



Photo by Dan Pearce

Hanna Bunton of the St. Theresa's Titans kisses the COSSA trophy after defeating the Moira Trojans 1-0 in at the Yardmen Arena March 3. She and three of her teammates are among the high school athletes profiled on page 4.

Government cuts school bursaries

Rebate on tuition replaced matching donations in Ontario budget

By Kristen Haveman

Starting March 31, colleges and universities across the province will receive less money for bursaries.

Since 2005, the Ontario government has matched donations one to one towards the establishment of permanent bursaries through the Ontario Trust for Student Support. This program along with two others, the textbook and technology grant and the Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship, were announced to be cut from the budget after it was revealed that a new program would give some students a 30 per cent rebate on tuition.

Joanne Farrell, awards officer at Loyalist College, said the change shouldn't affect the bursaries the college has already established but that it could mean fewer bursaries in the future.

"They maintain themselves, but they will not grow as readily now," said Farrell.

She explained that the loss of the program might mean less money for students as there would not be as much investment income but students would not see a difference right away.

Farrell said that each year the school takes a snapshot of what they have available for bursaries and that is what they give out. She said the initial donations come from various entities such as personal donations and services. Farrell said that cancellation of the program might be more of a downfall for these donors, as they will no longer get the matched donation.

The 30 per cent tuition rebate that replaces the three initiatives came with certain criteria that need to be met for students to benefit.

According to the website for the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, to be eligible for the rebate students must: be a full-time student at a public college or university in Ontario, been less than four years since you left high school, in a program that you can apply to directly from high school and your parents' gross income is \$160,000 or less.

Starting in September, eligible students in a degree program at a college or university will get a \$1,600 rebate a year while certificate and diploma programs will receive a \$730 rebate per year.

According to Statistics Canada, the majority of college and university students are late teens to early twenties but older students also make

up a significant portion of the student population.

"The new program is not necessarily fair because not everyone is eligible, but it is the government's money to allocate how they see," said Farrell.

Sam Andrey, executive director of Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, said while the loss of the Ontario Trust Support was disappointing, a higher percentage of people would benefit from the new program.

Overall, he said the new program was an improvement and that the government would be putting more money towards supporting education. The alliance's website felt targeted grants that reduce upfront costs was a top priority and they were pleased with the tuition rebate program.

"Pure numbers – more people are benefiting but any program that reduces student aid is not ideal," said Andrey.

Jim Robeson, director of advocacy at the College Student Alliance, said that any sort of elimination of financial aid is something they do not like to see.

He said that he realizes the government is in a time of financial restraint but that the College Student Alliance would like a discussion with the government to ensure that financial aid is available to all age groups.

Robeson said that he feels the 30 per cent tuition rebate is a step in the right decision.

"It's a tough subject, there is a significant portion who are under-represented, that might not otherwise go for post secondary education. It is our hope, with the incentive, that these students will take advantage of it."

Robeson said according to the Ontario College Environmental Scan that roughly 50 per cent of enrolled students will be impacted positively by the rebate program. He also said he didn't feel the end of these programs would deter enrolment of older students. He said that for older students there are a number of loans and grants that exist. One example, said Robeson, is the second career program that will fund up to \$28,000, though it is not a guarantee you will get that much.

"Student College Alliance is looking forward to all students having the aid they require and working with the government to see this happens," said Robeson.

A bursary is a non-repayable award that is given based on financial need. Farrell said other criteria might apply depending on the program and sometimes things like location. She said that the college works with donors to set up criteria for a bursary to ensure that the

Students strut their stuff at ballet auditions

Young dancers perform to impress adjudicators with hopes of gaining spot in Quinte Ballet School

By Rachel Psutka

As three nervous dancers step into Studio D, each knows this is the moment to impress the adjudicators and gain that elusive spot into ballet school.

Forty years after its establishment, auditions at the Quinte Ballet School of Canada, one of the top ballet schools in Canada, still seek out some of the best young dancers in the country. Now with the option of auditioning online or on DVD, the program continues to attract students from around the world.

But on this Saturday morning, none of that matters for the two girls and one boy, ages nine through 13, pulling on their ballet slippers and stepping in front of the wall of mirrors, their families, and two adjudicators, both teachers at the school. They are concerned with making it through the next 90 minutes of auditioning with the grace and skills the adjudicators are seeking.

The audition is the first step to gaining acceptance into the professional school, a coveted position. The Quinte school holds auditions throughout Canada and as far away as Vancouver, all in search for young talent.

"They are auditioning for our summer program. Students from the area who take dance probably not as seriously during the year come in for the intensive program we do during the summer," explained instructor Rhea Daniels, a graduate of the school herself.

"So it's their first step of the three-step process to becoming part of our full-time program," said fellow adjudicator Kristina McIntosh, also an instructor and graduate of the school.

The other steps include making it through the intensive summer dance program, followed by the big news itself: whether or not they've been accepted to the full program, commencing in September.

The audition is a chance for the adjudicators to see just what the dancers have to offer the school.

"What we're looking for, first of all, in a dancer is intelligence and enthusiasm," said Daniels. "We look at their body type



Photo by Rachel Psutka

Corbin Davies, 9, of Belleville takes to the air while ballet instructor Kristina McIntosh and fellow hopeful Emilie Anderson, 10, of Cobourg watch during the Quinte Ballet School of Canada's professional school auditions on March 3.

and flexibility."

"And the turnout of their feet," added McIntosh. "Also the potential to strengthen and grow. We usually focus a little bit also on flexibility and different movements and things like that to see how well they move and how flexible they are."

For Alexandria Lyall, 13, the trip from Toronto with her parents and younger sister was worth it to show off her skills. The young dancer has auditioned for the National Ballet School three times, but this was her first trip to Belleville.

"I like it a lot better. It seems like a really nice school," said the aspiring ballerina.

The three hopefuls won't find out if they made it into the summer program for another week or so, but their efforts were noted by the adjudicators, watching every pointed toe and delicately positioned hand.

The ballet school auditions hundreds of dancers each winter in locations across Canada, accepting only the cream of the crop, the number of which varies by the talent seen at each audition.

"Today's crew did very well," said McIntosh. "I think they each in their own way have that ability to go far. There's a place for them to dance if they want it."



To see more of the Quinte Ballet School auditions, visit qnetnews.ca.