MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities  
Director of Provincial and Demonstration Schools  
Program Superintendents of Education  
Principals of Secondary Schools  
Principals of Elementary Schools  
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools  
Principals of Inspected Private Schools  
Principal of the Independent Learning Centre

FROM: Kevin Costante  
Deputy Minister

DATE: March 30, 2010

SUBJECT: Policy Revision to Support More Opportunities for Meaningful Workplace Learning

The Ontario government is committed in our Student Success Strategy to helping all students plan a successful post-secondary pathway through the introduction of increased flexibility and more opportunities for high-quality, engaging learning experiences that build on their personal strengths and interests. Both the expansion of cooperative education and the Specialist High Skills Major are integral components of this strategy.

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce a policy change which increases the flexibility for both students and schools in offering a cooperative education experience earlier in a student’s high school career. This change will allow all students, including those who are registered in a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program, an earlier option for completing the requirement for two cooperative education credits. It also responds to a suggestion put forward by the Minister’s Student Advisory Council to make changes to the compulsory credits in Civics and Career Studies to encourage greater student engagement in education and learning.

Section 3.2.1 in Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000 has been amended by the addition of the phrase “If the related course is a half-credit e.g. Career Studies or Civics,
the cooperative education course must be scheduled for a minimum of 110 hours for one credit and may be scheduled for a maximum of 220 hours for two credits”.

A change is also being made within the program requirements for the Specialist High Skills Major, which formally begins in Grade 11, to allow the Grade 10 Career Studies course to serve as the related course for the two cooperative education credits required in all SHSM programs. The Grade 10 Civics course may also serve as the related course for the two cooperative education credits required for the SHSM in Justice, Community Safety and Emergency Services. The requirement for the cooperative education placement to take place in the specific sector related to the Specialist High Skills Major remains in place.

These policy changes are effective in the school year 2009-2010 and will be reflected in the updated version of the Education Policy and Program Update (EPPU) when it is released later this spring on the Ministry website. The current Education Policy and Program Update to June 30, 2009, is available on the Ministry website at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/oss/epp.pdf.

Updated resources for teachers and administrators are available on the Ministry website to support both the expansion of Cooperative Education http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentsuccess/expansion.html and the implementation of the Specialist High Skills Major http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentsuccess/specialist.html.

Please share this information with appropriate individuals within your boards and schools, including student success leaders, guidance and cooperative education board coordinators and teachers and Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) board leads. If you have any questions, please contact the ministry office in your district.

Original signed by

Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister

c. EDU Regional Managers