

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Sous-ministre

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Memorandum To:

Directors of Education
Secretaries and Supervisory Officers of School Authorities
Director, Provincial Schools Branch
Secretary-Treasurer, Ontario Teachers' Federation
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers'
Federation
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers'
Association
Executive Director, Association des enseignantes et des
enseignants franco-ontariens

From:

George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Date:

August 25, 2014

Subject:

Professional Activity Days/Professional Learning – 2014-15
and 2015-16

I am writing to provide you with information about strategic priorities for Professional Activity Days and professional learning during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.

Professional Activity Days

Educators will continue to be supported in pursuing their professional learning goals through Professional Activity (PA) days. As you know, school boards must dedicate two PA days per school year to provincial education priorities and may dedicate up to four additional PA days per school year under Ontario Regulation 304 (School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days). Ontario Regulation 304 can be found on the e-laws website at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 151 provides direction to boards concerning the criteria and topics for the two PA days devoted to provincial education priorities. To provide focus and consistency, there will be no changes to PPM No. 151 for the 2014-15 school year. As such, one PA day continues to be devoted to developing and implementing strategies to improve and/or to close the gaps in student achievement in numeracy. The second mandatory PA day will be devoted to teachers' professional learning, related to topics with a central focus on improving student achievement and student success and/or on closing the gaps in student achievement. Both days align with the professional learning priorities to support Ontario's renewed vision for education outlined in the next section of this memo.

PPM No. 151 is posted on the ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca. During the 2014-15 school year, we will update the PPM to reflect the renewed vision.

We are building on our recent success in education by focusing on a small number of clearly defined goals. While we have traditionally provided direction on an annual basis, for the first time we will be forecasting priorities for professional learning for a two-year term.

Priorities for Professional Learning

The fall regional symposia will provide an opportunity for the ministry and school boards to pursue the goals outlined in *Achieving Excellence* in education by collaborating on our shared priorities.

We are making connections to the renewed vision and strategic priorities for education in Ontario by reinforcing coherence and alignment of professional learning activities for 2014-15 and 2015-16. The ministry has identified the following professional learning priorities:

- engaging staff in planning and implementing school improvement plans, focused on Ontario's four key goals for education: excellence in teaching and learning, equity, well-being and public confidence
- building capacity at all levels of the system (classroom, school and board) for student and staff well-being, health, and safety to support an equitable and inclusive learning environment with attention to students with special education needs and First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- supporting the development of 21st century skills and competencies for all students through professional learning that focuses on how to assess and evaluate these, and how to support this work professionally
- deepening the understanding and application of pedagogical approaches that support high quality play and inquiry-based programs across the early years (FDK, Child Care, Family Support Programs).

Awareness, knowledge and implementation of key ministry resources is essential to meeting these priorities. Examples include, but are not limited to: *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)*; *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)*; the *Early Development Instrument*; *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)*; *The School Effectiveness Framework*; and the *Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007)*.

If you have any questions, please contact your ministry Regional Office. A list of Regional Offices is attached.



George Zegarac

Attachments

- c. Marg Connor (A), Assistant Deputy Minister
Leadership and Learning Environment Division

Kathy Verduyn, Director
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Regional Managers

Ministry of Education Regional Offices

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