MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education, District School Boards
Supervisory Officers and Secretary Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of Provincial School Authority

FROM: Aryeh Gitterman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

Dominic Giroux
Assistant Deputy Minister
French Language Education and Educational Operations Division

DATE: November 14, 2006

SUBJECT: Opportunity to Participate In the Teacher Professional Development Best Practices Initiative: Application for Funding

The Ministry is providing district school boards/school authorities/provincial schools who have targeted specific professional development programs for experienced teachers or have programs that can be enhanced to target this group, with the opportunity to submit, on a voluntary basis, proposals for funding under the Teacher Professional Development Best Practices Initiative.

This one-time only funding is to assist school boards/school authorities/provincial schools in their efforts to enhance their existing programs and to share data on the impact of this additional enhancement funding both on teacher practice and student performance. The enhanced programs will be reviewed and will help inform further discussions on the development of new ways to support experienced teachers.

The Ministry’s discussion paper entitled Teacher Excellence – Unlocking Student Potential Through Continuing Professional Development, released at the Minister’s Partnership Table in August 2004, proposed ideas for the creation of quality programs to assist all teachers to reach their full potential.

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The first of these programs was put into place this year, with the passage of legislation in June 2006 making the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) mandatory for all new teachers. The recent addition of two new professional activity days by the Ministry has set the stage for further application for all teachers.

The government would now like to move forward with plans to investigate the needs of experienced teachers. Through the Working Table on Teacher Development, the Ministry will be considering options for a professional development framework that encompasses the needs of experienced teachers. With fifty percent of Ontario’s teachers having been in the classroom for over 10 years, it is important to recognize and address the needs of these experienced teachers to support an ongoing commitment and motivation to the profession and to the classroom.

To assist the Working Table in this task, the Ministry is undertaking a Professional Development Best Practices Initiative in the 2006-07 school year to investigate best practices and enhanced supports for experienced teachers who are committed to excellence in classroom teaching.

An application for funding under this initiative is attached. We are expecting to fund approximately 10 to 20 boards/school authorities/provincial schools within a funding envelope of $2.85M in the school year 2006-07. District school boards/school authorities/provincial schools may apply for funding of up to $500 for each participating experienced teacher, with the allocation dependent upon the scope of the activities proposed in the application.

**Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants who most closely meet the following criteria will be eligible for funding:

- Have an existing effective professional development program in place or under development that is, or could be, specifically targeted to experienced teaching staff;

- Agree to use the funding to enhance professional development for experienced teachers estimated to have over 10 years of experience;

- Demonstrate that the professional development is guided by the following five key professional development principles: (1) centered on student learning; (2) focused on one or more identified goals; (3) guided by appropriate adult learning models; (4) sustainable and (5) evidence based (see attachment for further details);

- Provide innovative professional development opportunities that will allow teachers to focus on their own learning and the needs of students, and to consider new responsibilities within the context of classroom teaching at the school or board level;

- Engage in partnerships with other school boards, federations and/or faculties of education;

- Demonstrate that this funding will add to (i.e. not replace) current spending to enhance existing experienced teacher supports.

Applicants will be notified of the Ministry's decisions by January 10, 2007.
Funding and Reporting
The funds may only be used for specific program enhancements. The funds may not be used to cover infrastructure costs, such as the purchase of computer technology or new staffing.

Funding will begin the date the Agreements are signed with the Ministry to the end of the school year (July 31, 2007).

At the end of the funding period, participating boards/school authorities/provincial schools will be required to report on the following:

- Number of experienced teachers who participated in the initiative
- Methods/procedures used to collect data for the report
- Summary of activities
- Actual expenditures
- Evaluation methods and results of the initiative
- Partners involved in the development and delivery of the initiative and a description of their contribution
- How staff was informed of the initiative
- The use (or not) of a steering committee to oversee the initiative
- Lessons learned

Evaluation and Sharing Requirement
The Ministry will be assessing the enhanced programs on an ongoing basis. As the parameters for assessments are developed, we will involve participating boards/school authorities/provincial schools. Participants must be willing to cooperate in a review of these programs and permit the Ministry and/or researcher to conduct visits and conduct focus groups and/or surveys of the experienced teachers. Participants must also be willing to share their findings, product (if applicable) and expertise gained from the initiative with other school boards/school authorities/provincial schools.

Application Deadline
The due date for submission of applications to the Ministry is December 8, 2006. If you are interested in participating, please download the application for funding located in the Reporting Calendar section of the Ministry web site at http://calendar.edu.gov.on.ca/. To obtain more information about the application process, please contact Camille Chénier, Ministry of Education at (416) 325-1074 or by e-mail at camille.chenier@ontario.ca.
Thank you for your consideration of this initiative to investigate best practices in supporting the needs of experienced teachers.

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Instruction and Leadership  French-Language Education and Educational Development Division
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Encl.

cc:  Ben Levin
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George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister,
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Avis Glaze
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Ruth Baumann
Secretary-Treasurer,
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Pat Rogers,
Chair, Ontario Association of Dean of Education
Key Professional Development Principles and Indicators

(1) Focused on the impact on student learning
   - Professional learning is about student learning and success therefore activities align with the board’s goals for student learning.

(2) Focused on one or more identified goals
   - Clear goal(s) to ensure that experienced teachers’ professional learning will contribute to student achievement.
   - Connected to daily practice and context (job embedded).
   - Resources targeted to the goal(s).

(3) Guided by appropriate adult learning models
   - Professional learning for teachers respects adult learning principles:
     - **Differentiated Delivery:** Experienced teachers have different development needs. Delivery must ensure a diversity of approaches.
     - **Choice:** Professional learning opportunities that address the experienced teacher’s own learning needs and the needs of the province/board/school to reach the common goal.
     - **Collaboration:** Involves shared learning and learning networks.
     - **Motivation and Recognition:** Relates to the expansion of knowledge and skills teachers develop as their professional learning grows.

(4) Sustainability
   - Progresses over a continuum.
   - Builds capacity for commitment to ongoing professional learning and learning networks.

(5) Evidence based
   - Is based on research and data driven, with measurable outcomes.
   - Needs are revealed through data and action plans are developed from the data.
   - Data is used to establish a baseline upon which impact can be measured.