

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MINISTER

FOR THE YEAR 2009/2010

Ministry of Education

MACSE
c/o Special Education Policy
and Programs Branch
18th floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

MACSE
c/o Direction des politiques et des
programmes de l'éducation
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18^e étage, 900, rue Bay
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



September 1, 2010

The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education
900 Bay Street
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Dombrowsky,

Re: Annual Report of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

Please accept this annual report on the activities of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) for the fiscal year 2009/2010. The report also outlines future directions for 2010/2011.

MACSE has valued the opportunities to meet with you as Minister of Education and in particular has appreciated our conversations about priorities for the upcoming school year. Ministry staff also continues to support council through the Special Education Policy and Program Branch and have assisted council in providing timely and informed advice.

During this past year, council created two simultaneous working groups – Children's Mental Health in the School System and Building Capacity of Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs). Council members were encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of the reports produced by these working groups and in particular the well-timed release of your March memo to all SEACs which outlined your plan for increased communication.

As always, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and ministry staff to continue to discuss ways in which MACSE can advise and support the efforts in meeting the needs of students in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

John Wilhelm
Chair

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2009/2010 Achievements

The mandate of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) is to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for students with special education needs.

Council's voice is often heard through its representation on various Ministry work groups and other stakeholder advisory bodies. In addition to three face to face meetings, council members participate in teleconferences and through written requests for feedback. Members also document successful practices and challenges that are evident in the special education communities which are reported back to council as a whole. Council also responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education and other ministries that have potential impact(s) on students with special education needs.

MACSE's priorities and areas of focus for 2009/2010 aligned with the Ministry's special education strategic goals and initiatives: Accountability and Evidence Based Practice, Coordinated/Collaborative Services, Special Education Funding, and Secondary School Success.

The areas of focus were:

- Curriculum
- Individual Education Plan Development
- Learning for All
- Parent Engagement / Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)
- Safe Schools
- Special Education Plan Review

During the course of the 2009/10 year, MACSE had the opportunity to offer advice or participate in discussions related to the above priorities and areas of focus addressing a number of significant issues that affect students with special education needs. This included discussions and or recommendations on:

- Special Education Funding
- Student Success/Learning to 18
- Individual Education Plans
- Learning for All (K-12)
- Caring and Safe Schools
- Special Education Plans/School Effectiveness Framework
- Labour Mobility Agreement
- PPM 140: *"Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)"* – Implementation Survey Results
- Children's Mental Health and Review of School Health Support Services
- Parent Engagement / Building Capacity of SEACs
- Early Learning
- Ministry research practices and direction

MACSE continues to collaborate with other ministries through their participation at Council meetings. Council's voice was heard through the participation of its Chair in meetings with the Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Learning and Curriculum Division, and the Director of Special Education Strategic Planning Branch.

Council Chair and members also participated on a number of advisory committees and attended meetings with a variety of organizations in order to represent the strengths, needs and concerns of students with special education needs.

Recommendations to the Minister

In 2009, the Hon. Kathleen Wynne, then Minister of Education asked MACSE to focus more particularly on the areas of Student Mental Health and Parent Engagement / Building Capacity of SEACs. In response to this request, two working groups were formed.

The purpose of forming working groups was to ensure that advice of council continued to be strategic and focused in direction of the government's overarching priorities and those of the Special Education branch. Attention was given to making sure that reflections from individual sectors continue to be heard and are woven into the advice of council members.

Building Capacity of SEACs

The MACSE working group on Building Capacity of SEACs met together with staff from the Special Education Policy and Program Branch and the Parent Engagement Office. Discussion centered on Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the commitment to parent engagement, and MACSE's role in engaging SEACs. The working group developed a proposed action plan for building capacity of SEACs, which was submitted to Minister Wynne in October 2009. Since the submission of the action plan, the Ministry of Education continues to respond to MACSE recommendations to build capacity of SEACs. Key activities include:

- On March 12, 2010 the Hon. Minister Dombrowsky sent a letter to all SEACs in the province acknowledging and thanking them for their vital role in supporting students with special education needs.
- The Ministry has asked that SEACs review the current e-learning website and provide feedback to inform any changes to it.
- A SEAC questionnaire was drafted, in consultation with MACSE, and was shared with all SEACs September 29, 2010. The questionnaire will provide SEACs the opportunity to provide feedback on effective SEAC practices, orientation, resources and public engagement.

Student Mental Health

This MACSE working group has discussed mental well-being of students as it relates to education. In particular, council members met with staff from the Special Education Program and Policy Branch and staff from three other ministries to discuss collaborative practices amongst caregivers. On December 9, 2009, council submitted a position paper on student mental health entitled, *Mental Health Collaboration, Building the Village – Guiding Principles*. Since that time council chair, as well as other council members, have participated in numerous cross sectoral forums regarding children and youth mental health.

The Council's priorities for 2010/2011

Council was pleased to meet with the newly appointed Minister of Education, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky. Members took this opportunity to reiterate MACSE's role in supporting and making recommendations to the Minister. In addition, priorities and areas of focus for the upcoming year were discussed.

In the upcoming year, council will continue to respond to areas related to the provision of services for students with special needs. In doing so, consultations will occur during three scheduled meetings throughout the year. As well, members will be involved in several teleconference calls; will participate in discussions/ forums as they arise; and will respond to the ministry's ongoing requests for opinion.

During the upcoming year, further working groups will be formed. MACSE has begun the process of developing priorities in consultation with ministry staff. Early discussions include potential areas for prioritization as transitions, Section 23 programs and services, special education funding, and board improvement plans / school effective framework.

Council maintained its practice of continual assessment of its own effectiveness. A summary of evaluative feedback from Council members is provided to all members and to Ministry staff following each meeting. In addition, in accordance with the Order-in-Council, the Ministry has initiated a review of the Council. The review will focus on three main areas: accountability, operational processes (including issues related to member composition and appointments), and strategic planning and advice. SEPPB staff will work with the Council on the review. It is expected to be completed by the fall 2010.

APPENDIX I

Summary of Council Meetings 2009/2010

Membership

Council wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the following members whose terms expired on March 31, 2010:

- Jennifer Cantello Daw, Member representing Pervasive Developmental Disorders / Autism
- Tyler Meredith, Member representing Students / Youth

Council also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Sabeena Ali, Member representing Blind and Low-Vision who resigned in 2010.

Meetings

The Council held meetings on June 10-11, 2009, October 14-15, 2009, and on February 17, 2010.

The June 2009 meeting agenda included the following relevant topics:

- Labour Mobility Agreement – Implications for Teachers;
- Caring and Safe Schools Resource Document Consultation; and
- Special Education Board Plans

The October 2009 meeting agenda included the following relevant topics:

- PPM 140: *"Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)"* – Implementation Survey Results presented to MACSE and Autism Reference Group Members;
- Children's Mental Health in the School System and Building Capacity of Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) (MACSE Working Groups);
- Special Incidence Portion (SIP) and Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Reviews;
- Student Success/Learning to 18 – Continuing Connections to Special Education; and
- Consultations of MACSE members on Special Education Plans/School Effectiveness Framework and Individual Education Plans.

The February 2010 meeting agenda included the following relevant topics:

- Early Learning, Learning for All (K-12) ; SEACs; and
- Review of School Health Support Services (Overview and Consultation).

APPENDIX 2

MANDATE AND STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

The Advisory Committee on Special Education was established in 1974, and has been renewed continually from that date. Its name was later changed to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). The following describes the mandate and structure of the Council, as it existed during the 2009/2010 year.

The Council advises the Minister of Education on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for exceptional students, including the identification and provision of early intervention programs for students with special needs.

In particular, the Council:

- responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education or other ministries, as submitted to the Council, from time to time;
- identifies concerns in the delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils and provides information, advice and recommendations for Ministry consideration;
- submits an annual report and recommendations to the Minister; and
- meets up to three times a year for a maximum of 4 ½ days per year.

The membership structure of the Advisory Council was changed in 1996. Instead of seats for specific organizations, the Council now has:

- one seat for each of ten exceptionalities;
- one seat for each of nine educator and professional categories;
- one seat for a student member;
- one seat for Native Communities;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Community and Social Services;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities; and
- two representatives each for the Francophone and Roman Catholic communities, appointed from among the members above.

MACSE members are appointed for up to two terms of three years each. The Ministry sends a 'Call for Applications' letter to selected organizations with an interest in Special Education in the areas related to the upcoming vacancies. Potential candidates are requested to apply directly to the Public Appointment Secretariat where the applications are gathered and transmitted to the Minister's Office. The applications are then assessed and submitted for Minister's decision.

APPENDIX 3

MEMBERS OF THE MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION APRIL 1, 2009 - MARCH 31, 2010

Exceptionality/ Community of Interest Represented	Members
<u>Council Chair</u> <u>Exceptionalities</u> Learning Disabilities / French Language Community Pervasive Developmental Disorders/Autism Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Gifted Developmental Disability Blind & Low Vision Physical Disability Multiple Exceptionalities Emotional/Behavioural Disorder <u>Educators</u> Council Vice-Chair / Supervisory Officers Trustees / Roman Catholic Community Principals Teachers / French Language Community Teachers' Assistants <u>Professionals</u> Medical Practitioners Psychologists Social Workers / Roman Catholic Community Speech and Language Pathologists <u>Aboriginal Community</u> <u>Student / Youth</u>	John Wilhelm Raoul Romain Vacant Joanne Cripps David Mason Susan Blekkenhorst Vacant Alison Morse Tracy Grant Robert Savage Warren Kennedy Linda Ward Marlene Pike Jean-Baptiste Arhanchiague Lois Parkinson Dr. Arlette LeFebvre Joe Trovato Marianne Saade Ruth Jones Bonny Cann Vacant