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MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT MEETING NOTE

DATE: February 21, 2023

CLIFF#: 276851

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF MEETING: Monday, February 27th at 5:00 pm

ISSUE(S): Monthly meeting with Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister responsible for Education and Childcare (ECC)

BACKGROUND:

As a result of MCFD's transformation of children and youth with support needs (CYSN) service approach, opportunities for stronger collaboration between MCFD and ECC and other ministries were created in 2021 with the establishment of the cross ministry CYSN working group. MCFD chairs this working group which meets bi-monthly and includes representation from ECC, SDPR, MMHA, and MoH. There is also a regular meeting of cross-ministry Assistant Deputy Ministers to discuss CYSN.

The cross ministry CYSN working group includes key activities which Ministry staff of ECC leads or supports, including the revisions to the School-Age protocols, and Cross Ministry Youth with Support Needs Transition protocols. Both protocols are out of date and require revisions to reflect how each ministry currently supports school age children. As the four pilot communities implement the family connection centres (FCCs), MCFD has been working closely to provide presentations, communications and information to ECC to ensure understanding of the pilots and intersections with school district staff at the local level.

In 2022, as part of the CYSN new service approach, Supported Child Development (SCD) remained with MCFD while Inclusive Childcare became the responsibility of ECC. SCD is funded both thru the Federal government through ECC as well as additional funding from MCFD to contracted agencies across the province. As a result of the four piloted FCCs, a decision was made in 2022 to have SCD services and funding be streamlined to the four named agencies delivering supports in the piloted approach. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was created in 2022 between the ministries to outline the responsibilities, reporting, funding, and protocols to work together to ensure effective delivery and collaboration of this program. The MOU is currently being revised to address the four pilot communities which have SCD in their family connection centres.

DISCUSSION:

As part of the CYSN piloted family connection centres, ECC and its respective school districts (7 in total) have participated in various forms of information sharing, presentations and communications. In the summer of 2022, the seven school districts participated in mapping the various services for children with support needs to understand the 'journey' of children

entering and leaving the school system and the critical touch points of connections for families and their children.

Further to mapping critical touch points, MCFD staff have provided presentations to Superintendents and Secretary Treasurers in these piloting communities (January 2023) and the Superintendents Association in February 2023. Superintendents raised key issues raised included:

- Ensuring seamless supports for families entering the school system.
- Recognition that children may have a team involved before their transition to school, and acknowledgement that some policies and agreements may create barriers to engaging in collaborative and inclusive support planning among FCC professionals and school-based teams.
- Willingness and openness to adapting relevant policies and agreement to ensure seamless support for families.

Through some of the MCFD engagements, school districts had questions with respect to their role in fostering and leading effective relationships to deliver school age therapies to children and youth with support needs. In addition to funding from MCFD that supports school aged therapies, school districts also fund a portion of these services. District principals have a role and can establish and strengthen service delivery in partnership with community agencies including FCCs. Currently, there is a well-established assumption that the responsibility and funding of school age therapies is through MCFD.

As MCFD begins deeper engagement with various advocacy groups and partners, there is an opportunity to clarify roles and activities amongst MCFD, ECC and School Districts to provide supports children/youth who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities. MCFD staff have heard from advocacy groups and school districts that there is a need for earlier support on diagnosis, treatment, and resources to support children with learning disabilities. The intent of the pilot FCCs and other community-based agencies (like Child Development Centres) is to support the child/youth's functional needs and developmental outcomes as opposed to treating learning disabilities. FCC professionals will work collaboratively with a child/youth's school-based team, and intervention services and supports from the FCC would be in relation to their developmental needs.

Both MCFD and ECC work collaboratively on various files that intersect as it relates to children and youth with support needs. The most recent Representative Children and Youth report (RCY) 'Excluded' has several recommendations to government. MCFD staff work closely with ECC staff and other ministries to ensure comprehensive reporting and presentations as requested to the RCY to fulfil our responsibilities as required.

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ATTACHMENTS: N/A

Contact	Alternate Contact	Prepared by:
Assistant Deputy Minister:	for content:	
<i>Carolyn Kamper</i>	<i>Danielle Smith</i>	<i>Jan White</i>
<i>ADM, SIPL</i>	<i>Executive Director, SIPL</i>	<i>Director, Inclusion Policy</i>
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