

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE**  
**MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**February 6, 2013**

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

**Members**

John Wilhelm, Chair  
Warren Kennedy, Vice-Chair  
Lynn Ziraldo, Past Chair  
Susan Blekkenhorst  
Marcia Brown  
Dawn Clelland  
Tracy Grant  
Dr. Arlette LeFebvre  
Cheryl Lovell  
Catherine Luetke  
David Mason  
Christian Mclary  
Kim Pearson  
Marlene Pike  
Marianne Saade  
Robert Savage  
Janette Seymour  
Joe Trovato

**Non-Voting Members**

Jane Cleve, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)  
Stacey Weber, MCYS  
Christine Hughes, Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)

**Attending Guests/Presenters**

Alex Bezzina, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)

**Provincial Schools Branch**

Nancy Sanders, Director

**Regional Office**

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

**French-Language Policy and Programs Branch**

Vanessa Lee, Senior Program and Policy Analyst

**Special Education Policy and Program Branch**

Barry Finlay, Director  
Anita Bennett, Manager  
Sandy Palinski, Manager  
Mike Gildea, Council Secretary  
Céline Ranger-Rush, Education Officer  
Caroline Hicks, Senior Policy Advisor  
Louise Sibbald, Recorder  
Steven Venner, Policy Analyst

**Meeting Summary**  
**Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education**  
**February 6, 2013**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS</b>	<b>John Wilhelm</b>
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John Wilhelm, Chair of Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) greeted members and provided an overview of the *Conflict of Interest* rules to the Council. Council members were reminded of the requirement to declare any potential conflict at each meeting.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>	<b>Alex Bezzina</b> <b>Deputy Minister</b> <b>MCYS</b>
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Alex Bezzina, Deputy Minister, Children and Youth Services provided an overview of the Inter-Ministerial Collaboration on Services and Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs. The main focus of the presentation was to discuss the number of collaborative initiatives with other ministries including:

- Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities<sup>1</sup>;
- Re-engineering Provincial Speech and Language Services;
- Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy; and
- Care in the Long Term for Youth and Young Adults with Complex Care Needs.

Discussion

- A suggestion was made to have telepsychiatry available not only to more rural and remote areas but to school boards as well.
- It was noted that organizations will need to provide a wide variety of services including clinical expertise and have the ability to contract based on local needs.
- The Integrated Transition Plan (ITP) is a great opportunity to look at a standardized curriculum for life skills for all students.
- It was suggested that the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities be a part of the discussions around the ITP.
- The Deputy Minister would like to follow-up with members of MACSE regarding the upcoming changes in MCYS specifically Pathways to Care.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MCYS Update</b>	<b>Jane Cleve, MCYS</b> <b>Tracy Weber, MCYS</b>
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A written update of MCYS initiatives can be found in the Special Education Update.

Jane Cleve and Tracy Weber answered questions from members of MACSE on the following topics:

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<sup>1</sup> The Child and Family Services Act defines a developmental disability as: "A condition of mental impairment, present or occurring during a person's formative years that is associated with limitations in adaptive behaviour."

- Blind and Low Vision
- Mental Health and Addictions Strategy
- Infant Hearing Program
- Speech and Language Services

#### Discussion

- Early childhood vision experts are receiving professional development twice a year on how to work with low vision students through places such as W Ross MacDonald School. A protocol with the Provincial School Branch will be established in the next couple of months.
- The establishment of community lead agencies will assist parents in accessing services for their child.
- The Infant Hearing Program is now supporting both ASL and Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT).
- MCYS is looking into the wait times for both deaf and hard of hearing and speech and language services. There is currently 10,000-12,000 on a waitlist for speech and language services.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE</b>	<b>Barry Finlay Director, SEPPB</b>
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Barry Finlay began his update by providing a copy of Michael Fullan’s report, *“Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario’s Education Agenda”* to each member of MACSE to review. This report was released two weeks ago and is available on the ministry website. This report provides a framework for moving forward in education.

Policy Program Memorandum 156: *Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs* was released last week and will be required to be implemented in September 2014. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) must have a transition plan in place; this is an integral part of the IEP.

EDU, MCYS and MCSS are working collaboratively towards integrated transition planning which will lead to the development of a single transition plan for young people with developmental disabilities. This plan will be implemented in 2013.

SEPPB will be releasing funds for the purchase of technology in Section 23 programs. Funds will be available for all Section 23 programs. More information about Section 23 and Mental Health will be available in June.

Funds will be provided to boards to train individuals on suicide prevention and intervention.

MCYS, MCSS and EDU are currently working on the transformation of mental health as well as a number of Section 23 programs that will be affected. A total of \$2M has been allocated to new programs for Section 23 based on transformed delivery models. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

Anticipate there will be no changes in funding for 2013-14 for special education funding.

The Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) and the Guidelines for Programs and/or Services for Students with Learning Disabilities are currently in edit and are waiting for approvals. SEPPB will be seeking approval to move forward with working groups for the following exceptionalities: Mild Intellectual Disability (MID), Gifted and Developmental Disability (DD).

Student Success will be leading the review of the “Applied Level” courses.

Discussion

- There is a concern that there are too many transition plans being created from different parts of the ministry and ministries. The transition plan needs to be a coordinated effort.
- The review of the applied course was well received by members of MACSE. The past Chair noted that approximately 65% of students in the applied stream have a learning disability or other exceptionality.
- There is a concern that the appeals process under Regulation 181/98 is quite lengthy. The appeal process can take up to 31 weeks. It was suggested that the IPRC process take place early in the New Year.
- Timelines to submit proposals for the “Pilots to improve educational outcomes for students in care of Children’s Aid Societies” is too short. Not all school boards have information on Crown Wards. Student Achievement division should be made aware of this.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY</b>	<b>Sandy Palinski Dr. Kathy Short</b>
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Sandy Palinski and Dr. Kathy Short provided an overview of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Ministries have been working toward enhancing coordination within and across sectors. EDU commitments include amending the education curriculum, developing a resource guide and website and providing support for professional learning in mental health for all Ontario educators.

Members of MACSE were asked for feedback on how to better share information amongst school boards. Core topics for further discussion included youth suicide prevention, addictions and aboriginal students.

Discussion

- Members suggested that family involvement be included within the strategy.
- It was suggested that a family guide be written in plain language so that families have access to those documents and parents know how to talk to educators.
- The Administrator’s Guide should have a section on “talking to parents” for principals in schools
- Huge potential for mental health education in social media
- There is a gap between school boards right now in regards to mental health leaders. Some boards have a mental health leader in place and some boards have not been assigned one.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES</b>	<b>Christine Hughes MCSS</b>
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MCSS had two updates concerning the developmental services area.

1. A new regulation was approved in December that clarifies who is eligible for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports without having their eligibility determined by Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).
2. Consultation on Passport guidelines: The Passport guidelines are being revised to cover a range of services, such as respite. Two of the key concerns raised include:

- The need for more clarity — the current rules for how Passport funding can be spent are open to interpretation. This has led to inconsistencies in how individuals and families are using their funding in different parts of the province.
- The complexity of the reporting process – the current process for reporting expenses and submitting invoices for reimbursement is labour intensive for individuals and families.

Discussion

- The definition of developmental disability should be standard across ministries.
- One of the members suggested looking at the Quebec model on assisting people with developmental disabilities entering the workforce. For example, the government reimburses the employer if the person requires more time for on the job training.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>COMMUNITY COLLABORATION</b>	<b>All</b>
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Members were invited by the Chair to highlight successful practices and challenges as well as possible solutions from their most recent consultation with their constituency groups:

Chair (John Wilhelm)

- John received three pieces of correspondence referring to acquired brain injuries. He would like to know what resources are available through the ministry.

Past Chair (Lynn Ziraldo)

- Learning Disabilities Steering Committee has been breaking down stigmas by involving community organizations. It is a great model that has taken awhile to build.

Trustees (Cheryl Lovell)

- Schools and school boards are making more deliberate connections in the need for effective transition planning for students with special education needs. In one example a school board has established a Transitions Advisory Committee.

Emotional/ Behavioural Disorder (Robert Savage)

No feedback received.

Educational Assistants (EA) (Marcia Brown)

No feedback received

Pervasive Developmental Disorders/Autism (Janette Seymour)

- The York Region ASD Partnerships are service providers coming together for better access to services. There are also a number of working group pathways that are accessible without changing the individual approaches.

Principals (Marlene Pike)

- A wide range of PD opportunities is available to for educators in order to build capacity to try and meet diverse needs.

Social Workers (Marianne Saade)

- Positive Behavior Intervention Program is a training program from the United States. This program looks how to promote positive behavior.

Psychologists (Joe Trovato)

No feedback received.

Practitioners (Arlette Lefebvre)

- We are seeing more children that have seizures and vasculitis. Sick Kids has met with Holland Bloorview and Surrey Place to discuss this issue. The Brain Injury Association has a list of “Apps” in their latest newsletter.

Developmental Disability (Susan Blekkenhorst)

- Susan referred to a media story in her community where the provincial and federal government arranged for 45 first nations students to be bussed to another school due to the poor conditions of their school.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Catherine Luetke)

- The Hearing Foundation has been offering a program called Sound Sense to grade 4-6 students in schools. This program educates children about the dangers of noise exposure. The Hearing Foundation would like to work with the Ministry of Education to ensure that it is part of the curriculum.

Blind and Low Vision (Dawn Clelland)

- Technology is fantastic for blind and low vision students. The challenge is the mandate. Who does the technological assessments for these students? The Assistive Devices Program authorizer is the one who does these assessments but does not understand how it works in an educational setting. Teachers are the one who have the knowledge not the Assistive Devices Program authorizer.

Gifted (David Mason)

- David referred Dawn to the Pre-screening program at Peel District School Board
- David will provide his “resolution” to the Executive for comment

Students/Youth (Christian McLary)

- Christian met with the student support centre and they were able to provide his course on a cd so that he could follow along on his laptop.

Supervisory Officers (Warren Kennedy)

- Lots of good work going on with community partnerships including closing the gap, joint professional development and a transition plan framework. Representatives are needed for community based programs.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES</b>	<b>All</b>
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John Wilhelm and Barry Finlay expressed their appreciation to members whose terms have come to an end.

- Warren Kennedy, Vice Chair of MACSE and also representing Supervisory Officers
- Dr. Arlette Lefebvre, representing Practitioners
- Christian McLary, representing Students and Youth
- Susan Blekkenhorst, representing Developmental Disabilities
- Tracy Grant, representing Multiple Exceptionalities
- Marianne Saade, representing Social Workers

- Once finalized, MACSE's minutes will be posted on the MACSE repository and will be shared with members. Minutes from previous meetings, as well as MACSE's Annual Reports can be reviewed at [www.macse-on.ca](http://www.macse-on.ca).
- MACSE's next meeting is scheduled for June 12 & 13, 2013 in Toronto.
- Members are reminded that all meeting materials from the February 2013 meeting are confidential unless otherwise stated.