As you know, the Minister of Education has asked the Curriculum Council to examine the elementary curriculum. The Curriculum Council has convened a Working Group to initiate a broader discussion about this issue and to that end the Working Group has prepared a consultation plan which will provide opportunities for students, parents, school boards, educators, stakeholders and other interested members of the public to participate in the discussion.

The initial phase of the consultation plan began with a survey posted on the Ministry website in late June for public response. The purpose of the survey was to inform the development of a consultation paper that will be used in the fall consultation process. In addition, a focus group representing members of the affiliates was convened in Toronto during this period in order to ensure that the voice of practising teachers was reflected in information collected to inform the consultation paper.

In the next phase of the consultation process, the Working Group will provide opportunities for students, parents, school boards, educators, stakeholders, and other interested members of the public to respond electronically to the Consultation Paper and Guiding Questions on the elementary curriculum. In addition, the Working Group will hold focus group sessions for selected board teams, members of affiliates, and various stakeholder groups.

All Directors of Education will be notified electronically when the Consultation Paper and Guiding Questions are posted on the Ministry website for electronic response by board teams or individuals. It is anticipated that this will occur in early October and will be available for 30 days. Your support in encouraging the participation of teachers, administrators, parents and others from your board in this electronic response is appreciated.
At this time, in addition to encouraging your staff to complete the online survey, we invite your board to send a team to the Board Focus Group session to be held on **October 15, 2009**, at the Courtyard by Marriott Downtown Hotel (http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/yyzcy-courtyard-toronto-downtown/), from 10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. It is recommended that your team of 6 (maximum) include:

- one teacher from each of the primary, junior, intermediate, and senior divisions
- a principal or vice principal
- a supervisory officer

In addition, your team should include individuals with:

- experience with Student Success initiatives, students with special education needs, guidance, English language learners, Aboriginal education; and
- a range of years of teaching experience.

Expenses, including supply coverage costs, for team participants will be reimbursed according to government guidelines. Boards will invoice the Ministry according to usual procedures.

Please designate a lead contact for your board team who will complete and forward the attached template.

Attached please find:

1. Important information for Board Focus Group participants
2. A template to be completed by your designated lead contact and returned to Lorraine Hayden, lorraine.hayden@ontario.ca or at 416-314-4590 by **September 25, 2009**.

Thank you once again for your support in this important initiative, and our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

__________________________   _____________________________
S u e  D u r s t        G i n e t t e  P l o u r d e
Important Information for Board Focus Group Participants

Supply teacher coverage
• Boards will invoice the Ministry for supply teacher costs, as required.

Accommodations
• The distance from the participants’ home to the Ministry of Education at 900 Bay Street, Toronto must be over 100 kilometres one way in order to claim accommodation expenses. This can be verified using MapQuest.
• Attendees will make room reservations directly to the Courtyard by Marriott reservations department. Individuals may call the toll free number 1-800-847-5075. To ensure receiving the special group rate of $99 per night, attendees must identify the group name “Elementary Curriculum Consultations” when making the reservations.
• Reservations must be received on or before September 25, 2009 to receive the special group rate. The Ministry will not reimburse costs beyond the special group rate.
• All individual reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card prior to arrival. Individuals may cancel guaranteed reservations up until 4:00 pm, 24 hours prior to the day of arrival without incurring a cancellation charge. Any cancellation after this time will result in a “NO SHOW” charge equivalent to the cost of the first night’s stay at the agreed rate plus taxes. The Ministry will not reimburse “NO SHOW” charges.
• Self-Park available at the Hotel at a rate of $25.00 all inclusive per day (with in and out privileges) will be covered by the Ministry. Valet parking will not be reimbursed.
• All other hotel costs, including telephone charges, are at the attendee’s personal expense.

Travel
• Please select the most cost effective method of travel.
• Provide original receipts (e.g., ticket purchase summary/itinerary, boarding passes for flyers; return GO train tickets for commuters, etc.)

Parking
• Impark - 56 Wellesley Street West (NW corner of Wellesley and Bay)
  - 1075 Wellesley Street (East side of Bay, north of Wellesley)
• Ontario Auto Parks (Bay and St. Joseph)
• St. Michael’s College (St. Joseph and Queen’s Park Crescent)
• College Park (777 Bay Street)
• Women’s College Hospital (Grenville Street)
• 25 Grosvenor Street (south side of Grosvenor across from the YMCA)

Meals
• Lunch will be provided at the session and will not be reimbursed.
• Please indicate on the template if you have any dietary restrictions.
• Dinner expenses, to a maximum of $20, will be reimbursed for attendees requiring hotel accommodation, as needed.