



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

**FROM:** George Zegarac  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary  
Programs Division

**DATE:** April 3, 2008

**SUBJECT:** **Dedicated PA Day**

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We are strongly recommending that in the 2008 – 2009 school year, one of the six professional development days should be related to special education. Consistent with our recent focus on team training, the Ministry would strongly encourage as many appropriate staff to be included as possible. We recognize the considerable work that school boards have undertaken with respect to supporting and advancing the capacity of classroom, school and district leaders to improve the achievement for students with special education needs and teacher professional practice and acknowledge the gains that have been made to close the gap in student achievement for these students. However, further work needs to be undertaken in this area. The Ministry of Education staff will be happy to help design and support a professional development day related to special education and closing the gap strategies as a support for the boards.

The Ministry of Education special education goals within the student achievement agenda continue to be to:

- improve the outcomes for students receiving special education programs and services;
- increase the capacity of schools to effectively meet the needs of a variety of learners in settings ranging from regular to self-contained classrooms;
- ensure that programming in the IEP is linked to the Ontario Curriculum and the Provincial Report Card;
- improve the balance between a focus on teaching and learning, and the need for appropriate process, documentation and accountability; and
- close the gap.

By allocating one of the six professional development days in the 08 – 09 school year to special education, we can target these goals with greater precision.

The Ministry of Education is currently undertaking a number of steps to support the professional development work of school boards in special education. *Education for All, The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* is being expanded to an Education for All, K – 12 resource document.

Education for All, K – 12 is scheduled for release in the Fall of 2008 and will be followed by regional training sessions in early 2009.

We recognize that further work needs to be done to ensure that effective IEPs lead to appropriate instruction and assessment, support learning and higher levels of achievement for students with special education needs. The Ministry of Education is undertaking work to support this goal. Phase II of the Provincial IEP template is scheduled for release in September 2008. Phase II builds on the feedback gathered from the field on Phase I of the Provincial IEP template released in September 2007. The Ministry is also undertaking further work to support both the process of IEP development and the instruction and assessment components associated with the IEP process with a development of a variety of invitational, user friendly and professional development supports (including e-based). These supports are scheduled for release in early 2009 and will be followed by training sessions.

The Ministry of Education is committed to improving the outcomes for students with special education needs and believes that a professional development day related to special education will help to close the gap in achievement for these students. We hope that all directors will support this important area of professional learning for their school boards.



George Zegarac

c.c.: Chair, S.E.A.C.