



The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
Le Secrétariat de la littératie et de la numératie

The LNS Communiqué

Spring 2007

Dear Colleagues,

Since The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) was formed just over two years ago, we have established a solid partnership with school boards, supervisory officers' associations, teachers' federations, principals' councils — indeed with all education workers. We value tremendously the input that all these groups have provided on a regular basis as we support teaching and learning in Ontario's schools. We commend your professionalism and the spirit of goodwill that exists in our school communities. We also thank you for your ongoing commitment to enhancing the life chances of students.

Together, we have established ambitious targets, set high expectations for our students, influenced school and board improvement plans, engaged in locally developed projects and built capacity at all levels of the system to improve student achievement. It is important that we stay the course.

As we visit schools across the province, it has become clear that we need to enhance our communication with you in order to establish a direct connection between LNS and all school staff, answer your questions and provide regular updates on our work. To this end, we will be publishing The LNS Communiqué, a newsletter for all school and board staff. This inaugural issue includes an introduction to LNS and our work to date. I hope you find this publication helpful and informative. As always, we value your input, so please forward your comments and suggestions for future issues to us at LNS@ontario.ca.

Again, thank you for your perseverance and attention to our students as you prepare them for their year-end assessments and work towards the completion of another busy year.

Sincerely,

Avis E. Glaze

*Chief Student Achievement Officer and CEO
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat*

Our Goal

A solid education foundation in literacy and numeracy gives students the widest range of choices in their academic career and beyond. This is why the government has established a goal that 75% of 12-year-olds reach the provincial standard for reading, writing, math and comprehension skills by 2008. The latest EQAO assessments show that 64% of students reached this goal in 2005–06, an increase of 10 percentage points over the last three years. This means that 15,000 more students are meeting the provincial standard after years of flat-lined results.

Our Strategies

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) was established in November 2004 to boost student achievement. To accomplish this goal, we developed the following key strategies:

- 1.** Work with school boards to set achievement targets
- 2.** Assemble and support teams at all levels to drive continuous improvement in literacy and numeracy
- 3.** Reduce class sizes in the primary grades
- 4.** Build capacity to support student learning and achievement
- 5.** Allocate resources to support target setting and improvement planning

RESOURCES

All resources may be accessed on line at: www.edu.gov.on.ca. Simply select **Literacy and Numeracy** from the **Popular Topics** menu.

Webcasts and Web Conferences

Expert insights on current issues and effective practices for all educators.

Web conferences feature key experts from webcasts.

Inspire

This on-line journal features successful practices for teachers and principals.

Making it Happen

A report from The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

What Works? Research Into Practice

This research-into-practice series is produced in partnership between LNS and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education.

Professional Learning Series

A series of handbooks, videos and presentations for literacy and numeracy facilitators on effective instruction and assessment practices.

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6. Mobilize the system to provide equity in student outcomes
7. Embark on a process of community outreach and engagement to build support for the literacy and numeracy initiative
8. Demonstrate a commitment to research and evidence-based inquiry and decision making
9. Establish a growing presence on the national and international scene as an organization that learns from, and contributes to, the knowledge base on how to improve literacy and numeracy achievement

The work of LNS is carried out by regional and central teams of student achievement officers who work with the education community. These highly skilled curriculum specialists and instructional leaders focus on:

- Working with boards to set ambitious student achievement targets, develop improvement plans and provide the necessary resources to improve student achievement
- Providing professional development to teachers, principals and other educators and sharing successful practices within and across school boards
- Promoting the results of research on effective teaching
- Building partnerships with principals' councils, teachers' federations, faculties of education and other organizations

Working in Partnership: Professional Learning Opportunities

Thousands of teachers and administrators across the province benefit from the many professional learning opportunities offered by LNS. Opportunities offered to date include:

- **Summer Literacy and Numeracy Training** Thousands of elementary teachers participated each summer in 2004, 2005 and 2006 in ministry sponsored literacy and numeracy training.
- **Shared Reading Training** During the 2005–06 school year, more than 12,000 teachers and principals participated in training on the strategies and skills of proficient readers.
- **Differentiated Instruction** Approximately 16,000 teachers and principals participated in training for primary grade teams to develop skills in designing instructional programs that meet the wide range of learning needs within a classroom.
- **Leadership Development** LNS has worked in partnership with the three principals' councils to deliver innovative leadership development programs to almost 1,300 principals in 33 boards.
- **Regional Math Implementation Days** A total of 375 educators participated in the Regional Math Implementation Days held in seven regions across the province in January 2007. Teams of educators learned about *Mathematics for Teaching* as well as strategies for job-embedded professional learning to improve instruction and student achievement.
- **The Coaching Institute** In June 2006, 550 participants representing all 72 school boards participated in this event. It was designed to provide research-based information on models and strategies that will help district school boards embed professional learning in classrooms. A second institute will be held in July 2007 with 650 educators expected to participate.

- **Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program** Sharing successful practices across schools and boards in the province is a key strategy for building capacity and improving student achievement. The Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program was launched in June 2006 with 23 schools. These schools have demonstrated continuous improvement and/or success in challenging circumstances over three years. Schools participating in the program share successful research-based practices that have resulted in improved student achievement. Approximately 40 schools are joining the program in 2007 and a total of 100 schools will be participating in 2008.
- **Webcasts** This powerful learning medium links educators from across the province and beyond to discuss improved achievement for all students. Each month, experts in the field of literacy, numeracy and equity, along with ministry staff and educators from the field, share their expertise with teachers and principals across Ontario to improve instructional effectiveness.
- **Inspire** This on-line journal highlights successful literacy and numeracy practices for kindergarten to Grade 6 educators.

What Works? Research Into Practice

This research-into-practice series is produced in partnership with the Ontario Association of Deans of Education to make current research more accessible to classroom teachers. A key feature of this publication is that it includes implications for classroom practice. Please let us know if there are any areas of your work that would make a great *What Works* monograph.

Local School Board Initiatives

Ontario's school system is too large and too diverse for a one-size-fits-all approach. In order to support local innovation and problem solving, LNS introduced **Local School Board Initiatives**. In 2005 and 2006, \$35 million was invested to fund 250 local initiatives to further the goal of improved student achievement in literacy and numeracy. These innovative projects were developed by school boards to reflect their unique needs. Collectively, they offered exciting opportunities to improve student achievement.

In 2007 and beyond, the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP) will provide even more precise supports to students and schools that would benefit from additional attention and resources.

Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP)

The government invested \$25 million in 2006–07 to provide supports for boards and schools, including more intense supports for schools that have experienced particular difficulty in achieving continuous improvement. Our student achievement officers are working collaboratively with boards and schools to implement the OFIP initiative.

The **OFIP Board Strategy** helps boards to develop strategies to assist their schools, especially those schools with static or declining EQAO results in the 50–74% range of achievement.

The **OFIP Schools Strategy** provides more intensive focused support for nearly 800 low-performing schools. These schools have less than 50% of their students meeting the provincial standard in reading. They also have a trend of either consistent low performance, limited improvement over time and/or

Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program Booklet

Profiles schools participating in Phase 1 of the program.

A booklet profiling Phase 2 schools will be released this summer.

Solidifying Our Leadership Alliance: Leadership Support Letter

This series supports the work of supervisory officers in their role as instructional leaders, raising the bar and closing the achievement gap for all students.

Unlocking Potential for Learning: Effective District- Wide Strategies to Raise Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy

Case studies of Ontario school boards.

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declining results. This strategy also includes supports for Turnaround Schools.

Tutoring Initiatives

Research shows that additional time and appropriate support can help students learn the skills they need to be successful. This is why we have invested almost \$12 million in tutoring programs across the province.

Tutors in the Classroom is built on the premise that all students can reach high academic standards if they are given the time, support and instruction that focuses on their academic needs. This program has hired more than 3,500 college and university students as tutors in school boards across the province.

Building Literacy Skills Through Tutoring is a collaborative effort between Trent University's School of Education and Learning, three district school boards and LNS to train teacher education candidates to be volunteer tutors in the Peterborough-Muskoka region. Over 500 teacher education candidates have assisted hundreds of students by providing extra face-to-face and computer-assisted instruction. In a matter of months, over 50% of the students who were tutored gained half a grade level or more in their reading ability.

OFIP Tutoring Initiative provides funding for boards to initiate or extend programs that assist students beyond the regular day to strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills.

Character Development

Education is about more than reading, writing, mathematics and creating good workers. It is also about developing well-rounded citizens who possess the attributes to build a caring and compassionate society. Character development goes hand-in-hand with a strong academic program. By nurturing the qualities of good citizenship, we create a school environment where student engagement, civic responsibility and academic achievement thrive. We all know that good teachers are also good character developers.

The goal of the Character Development Initiative is to develop school environments in which all people – students, teachers, administrators and education workers – nurture attributes such as respect, responsibility, empathy and fairness. Specific goals include improved academic achievement, safe and healthy school environments, reduced behavioural problems and responsible citizenship in classrooms, schools and communities.

Ontario boards and schools will be expected to demonstrate the following in their implementation of the Character Development Initiative:

- Board-based consultations with a wide cross-section of the community
- School-wide commitment to model, teach and demonstrate positive attributes in all school, classroom and extra-curricular activities
- Inclusion of the Character Development Initiative in the policies, programs, practices and interactions within the school and board
- Conditions necessary for student leadership development and opportunities for student voice in the education process
- Opportunities for student civic engagement and community involvement that reflect the unique needs of school communities
- A culture that reflects the language and common understandings of character development

Boards with character development initiatives underway will be invited to share their successful practices and are encouraged to continue to build upon their own initiatives. Character Development Resource Teams will also provide support, advice and leadership to all boards and school authorities across the province.

Statistical Neighbours

School performance and improvement are not just about attainment measures. That is why we have developed a new tool called Statistical Neighbours to enable dynamic analysis of school performance, context and challenges to improvement. Through this analysis, we can explore school performance data and contextual data, such as the percentage of students living in low-income households, students whose language at home is different from the language of instruction, students in special needs programs as well as other socioeconomic and demographic information.

Through our research, we have identified schools that are showing substantial improvement despite challenging circumstances. We know from this evidence that increased achievement is possible for all schools across Ontario.

Watch for our **Summer 2007** issue of *The LNS Communiqué*, which will be available in June. It will feature questions we have received from classroom teachers.