MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretaries of School Authorities
Superintendents of Provincial Schools

FROM: Avis Glaze
Chief Student Achievement Officer

DATE: December 4, 2006

RE: Leading and Learning: Improving Student Achievement in Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances: An Innovative Professional Development Resource for Ontario schools

Over the past two years, The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has funded approximately 250 projects that further the goal of improved student achievement in literacy and numeracy. A few of the projects funded by The Secretariat are highlighted in the LNS report entitled, “Making It Happen”.

Leading and Learning: Improving Student Achievement in Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances is one of the projects that was funded by The Secretariat. Leading and Learning is the result of a collaboration between two district school boards, Curriculum Services Canada and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. It looks at the leadership practices that contribute to student achievement. Twenty schools in challenging circumstances were identified based on socio-economic factors, high numbers of English language learners and students with high special education needs. Schools in the sample also had to demonstrate improvement in student achievement as evidenced by their EQAO scores.

Innovative, online, interactive modules have been developed to share the exemplary practices of these school leaders. As well as powerful video segments, extensive facilitator’s guides accompany each module.

The following modules have been developed:
- Distributing Leadership
- Using Data Effectively
- Building Literacy Capacity
- Building Parent and Community Relationships
- Creating Opportunities Beyond the Classroom
- Supporting Professional Learning
The primary audience for this site is administrators – from those aspiring to leadership positions to those with extensive experience. However, all educators will find the content of interest. Each module presents participants with two learning paths: Individual learning or Facilitated Group learning.

Based on the way this is organized you would follow the individual path if you are:
- learning on your own
- part of a mentoring team
- a facilitator who wants to become familiar with the content before leading a facilitated session
- facilitating a group session but would like to have the 'online' facilitator to act as a co-presenter

Similarly you would follow the facilitated path if you are:
- facilitating a group session and need the activities to help introduce the content in each module
- working with a group and wish to introduce selected activities based on the needs of your particular situation

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is pleased to announce that phase one of the Leading and Learning Professional Learning Program will go live on November 30, 2006.

Phase One provides activities related to “The Importance of Context” as well as the following modules:
- Distributing Leadership
- Using Data Effectively

These professional learning modules demonstrate the leadership practices that make a difference in schools facing challenging circumstances. A highlight in each module is the inclusion of videotaped material where the participating school representatives discuss the specific practices, the ways these work in their schools and further, how these practices have impacted on student learning. Participants working with the modules have an opportunity to listen to the dialogue, reflect on their practice and engage in discussion generated through the facilitation process provided.

For optimal use of this website you need a computer with speakers, high-speed Internet access and Flash Player 6 or higher. For technical support or enquiries, please contact Curriculum Services Canada (CSC) at csc@curriculum.or or call 1-800-837-3048.

The address for Leading and Learning is:

http://www.curriculum.org/leadingandlearning/
We trust that you will make use of these modules to share effective practices. We are confident that by continuing to learn together, with and from each other, in our schools, our districts and across the province, we can positively impact student achievement in Ontario. Judy Speirs is currently The Secretariat’s primary contact with this initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact her if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Avis Glaze

Cc: EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers
    Regional Office Managers
    Director Field Services Branch