

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

The Literacy and Numeracy  
Secretariat

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Eleanor Newman  
Senior Executive Officer,  
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

DATE: September 30, 2010

SUBJECT: **Schools in the Middle: Effective Leadership, Effective Schools**

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The SIM *Effective Leadership, Effective Schools* strategy is designed to support the work of school improvement teams in elementary schools where 50% to 74% of the students achieved the Provincial Standard on a minimum of four of six (or two of three) 2010 EQAO assessments.

School Districts will identify a system improvement team to support the work of SIM school improvement teams as they work within networks of schools in order to improve instructional effectiveness and pedagogy within and across schools and to further develop instructional leadership.

Through professional dialogue and study, system and school improvement teams will further develop their capacity to:

- observe, describe, and analyze student work
- set specific goals and targets for student learning
- plan and implement specific teaching and learning strategies
- monitor student achievement results and adjust strategies as needed
- support the professional learning required to raise achievement
- align resources to meet achievement goals

The School Effectiveness Framework provides a focus for the work of the system and school leadership groups as we share and develop processes for collaborative goal setting, distributed leadership and shared accountability within school improvement teams.

For the purposes of evaluating this strategy, school districts will be asked to provide evidence of the impact of this work on system improvement and school improvement efforts.

## **Funding**

Attached is the total SIM funding allocated to your DSB; the total includes \$25,000 that was previously allocated to each board, and an additional amount that is based on the number of SIM schools in your district. This year, the funding allocation includes SIM schools where EQAO data was suppressed.

Funds allocated for the SIM initiative are to be used for:

- release time for capacity building of groups of teachers who work in the identified "schools in the middle" including release time for networking with colleagues across networks of schools
- purchase of LNS recommended professional materials
- travel costs for the System Improvement Team to SIM regional learning sessions
- travel costs for SIM School Improvement Teams to learning sessions facilitated by the System Improvement Team.

SIM funding, in combination with the OFIP and Schools Helping Schools funding announced last spring, supports the work of system and school improvement in all schools.

### **Identifying and Forming Clusters of Schools**

Attached is the list of schools in your board meeting SIM criteria – The names of schools with suppressed data are not included on the list, but have been taken into account in funding allocations. All “schools in the middle” are expected to benefit from participation in a network of schools as part of this initiative. Districts may choose to use funding from other sources to involve additional schools, including schools formerly or not yet SIM schools and secondary schools. School Districts have flexibility in forming their networks of schools.

Factors that may influence how schools are grouped and how SIM funding is allotted are

- the commitment of school staff to identify a focus that is related to improving student achievement and is aligned to the goals of their Board and School Improvement Plans;
- the commitment of the School Improvement Team to work closely with their System Improvement Team in partnership with LNS;
- the district's plan to maximize the potential of schools that are “ready to move”
- total funds allocated to the board for OFIP, Schools Helping Schools and SIM.

### **Regional Capacity-Building Sessions for System Improvement Team**

School Districts will identify a System Improvement Team who commit to providing leadership and direct support to SIM schools. The system team must include the SEF Lead, and Superintendents, Principals, and Classroom Teachers/Consultants/Coaches (a tri-level team). Including a system math leader on the system team is recommended.

Up to ten members of the System Improvement Team will participate in three sessions of professional learning dialogue with regional colleagues and will apply these experiences in their work with the school improvement teams of the “schools in the middle”. A board wishing to have more than ten participants at regional sessions must confirm with the regional host board that there is space and must cover the costs associated with additional attendees. Host boards are listed below.

In June, School Districts were alerted to the dates of the regional sessions, which are confirmed as follows:

#### **SIM 1 Fall 2010**

- October 12-13: Toronto (Peel DSB)
- October 21-22: Ottawa (EOSDN)
- October 25-26: London East (Hamilton Wentworth CDSB)
- October 28-29: Barrie (Bluewater DSB)
- November 1-2: Thunder Bay (Rainy River DSB)
- November 3-4: Sudbury/North Bay (Rainbow DSB)
- November 9-10: London West (Huron-Perth Catholic)

#### **SIM 2 Winter 2011**

- January 10-11, Thunder Bay
- January 13-14: Sudbury/ North Bay
- January 20-21: Toronto
- January 24-25: London West
- January 31- February 1: London East
- February 3-4: Barrie
- February 10-11: Ottawa

**SIM 3 Spring – 2011**

- March 24-25: Barrie
- March 29-30: Toronto
- March 31-April 1: London West
- April 4-5: Sudbury/ North Bay
- April 7-8: Thunder Bay
- April 11-12: London East
- April 26-27: Ottawa

Logistical details about the SIM regional sessions will be communicated directly to the School Effectiveness Leader in each district.

If you have any questions, please contact your LNS Field Team Leader or Judy Speirs at [judy.speirs@ontario.ca](mailto:judy.speirs@ontario.ca).

We look forward to working and learning together to make a difference for all students and appreciate your ongoing commitment to supporting SIM schools in moving from “good to great”.



Eleanor Newman

c.c. Mary Jean Gallagher, Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Student Achievement Division  
Mike Jancik, Senior Executive Officer, The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat  
Field Team Leaders, The Literacy & Numeracy Secretariat  
School Effectiveness Leads, District School Boards