

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Sous-ministre

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Memorandum To: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

Date: March 22, 2018

Subject: Mental Health and Addictions Announcement

I am writing as a follow-up to yesterday's announcement by the Premier regarding a substantial investment in mental health and addictions in Ontario.

This investment will provide new resources to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), and the Ministry of Education (EDU) to support their sectors' implementation of the final elements of Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (2011-2021). Based on a strong partnership between the three sectors, the Strategy will establish a high quality, accessible, and individual and family-centred mental health and addictions system available to all Ontarians across the life span.

All school boards face challenges in addressing student mental health needs; research suggests that one in five children and youth experience mental health challenges at any given time. School boards have been responding locally to the needs of these students with support from community-based services and through access to professional learning and resources. Stakeholders have called for additional strategies and supports focused on addressing the mental health and addiction needs of students in order to maximize student achievement, equity and well-being.

As part of the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, all school boards in Ontario will benefit from the following new dedicated school supports over the next four years:

- The addition of 400 new mental health workers over the next two school years to support every secondary school across the province to support continued and expanded mental health awareness and education, early identification and assessment, and enhanced timely referrals to community mental health services;

- New annual funding for School Mental Health ASSIST to ensure that ongoing expertise is consistently available to boards including professional development for educators and school staff in mental health literacy; and
- Embedding Social Emotional Learning (SEL) throughout the refreshed curriculum to promote mental health and well-being for all students.

This new investment in mental health will support the government's commitment to student equity and well-being by increasing responsiveness to students and youth mental health needs and their families. By working collaboratively across sectors, school boards and our community partners will provide children, youth and families with faster access to high quality services, and to earlier identification and intervention on mental health challenges.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to helping all Ontario students reach their full potential. Further information regarding the school-based mental health workers and school boards' allocations will be provided next week in the 2018-19 Education Programs – Other (EPO) memo.



Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

c: Council of Ontario Directors of Education