

**Ministry of Education
Learning Environment Branch**
15th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 325-7645
Facsimile (416) 325-2664

**Ministère de l'Éducation
Direction du milieu d'apprentissage**
15^e étage, édifice Mowat
900, rue Bay
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone 416 325-7645
Télécopieur 416 325-2664



MEMORANDUM TO : Directors of Education
Secretary Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM : Elizabeth Harding
Director, Learning Environment Branch
Instruction and Leadership Development Branch

DATE : May 26, 2010

SUBJECT : School Climate Funding and New Resource

In the March 26, 2010 memo to Directors of Education regarding EPO funding, the Ministry announced that school boards will receive a one-time allocation of \$2.5M in 2010-11 to undertake activities at the school level that will improve and promote a positive school climate. School boards were also provided with their total allocation. I am pleased to provide you with details on this funding and information about a new resource being developed for Safe Schools Teams.

In order to receive funding, participating schools must complete a student school climate survey. This will allow schools to assess perceptions of safety and to inform prevention and intervention planning. Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, *Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*, requires schools to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of their students every two years and to share the results with their safe schools teams. Schools that have conducted these surveys in the last two years are eligible and do not need to redo them. The Ministry has made sample surveys available on its website and they can either be completed online or downloaded at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/climate.html> . The results of the student school climate surveys will allow schools to focus their efforts on the identified needs.

Schools must also involve their safe schools teams in determining how the needs identified in the surveys will be addressed through this funding.

This funding is to be used at the school level to directly benefit students. To provide school boards with flexibility, activities can involve a select group of schools, a family of schools or individual schools. Boards are also encouraged to work with co-terminus boards, as appropriate.

The funding may be used for any of the following:

- training of staff or community members, or the development or purchase of training materials, for example training teachers on classroom organization strategies that reflect principles of inclusion and engagement;
- the purchase of resources (including software, books, manuals) that focus on improving school climate;
- programming, for example peer tutoring, mentoring programs, peer mediation, restorative practices;
- planning/coordinating activities (school level or family of schools) in support of initiatives that promote a positive school climate, for example, self-esteem workshops, drama presentations to promote inclusiveness;
- to promote student voice, for example supporting a variety of student-led clubs, or providing leadership training opportunities to students;
- parent engagement activities, for example, a parent night to review the Code of Conduct; and,
- community partnerships, for example working with mental health providers to address students' mental health needs.

Funding will be provided to school boards at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year through transfer payment agreements.

I am also pleased to inform you that the Ministry is currently developing a resource that will provide Safe Schools Teams with practical evidence-based activities schools can consider using to help promote a positive school climate. Many of these suggestions may be familiar and already happening in many of your schools. The intent of this resource is for schools to identify practices that could work in their schools. The framework will be made available to schools early in the 2010-11 school year.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing efforts to provide a safe environment in which students can learn, grow and succeed. If you have any questions, please contact your Ministry Regional Office or Gianoula Korinis at Gianoula.Korinis@ontario.ca.

Elizabeth Harding

c. Ministry of Education Regional Office Managers