MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Taddesse Haile
Director, Education Statistics and Analysis Branch

DATE: June 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) 2011-12

Further to Raymond Théberge’s memorandum of March 31, 2011 concerning the MISA program in 2011-12, I am writing to provide you with the following information:

- role of the MISA Leader in school boards;
- the planning process for the MISA Professional Network Centres;
- assessment of future local capacity building needs.

As you may be aware, targeted investments of $120 million were made through the MISA Local Capacity Building program over the past six years to assist school boards transform their processes and practices and grow the capacity of administrators and teachers to become more evidence-informed in support of improved student achievement.

Since 2005, all school boards have grown their capacity to utilize evidence and data for improved student outcomes. The ministry recognizes that school boards need to continue to grow their capacity in this important area. Although there will be no direct MISA Local Capacity Building funding provided to school boards during 2011-12, the ministry is providing additional funding to the seven MISA Professional Network Centres (PNCs) to help support the priority needs of their member school boards.

Role of the MISA Leader

It is vital that each school board have a MISA Leader who champions the use of evidence to inform board decisions, school administration, and classroom practice. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the attached “Role of the MISA Leader” brief that was put together in consultation with a number of school boards. This may be an opportune time for you to review this role and to determine whether a change in MISA Leader is required. My staff will be in touch with your office over the coming weeks to
confirm contact information of your board’s MISA Leader going forward.

The ministry will be hosting a professional learning event for MISA Leaders in late October 2011. Further details will be communicated early in the school year.

Planning Process for MISA Professional Network Centres (PNCs)

The MISA PNCs are well positioned to continue to provide support to the local capacity building efforts of individual boards. The role of the MISA PNCs as collaborative networked learning communities along with the formal connections they have with the research community will continue to result in the identification and sharing of effective practices related to the use of evidence for improved student outcomes.

Attached to this memorandum is the MISA Professional Network Centres Planning Guide and operational planning template for 2011-12. The Executive Lead of each MISA PNC is responsible for drafting the plan in consultation with their member school boards. Each MISA Professional Network Centre will include in its operational plan its strategy for advancing and supporting member boards’ MISA Local Capacity Building efforts through:

- professional learning (i.e., development and sharing of supports and resources and facilitation of professional learning related to the appropriate use of evidence at the school board, school and classroom levels – especially linked to instructional practice);
- research and evaluation (i.e., building capacity within/among school boards and regionally – especially the use of research/evaluation evidence by principals and teachers); and,
- promoting knowledge mobilization of the supports, resources, and tools developed by all MISA PNCs for use across the province (e.g., to ensure the importance of evidence-informed decision making is understood at the school and classroom levels and also to ensure that principals and teachers are aware of the supports and resources available).

MISA PNC activities are to be clearly linked to advancing key board and ministry priorities and should indicate how they are supporting boards to better utilize data and evidence to advance priority initiatives.

Assessment of Future Local Capacity Building Needs

The ministry has begun the review and assessment of MISA Local Capacity Building funding. The annual reports submitted by school boards in April 2011 are helping to inform the assessment. In addition, the ministry is reaching out to our sector partners (i.e., including system leaders and MISA Leaders) and the research community, and will continue to do so over the coming months, to seek input and advice. We want to ensure the needs of the sector are accurately reflected in this assessment, so I thank you in advance for the time and effort on your part that this may entail.

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In conclusion, investments made since 2005 through the MISA program are resulting in school boards across the province strengthening their capacity to use data and evidence in support of improved student outcomes. I sincerely thank you for your efforts which are making a difference in Ontario’s schools and classrooms.

Sincerely,

original signed by

Taddesse Haile
Director, Education Statistics and Analysis Branch

attach. (3)

c. MISA Leaders
   Director, Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch
   Director, Field Services Branch