

Ministry of Education

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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: Steve Marshall
Deputy Minister

DATE: June 27, 2008

SUBJECT: *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in
Ontario Schools, K-12*

I am pleased to provide you with the revised framework document *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12*. This document supports the implementation of character development, a key priority of the Ontario government. All Ontario school boards were expected to begin to implement a character development program in the 2007-08 school year.

Over the past few years, the Ministry of Education has re-emphasized its focus on enhancing academic achievement for Ontario students. Through character development, schools are able to address an important aspect of education – one that contributes to positive school cultures and student success. We believe that a quality education is holistic in nature. Our approach combines a strong academic program with a focus on character, respect for diversity, citizenship development, and parent and community partnerships – an approach that is already happening in many Ontario schools.

Character development is not a new curriculum. Teachers have always placed a high value on character development. The expectations of the Character Development Initiative provide the opportunity for schools to engage students, parents, all education workers and the community in shaping the culture of their schools.

This document replaces the discussion paper with the same title that was released at the October 2006 initiative launch. Consultations were held across the province between February and June of 2007 to share information, develop common understandings and gather input on the discussion paper. Parents, students, community members, and school and board staff attended these consultations. Additional input from a variety of

stakeholders was received during the 2007-08 school year. The feedback gathered contributed significantly to the revisions of this document.

The Character Development Initiative recognizes that learning, academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development, and parent and community partnerships are inextricably linked and must be interwoven into students' educational experiences. It provides students with tools for increasing academic achievement, building a solid foundation for thoughtful decision-making and creating more opportunities to use their skills to influence positive outcomes. Ultimately, we want our students to think critically, feel deeply and act wisely.

By June 30, 2008, boards are asked to submit a single page feedback form reporting on the actions that they have taken to support their 2007-08 character development initiatives. Further information about this report can be found in the April 11, 2008 Memorandum entitled *Update: The Character Development Initiative, K-12* from Avis Glaze.

Thank you for ensuring that character development becomes an integral part of Ontario education.

If you have any questions about this initiative please contact Lorraine Gruzuk at lorraine.gruzuk@ontario.ca or Jan Kielven at jan.kielven@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Steve Marshall
Deputy Minister

CC EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers
Regional Managers
Frank Kelly, CODE
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OTF Secretary General
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OECTA General Secretary
OSSTF General Secretary
ADFO Director General
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