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

Student Support Leadership Cluster Leaders

FROM: Aryeh Gitterman
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DATE: March 11, 2009

SUBJECT: Update on the Student Support Leadership Initiative

The purpose of this package is to provide you with an update on the Student Support Leadership (SSL) initiative and introduce to you the role of SSL Cluster Consultants that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and the Ministry of Education (EDU) are implementing to further support the work of your Clusters.

As you know, EDU and MCYS identified twenty-nine geographic clusters of neighbouring school boards/authorities and community agency/agencies based on their alignment with each other and/or their existing working relationships to participate in the implementation of this initiative.

We commend the dedication and commitment of the school communities and service providers within education and mental health, and the broader child and youth serving sectors in not only implementing this initiative, but also taking a lead in promoting and prioritizing partnership and collaborative service delivery as vehicles to better meet the needs of Ontario's children and youth. Attached see Appendix A: Status Update for some highlights of the implementation of the SSL initiative to date.

Student Support Leadership Cluster Consultants

MCYS and EDU are introducing a team of Cluster Consultants to support Clusters in their continued implementation of the SSL initiative. These Cluster Consultants have been retained through the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (Centre of Excellence). From February 2009 to March 2010, the Cluster Consultants will work directly with a *sample* of Clusters from across the Partnership Continuum. Cluster Consultants will also interact regularly with clusters outside of their immediate sampling to investigate best practices, enhance effective and sustainable leadership practices and partnerships within and across sectors, and to support enhanced communications across sectors.

Role of the Student Support Leadership Cluster Consultants

With your support, the Cluster Consultants will work to build sector/service knowledge of Cluster members by sharing relevant resources and evidence-based practices between clusters. The Cluster Consultants will help build capacity within Clusters, provide a mechanism for reflection on issues raised by you, and engage and connect with Clusters not immediately connected with a Consultant to promote knowledge transfer and learning.

To support Clusters in achieving their goals, the Cluster Consultants will: provide Clusters with strategic advice on implementation issues and next steps; develop and share compendiums of effective Cluster practices in partnership building and collaborative cross sector service planning, including supporting tools, protocols and mechanisms; recommend processes for monitoring achievements; and develop recommendations and highlight effective practices for sustaining cross sector partnerships and collaborative service planning/provision.

The Cluster Consultants will report directly to the Centre of Excellence and will provide reports on an ongoing basis to MCYS and EDU. They will collaborate with Regional Directors in ministries and the work of the Clusters in ways that enhance provincial understanding and knowledge of system needs and opportunities for improvement in leadership and partnership development across sectors.

We are pleased to introduce our Cluster Consultants and where they will be working:

1. Dr. Mona Kornberg has over twenty-five years experience working with diverse communities, in different cultures, to plan and implement effective service delivery. She brings to this project a range of relevant knowledge and skills including expertise in project management, planning and organizational change, and promoting teamwork and partnerships. Mona has a background in clinical psychology and education and has worked extensively with children, youth and their families. Mona will work directly with the following Clusters:

Southwestern

- 6 — Windsor-Essex/Huron
- 7 — London

Central

- 2 — Durham Region
- 3 — York Region
- 10 — Hamilton
- 24 — Toronto
- 26 — Dufferin-Peel

2. Keith McPhee has extensive experience in the education, community and child welfare sectors. Following his retirement from a career with Peel County and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Keith was an educational consultant for Family and Children Services of Leeds and Grenville, working to improve academic outcomes for students supported by the Children's Aid Society. He is co-Chair and founding member of *Every Kid in*

Our Communities of Leeds and Grenville, recently served as Chair of *Best Start*, and is actively involved in the work of *Triple P* – a population health approach to supporting parents. Keith brings to his role a wealth of understanding of the issues facing communities collaborating to improve outcomes for children, youth and their families. Keith will work directly with the following Clusters:

Northern (remote/rural)

- 14 — North Eastern Ontario
- 21 — Superior/Greenstone
- 22 — Keewatin Patricia/Rainy River

Northern (urban)

- 16 — Sudbury
- 23 — Lakehead/Thunder Bay

Eastern

- 20 — Limestone/Hastings/Prince Edward

3. Rollande Lavictoire will work directly with the Francophone Clusters. Rollande comes to us with 40 years experience as a teacher, a consultant and a principal in both elementary and secondary panels and an Education Officer for the Ministry of Education. For several years she helped schools across the province improve the effectiveness of their early reading programs. She has also worked with the Ministry's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat as a Student Achievement Officer for the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership. Rollande holds a Master's degree from University of Ottawa, is fluently bilingual, and will work directly with the following Clusters:

Northern (remote/rural and urban)

- 27 — Northern Ontario
- 28 — Southwestern Ontario
- 29 — Eastern Ontario

The above Clusters were chosen based on geographical and linguistic considerations, and to ensure a cross section of Clusters from across the Continuum. It is our intention that all Clusters in the initiative will be in communication with Cluster Consultants (and/or neighbouring Clusters) to also promote knowledge dissemination, transfer and translation of effective practices.

Success of this initiative, and sustainability of the goals achieved will continue to depend on multi-level collaboration and leadership across communities, sectors and ministries. We will look forward to your continued engagement and support of such an important and innovative initiative.

Aryeh Gitterman

Barry Pervin

Attachment

- c. Patrick Mitchell, Executive Assistant, Deputy Minister's Office, MCYS
Denys Giguère, Executive Assistant, Deputy Minister's Office, EDU
Gilbert Tayles, Assistant Deputy Minister, Youth Justice Services Division, MCYS
Grant Clarke, Assistant Deputy Minister/A, Strategic Planning and Elementary/ Secondary Programs Division, EDU
Trish Moloughney, Director, Community Development and Partnerships Branch, MCYS
Marian Mlakar, Director, Children and Youth at Risk Branch, MCYS
Liz Harding, Director, Policy and Program Branch, EDU
Barry Finlay, Director, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, EDU
Program Management Division Regional Offices, MCYS
Youth Justice Services Division Regional Offices, MCYS
Ministry of Education Regional Offices, EDU
Ian Manion, Executive Director, the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)
Colleen Hannewyk, Acting Director, Strategic Planning and Operations, the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO

Appendix A: Status Update

Highlights

Outlined below are some highlights of SSL implementation activities across the province to date:

- Since the spring 2008, school boards and community agencies have been working together to establish or enhance local partnerships within Clusters across the province. MCYS and EDU regional offices have been working collaboratively to support the development of plans, building partnerships and leadership models between the ministries' office representatives as well;
- Clusters have submitted a three-year cluster plan to address how they will build or enhance leadership and partnerships to improve child and youth access to appropriate services;
- Of the 29 plans, 10 plans have identified agencies leading their Cluster and 19 Clusters are school board led;
- Many boards and agencies across the province have mechanisms in place for sharing and communicating information about their relevant programs and use this knowledge by implementing various mechanisms/tools to some degree to support students and families in accessing the most appropriate service.

Overview of Mechanisms to Build Leadership/Partnerships and Improve Access to Services

Clusters have outlined their strategies for building/enhancing leadership and partnership to support the development/implementation of mechanisms to improve child and youth access to appropriate services. The strategies correspond with the provincial goals of the initiative as follows and include activities such as:

- Expand/formalizing partnerships across sectors through: *project charters/terms of references; case conferencing protocols;*
- Increase awareness through development of: *service inventories; resource guides; best practices compendiums (e.g., including web-based data systems); e-forums; cross-cluster outreach;* and
- Improved access to existing services through development of: *case coordinating, joint referral protocols; common intake tools (e.g., single point of access).*

Based on a review of the plans it is evident that support to school boards and agencies on a provincial level, through the implementation of SSL, is a critical factor and will be a key driver in further building/enhancing cross-sector collaborative partnerships and in implementing innovative strategies that will have meaningful impact on children and youth.