MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary Treasurers and Supervisory Officers of School Authorities
Superintendents of Schools
Principals of Elementary Schools
Principals of Secondary Schools

FROM: Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister

DATE: September 25, 2009

SUBJECT: Policy/Program Memorandum No. 149
PROTOCOL FOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES BY REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, REGULATED SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

As a result of the recent Provincial Discussion Tables (PDT) agreement, school boards are required to develop a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies.

Policy/Program Memorandum 149 provides direction to school boards concerning the review and/or development of a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies for the provision of services in Ontario schools by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals.

Implementation will begin January 1, 2010.

The PPM is posted on the Ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/149.html.

In order to support the review and development of a local protocol by all school boards, the following definitions, process components, responsibilities and documentation are requirements for the review of an exiting local protocol, or the implementation of a new local protocol. Also included in this memorandum are resources for best practices.

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1 In this memorandum, school board(s) and board(s) refer to district school boards and school authorities, with the exception of section 68 school authorities.
Definitions

- Local Protocol - A written document that enables school boards to form partnerships with external agencies in the areas of regulated health professionals, regulated social services professionals and paraprofessionals.

- External Agency – An organization, not internal to a school board, that employs regulated health professionals, regulated social services professionals and paraprofessionals.

- Unionized Staff – School board-employed professional student services personnel (PSSP) and/or paraprofessionals that are represented by a bargaining agent recognized under the Labour Relations Act.

- PSSP and paraprofessionals
  - audiologicalists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
  - speech-language pathologists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
  - occupational therapists, as defined by the Occupational Therapy Act, 1991
  - physiotherapists, as defined by the Physiotherapy Act, 1991
  - psychologists, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991
  - psychological associates, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991
  - social workers, as defined by the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998
  - other regulated professionals and/or paraprofessionals who are deemed by the school board to be essential for the delivery of programs and services for students with special needs
  - Any future regulated categories will also be covered by the protocol.

Process Components

School boards will assign a school board administrative position(s) or designate(s) to manage the protocol review and development process.

Each school board will establish a school board level committee, and where appropriate, school-based committees, to provide the following for the assessment of student needs:

- the identification of potential partners
- appropriate administrative mechanisms to complete a formal partnership agreement
- input by the joint school board/PSSP committee

Each protocol will delineate the following types of programs and services that are offered by the school board:
programs and services that are currently delivered by external agencies;
programs and services that are currently delivered by school board PSSP and paraprofessionals; and
programs and services that could be delivered by school board PSSP and paraprofessionals, but are not being delivered by them for financial reasons or because requirements do not match the job descriptions or qualifications of board PSSP and/or paraprofessionals.

Each local protocol will outline terms and general expectations of partnerships (i.e. operational procedures) that are then agreed upon with school board, external agency and PSSP and paraprofessional input in each individual partnership agreement.

School boards will develop and maintain a joint advisory committee to resolve disagreements or disputes that may arise.

Each protocol will include a partnership termination procedure to be utilized by school boards and external agencies if necessary.

Responsibilities

The following responsibilities must be clearly outlined in each local protocol:

- The principal is responsible for the organization and management of the school, per the Education Act
- Supervision of paraprofessionals from external agencies is to be provided by staff from the external agencies, who are members in the relevant regulated college
- School boards, external agencies and PSSP and paraprofessionals must collaborate on the evaluation of programs and services provided for yearly review

Required Documentation

School boards will collect the following information necessary to the review and/or development of their local protocol, and to support the implementation of the required procedures. This information must be retained by school boards and used in subsequent protocol reviews.

Partnership Eligibility Documentation for External Agencies must include:

- Description of service/program/external agency
- Validation of external agency status
- Names of representatives of the external agency
- Anticipated outcomes of programs and services provided
- Qualifications/Supervisory relationships for external agency staff providing service

Partnership Eligibility Documentation for External Agency Staff who are Members of a Regulated Professional College (PSSP) must include:
• Current qualifications as relevant to the services to be provided
• Current membership in the relevant regulated college
• Declaration of delivery of services in accordance with professional standards of practice

*Partnership Eligibility Documentation for External Agency Staff who are Paraprofessionals*

must include:

• Evidence of work under the clinical supervision of staff from the external agency who currently holds membership in the relevant regulated college
• Details of the paraprofessional’s role, responsibilities, name of immediate supervisor, supervision plan with time and supervisor’s qualifications

*Termination of Agreement* must include:

• Terms of termination are developed by school boards with input from external agency staff

*Statement of Fees* must include:

• Any fees or payment to external agencies must be documented in a partnership agreement

*Requests for Space/Material(s) by External Agencies* must include:

• Requests by external agencies to utilize school board space/materials must be articulated and must complement the needs of school board staff and not compromise their school board’s staff ability to execute their duties

**Resources for Best Practices**

London District Catholic School Board

Peel District School Board
http://www.peel.edu.on.ca

Rainy River District School Board
http://www.rrdssb.com

Ministry Involvement

If you have any questions, please contact your local Ministry of Education Regional Office, a list of regional offices is attached.

Sincerely,

Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister

Attachments

cc. Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning and Curriculum Division
Assistant Deputy Minister, French-Language, Aboriginal Learning and Research Division
Director, Field Services Branch
Director, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch