

Meeting Summary
Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)
February 18th & 19th, 2016

The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) held its most recent meeting on February 18th & 19th in Toronto. Below are highlights of the meeting.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Joe Trovato, Chair, MACSE

- Joe Trovato, Chair of MACSE welcomed members to Council and reminded them of the *Conflict of Interest* rules and the requirement to declare any potential conflict to John Wilhelm, Ethics Executive.
- Joe reminded the group that all documents distributed are confidential unless otherwise stated.
- The next meeting will be June 8th and 9th, 2016.

Special Education Update

Louise Sirisko, Director, SEPPB

Louise provided an update on the following items:

- Cathy Montreuil, currently Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Learning and Curriculum Division, will be appointed ADM, Student Achievement Division, effective March 21, 2016. Martyn Beckett, currently Director of Education with the Durham District School Board, will serve as ADM, Learning and Curriculum Division. He has a deep understanding of special education and funding.
- In the fall 2015, the ministry initiated a pause on many activities at the request of Directors of Education in order to focus on the needs of their schools and classrooms. As of February 2016, the ministry has emerged from the pause and allowed district school boards to focus on having smooth consistent classrooms, labour negotiations and maintaining positive relationships. This time also allowed the ministry to look at ways to support school boards differently.

Cathy Montreuil

Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning Curriculum Division

Cathy Montreuil, provided an update on the following items:

- Lots of intra-ministerial collaboration underway focusing on Mathematics. Various divisions gathered research on math initiatives to see which ones were effective. The ministry identified special education and math, specifically students with Learning Disabilities (LD). The Math Strategy will roll out this April 2016.
- Connie Quadrini is the provincial Mathematics Lead with the ministry and currently on assignment from York Catholic DSB. She has worked extensively with Student Profiles and Mathematical Thinking as well as Working with Manipulatives.
- Members of MACSE were asked to review and provide feedback on Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) statistics comparing students with learning disabilities vs. all students.
- Students with special education needs (excluding gifted) have shown improvement in their academic achievement according to EQAO results.

Ministry of Education: Promoting Well-Being
Christopher Kotz, Senior Policy Advisor

Christopher provided an overview of the Promoting Well-Being Goal within the *Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* and discussed the research and findings.

- Emerging Themes included:
 - Promoting well-being and student achievement are deeply interconnected

- Work is already underway across EDU to “promote well-being”
- Complex endeavor requiring the efforts of many – successfully moving forward will require clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the ministry, school boards, educators, parents and community
- Horizontal collaboration and integration within the ministry and collaboration with other ministries are critical and must be improved.
- Promoting the well-being of educators and ministry staff is an integral component of fostering the well-being of students

**Ministry of Education, SEPPB: Syrian Refugee Resource Group
Thevagi Satkunendran, Senior Policy Advisor**

- The Ministry of Education will continue to work with district school boards and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) to:
 - Provide current information about settlement plans (e.g., destination points)
 - Ensure, in partnership with the federal government, that school boards have the resources and support required (e.g., financial, language, mental health, community) to successfully integrate Syrian newcomers into our education system
 - Work together to problem solve situations as they arise
- Boards have been connecting with community services that may support both families and students during this transition period (e.g., walk-in clinics, tele-psychiatry referrals, referrals to mental health and addiction nurses)

School Mental Health (SMH) Newcomer Resource Group

- Established to support school boards in their efforts to promote mental health and respond to any social emotional needs of newcomer students and their families
- Membership: 25-30 school mental health professionals and senior administrators (Mental Health Leaders, Superintendents, Chief Social Workers / Psychologists) from across the province
- Primarily offers a monitoring and mobilization role, and works with school boards to observe and monitor the mental health needs of students and families as they transition to the school system

George Zegarac

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education

George Zegarac provided an update on the following:

- The recent announcement related to the changes in the Executive Leadership Team
- The ministry is working towards supporting school boards with a differentiated approach.
- At this time, the ministry is focused on math/numeracy. The Renewed Math Strategy will provide differentiated support to schools in terms of learning and teaching. The ministry will be looking at how to build capacity and provide professional learning to educators and special education teachers
- Priority areas for the ministry include: well-being, leadership and collaboration

Minister Update

The Honourable Liz Sandals, Minister of Education

- Minister Sandals thanked Council members for taking the time out of their busy schedule to participate and appreciates the efforts members have made in order to attend. Minister Sandals provided an update on the following:
 - Our vision for education, particularly the equity and wellbeing pieces of our vision and also achieving excellence, we want students to achieve excellence in their own way/capacity, and we need to make sure students with special education needs are included in the broader goals.

- The ministry will begin reviewing Provincial Schools. The ministry will be launching consultations with education/community partners to look at a way to provide a range of programs and services for the students.
- Focus for consultations will be on the students attending the Robart's School, Centre Jules-Leger in Ottawa and three English language provincial demonstration schools.
- These schools provide services for students with special education needs who require intensive help, in the areas of deaf, blind and children with severe learning disabilities.
- Minister Sandals will be doing site visits to share information with the parents. The formal consultation process is being led by an external party.
- The ministry continues to work with MCYS, as they look at their special needs strategy, their autism strategy and their Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) strategy.
- The ministry continues to focus on Aboriginal education and the whole area around student achievement and wellbeing. Focusing, obviously, on how we implement the vision.
- Minister Sandals thanked Brian Rivait, whose term representing principals is coming to an end as well as Marion Macdonald who is currently the Vice-Chair and representative of the aboriginal community.

Ontario College of Teachers, Professional Learning Framework

Deidre Smith, OCT
Lily Harfouche, OCT

Staff from the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) provided an overview of the draft *Professional Learning Framework*. There are three components of the framework:

- Standards of Practice for the teaching profession
- Professional Learning Framework
- Ethical standards for the teaching profession

The Professional Learning Document will be available in French and English.

Friday February 19th

Updates from Other Ministries

Deborah Bell, Manager, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC)

- *Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario* is now available on the Ministry of Health website. Discussion paper is available for comment until February 29th, 2016.

Jane Cleve, Manager, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)

- Proposals for how service providers and educators recommend implementing coordinated service planning and integrated delivery of rehabilitation services have been received and reviewed by the ministries of Children and Youth Services, Education, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community and Social Services .
- We are now working with identified coordinating agencies, along with partner children's service providers, Community Care Access Centres and school boards, to implement coordinated service planning across Ontario. Implementation will be phased across the province beginning in 2016.
- Funding is confirmed for 2016-17 of \$110,000 per area for a Coordinated Service Planner.
- Once in place, families will have a single, identifiable coordinating agency in their community where they can connect with a Service Planning Coordinator who will:
 - Work with families to develop coordinated service plans;
 - Help connect families with the range of services and supports that will meet their children's needs; and
 - Monitor progress

Roselynn Degano, Manager, MCYS

- In July 2015, the MCYS tasked us with conducting a review of Ontario's child and youth residential service system.
- MCYS staff consulted with service providers and associations involved in providing current child and youth residential services, as well as leading experts on children and youth with special and complex needs.
- The review also builds on the work of previous reviews and reports, advising on what is needed to improve the child and youth residential service system. A report will be submitted to MCYS by the end of February.
- MCYS, in collaboration with partner ministries, is moving forward to develop a provincial Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) strategy, which includes engaging Aboriginal partners; service providers; families, caregivers, and individuals affected by FASD; and researchers.
- A whole government approach to the FASD strategy provides a provincial framework for programs and services that addresses the complex needs of individuals living with FASD.
- The FASD Strategy will focus on five priority areas:
 1. Awareness and Prevention
 2. Screening, Assessment and Diagnosis
 3. Programs and Services
 4. Support for Families and Caregivers
 5. Data Collection and Performance Measurement

Christine Hughes, Manager, Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)

- The ministry has resumed approving new direct funding to more individuals for 2015-16. By the end of 2017-18, 13,000 individuals and their families will have received new Passport funding.

Sheltered Workshops

- In November 2015, the Minister of Community and Social Services (MCSS) announced that the government was moving to end all new admissions to sheltered workshops.
- Ontario wants to make sure people with developmental disabilities have every opportunity for inclusion and independence, just like other citizens in our communities.
- No programs will be closed or supports taken away without appropriate alternatives in place.
- Meaningful community participation can include work, volunteering or recreational activities.
- MCSS will be engaging with stakeholders in the coming months to carefully plan this transition.

Jane Cousens and Justine Wadhawan, Senior Policy Advisors, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU): Update on the Action Plan to Strengthen Transitions to Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

- Purpose of the four point plan is to assist Universities and Colleges in their capacity to support students with disabilities as they transition to post-secondary education
- The four point plan is built upon collaboration and includes:
 - Transition website: enhancement of a new web-based Transition Resource Guide for students with disabilities transitioning to post-secondary education. (www.transitionresourceguide.ca). As of fall 2015, the Transition Resource Guide has been distributed in hard copy in both English and French to all school boards in the province.
 - Multi-Sector Working Group: Focus is on transitions to Post-Secondary Education for Students with ASD to arrive at a Proposed Transitions Model for students with ASD. This group is on track to provide advice to the Deputy Minister of TCU by the summer of 2016.

- Review Transitions-Related Documentation for Students with ASD: The ministry has asked the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) and the demonstration projects to review transitions-related documentation for students with ASD to support the identification of best practices. RARC is using a specialized psycho-educational assessment template specifically designed for students with ASD.
- Demonstration projects are very busy refining their programs.
- This is the third and final year of the pilot program.

Experiential Learning Framework

- The ministry is expanding experiential learning to provide students from Kindergarten to the age of 21 with a broader range of learning opportunities that are “connected to the community.” This is learning that takes place both inside and outside the classroom, and in partnership with local, national and international community organizations and businesses.
- To help inform the development of this policy for Ontario schools, the ministry is looking for feedback on the draft Community-Connected Experiential Learning Policy Framework.
- The ministry is looking for feedback between January and May 2016 from various stakeholders, such as educators, business representatives, community organizations, non-profit agencies, and postsecondary institutions.

Priorities Update / Working Groups

All

MACSE members broke into the following groups to discuss their current priorities:

Aboriginal Education	Well Being and Student Achievement
Marion (Chair)	Sue (Chair)
John (Executive Member)	Lynn (Executive Member)
Shelly	Joanne
Katie	Daphne
Brian	Laura
Peggy	Denise
Sharon	Stacey
Cheryl	Janette
Lucille	Marcia
Suzanne	Braxton
	Dawn

Meeting Summary and Wrap-Up

Joe Trovato, Chair

As part of the Chair’s wrap-up, there was a follow-up conversation to members’ comments regarding community collaboration. Members were reminded of the purpose of the community collaboration portion of the meeting’s agenda which is to identify trends that cut across the various exceptionalities. In doing so, this will help inform MACSE’s planning for the year and potential topics for working groups. One of the trends identified during the community collaboration process was the importance of teacher training and the identification of effective practices to be shared across the profession especially when it comes to meeting the diverse needs of special education students.

The Chair thanked the members for attending and reminded them up the next meeting which is June 8-9, 2016.

Appendix A: Members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

Exceptionalities/Sectors Represented	Name
Council Chair	Joe Trovato
Exceptionalities	
Learning Disabilities	Suzanne Bonneville
Pervasive Developmental Disorders / Autism	Janette Seymour
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	Denise Maisonneuve
Gifted	Stacey Manzerolle
Developmental Disability	Laura LaChance
Blind and Low-Vision	Dawn Clelland
Physical Disability	Katie Muirhead
Multiple Exceptionalities	Lucille Norman
Emotional / Behavioural Disorder	Daphne Korczak
Educators	
Supervisory Officers	Peggy Blair
Trustees	Cheryl Lovell
Principals	Brian Rivait
Teachers	Shelly Durance
Educational Assistants	Marcia Brown
Professionals	
Medical	Joanne Jones
Psychologists	Dr. Sue Ball
Social Workers	Jim Van Buskirk
Speech and Language Pathologists	Sharon McWhirter
Students / Youth	
Students / Youth	Braxton Hartman
Aboriginal Community	
Vice Chair /Aboriginal Community	Marion Macdonald