

Ministry of Education

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MEMORANDUM TO:

Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers of School Authorities

FROM:

Martyn Beckett
Assistant Deputy Minister
Student Support & Field Services Division
Ministry of Education

DATE:

October 25, 2017

SUBJECT:

Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with
Autism Spectrum Disorder

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information about a pilot being led by the Ministry of Education (EDU), in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), to improve school-based supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

We are pleased to announce that EDU and MCYS are partnering on a one-year pilot that will take place in the 2017-18 school year. The intended outcomes of the pilot include increasing skilled direct support for students with ASD as well as a more seamless day for students with ASD and their families. The pilot has two approaches:

- **Targeted Education Assistant (EA) Training**
 - This approach will explore a targeted 40-hour online training module for EAs designed by Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) and based on the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) task list.
 - EAs participating in targeted training will gain a deeper understanding of behaviour and increase their capacity to support students with ASD.
- **Dedicated Space for External Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Practitioners**
 - This approach will explore the provision of dedicated space on school site in a select number of schools for external ABA practitioners to provide direct service to students with ASD.
 - External ABA practitioners include: practitioners from MCYS' Ontario Autism Program (OAP) agencies, practitioners being funded through MCYS' Direct Funding Option (DFO) and privately purchased practitioners.

In total, 18 school boards have agreed to participate in the pilot; 11 of the pilot boards will be implementing both approaches while the remaining 7 will be implementing only EA training. All 18 pilot boards will receive funding to hire additional ABA Expertise Professionals with BCBA certification for the pilot year. These professionals will support students with ASD and school

teams, including principals, project coordinators, teachers and EAs, to improve supports for students with ASD.

Implementation of the pilot will be overseen by a Provincial Advisory Team that will include representatives from school boards, OAP service providers, unions representing educators and other stakeholder groups in the province. Additionally, an external researcher will evaluate the implementation and outcomes as the pilot is implemented.

This pilot is a first step towards integrated service delivery for school-aged children and youth with ASD. We have attached Qs&As and key messages to support school boards not participating in the pilot in their conversations with families in their district. EDU and MCYS would like to thank the 18 pilot boards and their OAP service provider partners for their participation in these innovative pilots. We look forward to sharing best practices and lessons learned with both sectors to improve school-based supports for children and youth with ASD.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact Julie Williams at Julie.Williams@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martyn Beckett', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Martyn Beckett

c: Superintendents of Special Education
Frank Kelly, Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education