MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers and Supervisory Officers of School Authorities  
Director of Provincial Schools Branch  
Superintendents of Schools  
Superintendent of Centre Jules-Léger

FROM: Philip Steenkamp  
Deputy Minister (A)  
Ministry of Education  
Judith Wright  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

RE: Supporting Models of Collaborative Service Delivery for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

In response to the report, *Making a Difference for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ontario Schools, From Evidence to Action* released in February 2007, the government has committed to immediately address over half the recommendations of the Ministers’ Autism Spectrum Disorders Reference Group. The purpose of this memo is to provide you with specific information regarding the particular response to support collaborative service delivery for students with ASD supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

In a joint response, over the 2007 – 2008 school year, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will support six English school boards and one French-language school
boards, in collaboration with relevant community agencies, in the implementation of a collaborative services delivery model for students with ASD. School boards and school sites have been selected based on known models of good practice in coordinated services between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The goals of the collaborative service delivery model for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are:

- confirm current successful and community delivery models supporting the educational outcomes of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
- build on these models;
- advance inter-disciplinary practices in schools with respect to students with ASD; and
- advance the research and knowledge mobilization on effective educational practices for students with ASD.

For a more detailed description of the model please see Appendix A.

To assist in the development of the collaborative service delivery model, a Provincial Advisory Team is being established to coordinate all sites and to be responsible for the research dissemination from the provincial to the school board level. The Provincial Advisory Team will be responsible for coordinating the evaluation and making recommendations for programming and support for the next year. All school boards involved in the model will participate on the Provincial Advisory Team in order to maximize school board leadership in supporting educational outcomes for students with ASD. School board representatives on the Provincial Advisory Team will also be responsible for setting up a Regional Leadership Team to manage the implementation of the model with their board and provide the necessary liaison for sharing information research/data with the Provincial Advisory Team and boards within their region.

Correspondence has also occurred with MCYS-funded agencies serving children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Best Start Networks. This joint memorandum from EDU and MCYS is attached for your information (Appendix C).

Once again may we express our thanks for your continued support for the students identified with ASD as we continue to look for ways to strengthen and improve the development of programs and services across the province.

George Zegarevic
Philip Steenkamp

Judith Wright

Attachments (3)
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

SUPPORTING MODELS OF
COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY
FOR STUDENTS WITH
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD)

CONTEXT:
The ASD Reference Group presented its final report, *Making A Difference For Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ontario Schools, From Evidence to Action* to the Ministers of Education and Children and Youth Services in February 2007. The government is implementing more than half of the reference group’s recommendations. One of the initiatives in response to this report is a model of collaborative service delivery for students with ASD supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. An outline of the proposed model follows:

PURPOSE:
- to confirm current successful school and community delivery models supporting the educational outcomes of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
- to build on these models;
- to advance inter-disciplinary practices in schools with respect to students with ASD; and
- to advance the research and knowledge mobilization on effective educational practices for students with ASD.

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL:
School boards and schools, in collaboration with relevant community providers, will implement a collaborative service delivery model to support students with ASD. The sites will agree to facilitate the gathering of research to identify effective inter-disciplinary practices. The selected sites will lead the exercise and mobilize good practice by sharing and transferring the knowledge regarding their collaborative service delivery model, along with information from the additional sites, across their region.

Local service agencies including but not limited to those delivering the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) have expertise and knowledge that is very important to the success of this initiative. Almost all school boards have a memorandum of understanding with the School Support Program – ASD funded by MCYS to assist educators and school boards to meet the specific needs of students with ASD and improve learning outcomes for these students.

MODEL:
- 6 English-language school boards, 1 French-language school board, each with multiple sites
- 1 Provincial Advisory Team co-chaired by a Director of Education and a representative from a community service agency
PROVINCIAL ADVISORY TEAM:
A Provincial Advisory Team will coordinate all sites and be responsible for research dissemination to the school board level. All school boards involved in the model will participate on the Provincial Advisory Team to maximize school board leadership in supporting educational outcomes for students with ASD.

The Provincial Advisory Team will also advise the Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) on how to maximize the dissemination of good practice with all provincial sites and school boards across the province. The 2007 – 2008 school year is the first year of a two-year commitment to the Provincial Advisory Team.

Team members will include, in addition to the co-chairs and involved school boards, up to five external members: one recognized autism expert, one parent representative, and three representatives from service providers or community agencies.

School board representatives on the Provincial Advisory Team will be responsible for setting up Regional Leadership Teams to manage the implementation of the model with their school boards and provide the necessary liaison for sharing information and research/data with the Provincial Advisory Team. The Regional Leadership Teams will need to meet with staff from school board sites, service providers and/or community agencies to share information, research and data (see Appendix B for more details regarding the Regional Leadership Teams).

OUTCOMES

Student Outcomes (including but not limited to):
- improved student achievement (academic, social, emotional, and adaptive skills);
- increased student engagement in school activities; and
- increased parent confidence in public education.

System Outcomes (including but not limited to):
- improved teacher and school capacity to meet the needs of students with ASD;
- improved collaboration between the service provider/community agency and the local school/board; and
- broad dissemination of research on effective inter-disciplinary practices within and boards and across the province.

SELECTED SITES:
The school sites have been selected in consultation with Field Services Branch of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, based on known models of good practice in coordinated services.

Criteria for the selection of sites:
- demonstrated successful practice of collaborative service delivery for students with ASD. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - successful collaboration in transitioning children with ASD from pre-school to elementary school;
  - successful transitioning of students with ASD through grades, levels, elementary to secondary panels; and
o successful transitioning of students with ASD through grades, levels, elementary to secondary panels; and
o successful collaboration between school/board and local service provider and/or community agency, and/or Academic/Health Science Centre
- reflects the province in terms of geography, diversity (ethnic, socioeconomic), rural/urban, public, catholic, English, francophone, aboriginal, elementary, secondary;
- school site and board have the capacity to take on the additional responsibilities associated with this initiative;
- willingness and capacity to mentor other school boards in collaborative service delivery for students with ASD; and
- credible with other school boards and the SSP-ASD as a leader within their region.

The selected sites are:

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**FUNDING:**
- $150,000 will be allocated to each school board to cover costs associated with backfilling a regional leader and support dissemination of knowledge across their board and throughout the region. Appropriate linkages to community agencies (funded through Children and Youth Services) will need to be made. This funding may also assist with implementation of the collaborative service delivery model.
- $300,000 will be allocated to conduct and oversee the research of all sites. Research will be funded and led provincially.
- $600,000 will be allocated to support the work of the provincial advisory team.

**Total Funding:** Approximately S2M
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Each school board selected to participate in the Collaborative Service Delivery Model for Students with ASD is responsible for establishing a Regional Leadership Team. This team will engage all those who can play a critical role in developing supports for children with ASD so they can experience success in school. This means involving a variety of sectors, e.g., education and children’s services, and establishing partnerships that will facilitate the realization of this common goal. Outreach to parents, other community members and agencies is necessary in order to build and strengthen collaboration among all those who can make a contribution to improving the experiences of students with ASD.

Membership to Include:
- School board representative (cross-appointed to the Provincial Advisory Team)
- School site involved in the initiative – lead school site
- Regional autism service provider(s) – 1 representative from Autism Intervention Program (AIP) and 1 representative from School Support Program (SSP)
- Parent of a child with ASD, and parent of a youth with ASD
- Local agency delivering services to children with ASD
- Best Start Network, if applicable – 1 representative
- Representative from Ministry of Education Regional Office
- Representative from Ministry of Children and Youth Regional Office

Regional Leadership Teams are Responsible for:
- managing the implementation of the collaborative service delivery model within a school board;
- championing a collaborative service delivery approach among all those who play, or could play, a role in supporting students with ASD;
- modeling a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach by the school board and service providers to meet the needs of students with ASD;
- engaging all relevant sectors in the implementation of the service delivery model including the School Support Program-ASD, regional autism team members, regional autism service provider agencies, school board representatives, teachers, principals, special needs resource teachers, parents of children with ASD, providers of services and supports to children with ASD and providers of other community services for children.
- liaising with other school sites within their region in order to disseminate information, research and data related to collaborative service delivery that can be used by all boards to address the needs of students with ASD;
- providing information to service providers involved in the delivery of services and supports for children with ASD and other relevant community agencies related to effective collaborative service delivery; and
- providing a point of contact with the Provincial Advisory Team.
Memorandum To: Community Agencies Serving Children/Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Best Start Networks

From: Philip Steenkamp  
Deputy Minister (A)  
Ministry of Education

Judith Wright  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

RE: Supporting Models of Collaborative Service Delivery for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

In response to the report, *Making a Difference for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ontario Schools: From Evidence to Action* released in February 2007, the government has committed to immediately addressing over half the recommendations of the Ministers’ Autism Spectrum Disorders Reference Group. The purpose of this memo is to provide you with specific information regarding the joint Ministry of Education (EDU) and Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) initiative: Supporting Models of Collaborative Service Delivery for Students with ASD.

Over the 2007-2008 school year, EDU and MCYS, in collaboration with relevant community agencies, will support six English school boards and one French-language school board in the implementation of collaborative services delivery
models for students with ASD. School boards and school sites have been selected based on known models of good practice in coordinated services between EDU and MCYS.

The seven school board sites span six of the nine MCYS regions providing a representative sample of the province. The system outcomes of this initiative include:

- improved teacher and school capacity to meet the needs of students with ASD;
- improved collaboration between the service provider/community agency and the local school/board; and
- broad dissemination of research on effective inter-disciplinary practices within boards and across the province.

The goals of the collaborative service delivery model for students with ASD are:

- confirm current successful and community delivery models supporting the educational outcomes of students with ASD;
- build on these models;
- advance inter-disciplinary practices in schools with respect to students with ASD; and
- advance the research and knowledge mobilization on effective educational practices for students with ASD.

The selected sites will lead the exercise and mobilize good practice by sharing and transferring the knowledge regarding their collaborative service delivery model, along with information from the additional sites, across their region. For a more detailed description of the model please see Appendix A.

To assist in the development of the collaborative service delivery model, a Provincial Advisory Team is being established to coordinate all sites and to be responsible for the dissemination of research from the provincial to the school board and local community levels. Some of the community agencies providing services to children/youth with ASD will be invited to participate on the Provincial Advisory Team. The Provincial Advisory Team will be responsible for coordinating the evaluation and making recommendations for programming and support for the next year.

A Regional Leadership Team will be established for each of the seven selected sites to manage the implementation of the model with their board and provide the necessary liaison for sharing information research/data with the Provincial Advisory Team, boards and relevant community agencies within their region (Appendix B). School Board representatives will be responsible for working with MCYS and EDU regional offices to identify the membership for these teams. If your agency is in one of the areas targeted you may be contacted to participate in this initiative. For additional information on the roles and expectations of MCYS-funded participants, please see Appendix C.
We have attached, for your information, the joint memorandum sent to Boards of Education, School Authorities and the Provincial Schools Branch.

Thank you for your continued support to children and youth with ASD as we work together to strengthen and improve programs and services across the province.

Philip Steenkamp

Judith Wright

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THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

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The Provincial Advisory Team will also advise the Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) on how to maximize the dissemination of good practice with all provincial sites and school boards across the province. The 2007 – 2008 school year is the first year of a two-year commitment to the Provincial Advisory Team.

Team members will include, in addition to the chair and involved school boards, up five external members: one recognized autism expert, one parent representative, and three representatives from service providers or community agencies.

School board representatives on the Provincial Advisory Team will be responsible for setting up Regional Leadership Teams to manage the implementation of the model with their school boards and provide the necessary liaison for sharing information and research/data with the Provincial Advisory Team. The Regional Leadership Teams will need to meet with staff from school board sites, service providers and/or community agencies to share information, research and data (see Appendix B for more details regarding the Regional Leadership Teams).

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  - successful transitioning of students with ASD through grades, levels, elementary to secondary panels; and
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- reflects the province in terms of geography, diversity (ethnic, socioeconomic), rural/urban, public, catholic, English, francophone, aboriginal, elementary, secondary;
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Appendix B

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

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Membership to Include:

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- School site involved in the initiative—lead school site
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- managing the implementation of the collaborative service delivery model within a school board;
- championing a collaborative service delivery approach among all those who play, or could play, a role in supporting students with ASD;
- modeling a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach by the school board and service providers to meet the needs of students with ASD;
- engaging all relevant sectors in the implementation of the service delivery model including the School Support Program-ASD, regional autism team members, regional autism service provider agencies, school board representatives, teachers, principals, special needs resource teachers, parents of children with ASD, providers of services and supports to children with ASD and providers of other community services for children.
- liaising with other school sites within their region in order to disseminate information, research and data related to collaborative service delivery that can be used by all boards to address the needs of students with ASD;
- providing information to service providers involved in the delivery of services and supports for children with ASD and other relevant community agencies related to effective collaborative service delivery; and
- providing a point of contact with the Provincial Advisory Team.
Appendix C
Supporting Models of Collaborative Service Delivery for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):
Roles and Expectations of MCYS-funded Participants

The collaborative service delivery models initiative presents an important opportunity for Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and Ministry of Education (EDU) to work in an integrated way to improve outcomes for students with ASD and to identify and share the most effective practices.

Contributions of MCYS Programs to the Success of the Initiative
The MCYS’ Autism Intervention Program (AIP) and the School Support Program – ASD are well positioned to support shaping, and implementing collaborative service delivery models for students with ASD.

- School Support Programs have existing relationships with school boards and links to the AIP, to contribute to and support the activities of boards related to implementing a collaborative service delivery approach.
- Regional autism providers have a wealth of valuable information about how to support children transitioning to school and how to meet the needs of children once they are in school on a full time basis. This information is critical to the development of effective service delivery models.
- MCYS also brings expertise in working in an inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral way, which is of central importance to this initiative. MCYS-funded participants may play a role in facilitating receptivity to the activities of school boards across sectors, because of the relationships they have established.
- Finally, MCYS funded programs have a great deal of on the ground experience in implementing initiatives, sometimes very quickly, for children with ASD. This experience is invaluable in developing service approaches in the school environment.

Expectations of MCYS funded Participants on Regional Leadership Teams
Regional Leadership Teams with broad representation from school boards, autism service providers and other children’s services will be established to manage the implementation of service delivery models and to disseminate information to other school board sites in their areas.

While specific roles of MCYS funded providers on these teams will be determined by the particular collaborative service delivery model, the role may include:

- Providing advice regarding development of the collaborative service delivery network;
- Providing a bridge between a school board and autism service providers;
- Sharing expertise related to working with children with autism as well as training and resource materials including research evidence;
- Participating as a member of a multi-disciplinary team;
- Acting as a champion for the initiative within the autism and children’s services sectors;
- Bringing a comprehensive perspective to the development of collaborative service delivery models and the identification of outcomes for the child and family.

MCYS – September 2007