

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

June 12 & 13, 2013

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

Members

John Wilhelm, Chair
Warren Kennedy, Vice-Chair
Lynn Ziraldo, Past Chair
Dawn Clelland
Tracy Grant
Cheryl Lovell
Catherine Luetke
David Mason
Kim Pearson
Marlene Pike
Robert Savage
Janette Seymour
Joe Trovato
Suzanne Bonneville
Marion Macdonald

Non-Voting Members

Jane Cleve, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)
Christine Hughes, Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)
Mary Iannuzziello, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)
Jane Cousens, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)
James Pyett, (MTCU)

Regrets

Dr. Arlette Lefebvre
Christian Mclary
Marcia Brown
Marianne Saade
Susan Blekkenhorst

Attending Guests/Presenters

Honourable Liz Sandals, Minister of Education
Kerry Smuk, Senior Advisor, Minister's Office
Ann Sassman, Student Success Branch
Sean Twyford, MCYS
Cynthia Abel, MCYS

Provincial Schools Branch

Cheryl Zinser, Superintendent

Regional Office

Joan Fullerton, Barrie Regional Office
Cosimo Cinanni, Ottawa Regional Office

French-Language Policy and Programs Branch

Vanessa Lee, Senior Program and Policy Analyst
Francis Cormier, Education Officer

Special Education Policy and Program Branch

Barry Finlay, Director
Julie Williams, Manager
Anita Bennett, Manager
Sandy Palinski, Manager
Mike Gildea, Council Secretary
Céline Ranger-Rush, Education Officer
Katherine Nowina, Senior Policy Advisor
Louise Sibbald, Policy Analyst
Ramona Omidvar-Khullar, Policy Analyst
Christine Riedel, Education Officer
Maureen Cox, Education Officer
Zheng Xu, Education Officer

Meeting Summary
Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
June 12 & 13, 2013

June 12, 2013

ITEM	WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS	John Wilhelm
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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. John welcomed two new members to MACSE, Marion Macdonald representing the Aboriginal community and Suzanne Bonneville representing Learning Disabilities and the Francophone Community.

ITEM	REMARKS Honourable Liz Sandals
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The Minister of Education, Honourable Liz Sandals expressed her appreciation for the work that MACSE members do and for being a source of advice. The goals for education remain the same: student achievement, reducing the gaps and increased public confidence in publicly funded schools. The Minister discussed the new teacher education program and provided an overview of the program including: doubling the length of the program, doubling the amount of classroom instruction for teachers in training and reducing the number of graduates. Teacher candidates will now have a broader spectrum in education. Minister Sandals also spoke briefly of other education initiatives including:

- Mental Health and Addictions;
- *Accepting Schools Act*;
- Special Education Funding; and
- Building the next phase in Ontario's Education Strategy

The Minister identified a number of areas that MACSE could provide input into, including:

- Special education funding; and
- Building the next phase in Ontario's Education Strategy

The Minister answered questions from MACSE members and thanked them for their valuable input.

Discussion

- It was suggested that the new teacher education program provide a one week practicum working with high needs students.
- A member asked if Regulation 274 will be re-examined as it impacts on the hiring of teachers.
- More attention is required to resources in the classroom being more accessible to all students.
- Transitions from secondary to post-secondary continue to be an issue, teaching student self-advocacy skills is important.

- Other issues discussed during the Minister's visit were student engagement and advocacy, executive function skills beyond literacy and numeracy and common accommodations.

ITEM	SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE	Barry Finlay Director, SEPPB
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The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) provided an update on the following:

- PPM 155 – Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning – clarification required as special education assessments are not part of the scope of the PPM
- PPM 156 – Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs is now released and will take effect September 2014
- Complex care and care in the long term – Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and Ministry of Education (EDU) funded a consulting firm to review the definition of complex care for young adults and looking at how to transition these adults into long term support and/or betterment. One of the biggest challenges is the coordination of ministries within a common set of standards.
- Mental Health – funding is available for all boards in Ontario for mental health leaders. School boards received \$25,000 to implement the strategy.
- ASSIST initiative will expand and carry on beyond the 3 years.
- Additional working groups may be formed for the following exceptionalities: Giftedness, Developmental Disability and Mild Intellectual Disability.
- Ontario Special Education Tribunals (OSET) has now moved to the Human Rights Commission through the Social Justice Tribunal of Ontario. (SJTO)

Discussion

- A common definition is required for complex need.
- Principals continue to struggle with students who have mental health issues
- School boards have different interpretations of PPM 155 and require clarification from the ministry

ITEM	INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS PLAN	Anne Sassman Student Success /Learning to 18
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The Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) would be the primary planning tool as students proceed through school to initial postsecondary destination.

The plan will:

- help students develop the knowledge and skills for developing and revising education and career/life plans during the course of their lives;
- help students make successful transitions from grade to grade and from school to schools as they progress through elementary and secondary school;
- help student make successful transitions from elementary to secondary school; and
- ensure that all students have a plan in place for their initial post-secondary destination when they leave secondary school (apprenticeship, college, community living, university, workplace)

The plan provides students with a valuable archive of their learning and resources for planning. For each area of learning, students report and reflect on what they did, the skills and knowledge they used, what they learned and how they applied or plan to apply what they learned.

Discussion

- Members indicated that the integration of this plan with existing plans is an important to reduce duplication and that consideration is given to students with special education needs.
- IPP can play a role in supporting student voice during the IEP process.

ITEM	UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES	Sean Tywford, MCYS Jane Cleve, MCYS Mary Iannuzziello, MOHLTC Jane Cousens, MTCU James Pyett, MTCU Christine Hughes, MCSS
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MACSE members heard presentations on a variety of initiatives underway within MCYS, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (TCU). A written update from each ministry is now part of the Special Education Update.

Sean Tywford from MCYS provided an overview of *Stepping Stones, A Resource on Youth Development*

Stepping Stones, A Resource on Youth Development is informed by up-to-date research and dialogues with youth, community leaders and providers. It is designed to support those who work with youth aged 12 to 25 by providing an overview of youth development. A detailed look at the predictable developmental stages of youth aged 12 to 25, and the ways in which we can identify and respond to the needs of youth at each stage of their development. *Stepping Stones* has been created to serve as a tool to guide the development and delivery of high quality services and supports for youth province-wide.

Discussion

- Members indicated that this resource could be an effective part of the teacher training program offered through the Faculties of Education.
- Resource could be shared with students so they can become aware of the developmental stages.

MOHLTC

MOHLTC had an update regarding the “Partnering for Change” (P4P), service delivery model for children who require occupational therapy in schools”. The model focuses on building capacity through collaboration and coaching with the school as the client rather than any individual student. The partnership between therapists, parents and educators create environments that facilitate successful participation between therapists, parents and educators. These partners collaboratively design environments that foster motor skill development in children of all abilities, differentiate instruction for children who are experiencing challenges and accommodate for students who need to participate in a different way.

A two year initiative, beginning in 2013-14, will deliver the P4P model in 40 schools in three Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) and serve 400-500 children.

Discussion

- Students from Section 23 programs could benefit from this new model
- A member wanted to know what exceptionalities the model is working with
- It was mentioned that the student should be the client rather than the school
- Mary Iannuzziello has agreed to take questions back to the steering committee for a response.

MTCU

MTCU is committing up to \$9M annually to the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Of that, Kids Help Phone received \$2M to develop and implement a Postsecondary Mental Health Helpline. MTCU has also committed approximately \$6.4M through 2014-15 to fund ten projects submitted by postsecondary institutions and partners under this fund.

Discussion

- Members inquired if the pilot projects would be collecting data on exceptionalities and if the projects were posted on a website to see.
- Students who have special needs are being asked for up to date assessments and accommodations. A standard policy should be put in place so that students transitioning into postsecondary have an understanding of what is acceptable.

MCYS

Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with A Developmental Disability One item of importance was the work being done across Ministries to develop one transition plan, Transitions for students with Developmental Disabilities (one plan). MCYS/MCSS Regional Offices, District School Boards, School Authorities and/or Demonstration Schools are working together to integrate the current District School Board and MCYS/MCSS transition planning processes so that each young person with a developmental disability has a single, integrated transition plan. Implementation of integrated transition planning is anticipated for September 2013.

Discussion

- Students with developmental disabilities will now have a tool kit when walking out of secondary school. A positive outcome is community integration and cooperative skills to do what they like to do.

ITEM	Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Resources and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Resources	Julie Williams Christine Reidel SEPPB
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Julie Williams and staff from SEPPB provided an overview of the resources available to support students with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). These two issues were raised at the last meeting and SEPPB committed to doing research on these topics. Julie and staff had the opportunity to attend the FASD Ontario Network of Expertise (ONE) symposium. The slide presentations will be available on the MACSE website.

ABI is an injury that results in the disruption of the normal structure and function of the brain. There are two categories:

- Traumatic – external physical force/blow to the head (e.g. car accident, sports injury)
- Non-Traumatic – not related to an external force (e.g. toxic exposure, tumour). Often overlooked, not included in ABI literature (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2001)

FASD is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of effects that result from exposure to alcohol during pregnancy. These effects can include physical, mental behavioural and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. Many of the effects of FASD are not readily visible and can include lifelong challenges with learning, memory, attention, problem solving, behaviour, vision and hearing.

- A parent and grandparent to a child with FASD provided MACSE members with a personal view of FASD and how it has affected his family.

Discussion

- Tracy Grant, a member of MACSE, sits on one of the FASD ONE working groups. She recommended that the ministry has an inter-agency and inter-ministry working group to review the types of diagnostic services required for students who are identified with FASD.

June 13, 2013

ITEM	MACSE Working Groups	John Wilhelm
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John Wilhelm, Chair of MACSE asked members to provide feedback by August 1, 2013. (see below)

- Respond to 7 questions related to “Building the next phase in Ontario’s strategy” from a special education lens. Robert Savage has agreed to lead this working group
- Review past MACSE position papers related to Special Education funding. Tracy Grant has agreed to lead this working group

ITEM	CARE, TREATMENT, CUSTODY AND CORRECTIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM (SECTION 23 of the Grants for Student Needs)	Anita Bennett, SEPPB Sandy Palinski, SEPPB Joan Fullerton, Field Services Branch
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Anita Bennett, Sandy Palinski (SEPPB) and Joan Fullerton (Field Services) provided a status update on a number of projects within Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections (CTCC) Programs (Section 23 of the Grants for Student Needs).

Section 23 programs are education programs provided within care, treatment, custody and/or correctional facilities for students who are unable to attend a regular school because of their need for care, treatment or rehabilitation.

The Minister is reinvesting \$2M in savings from 2012-13 to support new and/or expanded programs in the 2013-14 school year to:

- Support CTCC program system transformation; and
- Address service pressures that have emerged in relation to identified local needs, including Francophone students, students who are First Nations, Métis and Inuit, children and youth with addiction issues and children in care.

In February 2013, MCYS announced the launch of the *Youth Justice Education and Skills Training Success Strategy Framework and Blueprint for Strengthening a Culture of Education in Youth Justice Services*. The purpose of this initiative is to improve academic achievement, enhance skills attainment and increase school engagement of youth in or at risk of conflict of the law.

SEPPB is currently reviewing student profiles and population categories to gain a better understanding of students and the different settings within CTCC programs

SEPPB and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB) have partnered together to support financial literacy and other curriculum-linked resource documents in CTCC Programs. Approximately 50-60 lessons to support Language/English (grades 4 - 12) and Mathematics (grades 4 – 10) will be developed, with an anticipated release for Fall 2013.

SEPPB, CAPB and French Language Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) have partnered together to integrate the provincial e-Learning Strategy in CTCC programs. At this time 14 English and 1 French school board have expressed interest in participating in pilots. Working groups (care, treatment, custody/detention and French language) have been set up to support this project. Results of these pilots will inform wider implementation across CTCC programs.

Discussion:

- Transitions and well-being are a large component for these students. A seamless transition is required for these students returning to their community school.
- It was noted that mental health nurses are often being used to assist students with those transitions.
- Parents should be more involved when speaking about transitions.
- The Chair of MACSE expressed interest in the governance piece and Section 23 noting the difference between school boards and agencies. School boards establish that a student has a right to education, social workers and agencies believe in the right to self-determination, where the students establishes whether they are in a Section program.
- The Section 23 program in Durham is now offering the dual credit program through a partnership with Durham College. Students in the Section 23 program have the opportunity to take college credits.

ITEM	Supporting Programs in Alternative Areas	Sandy Palinski, SEPPB
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Sandy Palinski and staff provided an overview of Supporting Programs in Alternative Areas. MACSE members were asked to provide feedback re: considerations, reflections and recommendations.

Students in the alternative programs do not access the provincial curriculum and are exempted from all standardized provincial assessments, such as EQAO.

Staff provided an overview of the current research in supporting programs in alternative areas.

The A4 e-Community has over 125 users and includes the following:

- News – feature item is posted every two weeks;
- Ministry resources related to A4;
- Board resources;
- Lessons learned; and
- Discussion page where educators can post questions to other educators.

Discussion

- There is a concern that the perspective is focused only on developmental disabilities, this type of alternative programs should focus on all students and include life skills.
- Educators need to ensure that the student has fair access to the Ontario curriculum before using alternative programs.

ITEM	COMMUNITY COLLABORATION	All
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Each member of MACSE shared the successes and challenges experienced by their exceptionality, group or the community they represent. The information gathered helps to inform MACSE's priorities and various initiatives of EDU.

Supervisory Officers (Warren Kennedy)

- Referred to Bill 168 - Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act (Violence and Harassment in the Workplace) 2009

Trustees (Cheryl Lovell)

- More support is required for students who participate in French immersion and have special education needs. Having a learning disability is not a barrier to having a second language.
- School boards require additional supports for newcomer students. These students require timely assessments and services.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Catherine Luetke)

- Two organizations have brought up the need to have parent voice heard before making a board decision
- Suggested that English and French school boards share their teachers if there is a shortage of deaf teachers

Blind and Low Vision (Dawn Clelland)

- A suggestion was made that teachers be given the opportunity to give a vision test. This could be part of PPM 155 under teacher training.

Pervasive Developmental Disorders/Autism (Janette Seymour)

- DSM-5 was released in May 2013
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Asperger syndrome no longer exists within the definition and it is hugely controversial.
- Janette has heard from parents that students are being removed from their special education class and losing their supports
- Guidelines for safety plans should be developed as boards continue to use blocker shields.

Psychologists (Joe Trovato)

Successful practices include:

- Psychologists are eager and willing to collaborate with leaders in the mental health strategy.

Challenges include:

- Categories of exceptionalities need to be updated, concepts and terminologies are old. There are concerns around learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities. The name of behavior exceptionalities is stigmatizing and tends to interfere with the ministry's current focus on student's mental health.
- It was recommended that a task force be formed to update the exceptionalities.

Gifted (David Mason)

Two urban boards are utilizing a process called In School Review Committee (ISRC) as a pre-screening activity that determines if a student should have an Identification, Placement Review Committee (IPRC). This committee is made up of school staff and parents are not invited. Key Issues include:

- Parental input and permission are not an integral part of the ISRC process
- Within the ISRC process, parents are not made aware of the IPRC process

The ISRC could potentially circumvent the IPRC process.

- Classroom teachers look at "high performance" as gifted, more professional development is required.
- The ministry should look at creating an "acceleration" policy for students identified as gifted.

Physical Disabilities (Kim Pearson)

Successful practices include:

Transition Tip Sheets have been developed through a Parents Reaching Out Grant, from the Ontario Ministry of Education Parent Engagement Office, in partnership with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS).

Tip sheets can be accessed from the Easter Seals website at:

<http://www.easterseals.org/services/parent-resources/transitions>

Challenges include:

More support is required from the Ministry of Education re: transitions

Multiple Exceptionalities (Tracy Grant)

- Tracy attended the FASD ONE symposium held on March 25, 2013. Concerns were raised regarding assessments for this population and the importance for education programming.
- 34 credit cap is still an issue for students who are not identified. Students will not be able to get the marks they need for post-secondary.

Principals (Marlene Pike)

Successful practices include:

- The collaboration between special education and curriculum in addressing the needs of students with LDs and other exceptionalities

Challenges include:

- Mental Health challenges (identification of problems, navigating the complex network of community supports, understanding at the school level how to support students with mental health needs)
- With the implementation of Regulation 274, many of our administrators are unable to hire experienced teachers from other boards to work in our programs.

First Nations (Marion Macdonald)

- First nations are in the process of negotiating tuition agreements. Funding for special education is separate funding and the amount has remained the same even though the cost has increased.
- IPRC's are only being done for students who have a severe disability. The Special Education Amount (SEA) does not follow the student.
- The Federal school system is on the reserve. All community outreach works through native trustees, Marion can only work through the native trustee for information related to education.

Emotional /Behaviour Disorder Robert Savage

Trends include excitement with the new teacher education program and hoping that it will be current with a focus on special education

Past Chair (Lynn Ziraldo)

Success include Student Voice

Challenges include Transitions

Chair (John Wilhelm)

Successes include:

Speech and Language

PAAC on SEAC

ITEM	SEAC website	Christine Reidel SEPPB
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The new SEAC site is located on the ministry website at:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/>

The website contains resources from school boards in Ontario. The site will be updated on a regular basis.

A memo will be sent out in September to SEAC Chairs informing them of the new site.

Discussion

- PAC on SEAC has created a resource and the ministry will provide a link to that as well.
- Members asked that the memo be sent to school boards in August

ITEM	Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA)	Julie Williams, SEPPB Cosimo Cinanni, FSB
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Julie Williams from SEPPB and Cosimo Cinanni from Field Services presented their findings on the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA). The board improvement plan is meant to be a strategic document that identifies key areas for improvement based on a school board's needs assessment. Over the past three years, BIPSA has continued to evolve and is more inclusionary. Boards are not only reporting on students with special education needs, they are also reporting on student achievement strategies.

Cosimo Cinanni described his observations in taking part in the BIPSA meetings. From discussions with the school boards, curriculum and special education work together to find out how to better serve the students. Cosimo also noticed a shift over the last years; the BIPSA process is now inclusionary. It is centred mainly on the student and teamwork.

ITEM	MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS STRATEGY	Sandy Palinski, SEPPB Cynthia Abel, MCYS
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Members were provided with an update on Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

- Funding for the strategy will grow to \$93 million per year by 2013-14.
- Over 770 new mental health workers are in schools, communities and youth courts are providing service to an estimated 35 000 more kids and their families.
- Funding was provided to school boards for suicide prevention
- The Mental Health resource guide and administrator's guide will be released in the Fall 2013.
- There are core mental health services that will be available in communities across Ontario, with other specialized services available regionally or provincially. Defining core services

will make the system more transparent to parents and young people, as well as those who help families find the services they need.

- Lead agencies will be established across Ontario and be responsible for providing core services and collaborating effectively with other services that play a role in young peoples' lives, such as schools, hospitals, those working in primary care and child welfare authorities. Parents will only tell their story once.
- A Toronto Implementation Panel has been formed to review the current services in the City of Toronto. They are currently in the process of gathering data and will have information for MCYS in September. Members include Sue Herbert, John Flannery and Paul Johnson.

Discussion

- A suggestion was made to provide students with an electronic portal to mental health
- There is concern that parents are being referred too many times and then told there are no resources available.
- MCYS should be looking at the grass roots organizations within the communities when determining lead agencies

At the end of the meeting, members of MACSE passed two resolutions. (see Appendix A)

- Once finalized, MACSE minutes will be posted on the MACSE repository and will be available to members. Minutes from previous meetings, as well as MACSE's Annual Reports can be reviewed at www.macse-on.ca.
- MACSE's next meetings are as follows: October 30, 2013 and February 5 and 6, 2014.
- Members are reminded that all meeting materials from the June 2013 meeting are confidential unless otherwise stated.

Appendix A

Resolution One

Whereas the Ministry of Education has established a Learning Disability Working Group (LDWG);

Whereas MACSE members have received inquiries and feedback regarding the working groups for other exceptionalities such as developmental disabilities/mild intellectual disability, Gifted and Behaviour;

Whereas there remain inconsistencies among boards regarding definitions of exceptionalities;

Whereas exceptional students transitioning between boards often require re-identification to receive special education services;

Whereas emerging research continually enhances understanding of the impact on learning of intellectual, physical, neurodevelopmental and mental health conditions, and advances interventions that support positive development;

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education:

- Release the work of the LDWG
- Establish additional special education working groups related to emerging issues

Resolution Two

Whereas the MACSE Accountability Work Group and the MACSE Accepting Schools Working Group are seeking further input from students and parents;

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education:

- Assist in the distribution of MACSE's Working Group surveys.