MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of the Provincial Schools Branch
Supervisory Officer of Centre Jules-Leger

FROM: Avis Glaze
Ontario’s Education Commissioner and Senior Advisor to the Minister of Education
Karen Mock
Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Education on Equity and Diversity

DATE: March, 2008

SUBJECT: Equity Strategy and Implementation Plan

As you are already aware, our Minister, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, has a strong commitment to equity in education. This is reinforced each time she describes her vision of Ontario’s education which she wants to be inclusive with a strong focus on equity of outcomes from all Ontario’s children. We are pleased to be co-chairing the Ministry’s steering committee that is developing an Equity Strategy and Implementation plan.

The commitment to equity is also embedded in the government’s vision for quality education in Ontario contained in the paper Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education:

“Equity and excellence go hand in hand. And a quality education for all in publicly funded schools is a key feature of fostering social cohesion an inclusive society where diversity is the hallmark, and where all cultures are embraced within a common set of values.”

A major component of our work as advisors on equity is to develop a strategy to provide equity of outcomes to all Ontario students. We know that closing the achievement gaps for all students is a major focus for all school boards as we work to meet the Ministry’s three key priorities of:

1. High levels of student achievement;
2. Reduced gaps in student achievement;
3. High levels of public confidence in public education.
Many school boards across the province have, over the years, developed policies and programs to address equity issues. For so many of you, this has been a moral imperative because of your long-standing commitment to provide the best possible education for all our students. We want to recognize and build upon the work that already exists and to capture your vision of what is possible when we adopt a stance that seeks to take our diversity to new levels of understanding and inclusion.

As we develop a comprehensive strategy for the province, it is important to for us to know the status of equity policies, procedures and practices within school boards. It is also important for us to ensure that we are honouring the past as we move forward. Collecting this information so that we can build upon successful practices is essential.

We are asking for your assistance in helping us to understand what is occurring in your school board and what documents you already have. It is our intention to create a compendium of ideas, relevant policies and related supporting documents that can be shared widely to encourage the dissemination of promising practices. We do not have to re-invent the wheel. A lot of outstanding work has already been done.

We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in having the accompanying survey completed and returned by March 26, 2008 to Doug Tateishi, e-mail: doug.tateishi@ontario.ca. You can also email Doug if you have any questions about the data collection.

Thank you for your attention to this very important initiative.

Sincerely,

Avis Glaze

Karen Mock