MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Norbert J. Hartmann
Assistant Deputy Minister

DATE: April 5, 2003

SUBJECT: New investments in Student-focused funding for 2003-04

Since the release of the report of the Education Equality Task Force in December 2002, the government has announced a series of new investments in publicly funded education.

This memorandum provides school boards with a summary of these funding commitments. Boards can expect more details about their allocations for the 2003-04 school year in the next few weeks.

As announced in the Budget, the projected total allocation for school boards in 2003-04 is $15.33 billion. This figure represents an increase of $1.1 billion, or almost 8 per cent, over the 2002-03 projected allocation announced last May.

This level of funding would make permanent and ongoing the $610 million in investments announced in December for the current (2002-03) school year:

- $340 million for salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff;
- $250 million, on an annual basis, for special education; and
- $20 million for student transportation.

As well, this increased level of funding would support total new investments of $551 million in the 2003-04 school year in response to recommendations of the Education Equality Task Force. Most of these new investments have been announced by the government in recent weeks:

- $22 million for classroom resources, including textbooks, learning resources, classroom computers and classroom supplies. This is the first year of a three-year commitment that would increase these benchmarks by a total of $66 million when fully implemented;
- $50 million for the new Rural Education Strategy;
• $19 million to provide support to small rural and northern schools;
• $50 million for school renewal;
• $50 million to support programs for students at-risk; and
• $20 million for student transportation.

This memorandum confirms that the new funding for education announced in the 2003 Ontario Budget includes a further $340 million that would support a 3 per cent increase to the salary benchmarks in student-focused funding for 2003-04.

Ministry staff have been directed to incorporate provisions into the student-focused funding regulations for 2003-04 to reflect these funding increases. School boards can expect further details of these announcements when the student-focused funding regulations are released in the next few weeks.

School boards can also expect to receive, at that time, details about two further investments that would provide funding in the current (2002-03) school year:

• $71.5 million that would reflect the final results of the ISA comprehensive review, with all eligible files funded at 100 per cent; and

• $10 million to launch the strategy for students at-risk. This funding will be allocated equally so each board receives an amount of $138,900. It will be flowed immediately to school boards to enable each board to hire a board leader to develop and implement board-wide programs for students at-risk.

The release of the student-focused funding regulations will include a comprehensive projection of the board-by-board impacts for 2003-04, with related information about accountability and reporting requirements.

These new initiatives continue the focus on enhancing important supports for student learning and achievement and on equitable access to quality education throughout the province. The Ministry will continue to consult with school boards, parents, and other partners in education as it works to fulfill the government’s commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Education Equality Task Force.

If you have questions on the above, please contact Peter Gooch, Director, Education Finance Branch, at peter.gooch@edu.gov.on.ca or (416) 325-2828.

Norbert J. Hartmann
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

c.c. Superintendents of Business and Finance