

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of the Provincial Schools Branch
Supervisory Officer of Centre Jules-Léger

FROM: Avis E. Glaze
Chief Student Achievement Officer/CEO,
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

George Zegarac
ADM, Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division

Dominic Giroux
ADM, French Language Education and Educational Operations Division

DATE: September 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Provincial Symposium: The Character Development Initiative
October 15th and 16th, 2006

Student success continues to be the fundamental measure of any education system and the ultimate expression of respect for the students in its care. Student success is multi-dimensional. In addition to academic success, Ontarians collectively share a belief in the need to develop character and prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants.

In the 2003 Speech to the Throne, the Ontario government made a commitment to engage school communities in defining and implementing character development initiatives in each local school board to strengthen our students' education experience. Over the past three years, the government has introduced a series of initiatives designed to enhance academic achievement for all students in Ontario's publicly funded elementary and secondary schools.

Through the Character Development Initiative, the government addresses a complementary and equally critical aspect of student success, focused on developing the whole student as a learner, an individual, and an active member of the school and broader community. The concept of character development is rooted in the belief that parents, schools and communities share in the responsibility for, and the benefits of, the development of our young people as caring, empathetic and involved citizens. The Character Development Initiative is grounded in the vision of an education system in which students play a pivotal role, and are actively engaged in their own learning and in the life of the school.

The Character Development Initiative is about sharing and further developing our collective knowledge and experiences in helping all students succeed. We invite you to join us in our efforts to address this important aspect of student success. We recognize the many good practices and initiatives currently in our boards and schools and the need to build upon them. Imagine the potential and possibilities of moving forward with our common goals and values to guide this province to further strengthen our shared vision of public education.

A Provincial Symposium will be held on October 15th and 16th, 2006 to engage system partners from each board in a dialogue on this initiative. The Symposium will highlight research, innovative programs and current practices in Ontario school boards. It will also feature special forums to engage students in the early stages of the development of the initiative. Speakers will include:

- The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario; (to be confirmed)
- The Honourable Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Education;
- Craig Kielburger, Free the Children;
- Justin Trudeau, Education, Environment and Youth Advocate;
- Dr. Philip Fitch Vincent, Character Development Group;
- Dr. Merle Schwartz, Character Education Partnership; and
- Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, Researcher, University of Missouri.

Each School Board is asked to send a team of six people to the Symposium:

- The Board Director
- The Board Chair
- A student, (elementary or secondary)
- A teacher or principal, (elementary or secondary)
- A parent representing School Councils
- The Board Leader who will have responsibility for the implementation of this initiative

One individual from each School Authority and Provincial School is also invited to attend; the person from each who will have the primary responsibility for the implementation of this initiative.

The Symposium will be held at the **Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto.**

The theme for the Symposium is:

Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools (K – 12)


Engaging our students, our schools and our communities

The Symposium's activities will reflect a K-12 perspective. The program will begin at 6 p.m. on October 15th with dinner and a message from the Premier and will conclude at 4:45 p.m. on October 16th. Educators from across the province will be able to view keynote speakers live through streaming webcasts at <http://www.curriculum.org/LNS/character/index.html>. As well, selected sessions will be archived for follow-up viewing across the province through the video-on-demand option. Specific details will be posted on the site as they become available.

Travel and accommodation will be covered according to current Ministry guidelines. Expense Claim Forms with detailed information will be available at the Symposium.

Please complete the following Registration Form and return it to Lorraine Gruzuk, Student Achievement Officer at the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, lorraine.gruzuk@ontario.ca by September 20, 2006.

We look forward to working together to support student achievement and success in all of our schools.


Avis Glaze


George Zegarac


for Dominic Giroux

Cc: EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers
EDU District Office Managers
LNS Student Achievement Officers CODE Executive Director
OPC Executive Director
CPCO Executive Director
ADFO Executive Director
ETFO General Secretaries
OECTA General Secretaries
AEFO General Secretaries