

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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MEMORANDUM TO:

Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director, Provincial Schools Branch

FROM:

Barry Pervin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

DATE: October 16, 2012

SUBJECT:

Accepting Schools: Funding and Supports to Implement Bill 13 and a Whole School Approach to Promoting Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools

Further to the March 29, 2012 B memo (2012:B6), I am pleased to make you aware that the ministry will provide funding to boards in the amount of \$4.75M for 2012-13 to support implementation of the *Accepting Schools Act* (Bill 13) and a whole school approach to promoting safe, inclusive and accepting schools to enhance student achievement and well-being.

Your allocation, as well as the funding criteria and reporting requirements, appears in the attached copy of the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA). Please sign and return electronically the attached TPA by October 19, 2012 to tpa-edu@ontario.ca. Upon receipt of the signed agreement, the ministry will flow funds to your board. Funds are to be spent by August 31, 2013.

As you know, the *Accepting Schools Act* (Bill 13) came into force on September 1, 2012. As per the June 19, 2012 memo regarding the implementation of Bill 13, some legislative changes reflect ministry policy requirements that boards have already implemented. Other requirements such as the boards' responsibility to put in place bullying prevention and intervention plans will come into effect in February 2013. This enables the ministry to consult with stakeholders and the Accepting Schools Expert Panel to develop a provincial model to inform boards as they develop their own plans. In addition, we have attached a document, *Creating Safe and Accepting Schools: Information for Parents about the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13)*, that your board may choose to adapt and provide to stakeholders and post on your website.

The Ministry's Accepting Schools Comprehensive Action Plan and Alignment with Existing Strategies and Frameworks

Building and sustaining a positive school climate is a complex challenge and requires multi-pronged solutions. For this reason, the ministry's Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools includes a robust legislative and policy framework. It builds upon the success of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education and Safe Schools strategies, includes components of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, provides direction to Ontario's Curriculum Council to report on strengthening equity and

inclusive education principles, and bullying prevention strategies across the curriculum, and introduces an Accepting Schools Expert Panel to provide advice on evidence-informed resources and practices that focus on a whole school approach, including bullying prevention and intervention. It also includes a public education campaign to further engage students and other stakeholders.

There are numerous strategies and frameworks available to boards and schools to support student achievement and well-being. Many boards have identified natural points of alignment among various strategies, in particular: safe schools, equity and inclusive education, mental health and First Nation, Métis and Inuit. In addition, the Ontario Leadership Framework and the School Effectiveness Framework are critical to making progress on accepting schools. We encourage boards and schools to align their strategies and frameworks, including strategies for creating safe, inclusive and accepting schools, in ways that build coherence and are most relevant to addressing school and board improvement goals, in the context of the Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and the board's Multi-Year Plan.

Ministry Support for Board Implementation

In addition to funding, the ministry will provide updated documents and other resources. The ministry will release revised PPMs in the fall, specifically PPMs 128, 144 and 145. Opportunities for dialogue and information sharing will be provided at that time through Adobe Connect sessions that will be open to all school and board staff, through Safe Schools Working Group teleconferences and through Equity and Inclusive Education Networks. In addition, the ministry, as required by legislation, will develop a model bullying prevention and intervention plan to be a reference for schools and boards in developing their own plans and to meet Bill 13 requirements.

Branches across the ministry will be integrating topics related to safe, inclusive and accepting schools, where appropriate, into ministry professional learning sessions and resources. This will reinforce alignment and help respond to the request that the ministry reduce the time out of schools and classrooms for principals and teachers.

The Institute for Education Leadership is engaged in developing a toolkit, for release in Winter 2013, which will bring together a practical set of resources, case studies and tips based on the experience of schools and boards and the best evidence available on how to promote and sustain safe, inclusive and accepting schools.

Purpose of Accepting Schools Funding

This funding complements the funding that boards receive for Safe Schools, and boards are encouraged to find opportunities to align the use of these funds with the work of their Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Networks.

The purpose of this funding is to: build on initiatives funded in previous years; support compliance with Bill 13; and to take further steps to implementing a whole school approach to promoting a safe, inclusive and accepting schools (see attached Whole School Approach Tip Sheet). Funding may be used for initiatives including:

- Development and implementation of bullying prevention and intervention plans;
- Professional learning for staff including access to on-line resources, course and/or conference fees, travel and/or release time;
- Purchase or development of programs and resources to support a whole school approach to positive

school climate and focus on prevention – for example, character development, building empathy, respect and understanding, equity and inclusive education, promoting pro-social behaviour, etc.;

- Purchase or development of programs and resources that focus on intervention and supporting principals to assist students who have been bullied, who have witnessed incidents of bullying and/or who have engaged in bullying behaviour;
- Implementation of school climate surveys to assess issues and inform school level plans to address prevention and intervention;
- Promoting student engagement in prevention and intervention activities; and
- Promoting parent and/or community awareness and engagement activities to support student achievement and well-being.

Criteria for Expenditures of Accepting Schools Funding

In this time of increased financial constraint and increased knowledge about what works, boards should avoid supporting one-time events that are not part of a longer term plan. Every effort should be made to select programs and resources that are:

- Informed by research;
- Related to resolving issues identified by data from school climate surveys and/or other diagnostic tools or sources;
- Relevant to local needs, context and population;
- Connected to a board/school plans (e.g. BIPSA/Multi-Year Plan); and
- Help to create and sustain safe, inclusive and accepting school environments.

For information about resources, please refer to the ministry's Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry. The registry contains information on whether the resource has been evaluated and whether it demonstrates evidence of its effectiveness. The Public Health Agency of Canada portal at <http://cbpp-pcpe-phac-aspc.gc.ca/> also has a repository of best practices (evidence-based) and promising practices (evidence-informed).

Accountability for Ministry Funding –Report Backs

I would like to remind you that boards are required to provide the ministry with report backs on how funding was spent. Please note the following report back requirements:

- Student Involvement Funding for the 2011-12 school year must be reported online using Survey Monkey by October 31, 2012. You can report your school board's funding at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/student_involvement
- 2011-12 Funding to Support a Whole School Approach to Promoting a Positive School Climate must be spent by December 31, 2012 and the report back is due January 15, 2012. The reporting template was appended to your board's Transfer Payment Agreement. Completed report backs should be forwarded to the Learning Environment Branch, Safe Schools Unit via regular mail or emailed to safeschools@ontario.ca.
- As noted above, Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools Funding for 2012-13 must be spent by August 31, 2013 and the report back is due October 31, 2013. The reporting template is appended to your board's Transfer Payment Agreement. Completed report backs should be forwarded to Learning Environment Branch, Safe Schools Unit via regular mail or emailed to safeschools@ontario.ca.

Implementing the requirements of Bill 13 and the broader culture change that is envisioned by the comprehensive action plan for accepting schools is a journey that we will continue to take together. I am heartened as it builds on the successful track record that we have had to date in implementing strategies for safe schools and equity and inclusive education. I look forward to working in partnership with you over this next year and welcome opportunities to speak with you individually and at Regional Education Council and other meetings throughout the year.

For further information, please contact your Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Barry Pervin
Assistant Deputy Minister

Attachments:

- Transfer Payment Agreement and Appendices
- Creating Safe and Accepting Schools: Information for Parents about the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13)
- Whole School Approach Tip Sheet –October 2012