

Ministry of Education

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers and Supervisory Officers of School
Authorities
Superintendents of Special Education

FROM: Barry Pervin, ADM (A)
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

DATE: June 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Student Mental Health

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) has partnered with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) to map the current service provision for child and youth mental health at both the community and provincial level.

Understanding the present service provision will support the identification of needs, gaps and opportunities for realizing change within the child and youth mental health system. Although child and youth mental health is not our primary mandate in education, the Ministry of Education is very aware of the impacts upon learning for students who are experiencing mental health issues.

The Ministry is also aware of the many non-education programs and supports provided by boards in an attempt to mitigate the impacts on learning for students with mental health issues. The combination and alignment of initiatives through Student Success/Learning to18, Student Support Leadership, Safe Schools and Special Education begin to address student needs in this area.

In 2006 the Government released Ontario's first Policy Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health. A central tenet of this framework is A Shared Responsibility among all child and youth-serving sectors for the mental health of our children. It is within this context, as a first phase, that we ask for your support in the identification of programs and services that you provide to students with mental health issues within your board.

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Timing of this initiative is critical as we look at how to better support our students. We appreciate the challenges that you face at this time as you end one school year and prepare for another school year. We also are aware that depending upon the size of your board and the availability of community services for students with mental health needs, the number of programs and services may vary from school to school. Therefore, in this first phase of information collection, we are requesting student-mental health programs and services that can be identified at the Board level. Together with the data collected by MCYS and MOHLTC, we will have a better picture of programs and services for children in the province.

The attached collection process has been designed for ease of completion by an individual responsible for programs and services in your board that in whole or in part address student mental health needs. We hope that the approximate 6-week time frame for the gathering of this information, with the attached mapping tool returned by July 18, 2008 is not too burdensome.

Thank you in anticipation of your positive response to this request but more importantly, for your continued support of students with mental health needs. In September we will again contact you regarding Phase 2 of this project with a more detailed data collection for the staff working in the school system with students with mental health needs.

Please complete the Mapping Tool and return it by July 18, 2008 by e-mail to: Mel Solman. His e-mail address is: mel.a.solman@ontario.ca and his phone number is: 416-325-4286. Please contact him or Dan Shultz at dan.shultz@ontario.ca or 416-325-2677 for any additional questions.

Barry Pervin, ADM (A)

- c. Aryeh Gitterman, Assistant Deputy Minister, MCYS
- Alexander Bezzina, Assistant Deputy Minister, MCYS
- Gilbert Tayles, Assistant Deputy Minister, MCYS
- George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister, EDU
- Kit Rankin, (A) Assistant Deputy Minister, EDU

Enclosure