

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Memorandum To: Directors of Education

From: George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Date: October 9, 2015

Subject: Supporting Our Partners: A Message from Deputy
Minister George Zegarac

I am writing in response to concerns that you have raised regarding the demands on you and your board staff, given the current labour climate and the range of pressures it is exerting on you.

Certainly, I appreciate that this is a difficult time for all of you, and that you have a number of additional responsibilities to manage over and above all of the great work you already do every day. In the midst of challenging circumstances, I know that our priorities remain student achievement and safety.

As a result, I have consulted with senior staff in the ministry, and we have agreed to put in place a *pause period for normal ministry business* to help minimize the demands being placed on you and your staff. During this pause period, all non-urgent ministry-directed initiatives, events and memos to school boards will be postponed.

This pause includes — but is not limited to — professional learning, consultations, memos and other directives, as well as any and all in-person interactions with school board staff, unless requested by the board. The only exceptions will be events or communications related to safety, legislative compliance, and other urgent matters, such as labour. These would proceed only after I have consulted with Minister Sandals, and then given my personal approval to go forward.

Despite this pause period, our CODE executive meeting is still on for Tuesday, October 13. This pause does not include our upcoming 2016-17 Education Funding consultations (also known as the GSN consultations), which will proceed in late October and November. We are, however, endeavouring to make these consultations as convenient as possible (i.e., teleconference options) given the circumstances.

The pause period will begin today, October 9, at 5 p.m. and continue until further notice. A process is already underway within the ministry to plan for a viable rescheduling of events and resumption of communications once the pause has been lifted.

I greatly value your frank input, and that provided by CODE. Ministry staff and I are always happy to provide support to you and your staff, especially in challenging times such as these.

Thank you again for your tremendous efforts and leadership during this difficult time. I look forward to returning to business-as-usual in the near future and continuing our joint efforts towards implementing the goals of *Achieving Excellence*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Zegarac". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Zegarac

c. Council of Ontario Directors of Education