I am writing to inform you of today’s release of three School Consolidation Experience Studies on the Ministry of Education’s website.

As Ontario’s student population continues to change, schools have reorganized, closed and/or consolidated, in order to address issues such as declining enrolment and changing demographic trends. The ministry recognizes that these decisions have significant impacts on students and their families, teachers, and communities. This is why we asked Senior Education Consultant Joan Green, recipient of the Order of Ontario, founding CEO of the Ontario Education Quality and Accountability Office, and former Director of Education for the City of Toronto, to study stakeholder experiences in two district school boards that have recently carried out school consolidations and/or reorganizations.

By conducting approximately 100 interviews and site visits in the Algoma and Durham District School Boards, Ms. Green gained valuable insight into the effects of three very different school consolidations and/or reorganizations on education stakeholders. One of these consolidations was the product of two secondary schools being consolidated into a single existing secondary school. Another was a case of two secondary schools consolidating into a newly constructed facility. The third was a result of several Grade 7 and 8 elementary school programs being merged into an existing secondary school and the subsequent reorganization of the elementary and secondary panels.

These studies provide insightful and useful lessons learned through school consolidation and/or reorganization experiences from multiple perspectives as the ministry continues to work with the sector to ensure the best possible outcomes for Ontario’s students. Additional School Consolidation Experience Studies are also being considered for the future.
The highlights of the reports include lessons learned from multiple stakeholder perspectives which are articulated around the themes of Communication, Transition Planning and Implementation of Decisions, as well as Program Offerings and School Culture. While the lessons learned are specific to each of the three case studies, collectively they provide valuable insight and advice to school board administrators who have undertaken, or are planning to undertake, school consolidations and/or reorganizations.

We trust that these studies will assist you in your future planning and look forward to our continued work together.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Doris McWhorter, Director, Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch, by telephone at 416-314-3819, or by email at: Doris.McWhorter@ontario.ca.

George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

c: Council of Ontario Directors of Education