MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Education, French-language School Boards
Supervisory Officers, French-language School Authorities

FROM: Steve Marshall, Deputy Minister

DATE: May 23, 2008

RE: Government’s Support to a Provincial Discussion Table (PDT)
Agreement between ACÉPO, AFOCSC and AEFO

In the late fall of 2007 and early winter of 2008, the Minister initiated informal discussions with trustee associations, teacher federations and unions representing support workers, including the Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l’Ontario (ACÉPO), the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC) and the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO). The purpose was to explore with them ongoing labour peace and progress in the publicly funded education sector by entering into new, local, four-year collective agreements no later than November 30, 2008. These new agreements would expire August 31, 2012 and would serve to promote the following guiding principles: improved student achievement, a safe and healthy learning and working environment and positive labour relations at all levels of the sector.

To this end, ACÉPO, AFOCSC and AEFO met during the past three months at a table facilitated by officials from the Ministry. The desire by both parties to put students first and their collegial approach to these discussions have resulted in an accord to incorporate into local collective agreements the agreements made at their provincial discussion table (PDT) and that the government has agreed to support.

I am pleased to write to you today to outline some details of the additional investments and policy changes the province will make to support the government’s continued goal for improved student achievement in an environment of labour peace and progress. It should be noted that required changes to the regulation governing grants to school boards for the 2008-09 school year have not yet been made. The information in this letter is provided in the absence of such a revised regulation. The initiatives and investments described herein must be implemented by, and are conditional upon, the approval of such a revised regulation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Ministry intends to seek approval for such a regulation and will advise you if it
is approved. The Ministry will be issuing a B Memorandum towards the end of May to provide full clarity on these announcements.

General Approach

As detailed below, the Ministry will:

- support enhancements to programming and collaborative capacity building in French-language boards;
- provide additional resources to allow School Boards to hire additional teachers;
- support compensation and group benefits enhancements.

Fiscal Context

In the fourth quarter of 2007, Ontario’s Growth in the Ontario Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 0.1%. As well, Ontario experienced a third consecutive decline in quarterly Real GDP growth. Within this fiscal context, the Government and the Ministry are prepared to provide the resources to support labour peace and progress in French-language schools where these investments also support their goals of improving student achievement, reducing gaps in student outcomes and increasing confidence in publicly funded education.

Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

Teacher education and the continuous Professional Learning of all education staff are key features of the government’s education strategy. Everyone who works in our school system has an important role to play in ensuring a high-quality education system.

The Ministry is pleased that ACÉPO, AFOCSC and AEFO have decided to promote PLC and that a committee will be set up in each board to direct professional development and learning activities and establish and ensure their durability and follow-up of their implementation. This approach, which will be supported by the cooperation and commitment to professional learning, will contribute to teacher professionalism and student success.

The Ministry intends to increase the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) subject to approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

- Pupil Foundation Grant – amount for professional learning:
  - $7.24 per elementary pupil in 2009-10;
  - $15.21 per elementary pupil in 2010-11;
  - $23.07 per elementary pupil in 2011-12;
- Reduction of class size in Grades 4 - 8:
  - 0.18 teacher per 1,000 pupils in Grades 4 – 8 in 2009-10;
  - 0.37 teacher per 1,000 pupils in Grades 4 – 8 in 2010-11;
  - 0.57 teacher per 1,000 pupils in Grades 4 – 8 in 2011-12;
  - 0.96 teacher per 1,000 pupils in Grades 4 – 8 in 2012-13;
- Student Success Teachers and Literacy and Numeracy Coaches for Grades 7 -8:
  - 0.32 teacher per 1,000 pupils in Grades 4 – 8 in 2012-13;
• Staffing at the secondary level:
  o 0.19 teacher per 1,000 secondary school pupils in 2008-09;
  o 0.38 teacher per 1,000 secondary school pupils in 2009-10;
  o 0.70 teacher per 1,000 secondary school pupils in 2010-11;
  o 1.02 teachers per 1,000 secondary school pupils in 2011-12;
  o 1.35 teachers per 1,000 secondary school pupils in 2012-13.

ACÉPO, AFOCSC and AEFO have agreed that the aforementioned sums, that is, 18.2 million dollars to French-language school boards from now until 2012-13 (0.4 million in 2008-09; 1.6 million in 2009-10, 3.3 million in 2010-11; 5.1 million in 2011-12 and 7.8 million in 2012-13), will be used to support the maintenance and growth of PLC in elementary and secondary schools. PLC activities will support implementation of the Aménagement Linguistique Policy, improvement of student achievement, and reduction of gaps in levels of performance.

**Elementary Preparation Time**

Preparation time for elementary school teachers will be supported by the Ministry at increasing levels for each year from 2009-10 to 2012-13. Funding through the Pupil Foundation Grant, the grant for the reduction of primary class staff and the Teacher Qualification and Experience Grant will compensate for the cost of increased preparation time.

Elementary teacher weekly preparation time is set at the following levels: 200 minutes/week in 2008-2009; 210 minutes in 2009-2010; 220 minutes in 2010-2011; 230 minutes in 2011-2012; and 240 minutes on August 31, 2012.

The combined funding from the additional minutes of preparation time as outlined above and the Special Purpose Grants will result in an increase in the number of teachers funded in the Pupil Foundation Grant from the existing level of 6.22 teachers per 1,000 elementary pupils as follows:

- 0.42 additional teachers per 1,000 elementary pupils in 2009-10;
- 0.86 additional teachers per 1,000 elementary pupils in 2010-11;
- 1.30 additional teachers per 1,000 elementary pupils in 2011-12;
- 1.74 additional teachers per 1,000 elementary pupils in 2012-13.

The additional teachers hired as a result of this initiative will be included in the calculation of the Cost Adjustment and Teacher Qualification and Experience Grant, which recognizes variations in salary costs based on teacher qualifications and experience. Funding to boards will be adjusted to reflect the costs of the additional teachers according to teacher placement on the salary grid.

This investment is projected to generate 2,253 new elementary specialist teaching positions ($211 million) by 2012-13, of which 111 are projected to be in French-language school boards ($10.3 million).

As you know, Arts programs can increase student engagement in learning. For some students, the opportunity for this form of creative expression keeps them coming back to school. Arts education also fosters important skills, such as creativity and innovation. A condition of this
allocation is to preserve flexibility in staffing at the board level to allow these new teachers to be assigned full-time to the Arts, in more than one school as required.

**Elementary Teacher Supervision**

All school-based staff have a role to play in elementary school supervision which is essential in creating and maintaining a safe school environment.

The government will introduce a new allocation in the GSN Pupil Foundation Grant to enhance funding for student supervision in elementary schools as follows:

- $22.23 per elementary pupil in 2008-09;
- $23.61 per elementary pupil in 2009-10;
- $26.88 per elementary pupil in 2010-11;
- $20.06 per elementary pupil in 2011-12.

This investment is projected to reach $24 million by 2011-12, with $1.2 million allocated to French-language Boards.

**Occasional Teachers**

The government will increase funding benchmarks in the Pupil Foundation Grant for Occasional Teachers by 3.5% in 2008-09 to allow for improvements in working conditions to be negotiated locally. This is projected to generate $7 million provincially, with $0.3 million as the French-language Boards’ share of this allocation.

**Tripartite Teacher Advisory Committee (TTAC)**

The Ministry agrees to take part in the Tripartite Teacher Advisory Committee to be appointed by the Minister by December 31, 2008 and remain in effect until August 31, 2012. The Minister will draft Terms of Reference following consultation with the Parties. The TTAC shall discuss issues that arise from the implementation of the PDT Agreement, advise the Minister on the implementation of government initiatives, design strategies for effective local labour-management coordination and cooperation and address specific issues raised during the PDT process. A Francophone subcommittee will be created.

**Salary Increases**

The Government agrees to fund the following salary increases for regular and occasional teachers:

- September 1, 2008: 3.0%;
- September 1, 2009: 3.0%;
- September 1, 2010: 3.0%;
- September 1, 2011: 3.0%.
This enhancement is projected to reach $1.6 billion by 2011-12, of which $88 million would be allocated to teachers in French-language Boards and School Authorities.

**Group Benefits and Other Working Conditions**

In August 2007, the Ministry announced an enhancement of $50 million in 2008-09 to be directed to benefits. An additional $33 million annual enhancement will be introduced in 2010-11 for sector-wide improvements to benefits and other working conditions provided that:

- French-language boards use their share of the $50 million enhancement announced in the August 2007 enhancements and allocated through increased benchmarks in the GSN on March 26, 2008 exclusively to offset boards’ current financial pressures and not to improve benefits through local bargaining;
- Each AEFO bargaining unit’s share of the additional $33 million, and no more, is used to enhance group benefits and other working conditions for AEFO members;
- All remaining group benefit coverage levels and working conditions with financial impact shall remain status quo for the four years of the Collective Agreement.

This enhancement should generate $1.6 million for the French-language Boards.

**Eligibility for GSN Enhancements**

The provision of these enhancements is contingent upon the Director of a French-language Board or the Supervisory Officer of a French-language School Authority, as well as the Presidents of all local AEFO bargaining units, providing a memo to Margot Trevelyan, Director of Labour Relations and Governance at the Ministry of Education, confirming that the Board or Authority and the AEFO Bargaining Unit have ratified by November 30, 2008, a collective agreement which:

- commences on September 1, 2008, and expires on August 31, 2012;
- includes a statement in its preamble that “The XX School Board and the YY AEFO Bargaining Unit agree that they are committed to improving student achievement, reducing gaps in student outcomes and increasing confidence in publicly funded education”;
- fully complies with the provisions of the provincial framework agreement reached at the AFOCSC-ACÉPO-AEFO Provincial Discussion Table, which all three organizations have signed.

In the event that the Parties do not meet these conditions, French-language school boards and authorities would be eligible to a 2% increase in teacher salary benchmarks in 2008-09, and a 2% increase in 2009-10. These increases reflect a rate that is higher than the 1.8% inflation in Ontario in 2007 and the average inflation rate of 1.9% over the past four calendar years. The 2008 Provincial Budget forecasted 1.4% inflation in Ontario in 2008-09, 1.9% in 2009-10 and 2% in 2010-11. Furthermore, during the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years, French-language Boards would not be eligible for the other funding enhancements discussed in this letter, with the exception of the portion of benefit enhancements outlined in the Appendix of the AFOCSC-ACÉPO-AEFO Agreement.
These conditions will apply for each of the province’s four school systems.

As Deputy Minister of Education, I am fully committed to implementing the “Energizing Ontario Education” agenda, building on the progress to date and deepening our strategies and efforts going forward. Labour peace and progress are winning conditions for any jurisdiction aspiring to become the best education system in the world.

I wish you much success in addressing local issues in an environment of good faith, collegiality and mutual respect.

[French-language original signed by]

Steve Marshall

c.c. Laurent Joncas, Executive Director, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
Carole Drouin, Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques
Louise Pinet, Executive Director, Association des conseillères et conseillers des écoles publiques de l’Ontario
Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister
Margot Trevelyan, Director, Labour Relations and Governance Branch