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

FROM: George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister

DATE: June 16, 2006

SUBJECT: Funding for Assessments

I am writing to you regarding additional funding that the Ministry of Education has allocated to further demonstrate its commitment to foster student success. I am pleased to advise you that the Ministry has provided the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) with a grant of $20 million that is to be used to support English and French-language district school boards and school authorities to reduce the current waiting times for students requiring assessments from school boards and to enhance teacher capacity.

Improving Ontario’s education system is the government’s highest priority and the Ministry of Education is focused on three goals: high levels of student achievement; reduced gaps in student achievement; and increased public confidence and support for public education.

Literacy and numeracy are the foundations for student success. Consequently, the Ministry is focusing on higher student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at the elementary level. The opportunity to develop these high levels of literacy and numeracy is contained within a narrow window of a child’s life. Children who have not learned fundamental literacy and numeracy skills during the primary grades are at an increased risk of having limited pathways as they transition through their school experience. The Ministry recognizes the importance of early identification of a student’s learning needs and therefore has targeted students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 4 as priorities for assessments through this initiative.

It is expected that the additional funds that will be provided to school boards through the OPA will be used to enhance the capacity of each school board and school authority to provide timely and appropriate assessments for students who require differentiated learning experiences as a result of significant learning or behavioural needs.

The additional funding to reduce assessment wait times will be provided until the end of the 2007-08 school year. The OPA will provide reports, as requested, to the Ministry outlining how the funds were distributed and used by school boards and school authorities.

I am very enthusiastic about the potential benefits for students. Working together, we can help more students to succeed.

George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister of Education

c. Dr. Ian Brown, President, Association of Chief Psychologists with Ontario School Boards
Dominic Giroux, French Language Education and Educational Operations Division