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