

Ministry of Education

The Literacy and Numeracy  
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Ministère de l'Éducation

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

**FROM:** Mary Jean Gallagher  
Chief Executive Officer &  
Chief Student Achievement Officer  
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

**DATE:** October 9, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Delivering The Promise

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We know that the transition to autumn is a promise for the future. There is a sense of urgency to the season, for only when nature prepares can we experience the magnificence of new growth.

Our promise for education must be no different. It is a collective quest for we must prepare our students for a learning world. It is a journey we must take together to equip them for future challenges. And we must do this with precision and urgency; every child deserves our best effort to help them succeed.

As I begin my own transition as CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, I am grateful for the work that has come before me. Thanks to your work, the extraordinary leadership of Avis Glaze and the steady course maintained by Ann Perron, we have accomplished a great deal together.

For instance, after three years of continuous year-on-year improvement, the 2007-08 results sustained previous improvements with a two percentage point increase in the overall combined calculation. Junior Level results show the most improvement and the greatest subject improvements are in writing and reading in French. We also see some positive change in the gender gap, ELL improvements in all areas and some modest gains for students with special needs, among other developments.

It is clear that existing policies and intervention strategies are working. Ontario is making progress in both raising student achievement and reducing gaps in student achievement. We should take pride in this but only with the knowledge that we must make even greater gains in the months ahead. Our progress tells us that we know how to improve what happens in our classrooms so that more students can realize their best possible future. Each of us then has the responsibility to ensure these best practices are part of every classroom.

Our next steps must serve to consolidate our gains and deepen the effectiveness of LNS strategies. We must:

- articulate high expectations for all students in all schools
- increase emphasis on numeracy and building capacity in the field
- ensure we have uninterrupted blocks of time for literacy and numeracy
- continue deeper implementation of closing the gap strategies in order to achieve equity of outcomes
- have a process to regularly monitor the growth and progress of specific students to ensure equity of outcome
- integrate technology into instructional practice to reflect the world in which our students live
- focus on precision in planning including interventions for primary students
- have a common assessment tool for primary and junior divisions
- support schools in the analysis of student achievement results including EQAO assessments and other relevant data
- create a school improvement team that uses the School Effectiveness Framework as a guide to examine data, identify instructional interventions and to plan for next steps in meeting ambitious targets for student learning
- develop, implement and monitor a school improvement plan based on the school's self-assessment and linked to the board's improvement plan
- meet with principals to review school achievement data and determine the level of implementation of evidence-based strategies
- ensure that targeted interventions for low-achieving and 'static' schools are implemented
- develop processes for sharing successful practices in schools achieving continuous improvement within and across boards

There is much to do, but I believe we are positioned for success.

One of the most effective strategies is the widespread implementation of teaching-learning networks. Forming communities of practice within our schools and districts has proven to be an effective means of sharing successful strategies. And, to move our entire province toward greater achievement we simply must find ways to leverage OFIP strategies for all schools. This is information and expertise not to be hoarded but to be shared widely.

Other strategies include the use of our communication tools. For instance, we will continue to develop informative multi-media resources including short video segments using formats such as pod casts and/or DVD to support literacy and numeracy initiatives. We will initiate new research and communicate highly effective strategies specifically designed to support higher levels of student achievement for groups who consistently under perform.

As research and case studies emerge, we will share success stories in a variety of media formats provincially, as well as with faculties of education and other stakeholders including the general public.

As we work together this fall and beyond in a spirit of optimism and confidence, we know that in every student there is a seed of promise, waiting to be fulfilled. I ask each of you to accept this as a personal challenge, and I invite you to work together to help all children achieve their full potential.

I look forward to meeting all of you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jean Gallagher".

Mary Jean Gallagher

Cc: EDU Deputy Minister  
EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers  
Regional Managers  
Frank Kelly, CODE  
OPC Executive Director  
CPCO Executive Director  
OTF Secretary General  
ETFO General Secretary  
OECTA General Secretary  
OSSTF General Secretary  
ADFO Director General  
AEFO Director General  
OCSOA, Executive Director  
OPSOA, Executive Director  
AGÉFO, President