

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 325-2600
Facsimile (416) 327-9063

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 325-2600
Télécopieur (416) 327-9063



MEMORANDUM TO:

Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of the Provincial Schools Branch

FROM:

Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister

DATE:

November 27, 2009

SUBJECT:

**Principal Congress 2010 – Request for Participant Nominations
and Report from Principal Congress 2009**

It is my pleasure to invite you to nominate practicing principals from your board to participate in the second Principal Congress to be held on February 10, 2010 at the Fairmont Royal York hotel in Toronto. Information, including the 2010 nomination process and travel and accommodation guidelines, is attached in the *Instructions to Boards* document. A number of superintendents and directors of education will also be invited through their professional associations.

This is a follow-up to the Principal Congress 2009, and participant evaluations for that event overwhelmingly told us that they benefited from the leadership-focused content, the engagement with tri-level partners, the affirmation of their own successful leadership practices, and the new insights about leadership needed to close gaps in student achievement.

The Principal Congress is an Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) commitment to strengthen the ministry's relationship with school and system leaders and to advance the cause of sustaining school improvement, enhancing student learning, and moving the system to new heights of success.

Principal Congress 2009

The first Principal Congress was held in February 2009 and established a province-wide forum for school and system leaders to share practical and effective strategies to improve schools and enhance student learning. The keynote speaker was Roger Martin, Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, who presented findings from his research on the thinking patterns of successful leaders and how this approach helps them produce creative resolutions to what appear to be unpleasant tradeoffs.

Participants told us that they wanted a way of staying connected with each other so that they could continue to learn from the knowledge and experiences of other leaders from across the province. In response, the ministry has developed a professional networking site for Principal Congress 2009 participants to network and dialogue. We will also be inviting participants of Principal Congress 2010 to join the professional networking site to connect with other participants in advance of the Congress.

The detailed self-reports and precise advice provided by participants at the Congress is the basis of a report by Dr. Ken Leithwood, advisor to the OLS. His report, *What Successful Principals Know and Do About Closing Achievement Gaps* identifies ten important findings that the ministry will be following up. I am pleased to share an executive summary of the report with you and encourage you to share it with your staff to spark conversations about leadership practices and to mobilize the knowledge demonstrated by last year's participants.

In addition, Leithwood found that the collective leadership practices identified by Congress participants match closely with results of current research on closing achievement gaps. We will be posting the full report on the professional networking site for debate and comment and will be addressing findings as part of Congress 2010.

You can learn more about Principal Congress 2009, and view video clips from the Congress at: www.ontario.ca/eduleadership

Principal Congress 2010

Principal Congress 2010 will go even further and build deeper connections with school and system leaders in order to document and share instructional leadership practices that close gaps in student achievement. I am pleased to inform you that Dr. Richard Elmore of Harvard University will be the keynote speaker. As many of you will know, Dr. Elmore's research focuses on the effects of education policy on schools and classrooms. His recent co-authored book, *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*, provides specific strategies for how school and system leaders engage with teachers, students and the curriculum in order to improve student learning. I am convinced that having Dr. Elmore at the Congress will set a positive tone for the day and inspire creative and deep thinking.

Professor Ken Leithwood of OISE/UT and the advisor on the Ontario Leadership Strategy will be guiding the discussions during the day.

If you have any questions, please contact Laurie Pedwell, Leadership Development Branch, at 416-325-7692 or Laurie.Pedwell@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your continued support of this important leadership initiative. I am looking forward to engaging school and system leaders in dialogue as we continue to help Ontario's two million students reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Kevin Costante

Attachments

C:

Ken Thurston, Minister's Office

Kathie Mitchell, Minister's Office

Denys Giguère, Executive Assistant, Deputy Minister's Office

Marla Hume, Policy and Briefings Co-coordinator, Deputy Minister's Office

Assistant Deputy Ministers, Ministry of Education

Executive Assistants to Assistant Deputy Ministers

Kit Rankin, Director, Field Services Branch

Regional Managers, Field Services Branch

Ginette Plourde, Director, French-language Education Policy and Programs Branch

Eleanor Newman, Senior Executive Officer, Literacy Numeracy Secretariat

David Euale, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18, Implementation, Training & Evaluation Branch

Carol Campbell, Director, Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch

Barry Finlay, Director, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

Council of Ontario Directors of Education

Conseil ontarien des directrices et directeurs de l'éducation de langue française

English Catholic Council of Directors of Education

Association des gestionnaires de l'éducation franco-ontarienne

Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association

Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association

Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes

Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario

Ontario Principals' Council

Institute for Education Leadership