Memorandum To: Directors of Education
Director, Provincial Schools Branch

From: George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Date: September 17, 2014

Subject: Student Injury Prevention Initiative: Update and Funding

Further to my remarks at the CODE August Annual General Meeting and my April 2014 memorandum about the Coroner’s Inquest into the May 2011 fatality of an Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) student, I am writing to provide you with a copy of the recommendations issued by the Chief Coroner for Ontario (attached). I also wish to inform you about additional funding to support the Student Injury Prevention Initiative – Phase Two.

Ministry of Education (EDU) staff has reviewed all of the Inquest recommendations as well as those contained within the January 2014 Report on the CODE Student Health and Safety in Schools Project to determine alignment and common themes. To assist us in addressing the recommendations and developing responses to the Coroner, EDU will be striking a Health and Safety Working Group composed of representatives from the education sector. The ministry will facilitate and provide technical support to this group. Ultimately, this group’s expertise will serve to inform a provincial approach to health and safety in Ontario school boards and schools.

The ministry has also committed to work with CODE and the Ontario Council for Technology Education (OCTE) to co-ordinate responses to those recommendations directed to Ontario school boards and to OCTE. Although the Inquest recommendations are based on specific circumstances surrounding the death of the OCSB student, they are relevant to every school board in Ontario. I encourage you to consider best practices, resources or other information your board may wish to provide to CODE. This input will be shared with the Working Group.

.../2
In addition to the allocations currently being distributed by CODE, EDU is providing a further $3 million in support of injury prevention. Later this fall, the CODE health and safety team will contact school boards concerning the specifics of their allocations. The additional funding is intended to address all outstanding Ministry of Labour (MOL) non-compliance orders, to resolve other high priority health and safety concerns in science laboratories and technological education facilities, and to continue to build on a culture of safety mindedness in school boards and schools.

I recognize and thank you for the improvements that have taken place to date to address health and safety in technological education facilities and science laboratories. Working together to address outstanding MOL work orders, and to formulate meaningful responses to the stakeholder recommendations, represents yet another step toward realizing our mutual commitment to build a culture of safety mindedness, and to improve health and safety for all, in Ontario schools.

Should you require additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Office.

Sincerely,

George Zegarac

Attachment: Coroner’s Recommendations

c: Frank Kelly
   Executive Director, CODE

   Kathy Verduyn
   Director, Field Services Branch

   Regional Office Managers