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

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

DATE: June 20, 2006

SUBJECT: Expression of Gratitude: Next Steps

With summer approaching it is an appropriate time to thank you for your accomplishments and to wish you a restful summer holiday. Your achievements to date have been well documented and appreciated. We congratulate you on an extraordinary year! We are grateful to you for the strides we have made and for the steady movement towards the achievement of our mutually shared goals. Thank you for your efforts and for your resolve.

When you return in September after a well deserved rest, we will begin, with confidence and optimism, the new *Sharpening our Focus* phase of our implementation cycle.

**Future Directions**

Our last memo documented some of the highlights of the past 18 months and our plans to sharpen our focus, to work more intensely with boards, and specifically, with low achieving schools. A key strategy will be The Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP). This initiative will provide direct support to schools and boards in order to achieve continuous improvement. As we set our direction for the coming year we are delighted to welcome members of the Turnaround Teams Program to The Secretariat.

The Turnaround Teams Program, which has provided intensive support in the primary division to over 100 low performing schools, will be joining the LNS in time for the 2006/07 school year. It is important for boards to note that current the Turnaround Teams Program contracts will be honoured and those schools will continue to receive support. We thank Aryeh Gitterman, Barry Pervin, Jennifer Evans, Leslie Banner, Linda Richardson, and all of the members of the team for their outstanding leadership.
The Student Achievement Officers (SAOs) and the Turnaround Teams Program staff, who have collaborated over the past year, will work together to implement the OFIP: Turnaround Strategy in order to provide intentional support to schools and boards that have faced challenges in achieving continuous improvement. In order to facilitate implementation, directors of education will be asked to identify at least one central office staff member to lead the OFIP: Turnaround Strategy in the board.

There are two components to this initiative:

- **OFIP Turnaround Strategy (Schools)** – The turnaround strategy will be implemented in over 300 low performing schools. LNS staff will meet with directors, superintendents and principals to discuss the schools that have been identified for special assistance and to agree on the strategies that will be used. Once strategies are agreed upon, resources will be provided to the board to support this initiative.

- **OFIP Board Strategy** – Boards that have no low performing schools as defined by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat will still receive funds to support their improvement efforts. LNS team leaders will work with boards to develop strategies to bring about further improvement in schools that do not fall within the turnaround strategy.

Following the release of the 2006 EQAO results, additional schools may be identified.

**Joint Symposium**

Once again, we will be hosting another symposium on September 27 and 28 for directors and superintendents. You will recall the success of last year’s symposium ‘Getting to 75%....Together.’

This year, the focus will be a Junior Kindergarten to Grade12 initiative that we are planning in cooperation with George Zegarac, Dominic Giroux, the Council of Ontario Directors of Education, and the three supervisory officers’ organizations. Once again, we will ask for people with exceptional programs that are demonstrating excellent results to present under the successful practices component of the program. Given the broader focus of the symposium on JK-12 this year, we are looking for presentations to reflect all grade levels.

The theme for the day is: **“Effective Leaders...Successful Students: The Time is Now!”**

The afternoon workshop segments will be:

- **a) Diversity: Achieving Success with All Learners, and**
- **b) Differentiating Instruction: Effective Leadership at Work**
The symposium begins at 6:00 p.m. on September 27th with dinner and a keynote speaker and end at 5 p.m. on September 28th. A committee, which includes CODE members and representation from LNS, Student Success and the French Language Branch, is working on the program.

**Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program**

We recently launched our Schools on the Move initiative with 25 schools chosen from across Ontario. These schools have demonstrated steady improvement over the last three years. Schools will share their successful practice with other schools and districts across the province.

Please note that the designation will be for the duration of one year, after which, other schools will be selected based on their EQAO scores and other factors.

**Student Engagement, Character and Citizenship Development**

The government has made a commitment to implement character education programs in Ontario schools. George Zegarac, Dominic Giroux and I are working collaboratively on this initiative. We will consult with two representative samples of boards: boards that are well underway with the implementation of similar initiatives, and a group of boards that have not yet started. This consultation will provide us with input into the proposed directions.

Please note this initiative will be developed in a way that honours the work of school boards that have already begun these programs while providing support for those who wish to begin these programs within the context of the existing Ontario Curriculum.

A symposium is being planned towards the end of October. The content of this JK-12 event will be informed by the recommendations of boards that are being consulted before the end of the school year.

**Web casts**

We sent you a memo, dated June 16, 2006 that included a list of last year’s web casts and the series for the coming year. You should also have received, by now, a complimentary set of DVDs with a selection of some of the highlights of the sessions.

May I ask you, once again, to make sure that classroom teachers are aware of these resources and of the fact that they can view these excellent resources at any time through the video-on-demand feature.
Our Talented Staff

I seize the opportunity to thank directors of education for providing us with the excellent staff that we have within the Secretariat. In all cases the request caused considerable hardship to school boards as they agreed to the secondments of their talented staff. If we are successful in doing our work as a Secretariat, it is due to the significant contribution that you have made to the establishment of the Secretariat. For this, as well, we thank you.

I am confident and optimistic that we will achieve our goals - thanks to the strong leadership in literacy and numeracy that many of you have shown over the years. We are assured that you will continue that level of dedication in the 2006-2007 school year.

Cordially,

Avis E. Glaze

C.c. Assistant Deputy Ministers
     Regional Office Managers