MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Richard Franz, Director
Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch

DATE: March 5, 2010

SUBJECT: Confirmation of 2010-11 Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM)

I am pleased to provide you with information on the SHSM sectors(s) and school(s) that have been approved for 2010-11.

The Ministry's commitment to these programs includes an ongoing focus on ensuring their quality and increasing opportunities for students. Approvals for the SHSMs are based on the expectation that boards will implement the five required components:

1. a defined bundle of Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits for each of the four pathways to postsecondary destinations – apprenticeship training, college, university, and workplace,

2. compulsory certifications and training identified in the sector guides,

3. experiential learning and career exploration including job shadowing, work experience, and job twinning,

4. ‘reach ahead’ opportunities which allow students to experience their intended postsecondary environment,

5. development of Essential Skills and work habits required in the sector, and use of the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) for purposes of documentation.
The list of approved SHSM sectors and schools for 2010-11 is attached (Appendix 1). Our overall goal is to ensure quality programs for all students. Applications of existing SHSM programs that did not meet all the criteria in the scoring process were given a conditional approval. Boards will have until May 3, 2010 to address the identified concern(s) and if satisfactorily addressed, the condition will be removed and the program will be approved to run. If for whatever reason the identified concern(s) are not satisfactorily addressed, the SHSM program will no longer be approved.

The funding for SHSM programs reflects the increased level of activity in schools and boards, and addresses the following implementation costs:

- students’ certification and training programs
- tracking students’ completion of the SHSM components
- equipment purchases and consumable expenditures
- development of contextualized learning activities
- promotion and marketing
- teacher training and partnership development.

In 2010-11 funding for SHSM programs will be allocated and communicated to school boards through the regular GSN process and through transfer payments. Note that boards will also receive GSN funding targeted to Student Success/Program Pathways which includes the Specialist High Skills Major. As well, funding from the School-College-Work Initiative (SCWI), in programs where dual credits are included as major credits for SHSM students, addresses board costs related to transportation and coordination.

The 2010-11 SHSM Confirmation Form (Appendix 2) is for your board to indicate which approved SHSM program(s) will be offered in the identified secondary school(s). We would ask that you indicate your confirmation of each program on the form, sign and fax back by May 3, 2010.

Please do not issue a news release or other public communication regarding this approval until advised by the Ministry.

For further information please contact:
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Thank you for your commitment to offer high quality SHSM programs as part of your board’s effort to support success for all students.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Richard Franz

c. Kit Rankin, Director Field Services Branch
Regional Office Lead for Student Success
Student Success Leader
Specialist High Skills Major Board Lead