

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE
FEBRUARY 2011

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Improving Student Achievement for Students with Special Education Needs

1. *Progress in Achievement for Students with Special Education Needs*

Students with special education needs have demonstrated improvement in their academic achievement, as demonstrated by Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results for grades 3 & 6 (Reading, Writing and Mathematics). There has been an increase in the percentage of students with special education needs performing at or above the provincial standard, Level 3 or higher. While the percentage at Level 3 or higher varies by exceptionality, there has been an improvement in this percentage for most of the exceptionalities.

In addition, there is evidence of a steady decline in the percentage of students with special education needs being exempted from EQAO. While the percentage of students with special education needs performing at level 1 has varied, by grade and subject, the trend for the percentage of students with special education needs performing at Level 2 has been increasing steadily. Again, performance at the exemption level and levels 1 and 2 varies by exceptionality.

2. *Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs*

A. *Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas – Draft Guidelines*

In response to recent recommendations from the Auditor General of Ontario and to further support the Ministry of Education's core priority to improve the achievement of all students, including students with special education needs, the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) supported school boards in 2009-10 in the assessment of students with special education needs who do not access the Ontario curriculum and do not participate in EQAO assessments through:

- Consultations with external stakeholder groups;
- Distribution of draft provincial guidelines to school boards on *Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas*;
- Funding of regional projects in boards to enhance assessment practices and inform the finalization of the provincial guidelines; and
- Provincial webinars to provide details to school boards on the guidelines and regional projects.

In 2010-11, SEPPB will finalize the provincial guidelines and investigate which knowledge mobilization strategies will be the most effective at sharing the guidelines and findings from the regional projects with all school boards.

B. Barrier Free Education Initiatives for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) has been provided funding to assist the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) with its goals of providing barrier-free education to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students attending Ontario publicly funded schools.

The project is intended to assist school boards in identifying access and accommodation needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, produce gaps analyses and make appropriate recommendations to ensure that students are provided with the tools they need to succeed in school.

Since the beginning of this project (October 2008), participants from 52 different school boards attended workshops held in Barrie, Sudbury, Belleville, Ottawa, London, Milton, Bradford and Toronto. Further information on the Barrier Free Education Initiatives can be found at <http://www.chs.ca/en/items/barrier-free-education.html>. A schedule of upcoming fall/winter workshops can be found at: <http://www.chs.ca/en/barrier-free-education-3.html>.

C. Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students With Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12

SEPPB has developed a resource guide to assist school and system leaders to promote and support a caring and safe school culture and to provide information about appropriate strategies and resources to help address behavioural challenges for students, in particular students with special education needs. The resource document was released on August 18, 2010. The document can be accessed on-line at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/Caring_Safe_School.pdf

D. Draft Learning For All K-12

SEPPB is leading the development of the draft resource guide titled *Learning for All K-12* which builds on the guiding principles outlined in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* (2005). The draft resource guide is designed to share information with educators about research-informed educational approaches that have proven to be effective in supporting the learning of all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. These approaches include Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated

Instruction and the Tiered Approach. The draft resource guide also presents sample planning tools including class and student profiles.

In June 2009, a copy of the draft *Learning for All K-12* was sent to all Directors of Education electronically. The draft *Learning for All K-12* was posted on the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) website <http://www.ontariodirectors.ca> in October. To support the roll-out of the draft *Learning for All K-12* in the 2009/10 school year, the Ministry provided funding to all school boards. Eleven lead boards received additional funding to begin using the approaches and planning tools presented in draft *Learning for All K-12* in selected schools in their boards. A wide range of resources and tools have been developed by school boards, particularly by the eleven lead boards to promote the concepts and approaches presented in the draft *Learning for All K-12 (L4A K-12)*, to support the learning of all students.

A Provincial Network Team that consists of representatives of all lead school boards was established to share resources and learning. The Ministry has gathered resources developed by the lead boards and feedback from school boards and stakeholder groups and is using this information to inform the revision of the resource guide in 2010-2011 school year.

In 2010-11, the Ministry continues to provide school boards with funds to:

- Continue supporting the use of draft *Learning for All K-12* as an integrating framework for assessment and instruction in boards, schools and classrooms;
- Continue supporting regional leadership networks and extend the Learning for All K-12 Provincial Network Team (PNT) to 18 school boards;
- Support the alignment of various ministry initiatives (e.g., JK – Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies, Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement and School Effectiveness Framework, Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program);
- Support school boards in developing resources; and
- Sustain and facilitate knowledge dissemination through professional learning communities (PLCs).

In 2010-11 approximately \$700,000 will be distributed provincially to support L4All K-12 activity. All lead teams will receive \$5,000 to continue participation in regional PLCs. In addition, lead teams in all six regions and the French Language School Boards will receive \$55,715 to support regional collaboration in developing a sharable product/resource and coordinating regional PLCs.

E. Draft Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (K-12), Draft Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who Are Blind or Low Vision (K-12)

SEPPB has recently developed draft guidelines for programs and services provided by school boards to students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (released May 2010), and a separate set of guidelines for students who are Blind or Low Vision in Ontario schools. These guidelines support the core Ministry priority to improve the achievement of all students.

The draft documents *Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing* and *Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students who are Blind or Low Vision*, describe effective practices for district school boards when providing support and services to these students. The guidelines are designed to help educators and other professionals design and implement structures and processes that will enhance learning and promote consistent practices across the province. The guidelines are complementary to the Ministry's legislative and regulatory framework regarding special education programs and services for students with special education strengths and needs. They also build on the guiding principles found in a variety of Ministry resources, including *Education for All K- 6* and the draft *Learning for All K-12*.

SEPPB has consulted with a number of educators, parents, advocacy groups, and external stakeholders in the course of developing the draft guidelines. The 'Effective Practices' and 'Look Fors' were created with the advice of these groups, and are consistent with other Ministry resource documents.

The next step is to release both draft guidelines to district school boards and stakeholders for feedback. Feedback will be used to finalize the documents.

F. Full –Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program

In September 2010, as Ontario implemented Year One of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (FDELKP), 579 schools across the province began offering a full day of learning for up to 35,000 four- and five-year olds, including students with special needs / special education needs.

The ministries of Education, Children and Youth Services, and Health and Long-Term Care are working closely to support these students. It is the shared goal of these ministries that students and families get the support they need to fully participate in FDELKP.

The FDELKP Special Needs / Special Education Needs Services Reference Group continues to identify and share effective practices and provide specific advice to the Ministry in the implementation of Year 1. The Reference Group will meet again in February 2011. A memorandum signed jointly by five Assistant Deputy Ministers from the three ministries was sent by each ministry to the ministries' relevant stakeholders on May 6, 2010 stating that the ministries' shared goal is to ensure that students and families get the support they need to fully participate in the FDELKP. The memo included Year One Guiding Principles developed with input from the Reference Group

to assist in the consideration of local solutions for the delivery of services to four- and five-year olds with special needs / special education needs who are enrolled in the FDELKP. The link to the memo is below:

http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/may2010/JointADMs_Memo%20ELP_May2010%20eng.pdf
<http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/mai10.html>

More than 800 schools will be offering Full-Day Kindergarten in 2011. The website for Full-Day Kindergarten is: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/kindergarten/index.html>

The FDELKP Special Needs / Special Education Needs Services Reference Group has met four times (in person and by teleconference) since February 2010.

G. IEP Initiatives

Electronic Samples

SEPPB has now posted 50 IEP samples on the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) website (<http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/IEP-PEI/index.html>). The samples are written using the provincial electronic IEP template. The website contains IEP samples that represent all of the Ministry exceptionality categories/definitions, as well as samples for non-identified students, at both elementary and secondary levels. There is a feedback loop on the website that asks users to share the usefulness of the samples and their comments/questions.

Provincial Template

SEPPB has provided all school boards with an electronic template for the development of effective IEPs. The template has also been shared with Faculties of Education, parents, advocacy groups, etc., on request. The IEP samples posted on the CODE website, referred to above, use the provincial template.

IEP Resource Guide

As part of the planned revisions to the Special Education Guide, there will be a revision of the Individual Education Plan (IEP), A Resource Guide (2004). It is being targeted for release in spring 2011.

H. JK – Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Project 2009-2010

The JK-Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Project is now complete. Findings from the project along with board developed tools and resources can be found on the Council for Directors of Education (CODE) website at www.ontariodirectors.ca.

The seven JK-Grade 1 lead boards have been invited to join the expanded 2010-11 L4All K-12 Provincial Network Team (PNT).

I. Oral Language Foundations (K-3)

SEPPB is in the process of developing *Oral Language Foundations (K-3)*. This user-friendly booklet will provide an integrating framework for related Ministry initiatives that support oral language development from K-3. The booklet will:

- provide a description of the theoretical framework of oral language foundations that supports K-3 classroom teachers in the development of oral language skills and in early identification of students with oral language difficulties;
- reflect the framework and processes outlined in draft *Learning for All K-12*; and
- include references and/or links to current Ministry resources and effective practices in the field.

The resource document is scheduled for release by Fall 2011.

J. Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) on Transitions

SEPPB is drafting a PPM to support effective transitions for students with special education needs. Building on input provided through consultation sessions with MACSE and other stakeholders including the Minister's Principal Reference Group, the proposed PPM will provide direction to school boards to support transition planning and the development of transition plans for students with special education needs.

This PPM will support students to move seamlessly through the educational system with regard to their individual transition needs, including entry to school and transitions from school to school, elementary to secondary schools and from secondary schools to work or other pathways.

The PPM is a focused effort to respond to a key recommendation from the 2008 Auditor General of Ontario's report on Special Education which cited transition planning as a key area of interest. The targeted date of release for this PPM is spring/summer 2011.

K. *Special Education in Ontario, K-12* (Working Title)

SEPPB is developing a guide, *Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12* (working title) that will include information from *Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)*; *The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)*; *Individual Education Plan: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation (2000)*; *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans (2000)* and *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)*. The guide is scheduled for release in 2011.

L. Supporting English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: A practical guide for Ontario Educators Kindergarten to Grade 12

SEPPB, in collaboration with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB) and the Literacy and Numeracy Branch (LNS), is developing a resource guide to support classroom teachers, ELL/ESL teachers and special education teachers. *Canadian Council on Learning (CCL)* has completed a comprehensive literature review to support the development of this resource document. In addition, SEPPB has completed a review of the current school board protocols and CODE research projects to inform development of this resource guide.

3. Building Capacity in School Boards

A. Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement

SEPPB continues to work with the Student Achievement Division to ensure that processes and resources used by school boards to support the development, implementation and monitoring of the Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement (BIPSA) include students with special education needs.

Board improvement planning processes establish a greater focus on and accountability for student achievement as school boards are required to identify targeted goals and strategies focused on improving the achievement of all students, including those with special education needs.

Throughout the 2010-11 school year, the progress and results towards the identified goals for improved student achievement are being reviewed and monitored by school board and Ministry staff to determine further direction and resources that may be required to support effective planning for improved achievement of students with special education needs.

B. Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

In July 2009, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) released *Every Door is the Right Door*, a discussion paper that sets out a framework for the proposed mental health and addictions strategy. It was introduced at the MOHLTC Summit on mental health and addictions in July 2009. *Every Door is the Right Door* can be found on MOHLTC website at:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/mentalhealth/minister_advisgroup/minister_advisgroup.html

The Minister's Advisory Group released its final report and recommendations to MOHLTC in December 2010. This is a step in the development of a provincial mental health and addictions strategy. This report can be found at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/ministry_reports/mental_health/mentalhealth.aspx

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions

An all-party committee was formed by the Ontario legislature to help develop ways to improve access to mental health and addiction services in the province.

The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions – with representatives from all three parties – worked with consumers/survivors, providers, experts and other interested parties to determine the mental health and addiction needs that currently exist. The committee submitted its report in August 2010. The link to the final report is: http://www.ontla.on.ca/committee-proceedings/committee-reports/files_pdf/Select%20Report%20ENG.pdf

There are a number of interministerial initiatives underway to support children and youth with mental health and addictions issues that are aligned with the 10 Year strategy, including:

Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI)

The Student Support Leadership Initiative is a joint initiative of EDU and MCYS, launched in February 2008. The goal of SSLI is to foster leadership and to build/enhance partnerships between school boards and community agencies in order to increase capacity to make appropriate and effective referrals concerning mental health services for students and their families through collaborative planning and coordination. There are 29 clusters of school boards and community agencies supported across the province. The initiative is driven by Ontario's Safe Schools Strategy and Policy Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health. It was supported by an initial investment of \$9M over three years beginning in 2007-08 and has been extended for an additional three years until 2012-13 and a further \$9M investment. The funding supports collaborative planning and coordination of services, but not the provision of direct services.

As part of phase two, which will extend for a second three year term, clusters are asked to invite appropriate partners from the health sector (e.g., hospitals that offer child and youth services, Family Health teams, Community Health Centres, addictions service providers) to participate in the clusters and develop joint referral processes with schools, school boards, and child and youth mental health agencies. SSLI will continue to empower system leaders and build on past successes.

Demonstration Project- Working Together for Kids' Mental Health

EDU is working with MCYS and MOHLTC on implementing a demonstration project, Working Together for Kids' Mental Health. The demonstration project is intended to improve the ability of professionals across sectors to identify and respond to indicators of mental health needs in children and youth. The demonstration project will review the use of common assessment tools as screens for children and youth with mental health and addictions issues. The demonstration pilot is now underway and is intended to continue to March 31, 2011. The pilot communities include Sudbury, Haliburton, Niagara and Belleville involving up to 10 schools in each community. At the completion of the Demonstration Project, the ministries will consider provincial implementation of the model, including decisions on the future use of common tools to inform decision making.

C. PPM 151: Dedicated Professional Activity Days

The Ministry continues to support district school boards in their implementation of dedicated professional activity days for the purpose of supporting students with special education needs by closing the gap and improving student achievement. Resources which have been developed by district school boards and the Ministry are available on the Council for Directors of Education (CODE) website, found at www.ontariodirectors.ca. Resources are available to support students with special education needs in the following areas

- *Learning For All, K-12*
- *Planning Entry to School*
- *Effective Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*
- *Shared Solutions*
- *Individual Education Plans*
- *Caring and Safe Schools*

School boards will continue to have the opportunity to submit board developed resources to support professional development days through the feedback mechanism on the CODE website.

D. Response to the Reference Group on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Funding

The Ministry provided funding to school boards in 2009/10 to hire additional ABA expertise, to support principals, teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and coordinating ASD training and resources, and facilitating collaboration between service providers and schools. The additional ABA expertise plays an important role in supporting deeper implementation of Policy/Program Memorandum 140, Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

For the 2010-11 school year, ABA expertise funding has been increased and transferred into the Grants for Students Needs (GSN) as the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA). School board allocations are calculated using a base plus enrolment model. This funding formula allows all school boards to hire at least one ABA expertise professional. School boards with a larger student enrolment will be able to recruit more than one Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to perform these functions. The total amount allocated in 2010/11 is \$10.8M.

The ABA expertise professionals will provide support to principals, teachers and other school board staff as required. ABA expertise professionals work to strengthen and facilitate collaborative working relationships among schools, parents, and community partners.

Implementation of PPM 140/Monitoring Implementation of ABA Instructional Methods

As required by PPM 140, the Ministry developed an annual process to monitor school boards' implementation of ABA instructional methods. Schools complete an annual snapshot self-assessment survey of 33 indicators of implementation of PPM 140. During the first school-year of implementation of PPM 140, 2007-08, all school boards were asked to randomly select 15% of their schools, elementary and secondary, to participate. In 2008-09 and 2009-10 all school boards were asked to involve all schools. This snapshot survey generates a provincial profile on implementation by school boards that is shared with MACSE and those members of the former Ministers' Autism Spectrum Disorders Reference Group who wished to be involved in selected MACSE meetings. The survey will be sent again in spring 2011.

Connections for Students model – province-wide implementation

EDU and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) are jointly supporting the provincial implementation of the Connections for Students model. The Connections for Students model is designed to support school-aged children transitioning from IBI therapy services delivered through the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) (funded by MCYS) to ABA instructional methods in publicly-funded schools. The Connections for Students model is centred on multi-disciplinary, student-specific, school-based transition teams that are established approximately six months before a child prepares to transition from the AIP to school and that continue to support the child for six months after entry to school. The Connections for Students model has been developed and is being implemented in response to the Ministers' Autism Spectrum Disorders Reference Group's recommendations.

Beginning March 2010, Connections for Students transition teams have been made available in all 72 publicly funded school boards for children who are ready to leave IBI services provided by the AIP and are starting or continuing in the publicly funded school system.

School board/AIP partnerships are being provided information and support during the provincial implementation of the Connections for Students model through information and resource links made available on The Council of Directors of Education (CODE) website (<http://ontariodirectors.ca/ASD/asd-english.html>).

The CODE website provides links to comprehensive tools and resources developed and made available by the 16 school board/AIP partnerships that have already participated in the Connections for Students model. Resources available are to be used as examples of tools and strategies that have been found to be useful by partnerships that have already implemented the Connections for Students model.

To better support school boards in implementing the Connections for Students model and to assess system changes, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are conducting an evaluation over 2010-11 of the provincial implementation of the Connections for Students model. Partnerships have identified designated school and AIP leads responsible for Connections for Students and submitted a Reporting Questionnaire to support school board and AIP partnerships in implementation of the model and to assist the ministries to assess system-wide model implementation. A final completed Implementation Reporting Questionnaire is due to the Ministries in April 2011.

In December 2010, MCYS announced \$25 million to expand ABA community-based services and supports for children with ASD, designed to help a broader range of children and youth with ASD develop skills in key areas and to address behaviours that interfere with their functioning. MCYS will be selecting providers to deliver these new services and supports by inviting submissions in response to an Expression of Interest EDU continues to work collaboratively with MCYS and ABA-based services and supports providers to provide and improve on the continuum of supports for students with ASD and their families. MCYS is expecting that children and youth will begin to access these expanded ABA services starting in spring 2011.

E. Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) Capacity Building Projects

The Ministry continues to respond to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education's (MACSE) recommendations to build the capacity of SEACs. A letter and survey were sent to SEAC chairs in September welcoming them back to the 2010-2011 school year and updating them on the work that the Ministry has taken to respond to the recommendations. SEACs are being asked to complete a survey asking for their assistance in the following areas:

- Effective SEAC Practices;
- Orientation;
- Resources/Materials;
- Public Engagement; and

- SEAC learning website.

Updates have been made to the SEAC Learning website and one suggestion of an effective practice would be for SEACs to regularly review the website during their meetings as updates are being made. Training modules will be available on the website for SEACs to use regarding Special Education Reports, Board Improvement Planning and School Effectiveness Framework. The Ministry continues to ask SEACs to review the SEAC Learning website and provide feedback to inform any changes to it.

The Ministry also continues to work with regional office staff to share information at SEAC meetings pertaining to MACSE recommendations and directives in special education for the 2010/11 school year.

F. VOICE Ontario School Board Training and Mentorship Program

Funding has been provided to VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children to deliver an Auditory-Verbal Mentorship Training Program (AVT) for school boards who have requested support to train teachers of the Deaf in the auditory-verbal approach.

The objective of the VOICE Ontario School Board Training and Mentorship Program is to increase the capacity of qualified professionals and broaden the understanding of decision-makers in Ontario school boards to meet the needs of oral Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students.

The mentorship program will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers, administrators and support staff to ensure that students with hearing loss who have learned to communicate through spoken language will have access to appropriate expertise that will help to ensure that their ongoing language, literacy and learning needs are met. The mentorship program will also increase school board capacity to offer the option of auditory-verbal intervention to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students within their board.

Training is now complete in the four pilot boards and VOICE is currently carrying out training in nine other boards.

Two additional boards are scheduled to begin training in Fall 2010 and Winter 2011.

G. Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT)

The Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) is administered by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), with funding from EDU. The WBTT provides teachers

with early screening tools and intervention strategies to help students in JK through Grade 2. The WBTT program helps teachers determine:

1. Which of their students are struggling
2. What areas they are struggling with
3. How these areas of need can be addressed in the classroom

LDAO initiated a program evaluation in order to assess the impact and effect of the WBTT program. This year's evaluation will focus on: WBTT's effectiveness in accurately predicting students who may be at-risk for future school difficulties, WBTT's effectiveness in closing the early achievement gap, WBTT's effectiveness in increasing overall student achievement. This evaluation will also assist in determining if there is a correlation between WBTT uptake in a school and subsequent grade three EQAO scores. The evaluation will include recommendations for future direction and is expected to be finalized by August 2011.

Funding for Special Education

1. Special Education Funding Overview

The 2010/11 Special Education Grant (SEG) is projected to increase by \$65.5 million to a provincial total of over \$2.31 billion. This is an increase of over \$687 million since 2002/03, or 42%. The government made a commitment to increase special education funding by 8% during this term, and this year's announcement demonstrates that it is on target to exceed its commitment by 2011-12.

As work continues on the evolution of the SEG, the 2010/11 total increase of \$65.5M will:

- provide \$10.8M in funding to support the introduction of the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA);
- continue to support the Measures of Variability (MOV) amount (approximately 5%) as part of the High Needs Amount (HNA) allocation to better reflect the variability of high needs students and boards' ability to respond to these needs in order to move away from allocating HNA on a claims-based process;
- provide \$10M in new funding for the introduction of the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model Component, which was introduced as part of the HNA MOV;
- provide transition support to school boards with declining enrolment by funding 50% of the transitional HNA Stabilization;
- stabilize funding for education programs for school-aged children and youth in government-approved care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities;
- continue to support the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) claim-based applications; and
- support a funding increase to the Special Equipment Amount (SEA), including the introduction of the SEA Per Pupil Amount, and continued support for SEA claims-based applications.

The Ministry has invested approximately \$53 million since 2006, through targeted funding outside the Grants for Student Needs (GSN), to build capacity and improve the learning environment for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

2. Evolution of Special Education Funding: Sector Discussions for 2010-11

Between September and December 2010, the Ministry held regional meetings across the province to discuss the evolution of special education funding. School boards were invited to send up to 5-8 representatives, including Supervisory Officers (Special Education and Curriculum), Business Officials, Principals and Special Education Advisory Committee Members. In addition to DSB discussions, the Ministry also met with special education associations and stakeholder groups, trustee associations, unions, MACSE and the Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC).

Participants were asked to consider effectiveness and efficiency in the use of existing resources, focusing the discussion on the relationship among: special education funding; the delivery of programs and services; and student achievement.

Advice on Special Education

1. Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

Two new members have been added to Council. Christian Mclary is the new representative for students and youth. Janette Seymour is the new representative for Pervasive Developmental Disabilities/Autism.

Lois Parkinson (who represented Teachers' Assistants) submitted her resignation from MACSE effective December 2010. The Ministry has initiated a process to fill this vacancy. In addition, there are three members whose terms are expiring at the end of March 2011: Alison Morse (represents Physical Disabilities), Joanne Cripps (represents Deaf and Hard of Hearing) and Linda Ward (represents Trustees). The Ministry is in the process of filling these vacancies and acknowledges the significant contributions made by current members.

Updates from Related Ministries

1. Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<p>School Health Support Service Review</p> <p>The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is working in partnership with the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and Education (EDU) on a review of School Health Support Services (SHSS).</p> <p>The review, conducted by Deloitte & Touche, focused on the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess whether clients are able to access and are receiving high quality services; • Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program's delivery and any areas in which it could be improved; • Identify whether the strengths 	<p>The report, "Review of School Health Support Services, Final Report, July 2010" was posted on the MOHLTC public website on January 27, 2011 and is available in English and French.</p> <p>In addition to the report, an electronic survey also in English and French is available for interested stakeholders to provide feedback on the report's recommendations.</p> <p>The survey will be open for 60 days, until March 27, 2011.</p> <p>The report will remain on the website after the survey has closed.</p>	<p>School Health Support Services are provided to children and youth in publicly-funded and private schools, and to children and youth that are being home-schooled to assist them in pursuing their education.</p> <p>The student must require SHSS in order to be able to attend school, participate in school routines, and receive instruction, including receiving satisfactory instruction at home.</p> <p>SHSS include nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and dietetics for students attending public schools. In addition to these services personal support services are provided for students attending private schools and for children and youth who are being home-schooled.</p>

<p>are aligned with the program's mandate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate whether current client care models utilized by service provider agencies are consistent with research evidence and best practices; and• Consider how SHSS can best serve students and their families, and whether proposed changes would benefit the students who use the services.		
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2. Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<p>Preschool Speech and Language (PSL), Blind – Low Vision (BLV) and Infant Hearing Program (IHP) : Semi- Annual Coordinators' Meetings</p>	<p>Between January 12th – January 14th, 2011, representatives from each of Ontario's local Preschool Speech and Language, Blind – Low Vision and Infant Hearing programs were invited to Toronto for the Province's semi-annual Coordinators' meetings. Highlights of the meetings included presentations and discussions on local, innovative strategies that support children and their families as they transition between service providers.</p>	
<p>Early Literacy Specialists (ELS) Program - Provincial Meeting</p>	<p>On January 17, 2011, the Ministry hosted a provincial meeting for representatives from Ontario's local Early Literacy Specialists programs. At this event, program staff had the opportunity to discuss local and collaborative approaches to promoting effective early literacy and language development in young children.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is working in partnership with the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and Education (EDU) on a review of School Health Support 	<p>Please see MOHLTC update.</p>	

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
Services (SHSS).		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On December 14, 2010 the Minister of Children and Youth Services announced the government's plan to help more kids with autism. An additional \$25 million annual investment in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) will help more children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). As part of its plan to help more kids with autism, Ontario is also investing in leading edge research and providing additional supports to parents. 	<p>New Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario is broadening the range of supports to children and youth with ASD and their families. Approximately 8,000 kids with ASD will benefit annually from new ABA-based services to be available in communities across Ontario starting in late spring 2011. These services will help children and youth with ASD become more independent, develop communication, social and daily living skills and manage better in school. <p>New training and supports for parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More training and support will be offered to parents so they can incorporate strategies into daily activities at home and further develop the skills their kids are learning at school and/or in a program delivered by an autism service provider. Parents will also have more access to resource materials and information about the full range of services and supports for children and youth with ASD. 	<p>Improved school-based supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These new supports will complement and build upon the ABA-based instruction children with ASD receive in school as required under PPM 140. MCYS continues to support the School Support Program. More than 185 autism consultants work with educators in publicly-funded elementary and secondary schools across the province as part of Ontario's School Support Program. These consultants help teachers and staff apply the principles of ABA to better understand and respond to the learning and social needs of children and youth with autism. The ministries of Education

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	<p>March break and summer camps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario is now providing ongoing funding to help children and youth with ASD attend March Break programs, summer camps and other respite programs. In 2010, summer camps and March Break programs provided almost 1,900 children and youth with ASD opportunities to have fun, make new friends and learn new skills. <p>Leading-edge research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario is supporting leaders in autism research to improve early detection and diagnosis of ASD and to better understand links with other related conditions. Since 2004, the province has committed more than \$15 million to autism-related research projects. • To learn more about the genetic causes of autism, the government is funding a five-year project at the Hospital for Sick Children, which is studying the role genetics plays in people with ASD. <p>ASD Clinical Expert Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents want to know how their children are progressing and that they are receiving the 	<p>and Children and Youth Services continue to work together to improve outcomes for children with ASD and to identify opportunities to further support them in school. For example, across Ontario, all 72 publicly-funded school boards now have Connections for Students teams in place to help kids leaving IBI therapy and the AIP transition to school.</p>

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	<p>treatment and services that best meet their needs. That is why the government is establishing a committee of experts in autism spectrum disorders to provide advice to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services - because clinical decisions are best made by experts, not the government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee will also advise the government on emerging research and best clinical practices. This will help to ensure kids with autism and their families get the right supports at the right time. <p>Autism Intervention Program - Independent Review Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government is establishing an independent review process for families who are not satisfied with a decision related to their child's eligibility, or to their discharge from Intensive Behavioural Intervention services. This will reassure parents that decisions affecting their children are fair and objective. 	

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<p><i>The 10-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy</i> The Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Education (EDU) and the Attorney General are working closely with the Ministry of Long Term Care (MOHLTC) on the development of the <i>Strategy</i> to improve services for those with mental health and addiction problems. The <i>Strategy</i> will consider the final recommendations of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and final report of the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions.</p>	<p>The development of the <i>Strategy</i> is expected to continue over the next few months.</p>	

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<p><i>The Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI)</i> started as a joint initiative of EDU and MCYS in 2007-08 (phase one). Phase two commenced in 2010-11, and deepened partnerships at a local level to include the MOHLTC. Phase two extends for a further three year period.</p> <p>The goal of the <i>SSLI</i> is to foster leadership and promote partnerships between school boards, community agencies and health partners in order to improve outcomes for students at risk through collaborative planning, coordination and referrals.</p>	<p><i>SSLI</i> was supported by an initial investment of \$9M over three years beginning in 2007-08 and was extended for an additional three years until 2012-13 and a further \$9M investment. The funding supports collaborative planning and coordination of services, but not the provision of direct services. Clusters have submitted their plans to EDU for approval, and the approval process is expected to be completed by the end of January, 2011.</p>	

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<p>MCYS is working with EDU and MOHLTC on implementing <i>Working Together for Kids' Mental Health (Working Together)</i>. This work is intended to improve the ability of professionals across sectors to identify and respond to indicators of potential mental health needs in children and youth. <i>Working Together</i> reviews the use of common identification and needs assessment tools.</p>	<p><i>Working Together</i> is now underway in schools in each of four communities (Sudbury, Belleville, Haliburton and Niagara) and is intended to continue to March 31, 2012. MCYS will consider provincial implementation of <i>Working Together</i>, together with EDU and MOHLTC, including decisions on the future use of common tools inform decision making.</p>	

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<p>Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Child Nutrition Program (AFASD/CNP) is delivered through 18 Aboriginal organizations in 180 Aboriginal communities across Ontario. The FASD/CNP combines health lifestyle and nutrition-based activities with FASD prevention education and family support interventions, in order to improve outcome for children and youth who are affected by FASD.</p>	<p>MCYS is renewing \$4.4M a year in funding to support the AFASD/CNP program. The AFASD/CNP service contracts will be renewed to March 31, 2014.</p>	

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<p>Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy - In December 2008, the government announced the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and committed to reducing child poverty in Ontario by 25 per cent in five years.</p> <p>The first annual report was released on December 2, 2009, and focused on the work completed to establish baseline indicators in various sectors.</p>	<p>The second annual report on the PRS was released on December 1, 2010. The progress report details steps taken to help families hit hardest by the recession and to stimulate Ontario's economic recovery. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolled out Full-Day Kindergarten in nearly 600 schools across the province for approximately 35,000 students, and maintaining approximately 8,500 licensed child care spaces and 1,000 child care jobs. • Cut taxes: 93 per cent of Ontarians are benefiting from personal income tax cuts and 90,000 low-income taxpayers no longer pay personal income tax. • Announced a review of social assistance and released a Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy - all with the goal of improving outcomes for low-income Ontarians. • Helped thousands of Ontarians afford college or university through investments in career retraining programs and post-secondary education. • Introduced the Open Ontario Plan to strengthen the province's economy and create more jobs. 	

3. Ministry of Community and Social Services

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On May 31, 2010, the Minister of Community and Social Services announced that the government is proceeding with the development of an Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR) under the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i>. ○ The proposed IAR will streamline, align and phase-in accessibility requirements pertaining to the Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the proposed IAR was posted for public review on the Regulatory Registry from September 2, 2010, to October 16, 2010. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over 950 comments were received from individuals, the disability community, municipalities and obligated organizations. ○ The government considered all comments prior to drafting the IAR. • The proposed IAR is currently posted on the Ministry of Community and Social Services' website for an additional 45-day public review period, which will conclude March 18, 2011. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The government will consider all comments received prior to enactment of the IAR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Information and Communications standard of the IAR, there are proposed requirements specifically for public and private elementary and secondary institutions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing accessible resources or materials, including student records and information about program requirements, to students once notification of need is given; ○ Providing educators accessibility awareness training related to accessible program delivery and instruction; ○ Producers of education materials will be required to provide the institutions with accessible or conversion ready versions, upon request; ○ Libraries of these institutions will also be required to provide accessible resources or materials, upon request.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Passport</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Passport program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2010, additional details of the 2010 Ontario Budget were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport has three components.

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<p>helps young adults with a developmental disability find more ways to participate in their community.</p>	<p>announced. The government is investing another \$3M over the next two years in the Passport program to serve 260 more people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry will be investing almost \$34 million in annualized base funding, since the Passport program was introduced in 2005. • Since 2005, the Passport program has supported approximately 2,500 adults with a developmental disability to make the transition from school to community life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first is funding for community participation supports for individuals with a developmental disability when they have left school. Recipients can choose to receive their funding directly so they can purchase their own supports, get supports and services through an agency, or a combination of the two. • The second is mentoring which is an in-school component to introduce students between the ages of 14 and 21 to post-school experiences and options. • The third is planning in which individuals and families are to work in partnership with educators and local agencies designated by MCSS's regional offices to assist in supporting the development of individual transition plans as identified under Regulation 181/98 of the <i>Education Act</i>.

4. Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Project Description	Status Update / Timing	Linkages to Special Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourteen Crown Ward Education Championship Teams support approximately 74% of Crown Wards across Ontario through partnerships with children's aid societies, school boards, colleges, universities, and employment services. Their objective is to remove information or administrative barriers to coordinated and integrated customer service for Crown Wards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crown Wards may require or already be receiving services through special education. Teams work towards removing information or administration barriers which may include ensuring appropriate special education services are provided to identified Crown Wards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 25th, 2010, College Committee on Disability Issues (Susan Alcorn-Mackay), Inter-University Disability Issues Association (Tina Doyle) and the representatives from the Ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities and Education presented NAVIGATING TOMORROW: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions to Postsecondary Education

	GUIDING PERSONAL SUCCESS to the Ontario Student Counsellors Association (OSCA).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with Disabilities Funding 2010-2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$39 Million in Base funding and \$8 million in Access to Opportunities funding to be flowed by March 31, 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding helps support institutions to deliver services and accommodations for students with disabilities at Postsecondary Education