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2007:B5

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Nancy Naylor
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

DATE: May 3, 2007

SUBJECT: 2007-08 Primary Class Size Flexibility and Plans

I am writing to confirm information about the Primary Class Size (PCS) policy and to provide you with details regarding submission of the 2007-08 PCS Plans and changes to the PCS application website.

PCS Policy

Memo 2007: B2 confirmed that school boards will be expected, beginning in 2007-08, to organize their primary classes so that at least 90 per cent of primary classes have 20 or fewer students. Up to 10 per cent of classes may have up to 23 students.

This memo also indicated that the Ministry is providing some limited flexibility in regard to this target. Transitional Program Equivalency (TPE), which has been available to boards in previous years to recognize circumstances where lack of space in elementary schools limited a board's ability to implement PCS, will be continued for 2007-08 to recognize situations where PCS – related capital projects are not complete and students can not be accommodated safely until these projects are finalized.

This memo also indicated that TPE will be extended in 2007-08 to recognize additional circumstances, such as French immersion or other congregated programs or boards where a large number of small schools limit their staffing flexibility.

As in previous years, application for TPE will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the ministry.

It is the Ministry's expectation that no primary class in 2007-08 should have more than 23 students. Boards will be asked to provide individual explanations for all primary classes that exceed 23.

As noted in memo 2006:B11, boards are expected to implement the cap on primary class size while ensuring that average class size in other elementary grades does not increase beyond 2003-04 levels or 25:1.

The 2007-08 PCS plans should continue to reflect the new policy on combined grade 3/4 classes referenced in Memo 2006:B11. Specifically, these classes are not to exceed 23 pupils and these classes are now included in the calculation of average class size for grades 4 to 8. The Ministry does not have a general policy on the number or composition of combined classes; policies regarding the use of combined classes continue to be at the discretion of the school board.

For more information on PCS Policy, see Memo 2007:SB2 and Memo 2006:B11.

PCS Plans

Boards are required to submit PCS plans for the 2007-08 school year, as was required for the 2006-07 school year. The PCS plans are similar to last year with the following exceptions:

- There are now two TPE applications to support boards in fully implementing PCS as a result of:
 - Accommodation issues pending construction of PCS capital projects;
 - Limitations due to speciality programs, such as French Immersion or other speciality programs that require congregating students; and/or having a relatively large proportion of small elementary schools.

The applications must detail the factors contributing to the TPE request, as well as measures the board is pursuing to meet the PCS objectives in 2008-09.

A new PCS exception report has also been added. Boards reporting class sizes greater than 23 in primary grades or in grade 3/4 combined classes will be required to provide individual explanations.

For more information on the PCS Plans, please visit the PCS Application website.

PCS Application

The PCS Application website at <https://pcs.edu.gov.on.ca> is now available to complete the 2007-08 PCS plans. Passwords to access the website remain the same as for previous submissions.

For those boards that submitted a preliminary plan for 2007-08 the data has been transferred over to the 2007-08 PCS Plan. If the board prefers to erase the preliminary plan data and start anew, please contact Tim Gallivan at (416) 314-0642 or by email at timo.gallivan@ontario.ca.

The deadline for submission of 2007-08 PCS plans is **May 22, 2007**. Changes and/or updates to these plans based on TPE requests or consultations with the Ministry are to be finalized by June 8, 2007.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact your board's Finance Officer or Abby Dwosh at (416) 325-2054 or by email at abby.dwosh@ontario.ca.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Naylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Naylor
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

cc: Superintendents of Business and Finance