MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Joan Fullerton
Regional Manager

DATE: February 2, 2010

SUBJECT: CAS Protocols and Practices

As you may be aware, the Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services have made a commitment to improve the educational outcomes of children and youth in care of the Children's Aid Societies (CASs).

We are looking at three key areas of concern that need to be addressed to achieve our goal. These include increasing school stability for children and youth in care; enhancing locally developed protocols and practices between District School Boards (DSBs) and CASs that are essential for moving forward; and tracking and measuring the educational progress of these students to know if our actions are having the intended results.

As a first step, the two ministries organized a cross-sector meeting for the child welfare and education sectors on November 12, 2009 in Toronto to facilitate conversation on the challenges and opportunities for improving educational outcomes for children and youth in care. The meeting was a great success. Approximately 225 representatives from DSBs, Children’s Aid Societies and other interested organizations as well as children and youth in, and formerly in, care met to discuss practical solutions to remove barriers strengthen partnerships and improve supports to help children and youth in care succeed in school. All participants agreed on the need to do better for this vulnerable group and committed to move forward on the issue and ensure that children and youth in care benefit from all the supports we have available in schools.

To this end, I would like to request your support in sharing any information about existing relationships between your school board and the child welfare sector with us. As a next step, EDU needs to conduct an informal environmental scan to identify school boards that have, or are working towards, any communications and information sharing protocols and practices with CASs in their jurisdiction. This information will assist us in
developing strategies and identifying partners who can work with us on best practices as well as in enhancing and promoting the development of locally agreed upon communications and information sharing protocols and practices between DSBs and CASs across the province. A short two question survey is attached. Please share it with your Student Success Leader. An Education Officer from the Barrie Regional Office will follow up by calling your Student Success Leader within the next week to complete the survey over the phone.

Should you have any questions about this, please contact Bob Stones, Education Officer at 705-725-7156/1-866-632-1602 or at Robert.Stones@ontario.ca or Mary Ellen Smith, Education Officer, at 705-725-7634/1-866-896-3922 or at MaryEllen.Smith@ontario.ca.

Regional Manager

Attachment