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

FROM: Dominic Giroux  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
French-Language Education and Educational Operations Division  
Barry Pervin  
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)  
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

DATE: January 30th, 2009

RE: Planning for Professional Activity (PA) Days

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of amendments to the criteria and topics of the two professional activity (PA) days devoted to provincial education priorities identified under the Education Act in O. Reg. 304 – School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days. Within the next two weeks, the consolidated Regulation, as amended, will appear on e-Laws at: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900304_e.htm. Attached you will find a list of the new topics.

We want to thank you for your ongoing support of the Ministry’s commitment to high quality professional learning for teachers. To reach our goals of improving the achievement of students with special education needs and closing the gaps in student achievement, the two PA days devoted to provincial priorities will now be dedicated to these areas. We recognize the substantial work that school boards have already undertaken with respect to these goals, and we are pleased to share with you the latest development.

PA DAYS DEVOTED TO PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES: UPDATED CRITERIA AND TOPICS

The amended Regulation sets out updated criteria and topics for the two PA days devoted to provincial education priorities. These criteria are:

i. special education, and  
ii. closing the gaps in student achievement.
They replace the previous criteria of:

i. improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy, and
ii. improving student success in making the transition from elementary to secondary school, graduating from secondary school and obtaining employment or attending college or university after graduation.

An updated list of topics that corresponds with these new criteria is found in Schedule 1 of the Regulation. The professional activities on these days should continue to be designed to improve teachers’ skills and knowledge in a range of instructional and assessment strategies, and relate to one or more topics set out in Schedule 1.

The Ministry recognizes that student achievement is strongly linked to teachers’ knowledge and instructional practices. The new list of topics in Schedule 1 relating to “special education” and “closing the gaps in student achievement” promote an inclusive and equitable approach to instruction for all students. To enhance teacher capacity and maximize student learning in these priority areas, professional activities on the two PA days should encourage collaborative dialogue to deepen individual understanding and skills, and develop collective efficacy regarding teaching and learning.

**PLANNING AND DELIVERY**

The amendments to the Regulation will take effect on June 30th, 2009 for implementation in the 2009-10 school year. Boards should include in their 2009-10 school year calendars, an outline of the professional activities relating to “special education” and/or “closing the gaps in student achievement” that will be conducted on the two PA days dedicated to provincial priorities. The timeline for submission of the 2009-10 school year calendars to the Minister is still March 1st, 2009 for modified calendars and May 1st, 2009 for regular calendars.

Thank you for your commitment to professional learning. We know that you share our commitment to ensure that the public has confidence in the effectiveness of the use of these two PA days.

**Original signed by**

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

**Original signed by**

Barry Pervin, Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

Enclosure

cc  Grant Clarke, Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
    Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division

    Mary Jean Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer
    Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

    Regional Managers, Field Services Branch
SCHEDULE 1
TOPICS FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY DAYS

1. The following are the possible topics for professional activities relating to special education:

1. Developing individual education plans.
2. Improving the application of applied behaviour analysis to support students with autism-spectrum disorders.
3. Implementing activities related to assistive technologies, differentiated instruction, universal design and professional learning technologies.
4. Facilitating transitions for students who are entering school, changing grades or schools, or leaving school.
5. Facilitating parental involvement in identification, placement and review committees established under Part II of Ontario Regulation 181/98 (Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils) made under the Act, and in the development of individual education plans.

2. The following are the possible topics for professional activities relating to closing the gaps in student achievement:

1. Differentiating instructional strategies and resources that are responsive to students' learning needs and their race, culture, and ethnic origin.
2. Developing and implementing strategies to close the gaps in mathematical literacy.
3. Developing and implementing strategies to close the gaps in literacy.
4. Developing and implementing strategies to improve boys' literacy.
5. Developing and implementing early and on-going instructional interventions.
6. Performing assessments and evaluations.
7. Facilitating parental and community engagement.
8. Using strategies to support English language learners and students in Actualisation linguistique en français and Perfectionnement du français.
9. Using data analysis to inform instruction.
10. Integrating the use of manipulative aids and technology to support a range of learning styles.
11. Developing and implementing board and school improvement plans that focus on equity of outcomes.
12. Creating a positive and inclusive classroom climate conducive to learning.
14. Promoting instructional leadership.
15. Developing skills for teacher inquiry and reflective practice.