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

FROM: Avis E. Glaze  
Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario & CEO, The Literacy & Numeracy Secretariat

DATE: April 11, 2007

SUBJECT:  
A) The Ontario Focussed Intervention Partnership (OFIP): Phase 2  
B) Capacity Building Session for Supervisory Officers

The Ontario Focussed Intervention Partnership (OFIP): Phase 2  
As the literacy and numeracy strategy evolves we are sharpening our focus and moving towards working more directly with schools to improve achievement. Through our many partnerships, we are providing more supports for schools to strengthen classroom instruction and implement strategies that we know will have a positive impact on student learning.

At the beginning of this year, The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) combined its efforts with the former Turnaround Teams Program to establish the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP). This enabled us to pool our knowledge and expertise to support almost 800 schools. In working with you, we have learned many valuable lessons about what works in our Ontario context in improving student achievement. In the spirit of continuous improvement, it is now time to assess the strategy with a view towards refining our processes.

One of the components of the Turnaround School Strategy that has been in use in the system over the last 5 years has been diagnostic visits and reports. The intent of these reports was to identify what was working well in these schools, what needed to improve and recommendations for improvement. Schools incorporated these recommendations as they developed or refined their school
improvement plans. Many schools, including those in challenging circumstances, have improved. In fact, eighty-three percent (83%) of the schools in this program have shown improvement as measured by EQAO assessments.

Across the province we are seeing steady improvement in student achievement. We commend you for your dedication and commitment to improving student learning. Three years ago nineteen percent (19%) of our schools were “low performing”. Two thirds or more of the students in these schools were not achieving the provincial standard. We have seen a steady reduction in these numbers, so that now, only five percent (5%) of Ontario’s schools are in this position.

This year, we are working intensely with an increased number of schools and we have received a wider range of feedback on our processes. One of the founding premises of The Secretariat is to build capacity in schools and districts. Ensuring that boards have individuals with diagnostic skills is one of our goals. We will be building upon the existing good practices in this area to develop a process that can be used across the system.

We have learned a great deal from the educational literature, but even more importantly, we have a repertoire of evidence that we have gathered right here in our province on effective improvement strategies. We feel that by pooling our knowledge and expertise we can continue to work collaboratively with teachers and principals to bring about improvement in schools even in the most challenging circumstances.

The changes that we are making to current practice will require us to redouble our efforts and to continue to insist upon high expectations for student learning. In schools that are not achieving at an acceptable level, a “business as usual” approach will not bring us the results that we now know are possible. In these circumstances, a willingness and openness to build upon our current knowledge base and to implement proven practices will help us to move our schools and districts to new heights.

It is important for us to assure you that financial support for the OFIP strategy will continue. We will also support the schools that are showing improvement to ensure that they are able to sustain the gains. OFIP will continue to be the primary focus of the work of Student Achievement Officers in schools.

Capacity Building Session for Supervisory Officers
You may remember at our last supervisory officer symposium we talked about developing a leadership alliance to support student learning. We pledged our commitment to continue to work with supervisory officers and to establish initiatives based on their expressed needs. We have been getting a large number of requests for capacity building related to the diagnostic process. We are responding by developing a model that can be used across the province.
To that end, a series of in-depth capacity building sessions will be provided in collaboration with experts and practitioners. The first of these sessions will be held for supervisory officers the evening of August 15, 2007 and a full day August 16, 2007 in Toronto. Details will be sent to boards before the end of May.

**In Conclusion**

The primary purpose of LNS is to build capacity at all levels of the system to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability. Since its inception, The Secretariat has focused on building positive relationships in the system based on respect and collegiality. We have recognized successful practices and the many pockets of excellence that exist. This does not happen by accident; it happens because of your intentional efforts and commitment to our moral imperative.

We thank you for your ongoing commitment to student learning.

Avis Glaze

**Cc:** EDU Deputy Minister  
EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers  
EDU District Office Managers  
LNS Student Achievement Officers  
CODE Executive Director  
OPC Executive Director  
CPCO Executive Director  
ADFO Executive Director  
ETFO General Secretary  
OECTA General Secretary  
AEFO General Secretary  
OTF Secretary Treasurer