

Friday, October 29, 2021

**Memorandum to:** Directors of Education  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities  
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools  
Chief Executive Officers and Executive Directors of  
Children's Treatment Centres  
Chief Executives of Home and Community Care  
Support Services, Ontario Health and the Children's  
Hospital of Eastern Ontario

**From:** Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister of Education

Dr. Catherine Zahn  
Deputy Minister of Health

Denise Cole  
Deputy Minister of Children, Community and Social  
Services

**Subject:** *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81, Provision of  
Health Support Services in School Settings in 2021-22:  
New Expectations*

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The ministries of Education (EDU), Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and Health (MOH) are working together to support students that require health and rehabilitation services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy) to be successful in school. We are writing to inform you that we are undertaking a joint review of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81 (PPM 81), *Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings in 2021-22*. Further details about consultations with key partners and how school boards/authorities, Children's Treatment Centres (CTCs) and Home and Community Care Support Services (the business name of the Local Health Integration Networks as of April 1, 2021), and other school health professional services delivery partners can contribute to the review will be forthcoming.

Some of the key objectives of the review are:

- Strengthening evidence-based practices;
- Improving access to health and rehabilitation services in schools; and
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities to address gaps in services.

The ministries will be in touch in the very near future to provide more details.

Pending the review, we are writing with some immediate updates to clarify the delivery of health and rehabilitation services in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

## **Streamlining Access to Rehabilitation Services**

As of January 1, 2019, responsibility for the School-Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS) program was transferred from the Local Health Integration Networks under the Ministry of Health to CTCs funded by MCCSS. This transfer allowed for school-based services to be better aligned and coordinated with community rehabilitation services – such as preschool and school-age services – and is a step toward more streamlined services for children and families. For greater clarity, rehabilitation services in publicly funded schools previously assigned to MOH (*as per memo sent August 31, 2018 - Transfer of Contracts for School-Based Rehabilitation Services from Local Health Integration Networks to Children's Treatment Centres*) under PPM 81 are the responsibility of MCCSS and their providers should continue to be welcomed into schools as laid out in the PPM.

Beginning January 2020 and in accordance with the terms of their transfer payment agreements with MCCSS, CTCs can adjust their service delivery models to offer services during summer and school breaks, and provide group and classroom interventions where appropriate, to best meet local needs. School boards are encouraged to work with CTC partners to implement changes to support the rehabilitation needs of students and their families.

## **Unified Speech and Language Services**

School boards and children's rehabilitation service providers have identified the delineation between speech and language services as a service delivery challenge that is not aligned with best practices. The ministries understand that many local communities have already adopted a unified approach to providing speech and language pathology. The government is supportive of these local arrangements and encourages the community to adopt a unified approach when it will best serve students and reduce duplication.

## **In-School Delivery of Services**

Although the public health situation resulting from COVID-19 continues to evolve, we remain committed to supporting students' access to the supports that they need to access learning. It continues to be the Ministry of Education's expectation that school boards work with their local partners to facilitate access to schools by service providers, including those providing school health professional services and CTCs and their delivery partners, as appropriate so that students learning in-person can receive access to support services. Remote delivery of services should only be considered for students learning in person as a last resort.

Please also note that school boards are expected to work with their local CTCs and with Home and Community Care Support Services, CHEO (providing pediatric home care

services in the Champlain region) and other delivery partners to facilitate access to health and rehabilitation services for students enrolled in remote learning.

Thank you for your partnership as we work together to jointly support students who require these vital services.

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Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)  
Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)  
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)  
Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)  
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)  
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