

Ministry of Education

Special Education Policy
and Programs Branch
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Ministère de l'Éducation

Direction des politiques et des
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**2009: SB10**

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Superintendents of Special Education

FROM: Barry Finlay
Director
Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

DATE: March 27, 2009

SUBJECT: Special Education Funding

May I first recognize and thank you and your staff for your efforts in not only improving the delivery of programs and services for students with special education needs in your schools, but also their learning and achievement. Your efforts are making a difference.

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the changes in the allocation of the High Needs Amount component of the Special Education Grant for the 2009/2010 Grants for Student Needs (GSN).

For the past two years district school boards declining in enrolment have been stabilized with respect to their HNA funding and boards increasing in enrolment had this increase reflected in their HNA funding. Once again in 2009/2010 this same stabilization approach will be in effect. The approximate cost of this stabilization strategy for 2009/2010 is \$38M. With the projected increase in other components of the Special Education Grant, the total increase for special education for the 2009/2010 GSN is approximately \$49M.

For the 2009/2010 GSN, district school boards will receive 95% of their high needs stabilized amount and the remaining 5% or approximately \$50M will be allocated based on the new Measures of Variability Amount which includes seventeen factors that further delineate both student high needs and boards' ability to respond to these needs. This is the first step in a process of building board profiles based upon a common set of factors that will be used to inform the allocation of the total HNA thus ensuring stability and predictability for boards in the future.

The changes in this year's allocation are incremental and support an evolution of the HNA allocation thus minimizing the impact on delivery of service by boards. This first step in the transformation of the HNA allocation process uses factors related to student outcomes on EQAO assessments and access to EQAO assessments; begins to address closing the gap strategies (eg. boys' achievement); begins to respond to challenges faced by boards smaller in size and in rural areas; and, begins to respond to boards with high prevalence rates for students with special education needs.

Although using data more effectively to inform decisions is consistent with provincial and board initiatives, it does provide a greater level of complexity to the process. In order to continue to provide a transparent funding process for district school boards the seventeen factors used to determine the allocation of the Measures of Variability Amount: (5%) and the weighting of these factors are provided in the Education Funding Technical Paper.

The Ministry of Education will continue to consult with stakeholders during the 2009/2010 school year as it transforms the HNA funding in order to promote better learning and more equitable outcomes for students with special education needs.

Sincerely,

Barry Finlay
Director of Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

cc. Special Education Advisory Committees