

Meeting Summary
Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)
October 5, 2016

The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) held its most recent meeting on October 5, 2016 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 of interest to a member of the Executive Committee.
- Joe reminded the group that all documents distributed are confidential unless otherwise stated.
- The next meeting will be February 8 & 9, 2017.

Minister Update

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education

The Minister thanked Council members for their commitment to students with special education needs and reiterated the importance of the role of MACSE. Minister Hunter also provided the following update:

Provincial and demonstration schools

The ministry recently completed the consultation with education and community partners. Some of the key elements to emerge from the consultations include:

- Strong support for the deaf culture
- The difficulty in providing adequate programming with low student enrolment
- The shortage of qualified interpreters and teachers of the Deaf

As a result of this review, the ministry will be taking the following steps:

- Establishing an advisory group to provide input on supports for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing; and
- Creating a reading intervention pilot program for students with severe learning disabilities (LD) in local communities
- The governance structure will change at Centre Jules-Léger so that it is governed by Francophones. This will be subject to legislative approval.

Renewed Math Strategy

- Improving math scores is another priority for this government. Students in Ontario continue to perform better in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test.
- Accommodations will be made for students with special education needs. More personalized instruction will be emphasized and support will include a focus on the strengths and needs of students with LD.

Well-Being Strategy for Education

- Another key to student's success is their well-being. The ministry has recently launched a Well-Being Strategy for Education. The discussion document is available on the ministry website for review.

Minister Hunter thanked Lucille Norman for her three years of service serving students with multiple exceptionalities.

Louise Sirisko provided an update on the following items:

Appointment of Bruce Rodrigues

Bruce Rodrigues was appointed Deputy Minister of Education. He was most recently the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Before EQAO, he was Director of Education for the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) and Associate Director of Education for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

EQAO & Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) on-line testing

- For the first time online testing for the OSSLT will be conducted province-wide on a voluntary basis in October and March. If the student is successful, he/she will officially satisfy the literacy requirement for his/her diploma.
- October is a trial of the online assessment platform only. The only accommodations available through the electronic platform are text-to-speech and colour control.
- It will cost \$6.2M to switch over to online testing, but the cost savings of electronic testing would recover that sum in five years.

Mandate Letters from the Premier

The mandate letter from the Premier to the Minister highlights the following related to students with special education needs:

- To develop a strategy to improve supports for children with special education needs in schools
- To improve school-based supports for students with autism spectrum disorder.
- Louise noted that the ministry will be looking at our mandate letter and other mandate letters from the various ministries (i.e. MCYS, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC))

Memo of September 8, 2016 - Special Education Information

A memo was sent to the education sector from the Assistant Deputy Minister providing information to support students with special education needs. As part of the central agreement with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and the Crown, a committee was formed to collaboratively discuss current issues related to supporting students with special education needs. A recommendation letter was sent to the Minister of Education at the end of June that included items related to IEP development and reporting, PA days, educator training, funding and professional support personnel.

Review of the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The ministry will be revising the current IEP guidelines and resources to reflect current pedagogy found in ministry resources. Furthermore, the ministry will be exploring the ability for IEPs created within the first 30 days of the school year to serve as the IEP updated for the progress report card.

MACSE members provided further comments:

MACSE members will be writing a letter to EQAO expressing their disappointment that proper accommodations/ supports were not developed for students with special education needs when developing the OSSLT online. Members would like to ensure that in the future, all supports for students with special education needs are in place prior to writing any provincial assessments either online or in writing.

Renewed Math Strategy (RMS)

Julie Williams, Manager SEPPB
Zheng Xu, Education Officer, SEPPB

- The Renewed Math Strategy is an Early Years to Grade 12 roadmap that leverages the collective knowledge and skills from our shared successes of the past, to focus on improving student achievement in mathematics.
- Support also focuses on the strengths and needs of students with learning disabilities and students taking compulsory courses in Applied Mathematics.
- The ministry is supporting focused efforts among elementary and secondary school mathematics leaders to share successful instruction and assessment practices.
- Key priorities include:
 - more precise and personalized instruction strategies for students with special education needs;
 - Skills such as reasoning, problem solving, and communicating mathematical thinking are essential; and
 - the achievement of students in applied mathematics courses.

MACSE members provided further comments:

- Mathies.ca is a website designed for K-12 students and parents and was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and is a widely used resource

Joint Autism Update (Delivery of Program & Services)

ASD Reference Group Members
Julie Williams, Manager, SEPPB
Sarah Hardy, Manager, MCYS
Marg Spoelstra
Neil Walker
Susan Menary
Lynn Ziraldo,

- EDU is supporting the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) in the implementation of a new Ontario Autism Program (OAP) that will combine the current blend of autism services into an expanded and more individualized program of supports for children, youth and their families. EDU is providing new one-time funding (\$39M in total) to all 72 school boards to support children through the transition period as the OAP is implemented.
- The *Connections for Students* model is centred on multi-disciplinary, student-specific, school-based transition team that are established approximately six months before a child prepares to transition from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) services provided through the MCYS funded Autism Intervention Program (AIP) to applied behaviour analysis (ABA) instructional methods in school, and continue for six months after entry or continuing in school. All district school boards have now hired ABA expertise professionals that are responsible for supporting principals, teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and coordinating ASD training and resources, and facilitating collaboration between service providers and schools.
- Annual ABA Day is scheduled for November 8, 2016.

Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

Lisa Lumley, SEPPB
Dr. Kathy Short, Director, Mental Health ASSIST

The ministry is continuing to fund the School Mental Health (SMH) ASSIST initiative which is a provincial implementation support team designed to help schools and school boards build system and school capacity to support all students, including those with mental health and addictions needs.

SMH ASSIST has developed a number of resources for Mental Health Leaders and Educators.

These resources are provided on the [SMH ASSIST](#) website and include:

- A suite of Decision Support Tools intended to help boards with the selection of appropriate resources and programming, including evidence-based mental health promotion programming Resources for *Supporting Minds* Modules
 - Anxiety: Facilitator's Guide, Slide Decks, Case Studies, Handouts and Toolboxes
 - Educator Info-Sheet on Helping Students to Manage Anxiety
 - Leading Mentally Healthy Schools
 - Mentally Healthy Classrooms Module
 - Information Sheet on supporting newcomer mental health
- Dr. Kathy Short reviewed the aligned and integrated model for school mental health and well-being.

MACSE members provided further comments:

- District school boards meet three times a year to network and share best practices

Updates from other ministries

- MACSE members heard presentations on a variety of initiatives underway within MCYS, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). A written update from each ministry is now part of the Special Education Update.

Working Groups

All

Members discussed the two draft reports developed by members on Aboriginal Education and Well-Being and Student Achievement.

After group discussion, edits were made to the two reports and are close to being finalized.

Meeting Summary and Wrap-Up

Joe Trovato, Chair

Joe reminded the group of the following:

- Once finalized, the MACSE summary 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.
- Members are reminded that all meeting materials from the October 2016 meeting are confidential unless otherwise stated.

Appendix A

Members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

Updated September 2016

Exceptionalities/Sectors Represented	Name	Expiry Date
Council Chair	Joe Trovato	March 31, 2017
Exceptionalities		
Learning Disabilities	Suzanne Bonneville	May 16, 2019
Pervasive Developmental Disorders / Autism	Vacant	
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	Denise Maisonneuve	November 5, 2017
Gifted	Stacey Manzerolle	May 27, 2018
Developmental Disability	Laura LaChance	October 1, 2016
Blind and Low-Vision	Dawn Clelland	March 31, 2017
Physical Disability	Katie Muirhead	May 27, 2018
Multiple Exceptionalities	Vacant	
Emotional / Behavioural Disorder	Vacant	
Educators		
Supervisory Officers	Peggy Blair	May 27, 2018
Trustees	Cheryl Lovell	December 2, 2017
Principals	Vacant	
Teachers	Shelly Durance	October 1, 2016
Educational Assistants	Marcia Brown	March 31, 2017
Professionals		
Medical	Vacant	
Psychologists	Dr. Sue Ball	November 5, 2017
Social Workers	Jim Van Buskirk	October 1, 2016
Speech and Language Pathologists	Sharon McWhirter	October 1, 2016
Students / Youth		
Students / Youth	Braxton Hartman	October 1, 2016
Aboriginal Community		
Vice Chair /Aboriginal Community	Marion Macdonald	May 8, 2016