MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Gerry Townsend
Regional Manager
Toronto and Area Regional Office

DATE: April 24, 2009

SUBJECT: Integration Action for Inclusion in School and Community

Attached, for your information, please find a research report recently completed by the advocacy organization: Integration Action for Inclusion in School and Community. This study was done in partnership with the Centre for Inclusive Education at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario and with funding from the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry has become aware of considerable interest in this project among some members of School Board Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs).

The study reports on experiences shared by staff teams in two English language Ontario secondary schools. The Essential Best Practices in Inclusive High Schools (developed at the University of New Hampshire) provided the framework for the two schools to consider effective inclusive practices.

The study was conducted as action research from a position of advocacy for “inclusive education” and its design, analysis and report presentation all present that perspective. Many parents and advocates, particularly for students with significant intellectual and physical disabilities, are strong advocates for the inclusion of all students in regular classrooms, in neighbourhood schools with their same age peers.

The opinions and statements in the report are the authors’ and do not necessarily reflect the positions and policies of the Ministry of Education. Nor does the study reflect the positions and opinions of those parents and advocates who support withdrawal or congregated classroom options. Such options are often advocated by parents of students who are gifted, or deaf or have specific learning disabilities.

While the study contains interesting information, it reports qualitative (not quantitative) data; it is limited to two secondary schools, and it does not directly compare the two schools with schools that use other approaches. The Ministry will be considering the need for additional research to further extend our understanding of the value (i.e. educational and other outcomes) of including students with significant disabilities in secondary schools.
If you would like to explore further the findings of this study or the application of inclusive education principles at the secondary school level with Marilyn Dolmage, the principal author of this report, her contact information is as follows. Ms. Marilyn Dolmage

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Please share this study with those in your school community and on your SEAC who you believe will be interested.

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