MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Planning & Elementary/Secondary Programs Division

Dominic Giroux
Assistant Deputy Minister
French-Language Education & Educational Operations Division

DATE: April 24, 2007

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Ministry of Education’s Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy

The Ministry is embarking on an external evaluation of the Student Success/Learning to 18 strategy. This evaluation aims to learn what is working and what needs to be made more effective in the strategy. The evaluation will take place over the next thirteen month period, beginning in April 2007.

The Ministry has contracted with the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) to conduct the evaluation. CCL is an independent, non-profit corporation that promotes and supports research to improve all aspects of learning across Canada. The evaluation team at CCL is led by Dr. Charles Ungerleider.

The evaluation focuses on the five key goals of the SS/L18 Strategy:
- To increase the graduation rate and decrease the drop-out rate
- To support a good outcome for all students
- To provide students with new and relevant learning opportunities
- To build on students’ strengths and interests
- To provide students with an effective transition from elementary to secondary school.

CCL will examine the outcomes of the strategy achieved to date as well as how well the elements of the strategy work together. More specifically, they will explore whether:
• Graduation rates are increasing and drop-out rates are decreasing
• Structures and supports are changing to better provide viable pathways for all students to learn to 18 and beyond, which lead to students' post-secondary destinations of choice
• New learning opportunities are being provided that are relevant to students
• Structures and supports are changing to better capture and build on the strengths and interests of all students
• Structures and supports are changing to better assist students in their transition from elementary to secondary school.

As an initial step, CCL will be coordinating focus groups with a representative sample of Student Success Leaders (SSL) across the province. The sessions are an opportunity for CCL to learn about how Student Success is being implemented and experienced at the board and school level. SSL focus group sessions will take place May 14 and 16, 2007. In the second phase of the evaluation, June 2007 through March 2008, CCL will look to conduct interviews and focus group with additional board and school representatives. If you or persons from your board are selected as participants, CCL will contact your office and coordinate scheduling with the appropriate staff. Boards and schools will be contacted with advance notice so that all of the necessary arrangements and permissions can be secured.

CCL has begun reviewing Ministry documentation and student success indicator data. We would like to provide CCL with Student Success Action Plans to give them an initial sense of what is happening within boards. Please contact Richard Franz (Richard.franz@ontario.ca) if you have any questions or concerns.

Your willingness to welcome the evaluation team to your board and schools will be greatly appreciated. The insights CCL’s work will generate will help the Ministry, boards and schools to better reach every student.

Thank you in advance for your support for this important evaluation.

Sincerely,

George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Planning & Elementary/Secondary Programs Division

Dominic Giroux
Assistant Deputy Minister
French-Language Education & Educational Operations Division

c. Student Success Leaders
Kit Rankin, Director
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