MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: George Zegarac
Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division

Dominic Giroux
Assistant Deputy Minister
French-Language Education and Educational Operations Division

DATE: October 16, 2007

SUBJECT: Grade 8-9 Transition Project: Research Study

Recently, your school board participated in the Transition Project Research Study led by Dr. Bruce Ferguson of the Hospital for Sick Children, as well as Dr. Simon Laflamme and Dr. Kate Tilleczek of Laurentian University. This research project has engaged a team of expert researchers from across Ontario to examine the ways in which young people, parents, and educators experience and negotiate the transition between elementary and secondary school.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for agreeing to participate in the research study and also for the invaluable assistance of key members of your staff. Your board’s Student Success Leader and the principals of participating schools were welcoming and very helpful in identifying members of your board and school communities for interviews and focus groups. Guidance counsellors and teachers also greatly contributed to the success in accessing student and parent participants. In addition, board personnel who oversee the external research review process were accommodating and supportive in meeting the needs and timelines of the research study.

This in-depth study includes site visits, and tracking the 2006-2007 cohort of grade 8 students for two years in order to determine the school routines and structures that could further assist students as they move from grade 8 to grade 10. Your continued willingness to participate is greatly appreciated. The insights from this study will provide valuable information to the Ministry and we believe will better equip schools and school boards to provide smooth transitions leading to successful outcomes for Ontario students.
A number of interim reports will be due during the course of the study and a final report of the Transition Project is due October 2009. We will let you know when the reports are available, and, as has been our practice, we will share research findings and their implications for practice with you and your board at future Student Success Leader Symposia.

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Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

George Zegarac            Dominic Giroux

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c. Student Success Leaders