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

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

DATE: June 27, 2007

SUBJECT: Support for Improvement Planning

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat believes that it is very important to evaluate our progress in achieving our goals on a consistent and continual basis. In order to further inform our improvement efforts, we have engaged the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of our literacy and numeracy strategy. Their research findings will provide us with recommendations for the future refinement of our strategies. We regularly invite and host internationally renowned educators as critical friends to provide feedback on our strategies.

Recently we had the opportunity to host Dr. Douglas Reeves who has agreed to work with us. Dr. Reeves is the Chairman and Founder of the Center for Performance Assessment, an international organization dedicated to improving student achievement and educational equity. Dr. Reeves is a faculty member of leadership programs sponsored by the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His work with school systems helps system and school leaders to improve student achievement through practical and constructive approaches to standards, assessment and accountability.

Following a visit to The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat in early June, we discussed the possibility of his working with LNS to support boards and schools in their improvement efforts. We are most interested in the following initiatives in which Dr. Reeves is willing to assist us:

1. **Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring (PIM) Review Process**
   In this process, Dr. Reeves and his team will be able to identify those elements of planning, implementation and monitoring that are most related to student
achievement. This process would not involve any time commitments from board or school leaders.

We are proposing to provide all board improvement plans to Dr. Reeves during the first week of July for the PIM review process. This would enable Dr. Reeves and his team to review the plans over the summer and provide feedback by September. Given the commitment that directors and superintendents have to continuous improvement, we are confident that you will be supportive of this review of board plans. Feedback that is board specific would only be shared with that particular board. General provincial trends and patterns and suggested next steps will be shared with all school boards.

In the second phase of PIM, we will invite schools, on a voluntary basis, to submit their school improvement plans to LNS in September for analysis by Dr. Reeves. This review process will be limited to 400 schools.

The PIM process will give district and school leaders throughout the province the insights they need to focus their efforts on those specific activities that have the greatest relationship to student achievement. It will also allow for international comparability of our plans and how the areas of focus and strategies selected contribute to our goals.

2. **Hallmarks of Excellence**

This initiative will provide a limited number of senior leaders with confidential and non-evaluative leadership insights. Built on a research base of best practices in senior leadership, the Hallmarks of Excellence report gives senior leaders confidential and constructive feedback on how to capitalize on their strengths to improve leadership effectiveness. With a focus on execution, vision and systems thinking, the assessment has been described by senior leaders elsewhere as the first time that they have received feedback that is directly related to their most important leadership performance needs. We must re-emphasize that the Hallmarks of Excellence is not an evaluation tool, nor is it a public document.

Participation in this initiative will be voluntary and limited to 100 directors and supervisory officers who will be provided with details about this initiative at the symposium in September. After that date, you will be able to notify LNS if you are interested in participating in the Hallmarks of Excellence initiative.

We believe that these initiatives will allow us to gain valuable insights into effective educational leadership practices as they relate to student achievement within the Ontario context. In order to capitalize on the summer period, we are sending Dr. Reeves and his team the board improvement plans now. This will facilitate timely feedback to you for the start of the school year as you begin to think about reviewing your board improvement plan after the next set of EQAO results. LNS will facilitate copying the board improvement plans that you have already submitted to us this year.

We see this as yet another opportunity to go deeper in our efforts to improve student achievement and build leadership capacity in boards. Having Dr. Reeves as a Critical Friend to LNS and boards across the province will provide a rich opportunity to
identify our strengths and determine next steps as we work collaboratively to sharpen our focus.

Once again, we thank you for your continued dedication and leadership. We wish you a restful and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,

Avis E. Glaze

cc: EDU Deputy Minister
    EDU Assistant Deputy Ministers
    Regional Managers
    Frank Kelly, CODE
    Deans, Faculties of Education
    OPC Executive Director
    CPCO Executive Director
    ETFO General Secretary
    OECTA General Secretary
    OSSTF General Secretary
    ADFO Director General
    AEFO, Director General
    OTF Secretary General