



**University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Special Education Completion Ceremony**

**The Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith, DBE, JP, DHumL, MP
Minister of Education**

10 January, 2012

Good evening.

Let me begin by extending a special welcome to Doctors **Nick Scarfo and Jim Greenlaw**, Deans of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

I acknowledge the presence of our Commissioner of Education, **Mrs. Wendy McDonnell**; and University of Ontario Institute of Technology **on Island Course Instructor, Ms Donna Edge-Bean**.

And a special welcome to the successful participants and guests;

Ladies and gentlemen, what better way to start the New Year - than by honouring the 19 teachers who have successfully completed the University of Ontario Institute of Technology's Special Education Specialist Training Programme.

As Minister of Education, I want to congratulate you on qualifying. Because of your work - our students will benefit; and - as you know - the Ministry of Education's sole focus and commitment is to our students.

Everything that we do – we do with them in mind - from implementing quality educational programmes and initiatives, to ensuring a first class teaching and learning environment.

Teachers, you play a critical role in ensuring that our efforts are successful and to that end, I am grateful for the partnership that provides this educational opportunity.

I know that I do not have to tell you that the University of Ontario's Institute of Technology is a premier educational institution with a leading learning environment.

Their Special Education Training course has provided the sound foundation those who teach special education need to support our students with special needs.

Because education the threshold to a better future for all children; every child deserves the best education we can provide.

This means continuous training and development on the part of those who provide that education.

You will be pleased to hear that the Ministry, through the work of our Policy Analyst, Kimberley McKewan, and after some consultation is almost ready to enter into discussions with parents on our suggested Special Needs Policy.

You - as properly trained teachers skilled in this discipline are now prepared to bring out the full potential of our students, no matter their special need.

Tonight I am thrilled to congratulate the 19 successful individuals. Each of you has an important task ahead.

I am confident that you will help to fulfill our mandate of ensuring that students receive the proper support, nurturing and quality education that they all deserve.

Thank You.