

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Student Achievement Division

Division du rendement des élèves

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Mary Jean Gallagher
Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario
Assistant Deputy Minister

DATE: January 10, 2014

SUBJECT: Student Success School Support Initiative 2014-2015

Dear Colleagues,

In response to requests from a number of senior board leaders, I am pleased to announce that the School Support Initiative (SSI) will be expanding its offering to additional secondary schools in the 2014/15 school year. I invite boards to consider participating in this on-going initiative, which continues to effectively support improved student achievement in applied courses.

Introduced in 2008, SSI is a partnership between the Ministry and selected school boards where pass rates in Grades 9 and 10 applied compulsory courses are below the provincial rate* and where, therefore, students may not be on track to graduate within 4/5 years. The majority of participating schools in SSI have seen consistent improvement in student achievement. It is expected that this type of improvement— both pass rates and levels of achievement – would also occur in schools participating in the 2014/15 expansion.

The 2014/15 expansion can include additional secondary schools where pass rates in applied compulsory courses are below the provincial rate. The additional schools who volunteer to participate in this initiative in 2014/15 will be provided with access to the same professional learning, professional resources, and monitoring tools that are currently available in the School Support Initiative.

If you wish to have schools participate in this initiative, you are asked to identify the schools that meet the eligibility criteria, as well as be willing to take on specific responsibilities (please see details attached below). The Ministry will also be providing an overview of the initiative to Student Success Leaders at the upcoming provincial meeting on January 15, 2014.

Please contact Student Success Director, Rob Andrews or Helen Beck if you have any questions and, if you wish to participate in this initiative, to recommend specific schools in your board that meet the eligibility criteria before January 31, 2014.

Please note that schools currently in SSI will continue to be in the initiative and no further action is required.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean Gallagher

cc: Rob Andrews, Director SSL18SIIS
Sandra Bickford, Director SSL18SPIB
Richard Franz, Director RECBB
Russ Riddell, Director STB
Bruce Shaw, Director L&IB, LNS
Denys Giguère, Director FLEPPB
Kathy Verduyn, Director FSB
Regional Managers, FSB
Student Success Leaders

*The Provincial Rate is the total number of students in the province who passed the course divided by the total number of students in the province still enrolled at the end of the course, expressed as a percentage.

Student Success School Support Initiative 2014-2015

Attachment

To participate in the expanded 2014-15 School Support Initiative, boards have to be able to identify schools that meet the following eligibility criteria, as well as commit to the responsibilities outlined below.

School Eligibility Criteria

- School projected enrolment is over 350 students
- More than 20% of students in Grades 9 and 10 are enrolled in applied courses
- Student achievement in these courses is below the provincial rate*
- Not an alternative or vocational school
- Not currently engaged in SSI (intervention or extended), Leading Student Achievement (LSA), or the Building Innovative Practices Initiative (BIPI)

Board Responsibilities

Participating Boards are being asked to:

- Use funding from their current Student Success allocation and/or other sources of funding to support job-embedded learning for the SSI Professional learning teams
- Support a minimum of 2 secondary schools engaged in this work
- Commit to a strategic and targeted focus on the course(s) that represent the greatest area of need for student improvement (in Grades 9/10 applied compulsory courses)
- Attend professional learning sessions offered and funded by the Ministry to support this work (2 sessions each year)
- Ensure that the work of this initiative is being overseen by one senior system leader, such as a Family of Schools Superintendent, or SSL
- Use the frameworks, support materials and resources of the School Support Initiative to guide their work, including the web-based data collection tool – this is critical to successfully monitor the impact of the initiative

The commitment requested flows from the key elements that have proven to be integral to the success of School Support Initiative. Those key elements are:

- Leadership is provided by a senior staff member (usually a superintendent) within the board who ensures that the goals of the School Support Initiative are known, understood and shared by the schools participating in the initiative. This person also ensures that the work of SSI is coherent and aligned with the system directions as outlined in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement
- The instructional leadership of the principal, actively engaged in the work of the Professional Learning Team;
- On-going monitoring of Student Success indicator data - both pass rates and achievement levels
- A focus on teaching and learning in the context of the secondary school
- A focus on student intellectual engagement through the strategic selection and effective implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies and the creation of conditions supportive to student learning
- Strategic, targeted and differentiated professional learning sessions for principals with their professional learning teams
- Support documents and structures provided through Professional Learning sessions and through an E-Community

*The Provincial Rate is the total number of students in the province who passed the course divided by the total number of students in the province still enrolled at the end of the course, expressed as a percentage