



Investing in learning excellence

Governments must ensure that colleges have the resources to support high-quality programs.

Post-secondary education is a necessity in the innovation economy. Throughout all sectors, there is a heightened demand for better-qualified and more highly skilled people.

The Ontario government has acknowledged this reality and is encouraging more students to pursue further education and training. For the most part, students who hadn't traditionally attained a post-secondary education are now enrolling in colleges.

Providing college education that responds to the evolving labour market and reaches a broader range of students has created new demands for supports and resources. In fact, a report by Deloitte found the annual cost for educating at-risk students at colleges is \$100 million greater

than the funding provided by government.

The investments are important. Deloitte's report said the supports and services provided by colleges increased the graduation rate for at-risk students by 35 per cent. Nonetheless, the costs associated with improved access to post-secondary education are significant.

Ontario's colleges have tried to manage increasing cost pressures through collective efficiencies in everything from their centralized application service to collaborative purchasing. But there is little room for further efficiencies.

It is time for government funding decisions to support the goal of reaching a greater range of students. Ontario must treat college education as a greater fiscal priority.

FUNDING MEASURES TO BETTER SUPPORT COLLEGES MUST INCLUDE:

- A commitment to stable and predictable investments in college education that reinforces the colleges' central role in meeting labour-market demands for more highly skilled people.
- New resources to help students achieve success from the point they enter college through to their graduation into the workforce.
- A reaffirmed commitment to increased investments in capital repairs at colleges.

Colleges play an essential role in providing greater access to higher education. The Ontario government must support these efforts by improving the funding for college education.