

**Ministry of Education**  
**Minutes for the Meeting of the**  
**Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education**  
**February 5 & 6, 2014**

**900 Bay Street**  
**Macdonald Block**  
**Toronto, Ontario**

## **Attendance List**

### **Members**

John Wilhelm, Chair  
Lynn Ziraldo, Past Chair  
Suzanne Bonneville (via teleconference)  
Marcia Brown  
Laura Lachance  
Dawn Clelland  
Shelly Durance  
Braxton Hartman  
Laura Lachance  
Dr. Arlette Lefebvre  
Domenica Leone  
Cheryl Lovell  
Catherine Luetke  
Marion Macdonald  
David Mason  
Sharon McWhirter  
Lucille Norman  
Marlene Pike  
Joe Trovato  
Jim Van Buskirk

### **Regrets**

Kim Pearson  
Janette Seymour

### **Non-Voting Members**

Christine Hughes, Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)  
Jane Cousens, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)  
Mary Iannuzziello, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC)

### **Attending Guests/Presenters**

Dr. Kathy Short, ASSIST  
Myra Stephen, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch  
Ruth Swan, Leadership Development and School Board Governance Branch  
Carla Meili – Inclusive Education Branch  
Sharon Weller - Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Branch  
Susan Brown – Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Branch  
Allyson Collymore, MCYS  
Jane Cleve, MCYS  
Cynthia Abel, MCYS  
James Payette, MTCU

### **Regional Office**

Glenda Stevenson, Ottawa Regional Office  
Cosimo Cinanni, Ottawa Regional Office

### **French-Language Policy and Programs Branch**

Vanessa Lee, Senior Policy Advisor

### **Special Education Policy and Program Branch**

Barry Finlay, Director  
Julie Williams, Manager  
Anita Bennett, Manager  
Lisa Lumley, Manager  
Mike Gildea, Council Secretary  
Caroline Hicks, Senior Policy Advisor  
Louise Sibbald, Policy Analyst  
Christine Riedel, Education Officer  
Steven Venner, Policy Analyst

**February 5, 2014**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**John Wilhelm, Chair**

John Wilhelm, Chair of Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) welcomed members to Council and reminded them of the *Conflict of Interest* rules and the requirement to declare any potential conflict at each meeting.

The Chair reminded members that since February marks the end of MACSE's fiscal year, priorities for the upcoming year will be discussed and finalized before the June meeting.

**Special Education Update**

**Barry Finlay Director, SEPPB**

Barry Finlay, Director of the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) provided an update on the following items:

- The ministry continues to work with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) on integrated transition planning for youth with developmental disabilities and how to transition these youth into adult services and long term support. One of the biggest challenges is the coordination of ministries and ensuring a seamless approach.
- All 72 school boards received funding for a Mental Health Leader in 2013-14.
- Three new working groups have been approved for the following exceptionalities: Giftedness, Developmental Disability/ Mild Intellectual Disability and Behaviour.
- PPM 8 on Learning Disabilities is currently in edit with an anticipated release date of Spring 2014. Implementation of the revised PPM is targeted for September 2014.
- The Minister has been briefed on the special education funding working group and will consider its advice as we move into the release of the Grants for Student Needs.
- PPM 156 on Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs - Implementation of PPM 156 will begin in September 2014.
- On April 29th 2014, we plan to bring together all boards for a one-day Learning for All K-12 (L4All K-12) Professional Learning Day. This one day session will include updates from the Ministry of Education, findings from district school boards and breakout sessions featuring presentations by district school boards highlighting projects pertaining to several areas of focus including PPM 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs, IEP and IPP/Creating Pathways to Success.

**Discussion**

- Please e-mail Mike Gildea if you are interested in participating in one of the exceptionality specific working groups.
- On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014 the Learning for All K-12 network has scheduled a professional development day for teachers to present the implementation of PPM 156 on transitions, the continuous improvement of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the work of Student Success on creating pathways for students.
- Members requested additional information about the Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities.

A legislative committee is a small working group of MPPs responsible for detailed consideration of any matter that it is authorized to review.

The [Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities](#) shall present an interim report to the House no later than February 26, 2014, and a final report no later than May 15, 2014. [Transcripts of committee meetings](#) are available for your information.

Please visit the [Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#) website for more information on current committees.

## **Mental Health and Addictions Strategy**

**Dr. Kathy Short, ASSIST  
Lisa Lumley, SEPPB**

Dr. Kathy Short and staff from SEPPB provided an update on the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The three goals of this strategy include:

- Providing fast access to high quality services;
- Identifying and intervening in child and youth mental health and addictions needs early; and
- Closing critical service gaps for vulnerable children and youth.

Over the past three years, more than \$250M has been spent on a number of initiatives related to child and youth mental health including:

- Funding provided for Mental Health Leaders in all school boards
- Implementation of school mental health ASSIST designed to help all 72 school boards as they work to promote student mental health and well being
- The release of a draft K-12 document *Supporting Minds* and intention to revise it including implications for Full Day Kindergarten (FDK).

Dr. Short provided Council with an outline of the core elements her team is working on with the mental health leaders which includes:

- Implementation and Coaching Model
  - Organizational Conditions
  - Capacity Building
  - Evidence Based practice
  - System Coordination and Networking
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- As part of the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, the three ministries (MCYS, MOHLTC and EDU) committed to evaluating the Strategy and the various initiatives after the first three years.
  - The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) was hired by MOHLTC to develop an evaluation framework, develop a baseline mental health and addictions scorecard, and evaluate various components of the Strategy including a qualitative study of the impact of all the workers hired through the Strategy (including the 72 Mental Health Leaders) and an evaluation of the Mental Health and Addictions Nurses in Schools Program.
  - MACSE members viewed the introduction of the mental health and addictions video resource prepared by the ministry to support educator's implementation of the Strategy in the classroom. MACSE members provided input to the ministry on mental health and addictions

challenges for various special education needs / exceptionality groups.

**Discussion:**

- A video has been developed to show what a mentally healthy class looks like.
- A viewer guide has also been developed with a curriculum focus.
- This year a focus will be on providing leadership on youth suicide prevention.
- EDU is working in collaboration with MCYS on the youth suicide prevention resources.
- It was suggested that an open repository be created for students as they have a different perspective about mental health.
- MCYS will be organizing a round table in April 2014 that will include youth and families.
- The evaluation of Mental Health ASSIST will be done by the Hospital for Sick Kids.

**Updates from other ministries**

MACSE members heard presentations on a variety of initiatives underway within MCYS, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (TCU) and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). A written update from each ministry is now part of the Special Education Update. One item of importance was the work being done across Ministries in Mental Health and Addictions.

**MCYS Update – Cynthia Abel**

- A letter from Minister Piruzza to MCYS child and youth mental health funded agencies on January 8, 2014, provided information regarding the identification of 34 service areas in Ontario.
- 16 service areas will be sequenced in Phase 1 (Spring 2014), and 17 service areas in Phase 2 (Spring 2015).
- Toronto has been designated as a single service area and the lead agency identification process will begin in June 2014.
- Each service area will have an associated lead agency identified who will be responsible for implementation of new accountability tools, service expectations and revised service contracting processes consistent with the transformation.

**MCYS - Youth Justice update – Allyson Collymore**

- Youth in or at risk of conflict of the law have a number of challenges such as mental health, addictions and poor school history.
- Youth Justice is currently working with the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, EDU to identify opportunities to improve educational outcomes for youth in Section 23 education programs in youth justice settings.
- As part of the strategy, Youth Justice is enhancing programs in our facilities, providing capacity internally and we continue to look at how to strengthen the education component.

**Discussion:**

- It was mentioned that the planning boundaries are very different than that of the Ministry of Health. This is an example of two different initiatives with different boundaries.
- The Final Report on the Evaluation of Speech and Language Demonstration Sites has been released. An update will be provided at the June meeting

## MCSS Update - Christine Hughes

- Christine provided additional information on the Select Committee on Developmental Services.
- The Committee was struck in the fall of 2013 and includes members from all three parties. Meetings commenced in October and the Committee finished public hearings the week of January 20. In addition to meetings in Toronto, they travelled to London, Thunder Bay, Moosonee and Ottawa. They have heard from ministries, agencies, family members and individuals with a developmental disability. An interim report is to be tabled on February 26, 2014 and a final report with recommendations by May 15, 2014.
- Many presenters have raised issues that students with a developmental disability encounter difficulties transitioning from school to adult life in the community.
- MCSS introduced the Developmental Services Inclusion and Employment Opportunities Partnership Fund, a \$2 million fund to provide one-time funding for projects that support agencies, organizations or partnerships with the development and/or implementation of creative projects that promote social inclusion and/or employment opportunities for adults with a developmental disability.
- Successful projects should be announced in early to mid-February 2014 and must be completed by March 31, 2015.
- The Ministry is investing \$900,000 for person-directed planning in 2013/14 and into 2014/15.
- Once selected, individuals would work with an independent facilitator or an agency planner to create a customized person-directed plan to help the individual:
  - Identify their life vision and goals;
  - Find supports to meet their goals with the help of others.
- Person-directed planning has been identified as a useful way to plan for transitions, such as leaving school.

### Discussion:

- One of the members inquired if the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) collected data on whether the incidents of ODSP have increased within exceptionalities
- The Ontario government requested the Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) to undertake a review of how adults with mental disabilities might be better enabled to participate in the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). The Final Report is anticipated to be released in spring 2014.
- It was suggested that EDU send information to district school boards about the Employment Opportunities Fund.

## MTCU Update - Jane Cousens and James Payette

### Summer Transition Program

- Summer transition projects are intended to assist students with learning disabilities in making a successful transition from secondary school to college or university.
- For 2013-14 \$1.02 million in funding was flowed in November for these programs.
- MTCU is exploring integrating Summer Transitions Program funding with Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities (AFSD).
- The integration remains a part of the working group consultation for the AFSD. No final decision has been made.

### Discussion

- Programs during the summer are excellent but one is needed for the developmental disability community
- It was suggested that the transitions program include the social and emotional transition. Students are overwhelmed.

#### MOHLTC Update – Mary Iannuzziello

- Beginning April 2014, the province will increase access to oral health services by expanding eligibility for the Health Smiles Ontario program.
- Starting August 2105, six publicly-funded dental programs will be integrated into one program to provide seamless enrolment.
- This service will make it easier for eligible children and youth to receive timely dental care. 70,000 more low income children and youth aged 17 and under will receive care

#### Discussion

- The Assistive Devices Program does not have a warranty in place. An example of one of these devices is the Apex Braille Note; a two year warranty costs \$1000. The warranty should be three years, similar to the Special Education Amount (SEA) for equipment.
- Catherine Luetke who represents the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community asked if there is any way to get an MRI sooner for cochlear implants. At this time there is a 6 month waiting period.

**February 6, 2014**

**Learning for All K-12**

**Julie Williams, SEPPB  
Christine Riedel, SEPPB  
Steve Venner, SEPPB**

Julie Williams and staff from SEPPB provided background information for new members and an update on Learning for All K-12. As mentioned the ministry plans to bring together all boards for a one-day Learning for All K-12 (L4All K-12) Professional Learning Day. This one day session will include updates from EDU, findings from district school boards and breakout sessions featuring presentations by district school boards highlighting projects pertaining to several areas of focus (PPM 156, IEP and Transitions, IPP/Creating Pathways to Success, Student Self-Efficacy and Collaborative Inquiry)

The ministry continues to provide school boards with funds to support Learning for All K-12 Regional Projects that focus on:

- educators “knowing your student” and “students knowing themselves as learners” as student self-efficacy is key to their achievement and well-being
- fostering continuous improvement of IEPs as a critical tool in driving student achievement and well-being for students with special education needs
- developing a plan and identifying effective practices to implement the requirements set out in Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 156.

In Fall 2013 SEPPB conducted a survey with the 18 lead L4All K-12 school boards to review Learning for All K-12 Regional Projects 2009-13.

Julie provided an update on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) website. A total of 42 resources have now been posted from various school boards.

Discussion

Members focused on the following key areas when discussing Learning for All, K-12:

- Developing Learning for All, K -12 into a policy document vs. resource document
- Knowledge mobilization in pre-service teacher education programs
- The model for teacher capacity building (i.e., Coaching model)
- Positive feedback on Learning for All K-12 project model and a suggestion to explore application to support PPM 156 implementation and Mental Health and Addictions Strategy
- Identification of effective practices (i.e., on-line student/class profile tools)

Hamilton Wentworth DSB developed a [Learning for All K-12 video](#) on YouTube.



## **Supporting Bias-Free Progressive Discipline in Schools Resource Guide**

**Ruth Swan, Leadership Development and School Board Governance Branch**

**Carla Meili – Inclusive Education Branch**

**Sharon Weller – Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Branch**

**Susan Brown – Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Branch**

**Myra Stephen, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch**

Staff from the Inclusive Education Branch, Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Branch and SEPPB provided an overview of the *Supporting Bias-Free Progressive Discipline in Schools Resource Guide*. This guide was developed by the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Human Rights Commission and reflects feedback provided through consultations that took place with educators, non-teaching staff and parent groups.

### Discussion

Members focused on the following key areas when discussing Human Rights in Ontario Schools:

- Knowledge mobilization in pre-service teacher education programs
- More parent engagement and involvement (i.e. a dialogue required at the Parent Engagement Advisory Committee (PEAC) Table)
- Resources related to Human Rights should be posted on the SEAC website
- Knowledge mobilization with other ministries as well as agencies
- Ensure that there are collaborative leadership opportunities

### **Presentation of Certificates**

John Wilhelm and Barry Finlay expressed their appreciation to members whose terms have come to an end.

- Marlene Pike, representing Principals
- Joe Trovato, representing Psychologists

Barry also presented a Certificate of Appreciation to John Wilhelm, Chair of MACSE on behalf of the Minister and Ministry.

### **Community Collaboration**

Shelly Durance (Teachers)

- The use of iPads as a support for the EQAO testing or a PDF version of the test for students with special education needs

Challenges include:

- Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) are being identified as having Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) or Emotional / Behaviour Disorder.

Domenica Leone (Supervisory Officers)

- Services and supports are required to support FDK students
- Greater coordination of services is required

- The need for a clear vision and collaborative approach for adults with special education needs
- More information is required for students transitioning to post- secondary education

#### Cheryl Lovell (Trustees)

Successes include:

- Boards are pleased about the funding received for Mental Health Leaders

Challenges include:

- The number of high needs students is steadily increasing and school boards do not have enough staff to meet the needs. Some school boards have been using their reserve funds to accommodate the increase.
- Concerns among school board staff about meeting the needs of the extended day program.

#### Dawn Clelland (Blind and Low Vision)

Successes include:

- The technology for Blind and Low Vision students. Students can now print from an iPhone and/or blue tooth a screen so the teacher can see what they are doing.

Challenges include:

- Blind students do not have transitional supports in place including technology, money supports, etc.
- PC's are not compatible for blind and low vision students, the Apple products have accessibility features that work. More Apple products are required in schools.

Solutions include:

- Provide students with hands-on opportunities for life skills, tech seminars, and money management.
- We need to teach students self-advocacy skills.

#### Lynn Ziraldo (Past Chair)

Successes include:

- Some school boards are having students create self-advocacy cards from their IEP's. This project has made a huge impact for students. Students are more aware of their strengths and needs and are learning self-advocacy skills.
- Pre-service programs and AQ courses are using the *Learning for All K-12, Shared Solutions and Caring and Safe Schools* document.

Challenges include:

- Some SEAC's are not working effectively, this had to do with relationships around the table and working together. Lynn suggested that the *Shared Solutions* document be used for group dynamics.

#### Robert Savage (Emotional/ Behavioural Disorder)

Successes include:

- Homework Help is a free online math help resource for students in Grades 7-10. Homework Help provides free, live one-on-one tutoring from Ontario teachers
- St. Clair College is launching a new program "Community Integration Partnership". This program focuses on the needs of the community.

Challenges include:

- High needs students coming into school and the funding model. The ministry should consider late registration for students with complex needs.

- Transitioning from secondary to post-secondary

Joe Trovato, (Psychologists)

Successes include:

- Mental health initiative and three ministries working together

Challenges include:

- Board administration continue to get the information first, how does that get sent to front line staff?

Solutions include:

- Community collaboration
- Streamlined approaches

Marion Macdonald (Aboriginal Community)

Successes include:

- Now that the ministry is gathering FNMI (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) data, there is an increased awareness of FNMI in student achievement.
- Supports are now available in various boards to assist with student engagement.
- These supports also assist students both culturally and academically.
- All 72 school boards now have programs where parents can self-identify.

Challenges include:

- The ministry needs to find some type of assessment that reflects FNMI. We need to assess a culture that has different views / perceptions.
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills and early intervention strategies for FNMI population

Marlene Pike (Principals)

Successes include:

- A student is graduating secondary school from one of the shelters in Durham DSB. This is our fourth graduate.
- On-going communication with teachers
- Teams – we now have an IEP team, support staff team and a weekly team

Challenges include:

- The Kurzweil software does not work for students taking the EQAO test
- The complexity of needs of students such as students with FASD
- The access to services students require beyond the school system

Solutions include:

- Professional learning
- Knowledge mobilization
- Professional learning communities (PLC's)

Marcia Brown (Educational Assistants)

Successes include:

- More teachers are involved
- E.A's are always having difficulty understanding students, TDSB has a Methods and Resource Teacher (MART) come in and assist.

Challenges include:

- There is an increase of students with special education needs and not enough E.A's
- Current E.A's are finding their days overwhelming

### Lucille Norman (Multiple Exceptionalities)

Successes include:

- There are many different forms of technology for students with ME
- The continuous improvement of IEPs

Challenges include:

- Students are experiencing delays and interruptions when receiving equipment
- Students are being told they have to be on modified days
- Does the ministry collect data on the total number of students who have been identified with Multiple Exceptionalities and are on modified days?

### Laura LaChance (Developmental Disability)

Successes include:

- Many school boards have programs at the elementary level that are excellent but not at the secondary level

Challenges include:

- There are no credit bearing courses for students with DD
- There is a concern in the sector re: DSM 5
- Students with DD are often going to one school in the morning and travelling to their home school in the afternoon. This is their only option for secondary school.
- There are some school boards who do not follow ministry practices with MID and DD students, students who have regular class placement are not offered this when entering secondary school.

### Arlette Lefebvre (Medical)

Successes include:

- The announcement of a \$60 million investment to establish the Medical Psychiatry Alliance, a joint initiative by the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Hospital for Sick Children and Trillium Health Partners, to address the challenges of combined mental and physical health.
- Media Smarts is a website that provides information on digital and media literacy for youth. One of their key mandates is to raise public awareness of the importance of “media smarts” for children and youth.
- The Social Emotional Enhancement and Development (S.E.E.D) Project is a three year project of the BC Centre for Ability with partial funding from the Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability Component. The objective of the project is to promote social-emotional health of children and youth with special needs. For more information, please visit [www.BCCFA-SEED.org](http://www.BCCFA-SEED.org).

Challenges include:

- Providing services to students who have medical and psychiatric problems

### Jim Van Buskirk (Social Workers)

Successes include:

- There is growing attention to evidence-based practice and a focus on what is working and what doesn’t amongst social workers
- The funding for suicide prevention activities and Ontario’s Mental Health and Addictions Strategy has been well received.

- Restorative practices have been used to develop character attributes amongst students in some parts of the province.

Challenges include:

- Caseloads for social workers are high and the complexity of the cases make the workload challenging
- One time professional learning sessions around suicide prevention have a limited impact.
- Youth accessing psychiatric services in a timely fashion is a challenge

David Mason (Gifted)

Successes include:

- The autism Connection Model represents a type of centre of excellence which has been successful. All exceptionalities could benefit from this type of approach.
- Assistive technology is very important for students with special education needs. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with school boards, should explore the creation of a centre of excellence for assistive technology.

Challenges include:

- There have been challenges around the acceptance by school boards of minority reports.
- Mental health issues for students continue to emerge and are an important issue.
- Parents' acquiring knowledge around the special education processes remains a challenge

Catherine Luetke (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)

Successes include:

- One way to build capacity would be through video conferencing where school boards could be linked with those boards who have teachers of the deaf

Challenges include:

- There are not enough qualified interpreters for American Sign Language
- No provincial standards and guidelines for service delivery to students who are deaf or hard of hearing resulting in inequitable services across the province
- Some boards have no teachers of the deaf on staff

Sharon McWhirter (Speech and Language Pathologists)

- There is a need to focus on the early years in school. A number of school boards have increased speech-language pathologists (SLP) to support students in full-day kindergarten programs.
- There has been increased SLP staffing on multidisciplinary Autism Resource Team. Teams focus on supporting teachers and school staff in programming and problem solving and provide capacity building through ongoing professional development for teachers and educational assistants.

Challenges include:

- Collaboration across sectors remains a challenge when there is not a joint focus.
- Parents are frustrated with the speech-language system, reporting long wait lists and inadequate levels of service.
- School board resources are focused on early intervention for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3. This is an effective approach but for many students with severe speech and language impairments their needs are lifelong. More services, and a variety of supports, are needed by students in older grades
- Ongoing challenges of building capacity within the education system for our teachers to

program effectively for students with speech-language delays and disorders including Autism.

### **Upcoming Priorities for MACSE**

MACSE members reviewed their focus areas for 2012-13 and discussed upcoming priorities. Two working groups were established and are as follows:

- Full Day Kindergarten and early identification
- Special Education exceptionalities / guidelines / interventions

Once finalized, MACSE minutes will be posted on the MACSE repository and will be available to members.

- MACSE's next meeting is scheduled for June 24 and 25, 2014.

Members are reminded that all meeting materials from the February 2014 meeting are confidential unless otherwise stated.