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**MEMORANDUM TO:**

Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Executive Directors, Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies
Student Support Leadership Cluster Leads

FROM:

Ben Levin
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education

Judith Wright
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

DATE:

June 29, 2009

SUBJECT:

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

The purpose of this memo is to share with you our joint interest in and support for the many innovative activities that are being undertaken in support of child and youth mental health services in Ontario schools. A solid foundation of collaborative relationships between local school boards and community agencies has set the framework for strengthening how we address and meet the mental health service needs of students.

The Student Support Leadership initiative has built on partnerships to collaborate on some key areas related to mental health services for students such as the mapping of provincially-funded child and youth mental health programs and services and research to develop a framework for collaborative mental health services.

The Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services provided \$3 million per year for three years beginning in 2007/08 for the Student Support Leadership initiative to support enhanced partnerships, leadership and collaboration between school boards and local community agencies in meeting the mental health needs of children and youth.

These Student Support Leadership partnerships are enabling school boards/authorities and community agencies to:

- Share expertise;
- Improve decision-making through collaborative planning mechanisms;
- Establish and/or enhance referral mechanisms;
- Increase access to services and supports for students and families;
- Improve a student's and family's ability to understand, navigate and use the services and supports available to them; and
- Maximize local resources.

As the Student Support Leadership initiative enters its third and final year of funding our ministries are interested in hearing your ideas on ways to build upon the leadership, established through this initiative, to drive improvements in child and youth mental health delivery to schools and agencies. We are interested in any ideas you may have which maximize outcomes for children and youth through collaboration among the professionals in schools and mental health agencies. Our ministries believe that improving mental health service delivery for students, with your help, will result in better outcomes for students at school. For example: a student support team in schools involving child and youth mental health agencies, social services and the health sector to help children and youth with mental health issues in schools get services from the right people sooner.

Attached you will find the planning template for Year 3 which, in addition to outlining your planned cluster's activities, outcomes and budget for the coming year, requests any new ideas you may have on ways to build on your accomplishments and drive service level improvements in your schools and agencies beyond August, 2010.

Should you have any questions regarding the Student Support Leadership initiative, please contact Dan Shultz, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Education at (416) 325-2677 or dan.shultz@ontario.ca or Jessica Walters, Policy Analyst, Ministry of Children and Youth Services at (416) 325-8344 or jessica.walters@ontario.ca.

We thank you for your continued support in helping Ontario students reach their full potential at all stages of their development and look forward to hearing your ideas on how we can continue the momentum we have been building through these partnerships.

Original signed by

Ben Levin

Original signed by

Judith Wright

c: Cluster Leaders
Ministry of Education Regional Offices
Ministry of Children and Youth Services Regional Office

Attachment