MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Rob Andrews
Director

DATE: September 21, 2015

SUBJECT: Students as Researchers (StAR): 2015/16 Training Forum Information Package

Please find attached for your review the Students as Researchers (StAR): 2015/16 Training Forum Information Package.

This package provides detailed information for the upcoming StAR Training Forums. To support this request, the following documents are included:

- StAR Guide;
- StAR Bookmark;
- StAR Collaborative Inquiry Graphic (used for promotion);
- StAR Registration Form (student-teacher teams);
- StAR Action Calendar/Staying Connected;
- Release and Consent Form; and a,
- List of Minister’s Student Advisory Council (MSAC) members.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Overview

Students as Researchers (StAR) is now in its third (3rd) year of implementation and is one (1) of several programs as part of Student Voice, offered by the Ministry of Education.

- Student Voice sets out ways to learn directly from students what would help them strengthen their engagement or re-engagement in their learning. This includes strengthening communication between students and all members of the education community.

- Student Voice also helps students build citizenship skills, such as leadership, team building, advocacy, organization, creative thinking, problem-solving, self-efficacy, self-confidence and critical thinking.

Students as Researchers (StAR) provides student-teacher teams (approximately four (4) students and one (1) teacher) from grades 7-12 with training to support a
student-led ethical collaborative inquiry research project on topics of student engagement.

The StAR Training Forum provides:

- An opportunity for a team of students and educators to work collaboratively to become ‘change agents’ and create/share research-based knowledge by raising and exploring their own questions of student engagement, student needs and school climate;

- Students with the opportunity to learn how to ethically conduct action research and produce data of quality, depth and scope; and,

- A great way for students to learn how to carry out a research project that can inform policy and program changes at the school, board and Ministry.

The French-language component for StAR is provided by the French-Language Education Program and Policy Branch (FLEPPB) part of the Ministry of Education. FLEPPB works closely with the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) to provide a one (1) day training session.

Deliverables

As part of StAR, participating student-teacher teams shall:

- Attend a two (2) and a half day overnight StAR Training Forum;

- Engage in a student-led (educator facilitated) collaborative inquiry-based research project over the course of the school year;

- Access the research expertise, if required, of the ministry staff (Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Team) through three (3) Adobe Connect meetings;

- Write and submit a StAR Report (in a format the team chooses) to share both findings and anticipated actions/outcomes which will be shared at the StAR Symposium Conference and may be part of a StAR publication; and,

- Attend a StAR Symposium Conference at the Ministry of Education in Spring 2016 to showcase the research findings and recommendations with other student-teacher teams, researchers, educators, Ministry policy advisors and education officers.

Additional information is outlined in the attached StAR Guide and Action Calendar/Staying Connected.
**StAR TRAINING FORUM INFORMATION**

A two (2) and a half day StAR Training Forum will be held in each region with the following high-level schedule (may be subject to change):

- **Day 1**: 4:00pm (Arrival)
- **Day 2**: 9:30am (Full day)
- **Day 3**: 9:30am – 11:00am (Departure)

Outlined below are the upcoming StAR Training Forums dates and locations. Please note, there is limited capacity at the venues and availability is first come first serve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Total # of Student-Teacher Teams Available</th>
<th>Registration Form Due By:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6-8</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Ontario Education Leadership Centre (OELC)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>September 30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 7-9</td>
<td>North Bay/Sudbury</td>
<td>Stokely Creek Lodge</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>September 30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13-15</td>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
<td>Fort William Historical Park</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14-16</td>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>RKY Camp</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20-22</td>
<td>Barrie</td>
<td>OELC</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 27-29</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Pearce Williams Christian Centre</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 3-5</td>
<td>North Bay/Sudbury</td>
<td>Canadian Ecology Centre</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 23rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**ACTION & NEXT STEPS**

I kindly ask that you forward this information to respective staff as soon as possible in order to complete the following steps:

1. Use the StAR Bookmark and StAR Collaborative Inquiry Graphic to support and promote this opportunity with both students and educators.

2. Identify student-teacher teams from grades 7-12 to participate in StAR.

**Note 1**: It is important that student-teacher teams commit to attending both the StAR Training Forum and completing a project and Report. Student-teacher teams have indicated that when the program was followed with fidelity and support, the resulting learning and skill development for both students and educators was invaluable.
Note 2: Students who are part of the Minister’s Student Advisory Council (MSAC) (see attached list) may be invited to participate in StAR as they are aware of this opportunity and were provided with information at the recent MSAC meeting in August.

3. Complete the Registration Form (see attached) and submit the completed Form by the date specified above (region specific).

4. Collect the Release and Consent Forms for each participant (students and teacher). These forms are a mandatory requirement for participation at the StAR Training Forum and will be collected for each participating student and teacher upon arrival.

Expenses (i.e. accommodation, transportation, etc.) related to this event are covered by the Ministry of Education. Once student-teacher teams have been confirmed, additional logistical information will be provided.

CONTACT

Thank you for your support and involvement in preparing, accompanying and supporting your students through this exciting endeavour.

Should you have any questions, please contact either Ruth Bennett, Education Officer, SSIB at Ruth.Bennett@ontario.ca or 416-325-5788 or Samantha Hamilton, Senior Policy Advisor, SSIB at Samantha.Hamilton@ontario.ca or 416-314-3862.

Sincerely,

Rob Andrews
Director

C: Mary Jean Gallagher, ADM, Student Achievement Division
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