MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Cathy Montreuil
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Student Achievement Division

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Assistant Deputy Minister
French Language, Aboriginal Learning and Research Division

DATE: November 30, 2016

SUBJECT: Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) New Program
Applications for 2017-18

This memo provides information about the application process for Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs for 2017-18.

The Premier’s 2016 mandate letter to the Minister of Education is to expand the participation rate of grade 11 and 12 students in the SHSM program by 10 per cent. This commitment also aligns with recommendations made within the Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel report, *Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility*, released in June 2016. The report makes recommendations on how the province can build on its world-class skills, education and training systems to prepare Ontario’s current and future workforce. The report recognizes the SHSM as a program that provides students an opportunity to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests while exposing them to opportunities in the workforce. When considering SHSM expansion, boards should ensure program proposals are in alignment with labour market needs as outlined in the report.

SHSM growth in 2016-17 continued to increase with approximately 48,000 students enrolled in over 1,835 programs at over 690 schools. This represents 14% of grade 11 and 12 students participating in an SHSM program. The Ministry of Education’s priorities for 2017-18 are to support program expansion while maintaining focus on high quality SHSM programs and to:

- increase the number of SHSM programs in boards and schools with demonstrated capacity for growth, with a focus on expansion in sectors aligned with the recommendations set out in the Highly Skilled Workforce report (e.g. Information and Communications Technology).
- continue support for growth within current SHSM programs, with a focus on ensuring opportunities for students in all pathways, particularly Apprenticeship.
• support increased completion rate of students earning the SHSM seal on their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)

**Application Details for 2017-18 SHSM Programs**

The Ministry of Education’s approval is required to offer an SHSM program, enabling students to earn an OSSD with the SHSM seal designation. School board teams are invited to submit applications to propose new SHSM programs for 2017-18, and are asked to project student enrolment for all SHSM programs offered (existing or proposed) in 2017-18.

School boards have the opportunity to submit SHSM applications in 19 economic sectors: agriculture; arts and culture; aviation and aerospace; business; construction; energy; environment; food processing; forestry; health and wellness; horticulture and landscaping; hospitality and tourism; information and communications technology; justice, community safety and emergency services; manufacturing; mining; non-profit; sports; and transportation.

The application content focuses on the required components of the SHSM and partnership capacity. SHSM programs must be offered in partnership with local business, industry, and/or community organizations, and postsecondary educational institutions and training centres. SHSM advisory committees comprised of local stakeholders, school board, and school staff are required for all programs. The SHSM program must equitably serve all pathways for students in the school.

All applications will be submitted online (https://www.iam.security.gov.on.ca/) and are due by **January 11, 2017**. Adobe Connect information sessions will be held for SHSM board leads regarding the online application process.

Funding will be contingent upon successful fulfilment of program commitments and funds being appropriated by the Ontario Legislature, as per current practice. Please note that, as in the past, boards are encouraged to use a portion of the funding provided for Student Success through the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) in addition to their SHSM funding to support the implementation of SHSM programs.

**Approval Criteria**

The scoring template used to assess the application is available on the on-line application site. The following criteria will also be considered in the approval process:

- The current board and school SHSM completion rate (i.e., the percentage of grade 12 SHSM students that complete all the required components and graduate with the SHSM seal on their diploma when compared to the total number of grade 12 SHSM students in the program), as compared to the provincial completion rate
- The SHSM footprint in the board (i.e., the total number of SHSM students compared to the total number of grade 11 and 12 students in the board), compared to the provincial average footprint
- The capacity of a school and school board to support additional SHSM programs and ensure quality offerings that provide students with the opportunities to complete all the required components and graduate with the SHSM seal on their diploma
- The capacity of a school and school board to offer quality experiential learning opportunities for SHSM students
As part of the application approval process, historical trends in the number of students enrolled in and completing SHSM programs will also be considered. In cases where there is consistently low enrolment and/or completion rate in particular programs, programs may be reviewed with a view to sustainability for the 2017-18 school year. The Ministry SHSM Team may be contacting board and school SHSM teams as part of the approval process.

If you require further information or assistance on any of the elements of this memo, please contact Aldo Cianfrini at 416 325-2669, aldo.cianfrini@ontario.ca or Sudeshna Dutta at 416-325-2508, sudeshna.dutta@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your on-going commitment to support success for all students. We look forward to working with you on this important endeavour and to hearing about the SHSM results achieved by your students.

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Assistant Deputy Minister

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c: Student Success Lead
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