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2006:B7

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Nancy Naylor
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

DATE: June 5, 2006

SUBJECT: **2006-07 Primary Class Size Funding and PCS Plan**

I am writing to provide information about the Primary Class Size (PCS) Funding that the government proposes to provide to boards in 2006-07. The government intends to seek this approval in June 2006. This information is in advance of the release of the 2006-07 Grant for Student Needs regulations to allow boards to estimate the funding for Primary Class Size Reduction, allow time to plan class organizations effectively, and hire the additional teachers for the start of the school year this September.

The government is proposing to continue its investment in PCS by providing \$531 per-primary-pupil.

The PCS Funding would again result in a corresponding reduction in the Distant Schools Allocation component of the Geographic Circumstances Grant. This adjustment recognizes that a portion of the funding provided through the Distant Schools Allocation supports primary class sizes below 20:1 in eligible elementary schools with small enrolment.

This would be the third year of PCS Funding and the government and parents are expecting to see even greater progress by school boards in reducing primary class sizes this September. As a goal, boards should plan to have 100% of all primary classes with 23 or fewer students and as many classes as possible with 20 or fewer students in place this fall. The expectation is that all boards will be fully compliant with the class size cap by 2007-08. The class size cap means that 90% of primary classes will have 20 or fewer students and up to 10% of primary classes may have up to 23 students.

Primary Class Size Plan

For 2006-07, school boards will have to complete a comprehensive Primary Class Size Plan (Plan) for the start of school this September. The Plan is web-based and requires boards to provide class by class organizations for all schools with elementary grades in a format similar to Table N of the October Reports. The web-based Plan application will provide boards with:

- an estimate of the PCS funding and any Distant School reductions;
- the number of new teachers to be hired with PCS Funding and the minimum number of additional primary classes expected;
- current and historical class size statistics on each school with elementary grades and for the board overall; and
- Ministry accountability measures which estimate grant withholdings if the number of planned primary classes differs materially from the minimum number of classes expected.

Boards are asked to complete the Plan with its elementary enrolment information as of June 2006 for the start of school this September. The ministry realizes that enrolment fluctuations will occur prior to school starting as families move over the summer months and new registrations are accepted. However, it is important for boards to complete the Plan to demonstrate assigning new primary teachers, establishing the additional primary classes with the PCS Funding provided, and to show significant progress in reducing primary classes this fall.

School principals and superintendents are important players to ensure school boards are successful in implementing the primary class size cap in schools. The web-based Plan provides boards the opportunity of engaging elementary principals and superintendents in the process of preparing the Plan. Boards may provide access to these staff members to input school level class organization data and to review corresponding statistics.

The Director of Education and the Senior Business Official for each board will be provided with password, access information and instructions to the web-based Plan located at <https://pcs.edu.gov.on.ca>. Boards are to finalize the Plan no later than **July 14, 2006**. Plans that are finalized after July 14, 2006 will be considered late and boards will be subject to a grant withholding of 100% of the PCS Funding until October 2006.

Transitional Program Equivalency Teachers (TPE)

The government continues to recognize that a small number of boards face accommodation pressures and have insufficient permanent and non-permanent elementary classroom space in existing schools to add all the new primary classes from their proposed PCS Funding allocation.

In these circumstances, boards may seek Ministry approval, as a transitional measure, to use some of the proposed PCS Funding for alternative primary programming. Examples include: team teaching, where two teachers are assigned to a classroom; or organizing smaller classes/groups to give students small-group instruction in areas such as reading, writing, and math. Ministry approval would be provided only to those boards that can demonstrate that the PCS policy has been met in schools with sufficient space.

To request consideration for TPE, boards are to complete the Application for Transitional Program Equivalency portion of the Plan, no later than the July 14, 2006 due date (see above). The Plan website includes more instructions on completing the application, including Q & A's.

Boards will still be required to provide actual elementary class size information to the ministry at the October 31 count-date. The ministry will be monitoring Plan information to actual results to ensure that the additional primary classes have been added and that class sizes in grades 4 to 8 have not increased as a result. Boards may be subject to a grant withholding if they have not used the PCS funding for establishing additional primary classes and for lower primary class sizes.

For more information see attached guide and Q & As. If you have questions please contact your Ministry Finance Officer.



Nancy Naylor
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

cc: Superintendent of Business
Secretaries of School Authorities