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**MEMORANDUM TO:**

Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers and Supervisory Officers of School Authorities  
Executive Directors, Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies

**FROM:**

Philip Steenkamp  
Deputy Minister (A)  
Ministry of Education

Judith Wright  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

**DATE:**

February 6, 2008

**SUBJECT:**

**STUDENT SUPPORT LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE**

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The purpose of this memo is to inform you about the Student Support Leadership initiative developed by the Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services. This initiative supports and is aligned with Ontario's Safe Schools Strategy, recommendations of the Working Table on Special Education and Ontario's policy framework for child and youth mental health.

The Student Support Leadership initiative was developed in response to recent changes to the safe schools provisions of the *Education Act* and related Policy/Program Memoranda<sup>1</sup> that came into effect February 1, 2008. For this initiative, school boards are being encouraged to form partnerships with community agencies<sup>2</sup> to provide non-academic supports that promote positive student behaviour. The Student Support Leadership initiative also aligns with Ontario's first policy framework for child and youth mental health, entitled *A Shared Responsibility: Ontario's Policy Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health* (2006), which promotes enhanced collaboration and coordination across school boards and community agencies to support the healthy development of Ontario's children and youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy and Program Memoranda (PPM): School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension (PPM 141), the PPM on School Board Programs for Expelled Students (PPM 142), the PPM on Bullying Prevention and Intervention (PPM 144), the PPM on Progressive Discipline (PPM 145), and the Code of Conduct (PPM 128).

<sup>2</sup> Community agencies include a range of community services, local organizations and programs.

School boards and community agencies are being asked to work together in order to establish or enhance local partnerships in geographic clusters across the province. This is intended to better meet the needs of students through collaborative planning, coordination and referrals. Our ministries recognize that the needs of communities vary, as do the level of resources and services available. We understand that current partnerships between school boards and community agencies are at different stages of development and the establishment and/or enhancement of partnerships requires leadership and cooperation. Protocols between boards and community agencies should be in place to facilitate referral processes and the provision of services and support for students while respecting collective agreements. Where such protocols already exist, they should be reviewed to reflect the partnership's capacity to respond to the needs of the students. Further details about the Student Support Leadership initiative are outlined in *Appendix A: Student Support Leadership Overview*.

For the purposes of this initiative, the Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services have identified twenty-nine geographic clusters of neighbouring school boards and coordinating community agency/agencies. (*see Appendix B: Cluster Groupings*)

As a part of the government's safe schools strategy, multi-year funding of \$3 million per year for three years beginning in 2007-08 is being provided for the Student Support Leadership initiative. (*see Appendix C: Annual Funding Allocation*) This funding is being provided to build and enhance the leadership necessary to champion this initiative. We encourage you to incorporate community agencies in your respective geographic cluster who you believe would help with this initiative (e.g., mental health agencies, Public Health Units, etc.).

To be eligible for funding, clusters must return the **Letter of Intent** (*Appendix D*), signed by cluster members, to the Ministry of Education by the date identified in Appendix A. We ask that the school board identified by cluster members as the lead school board coordinate the necessary signatures and be responsible for managing the funding.

Should you have any questions regarding the Student Support Leadership initiative please contact Glenn Court, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Education at (416) 325-3489 or [glenn.court@ontario.ca](mailto:glenn.court@ontario.ca) or Esma Trejic, Policy Analyst, Ministry of Children and Youth Services at (416) 314-1889 or [esma.trejic@ontario.ca](mailto:esma.trejic@ontario.ca).

We thank you for your continued support in helping Ontario students reach their full potential at all stages of their development.

Philip Steenkamp

Judith Wright

Attachments