September 4, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Chairs of School Authorities
Director of the Provincial Schools Branch

FROM: Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister

SUBJECT: pH1N1 Update and Conference Call Details

First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness to work with the Ministries of Education and Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to ensure that we are well prepared for the upcoming flu season.

The MOHLTC has already provided the Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in Elementary and Secondary Schools, which we hope has been a useful resource. You will receive additional support materials in the near future:

- information posters for students and parents;
- a draft letter for parents regarding pH1N1; and
- a Question and Answer (Q&A) document that summarizes the information from the H1N1 guidelines that may be used for communication purposes within school communities.

Please note that all of these documents will be posted on the Ministry of Education and CODE websites to ensure easy access.

MOHLTC’s communication with school boards is one part of the government’s strategy to inform Ontarians about H1N1 and how to stay healthy. We understand that the MOHLTC will be communicating through various media, including their website, about this year’s flu season. Their plan includes information to be distributed to every household in Ontario in September.

To support school board’s preparation for the flu season, the Ministry of Education will provide one-time funding of $2.5 million to purchase hand sanitizers to be used in accordance with MOHLTC guidelines. The guidelines state that if hand washing facilities are not available, alcohol-based hand rub with 60-90% alcohol should be used under adult supervision. Boards are encouraged to consult with local fire departments when determining where to place hand sanitizers, due to their alcohol content.
Boards can use the funding to support purchases for the 2009-10 school year. The Ministry's funding is allocated on a formula based on an amount of hand sanitizer containers per school, taking into account school size. Please see the attached board allocations. However, it is up to boards to determine how to allocate the containers to their schools. The funding will flow in the fall of 2009 under the Master Transfer Payment Agreement and, prior to receiving funding, boards will be expected to sign a project agreement that will be sent to senior business officials. Reporting requirements will be outlined in the project agreement. Boards should follow their own procurement policies in purchasing hand sanitizers.

**Conference Call Information**

On Thursday, September 10, 2009, Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario and I will be pleased to join Chairs of School Boards and Directors of Education and representatives of school authorities and provincial schools via teleconference to update information regarding pH1N1 and to consider questions and comments. Please see the attached agenda.

Directors and chairs are asked to call in from the same location, where possible, in order to accommodate the large number of participants on the call.

**Conference Call Details**

- **Date:** Thursday, September 10, 2009
- **Dial-in:** Between 3:30 and 3:45
- **Call Time:** 4:00 to 5:00
- **Call-in Information:** 1-800-913-1647 (Toll Free)

All callers will be greeted by the Moderator/Operator, who will obtain the caller’s name and location for the feedback and questions portion of the call. Callers will then be placed on music-waiting until the call begins. In order to provide the opportunity for everyone to participate, the conference call chair will invite each region to comment in turn.

I look forward to speaking with you next week. Best wishes for a successful school year!

Sincerely,

Kevin Costante

Copy: Kit Rankin, Director of Field Services
Regional Office Managers

Attachments: Conference call agenda
Board-by-board funding allocations