

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

**FROM:** Grant Clarke  
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)  
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Assistant Deputy Minister  
French Language, Aboriginal Learning and Research Division

**DATE:** October 9, 2009

**SUBJECT:** **Ontario Leadership Strategy Fall Update**

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In response to your recommendations about improving the alignment of ministry initiatives, we are writing to provide an update on some commitments we have made at the ministry. Our intent is to ensure that leadership development supports provided across the ministry are cohesive and effective in making a difference for student achievement and well-being.

As you know *Energizing Ontario Education* reconfirmed our collective commitment to improving student achievement and well-being, closing the achievement gaps, and building public confidence in our publicly funded education system. Leadership development was identified as a supporting condition needed to meet these core priorities.

The Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) is a comprehensive plan of action that was launched by the Premier and Minister of Education in 2008 and is being phased in over the next few years.

The vision of the Strategy is to support student achievement and well-being by attracting and developing passionate and skilled leaders in our schools and boards with the goals of attracting the right people to the principalship and helping principals and vice-principals develop into the best possible instructional leaders.

We are pleased that school boards across the province have been actively engaged in the implementation of the Strategy, recognizing the important role that school and system leaders have in meeting our three core priorities.

As we move forward, we continue to refine and strengthen the OLS while engaging with you to deepen implementation. To this end, the following are two new developments related to implementation of the OLS for this school year.

### **1. Ongoing Commitment to the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) and the Five Core Leadership Capacities (CLCs)**

The OLF includes a leadership framework of practices and competencies for individuals (supervisory officers, principals and vice-principals) and system practices and procedures for districts. Drawing on what we have learned about leadership development based on research, evaluation findings of key ministry initiatives, and recommendations from practicing leaders across the province, the Ministry of Education has adopted the following five Core Leadership Capacities (CLCs) derived from the framework:

1. Setting Goals
2. Aligning Resources with Priorities
3. Promoting Collaborative Learning Cultures
4. Using Data, and
5. Engaging in Courageous Conversations.

Beginning in 2009/10 we will embed these five CLCs as appropriate in provincially-sponsored professional learning and resources for school and system leaders. We believe this important new direction will help ensure that capacity building activities associated with ministry initiatives address these five CLCs in a consistent and cohesive way.

To support system-wide understanding of the five CLCs, the ministry has launched *Ideas into Action for School and System Leaders*, a series of bulletins designed to highlight the key leadership capacities and provide evidence-based approaches for further strengthening and integrating these capacities into daily leadership practice. These bulletins are intended to provide research insights and practical strategies for school and system leadership that are aligned with both the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) and the broader Ontario Leadership Strategy.

This first bulletin, attached for your reference, is scheduled for electronic distribution to all school and system leaders later in October. It provides short descriptions of the CLCs that establish their evidence base and make linkages to the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Future issues of *Ideas into Action* will provide you with more in-depth knowledge specific to each of our initiatives to support the integration of the CLCs into the 'day-to-day' business of the ministry, boards and schools. The work related to these capacities will strengthen and further align initiatives that are already underway in the ministry, school boards and schools to build leadership competencies and practices.

*Ideas into Action* will be distributed on an occasional basis and will offer ideas and strategies drawn from current, credible research.

We encourage boards to consider approaches to embedding the CLCs into professional learning and resources being provided to staff. We hope this bulletin enriches your professional learning experience and provides a powerful springboard for putting ideas into action. This includes providing opportunities for staff to read and discuss these bulletins and also to share any comments and insights with us by emailing: [ldb-ddl@ontario.ca](mailto:ldb-ddl@ontario.ca).

## **2. Ontario Leadership Strategy: Next Steps in Research-Based Design and Implementation**

We are also pleased to inform you that Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) has taken on the role of Advisor to the Ontario Leadership Strategy. The attached announcement highlights Dr. Leithwood's professional accomplishments in the field of educational leadership and the focus of his work on the OLS for the coming year.

The OLS will continue to be strengthened through consultations with key partners, and refined through ongoing research, and the input of our OLS Advisor.

We will keep you informed of additional developments related to our efforts as a ministry to strengthen and support effective leadership practice and invite you to provide us with your insights and suggested approaches to embedding the five CLCs.

Thank you for your continued collaboration in fostering leadership of the highest possible quality in schools and boards across the province. We look forward to continuing this important conversation with you throughout the year.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Marg Connor, Director, Leadership Development Branch at [marg.connor@ontario.ca](mailto:marg.connor@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

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Attachments

c.c.

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Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques  
Conseil ontarien des directions de l'éducation de langue française  
Council of Ontario Directors of Education  
Council of Supervisory Business Officials of Ontario  
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English Catholic Council of Ontario Directors of Education  
Formation personnel cadre  
Ontario's Institute for Education Leadership  
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association  
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Ontario Catholic Trustees' Association  
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Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association  
Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario  
Ontario Principals' Council  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation  
Ontario Teachers' Federation  
The Learning Partnership