

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2009-2010
Accessibility Plan



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Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers in key areas of everyday life.

These standards will increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

The Government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province, beginning in January 2010 when the first standard — for customer service — comes into force.

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Building on last year's plan, the 2009-10 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of Education towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians. The ministry's seventh annual accessibility plan highlights 2008-2009's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

Highlights from this year's plan include:

- To ensure delivery of high levels of service to customers with disabilities, the Ministry of Education promoted the Ontario Public Service *May I Help You?* training modules. The ministry has made it a mandatory requirement for all existing and new staff to complete these modules;
- To help students reach their potential in learning, the ministry has led the development of *Learning for All K-12*. This resource is designed to share information with educators about research-informed educational approaches that have proven to be effective from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Funding to support implementation of the approaches and planning tools will be provided in 2009-10 to all school boards;

- To support students who are Deaf, Blind or Deaf-Blind, the ministry formed partnerships with Nipissing University, York University and the University of Ottawa to increase the numbers of specialist teachers for these students. The partnership developed additional qualification courses for Specialist Teachers of the Deaf and offered programs and summer camps for teachers and student teachers on American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ);
- To support barrier-free learning environments where all students have equal access to the learning experience and the Ontario curriculum, the ministry provides workshops, in-service and additional qualification courses on assistive technology to teachers in district school boards. In August 2009, the ministry hosted a provincial conference on the use of assistive technologies in, and beyond the classroom, by partnering with the Association of Special Education Technology (ASET); and
- To support children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services are implementing the Connections for Students model. The Connections for Students model is a strategy to support children transitioning from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) services to applied behaviour analysis (ABA) instructional methods in school. School boards throughout the province are expected to implement the Connections for Students transition teams no later than spring 2010.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Education to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

Links to the other ministry plans are available at:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. **All OPS ministries must comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010.**

To begin to transition OPS ministries to this regulation, this section has been added to the ODA Planning Template to highlight customer service initiatives.

The Ministry of Education was successful in achieving, and in some cases surpassing, planned commitments for Customer Service for the past year, outlined in its 2008-09 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report as of August 31, 2009.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In preparation for the implementation of the Customer Service Regulation under the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005, the ministry will continue to address gaps identified in the 2008 initial review of the ministry's customer service practices.

Planned Action(s):

- A sample audit of training logs will be undertaken; units not in compliance will be identified and reminded of training requirement.
- A sample audit of progress toward branch compliance will be completed, issues identified and resolution strategies implemented.
- Deputy Minister-approved compliance report will be completed by December 10, 2009 and sent to Ministry of Government Services for their roll-up and presentation to the Secretary of Cabinet.
- The ministry will host conversations for staff to provide practical tips on accommodations staff can make to provide better service to persons with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Nov 09 – Mar 11**Results Achieved:**

The ministry is continuing to work with the Diversity Office to ensure that we will be in full compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, also known as the Customer Service Regulation.

The ministry's implementation strategy included:

- meeting with senior management teams to inform on compliance requirements and ensure continued high-level support,
- assigning Divisional contacts to ministry working group to ensure implementation approach was customized to individual divisional operating realities,
- developing and issuing communications to all levels of staff, for purposes of informing and educating,
- creating ministry process for communicating temporary service disruptions and incorporating accessibility into feedback processes,
- reviewing and revising as necessary, ministry customer service policies to ensure that they align with the Ontario Public Service Accessible Customer Service policy,
- collaborating with Educational Audit Services Team to develop strategy to monitor implementation,
- adapting and implementing enterprise-wide training strategy to ministry needs, and
- collaborating with OPS Accessibility Leads Network, the Diversity Office and ministry Communications Branch to develop and implement ministry strategy to post documents required under the Regulation.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry will promote OPS training modules to employees, to ensure delivery of high levels of customer services to customers with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to require completion of the *May I Help You?* modules by all new staff.

Implementation Timeframe: ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

All managers received a notice by e-mail outlining the mandatory training requirements – completion of *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service*. Notice was issued on August 2, 2009.

An all-staff notice was sent by e-mail on August 12, 2009 advising of the mandatory requirement to complete both modules: *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service*.

Accessible formats of both modules were posted on the ministry intranet; staff received notification in October.

Divisions are tracking completion of training and are identifying non-completion for follow-up by managers to ensure that all ministry staff will complete the training.

The ministry also identified that accessibility was a missing component in the OPS new managers' training program – Managers' Foundations. The Diversity Office was asked to follow-up with the training developers to ensure modules on accessibility will be included in upcoming new managers' training.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

The Ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to identify, remove or prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments as of August 31, 2009.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, through our Corporate Finance and Services Branch, will ensure that the new Standards for Barrier Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities released in October 2004 to improve barrier-free accessibility in ministry buildings, are implemented. The ministry will continue to improve accessibility when planning major capital projects, especially converting washrooms to barrier-free washrooms. The ministry will undertake the same diligence with respect to the renewal of rental agreements to ensure that existing ministry properties are accessible.

Planned Action(s):

Build one unisex accessible washroom on the 15th floor (which is a cross over floor for the high rise and low rise elevators).

Implementation Timeframe: To be completed in fiscal 09/10

Results Achieved:

All elevator lobbies in the Mowat Block have been renovated with glass doors with automatic door openers to assist staff/visitors with mobility challenges to get in/out of the office space.

Focus Area: Built Environment**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Provincial Schools (PSB) and French Language Education Policy and Programs Branches (FLEPPB) will continue to work with facilities and the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) to improve the accessibility and overall environment of the school /residence installations they maintain. All new construction and renovations will be inclusive and comply with barrier free design standards.

Planned Action(s):

Improve our communications equipment to allow our non-hearing population access to vital information which is otherwise sent through a regular paging system. The Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) will allow Deaf and hard of hearing students or staff to be notified visually of pending emergencies through a network of monitors, strobes, pagers and computers located throughout PSB and FLEPPB schools and residences. Ensure that the design of all new construction and renovations is inclusive.

- Evaluate the success of the prototype emergency notification system for Deaf and hard of hearing students and complete implementation at sites with Deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Continue to design and construct buildings and renovations according to inclusive design standards.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

- Developed a prototype emergency notification system for Deaf and hard of hearing students.
- All new construction projects and renovations incorporated inclusive design.

Focus Area: Employment**Impact: Program and Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministries will continue to promote the *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs* developed by Emergency Management Ontario, via the intranet and during Emergency Preparedness Week.

Planned Action(s):

Our Emergency Management website will be refreshed in the near future and will include both the Accessibility Checklist along with the *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs*

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

As part of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) update, all COOP reps received a copy of the Draft Accessibility Checklist and were informed to provide a copy to their managers so that they would take into account staff with accessibility issues in their COOP and Evacuation plans.

Within Mowat Block, all accessibility requests are handled by Facilities Unit.

Focus Area: Employment**Impact: Program and Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry will continue to build on ministry managers' and employees' awareness of employment practices and continue to provide training opportunities to ensure improved accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to require completion of the *May I Help You?* modules by all new staff.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

All managers received an e-mail notice outlining the mandatory training requirements – completion of *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service*. Notice was issued on August 2, 2009.

All-staff notice was sent by e-mail on August 12, 2009 advising of the mandatory requirement to complete both modules: *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service*.

Managers were reminded of the requirement to complete the training module - *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act—Maximizing the Contributions of Employees with Disabilities* – in a notice issued in November 2009.

Staff were encouraged to attend the OPS Accessibility Expo in May.

The staff survey to promote awareness of accessibility issues has been cancelled. Staff have instead received comprehensive information on serving persons with disabilities by completing the mandatory training for the Customer Service Regulation.

Focus Area: Info&Comm**Impact: Program****Commitment: Ongoing**

Within the broad context of identifying any barriers/issues and opportunities that could impact people with disabilities, the Ministry of Education will be exploring, and enhancing where appropriate the accessibility potential of processes related to the delivery of its e-learning policies and programs, including design, procurement, development/modification and implementation.

Results Achieved:

Accessibility has been a key consideration in the development of the provincial Learning Management System (LMS) and the Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB). The LMS and OERB software have been tested to ensure they are WC3 compliant. In addition, every effort has been made to include accessibility considerations in course

development. For example, courses have been designed to provide alternative text descriptions for images and transcripts are provided for audio and video files.

All e-learning courses in support of the French-language curriculum continue to be developed using a technology permitting use by persons with visual disabilities using a text reader.

Planned Action(s):

E-learning courses in support of the French-language curriculum will continue to be developed using a technology permitting use by persons with visual disabilities using a text reader.

First courses should be available winter 2010.

School boards remain responsible for identifying the particular needs of students with disabilities and customizing the courses and resources to meet their needs.

Implementation Timeframe: 2007 - 2010

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if their needs are not addressed in the revised curricula.

As revised curricula are released, the Introduction will include an enhanced section on Planning Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, and many specific curriculum expectations in the documents will include examples to address the teaching and learning needs of all students. The ministry will continue to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed in the revised curricula.

Results Achieved and Planned Action(s):

The Curriculum Review process will continue to develop revised curriculum policy documents that include an enhanced section on Planning Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, and many specific curriculum expectations with appropriate examples to address the teaching and learning needs of all students.

Health and Physical Education Grades 1-8 is scheduled for release in fall 2009 for implementation in schools beginning September 2010. The Grades 9 and 10 and Grades 11 and 12 curriculum documents for Health and Physical Education and Social Sciences and Humanities are scheduled for release in spring 2010 for implementation in schools beginning September 2011.

The curriculum review process for French as a Second Language 1-12 began in fall 2008. The initial stages of the curriculum review process for Classical Studies and International Languages, Grades 9 to 12 and Native Languages, Grades 1 to 12 began in spring 2009.

French-language curriculum policy documents on the following subjects have been revised to address the needs of students with special education needs:

- *Éducation artistiques*, 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années
- *Éducation physique et santé*, 1^{re} à la 8^e année
- *Éducation physique et santé*, 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années
- *ALF / PANA*, 1^{re} à la 8^e année
- *ALF / PANA* 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années
- *Sciences humaines et sociales*, 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années

The revised policy documents will be released starting fall 2009 through to fall 2010.

Planned Action(s):

Curriculum review process is proceeding as planned although the release of the revised Health and Physical Education, Grades 1 to 8 curriculum will now occur in fall 2009. Expectations and examples that address the teaching and learning needs of all students are included as appropriate. The review of the secondary curriculum for Health and Physical Education and the Social Sciences and Humanities will conclude in spring 2010 with the release of the revised documents which will be implemented in fall 2011. New courses in Equity Studies which are included in the revised Social Sciences and Humanities curriculum will provide opportunities to address issues of equity of access. The review of the French as a Second Language curriculum, grades 1 to 12 will continue in fall 2009, in addition to the review of Native Languages, grades 1 to 12 and Classical and International Languages, grades 9 to 12.

The French-language Curriculum Review process will continue to develop revised curriculum policy documents that include an enhanced section on Planning Programs

for Students with Special Education Needs, and many specific curriculum expectations with appropriate examples to address the teaching and learning needs of all students.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may not reach their full education potential if appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are not developed and/or implemented. The ministry will continue to take steps to improve program planning by clarifying the connection between a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), the Ontario curriculum and the provincial report card with school boards. The ministry will also assist boards to streamline their administrative processes, so that they may focus their resources on program planning and implementation.

The ministry, under the guidance of the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), is currently exploring the possibility of creating a voluntary electronic IEP template for school boards.

Planned Action(s):

District School Boards piloting the template are being invited in the Fall 2009 to a meeting to discuss their use of the template. A final report with recommendations including recommendations to enhance accessibility will be developed and submitted in early 2010.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009 - 2010

Results Achieved:

Phase II is unfolding as planned. The IEP template has moved to a new server with added electronic features.

Focus Area: Info&Comm**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will continue to provide textbooks and learning materials in alternate formats to students who are blind or who have low vision and are in district school boards. A recently created facility enabling special needs advisors in district school boards to order publications online has improved the service provided.

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will continue to examine the feasibility of expanding access to learning materials in digital formats to all print-impaired students in district school boards and school authorities in order to ensure equity, improve service and reduce costs.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry, through the W. Ross Macdonald School and le Centre Jules-Léger (CJL) will:

- Work with Curriculum Branch (Trillium List), district school boards (DSBs) and publishers of text-based materials to expand the items available both in softcopy and hard copy, and to reduce production and delivery timelines for students with perceptual disabilities.
- Implement the French interface to the Resource Services Library (RSL) repository and search engine to improve services to French-language students and DSBs.
- Implement the post-secondary pilot project in 2009-10 and start the evaluation process with project partners to determine if it can be expanded to all provincially funded post-secondary institutions.
- Work with Curriculum Branch, the Corporate Coordination Office, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and publishers on the implementation of the section of the Information and Communication Standard as it effects the provision of text-based educational materials in the provincially funded education sector.
- Work with the Corporate Coordination Office to improve the delivery time of employment information to employees who are blind or have low vision.
- Following a thorough review of the feasibility of expanding access to learning materials in digital formats to all print-impaired students in district school boards and school authorities, a decision will be made regarding further efforts in future years.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

- Books provided on request
- Ability to download items available in softcopy implemented in early 2009.
- Worked with MTCU, selected post-secondary institutions and representatives of post-secondary texts to create a pilot project to improve service to post-secondary students with perceptual disabilities.

Focus Area: Info&Comm**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

Lack of awareness of tools and resources on accessibility and the ODA can be a current and future barrier to the development of integrated, accessible I & IT business solutions.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to post on ClusterNET relevant ODA resource materials. (ClusterNET is a cluster-wide intranet that allows cross-ministry collaboration and information-sharing of I & IT knowledge.)

Specifically, links to current ODA standards and policies, as well as tools for ODA-compliance will be made available for all staff across the six ministries of the cluster.

Planned Action(s):

This commitment will continue to expand a section of the Resource area that is populated with links to current ODA standards and policies, video and demos, as well as tools for ODA support and compliance. Please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_022782.html.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries fulfilled its commitment to post relevant ODA resource materials on ClusterNET.

This commitment includes the expanded section of the Resource area that was populated with links to current ODA standards and policies, video and demos, as well as tools for ODA support and compliance. Please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_022782.html.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Successful integration into the workplace for persons with disabilities requires a variety of support tools (i.e. software).

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to the maintenance and updating as required, of the current checklist of software and applications, designed to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in day-to-day work activities.

Planned Action(s):

This checklist will remain available to all OPS staff on ClusterNET – please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_023162.html.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries continued its commitment to the maintenance and updating as required, of the current checklist of software and applications, developed in 2004-05, designed to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in day-to-day work activities.

This checklist is available to all OPS staff on ClusterNET – please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_023162.html.

Focus Area: Info&Comm and Employment**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will investigate the use of Web 2.0 technologies and other social networking tools in relation to their possible support of accessibility for OPS users in the workplace environment.

Planned Action(s):

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue to investigate on an ongoing basis, the use of Web 2.0 technologies and other social networking tools in relation to their possible support of accessibility for OPS users in the workplace environment.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue to explore on an ongoing basis, these new tools to measure how they may enhance I & IT accessibility in the OPS workplace for all employees, including those with special needs.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries is investigating, on an ongoing basis, the use of Web 2.0 technologies and other social networking tools in relation to their possible support of accessibility for OPS users in the workplace environment.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries is exploring, on an ongoing basis, these new tools to measure how they may enhance I & IT accessibility in the OPS workplace for all employees, including those with special needs.

Focus Area: Info&Comm**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that the ministries' intranet and websites meet or exceed accessibility requirements.

Planned Action(s):

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that both ministries' intranet and websites are ODA-compliant.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The ministry's intranet and website meet all ODA requirements and remain compliant.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that ministry publications are available in alternate formats on the website.

Planned Action(s):

Publications will continue to be posted in HTML, PDF and/or plain text formats on the websites.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The ministry posted alternate formats of publications on its website to meet accessibility needs.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program & Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will continue to support embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education into its programs and initiatives.

Within the sector, the ministry will continue to support removing systemic barriers and discriminatory biases as a means of supporting student achievement and to help close the gap.

School boards are to adhere to ODA, as stated in Policy/Program Memorandum 119 (2009).

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will:

- Support the development, implementation, monitoring of equitable and inclusive education policies, programs, and practices in the ministry, school boards, and schools through the Inclusive Education Branch; and
- Continue to work toward embedding the principles of equity and inclusiveness into all ministry practices, programs and initiatives.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will promote and educate teachers, parents and students on the use of Assistive Technology to support barrier-free learning environments where all students have equal access to the learning experience and the Ontario curriculum.

Planned Action(s):

The PSB will:

- Continue to research, develop and train educators on the use and benefits of assistive technology to support barrier-free learning environments for all students,
- Work with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to develop and offer an additional qualification course for teachers on assistive technologies, and
- Continue to provide workshops and in-service to teachers in district school boards on assistive technology.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

- Partnered with the Association for Special Education Technology (ASET) to host a provincial conference on the use of assistive technologies in and beyond the classroom in August 2009 (AT4ALL).

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will design an American Sign Language (ASL) curriculum to allow users whose first language is ASL to learn about their language, similar to how English first language users learn about their language in Language Arts.

Planned Action(s):

The PSB will continue developing the curriculum.

- The Grade 9 curriculum will be implemented as a pilot at one of the PSB schools.
- Work will continue towards getting the Grade 9 to 12 curriculum approved.
- Implementation of curriculum will continue in Grades 10 to 12.
- Training school boards on the ASL curriculum will continue.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

- The ASL curriculum is fully implemented at the elementary level in the Provincial Schools Branch.
- Some school boards have been trained on the elementary curriculum and at least one board has implemented it at the elementary level.
- Visitors from the United States and Japan have been trained on the curriculum.
- The Grades 9-12 curriculum has been written but has not yet been approved as credit-bearing courses by the Ministry of Education.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Policy and Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

Language is certainly the key to universal access. There is currently no curriculum defining the requirements of the Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and therefore no set standards for the efficient learning of the language. The ministry, in providing what is to become a curriculum for the learning of the signed language, is promoting a universal access to information by the Deaf or hard-of-hearing student.

Planned Action(s):

- We plan to submit the Grade 9 to 12 curriculum to the Ministry's regional office for Locally Developed Courses recognition.
- Pending the availability of funds, we would like to increase the number of teaching resources related to the curriculum contents, including resources for the teaching of Signwriting, as promoted by the would-be curriculum.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

- As planned, we have now completed the K-8 document on the curriculum for Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ). It is currently being validated at our Provincial School for the Deaf.
- We have also completed the equivalent document for the secondary level, Grades 9 to 12. Of the 5 courses involved, PLSQ1 is the equivalent of an international language credit, while PLSQ2, PLSQ3, PLSQ4 and PLSQ5 are credited courses intended for students whose first language is LSQ.
- We have also created teaching support documents for the K-8 curriculum document.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) and the French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) will partner with post secondary

institutions to increase the supply of specialist teachers of the Deaf, the Blind, and the Deaf-Blind.

Planned Action(s):

- The ministry will continue to assist with the development and offering of additional qualification (AQ) courses for specialist teachers of the Deaf and of the Blind

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

- The PSB and FLEPPB have formed partnerships with Nipissing University, York University and the University of Ottawa to increase the numbers of teachers of students who are Deaf, Blind, and Deaf-Blind.
- Offered AQ programs and summer camps on American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ) for teachers and student teachers in partnership with faculties of education.
- Worked with partners on the development of the new AQ courses for Specialist Teachers of the Deaf.
- Hosted and provided educators to teach AQ courses for the two specialist programs.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy, Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers accessing education. The ministry supports the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and will continue to provide the Minister with advice on special education matters. Led by the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), ministry staff will continue to support MACSE to respond to ministry proposals.

Planned Action(s):

Council's planned activities will be to continue to examine and respond to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education and other ministries that have potential impact(s) on students with special education needs, participate on/with various ministry work groups and other stakeholder advisory bodies and document successful practices and challenges that are evident in the special education community.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may not benefit from special education programs and services if issues are not addressed in a timely and effective manner. The ministry addressed these issues through the preparation of a resource guide and through a dispute resolution pilot.

Following recommendations made by the Working Table on Special Education, the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch initiated a project on informal dispute resolution and mediation. One of the deliverables included a resource guide for parents and educators. Consultations on the guide were held with English and French-language education stakeholders. Participants included: parents, students, educators, parent advocates and mediators. Feedback from the sessions was incorporated into the guide, *Shared Solutions*, released in Fall 2007 along with regional professional development sessions.

A Provincial Advisory Committee was also formed with representation from parents, students, educators and dispute resolution specialists to assist in the development of a formal dispute resolution pilot. This pilot project started in Fall 2007 in selected school boards.

Planned Action(s):

Engage discussion with other ministry branches to identify ways in which the strategies from *Shared Solutions* could be taken into account in other ministry initiatives.

- Review evaluation report from the pilot and report from Provincial Advisory Committee to inform future direction.
- Share findings with all district school boards.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

The pilot project that started in Fall 2007 continued in 2008 involving the use of informal and formal dispute resolution mechanisms in resolving disputes between educators and parents regarding special education programs and services.

The pilot was to be evaluated by an external evaluator and the results were to inform future policy making decisions.

The Provincial Advisory Committee was also to review the results of the pilot and submit a report with recommendations for future policy decision making.

As part of the pilot, training was provided in several boards to educators, parents and community organizations on the conflict prevention and resolution strategies outlined in *Shared Solutions*.

Pilot boards were requested to complete a summary of their projects identifying key findings and lessons learned around effective conflict prevention, and resolution. The external evaluator and the Provincial Advisory Committee were to submit their reports for review.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Policy, Program and Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may face barriers in the classroom if they do not receive effective support from school board staff.

To support deeper implementation of Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 140, *Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)*, the ministry will provide funding to hire additional board level ABA expertise to support principals, teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams.

The Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) will support the implementation of the Connections for Students model through

its Collaborative Service Delivery Models (CSDM) for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders Phase 2. 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 intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) services provided through the MCYS funded Autism Intervention Program to applied behaviour analysis (ABA) instructional methods in school.

School boards throughout the province are expected to implement the Connections for Students transition teams no later than spring 2010 for all children transitioning from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) therapy services provided through the MCYS funded Autism Intervention Program (AIP) to ABA instructional methods in our publicly funded schools in September 2010 and thereafter.

Sixteen boards will receive funding to participate in Phase 2 of the CSDM initiative to implement the Connections model in 2009.

Planned Action(s):

As required by PPM 140, the ministry has developed and implemented a process to monitor school boards' implementation of ABA instructional methods by school boards. The boards participating in CSDM Phase 2 will participate in an evaluation process to monitor and share their experience and best practices that support successful outcomes for students with ASD, their families, and for the system. The ministry expects to share their promising practices for the benefit of all school boards as they continue to evolve their supports for students with ASD and build their capacity.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009-2010

Results Achieved:

EDU and MCYS supported Collaborative Service Delivery Models (CSDM) for students with ASD in 2008-09. There were six English-language sites and one Francophone. Each model has established a focus: transition to school, transition to a new division in a different building, transition from the elementary to the secondary panel, transition from grade to grade / semester to semester, engagement of parents in diverse communities, creation of data collection and behavioural intervention plans, building and enhancing individual support teams and integration of high-functioning students with ASD into regular classrooms. Knowledge mobilization strategies will be implemented to share lessons and experiences of CSDM Phase 1 across the school boards.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if their learning difficulties are not identified at an early stage.

The ministry will continue to support the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) to make the early screening and intervention tool, known as the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT), available to additional teachers in more school boards. It is anticipated that the expanded use of this tool will result in earlier identification of more students' learning difficulties and greater application of instructional strategies and targeted interventions. A new evaluation of the tool is in progress to assess its effectiveness in improving student achievement.

An evaluation of the tool was completed and showed its effectiveness in improving student achievement.

Additional features were built in 2008 to support schools in managing student information. A School Administrator Site (SAS) has been developed, along with plans for an export function to enable school principals to view their individual student WBTT information.

In January and February 2008, over 40 school principals participated in a professional development session on the School Administrator Site in order to pilot this new WBTT site.

Planned Action(s):

Currently, more than 1600 schools in 54 school boards and 25 school authorities are using the WBTT. Future actions will foster and enhance the use of the WBTT to ensure we continue to reach every student through early identification of difficulties in reading, writing, math and social skills.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009-2010

Results Achieved:

A pilot related to the import and export features of the WBTT was planned for fall 2008.

The import feature allows principals to import student data (names, dates of birth and OENs) directly to the WBTT School Administrator Site. Principals can then quickly and easily create classes for teachers and select the students that belong in each class. The export feature allows principals to export their school's WBTT data to the school board's Student Management System (SMS). Once this is done, everyone with access to the board's SMS data will also have access to WBTT data.

The pilot mentioned above took place as planned in 2008 and principals should have access to the new features of the WBTT for the 2009/10 school year.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy, Program and Service

Commitment: New

Students with special education needs not accessing Ontario curriculum and not participating in Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments may not reach their full education potential if appropriate assessment measures are not put in place.

The ministry, through the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), is committed to address this issue and reach every student by supporting school boards to enhance assessment practices and identify broader measures of success.

The SEPPB conducted a survey of school boards in February 2009 on current assessment processes and methods used to report the achievement of students who do not access the Ontario curriculum and are exempted from all standardized provincial assessments.

Planned Action(s):

The SEPPB is planning to:

- Collect samples of reporting and data collection methods and professional development materials from school boards to identify effective practices to share amongst boards,
- Consult with external stakeholders,
- Develop provincial indicators of effective methods for school boards to assess, monitor and report on the achievement of these students, and

- Support projects among school boards to enhance their capacity to assess, monitor and report on the achievement of all students.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009-2010

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: New

Students with special education needs may face barriers accessing curriculum and receiving appropriate support and services to reach their potential in learning.

The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) has led the development of *Learning for All K-12* - a resource that is designed to share information with educators about research-informed educational approaches that have proved to be effective in Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Planned Action(s):

Funding will be provided in 2009-10 to all school boards to support implementation of these approaches and planning tools in *Learning for All K-12*. In addition, selected model boards will receive additional funding to work with their internal and regional partners to gather information that will inform the finalization of the draft document.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009-2010

Results Already Achieved:

The draft document was released to all Directors of Educations late June 2009. The draft document will be posted on the Council of Directors of Education (CODE) website in the Fall 2009.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy, Program and Service

Commitment: New

Students with special education needs may face barriers accessing a caring and safe learning environment.

The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) has led the development of *Caring and Safe Schools K-12* (working title) resource document. This document is intended to provide strategies and resources to support school and system leaders in building a caring and safe culture for all students including students with special education needs. It will assist superintendents, principals and vice principals in their decision-making process during their implementation of school board policies and programs to meet the Ministry's requirements on safe schools with respect to students with special education needs.

Planned Action(s):

The draft resource document is currently in edit and scheduled for release in the Fall 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: 2009 - 2010

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if they are not taken into account in the revision/updating of provincial policies governing secondary school programs and diploma requirements.

Work is underway to revise/update the provincial policies governing secondary school programs and diploma requirements, in keeping with the government's announced policy commitments for Student Success/Learning to 18 Phase 3. Similar to the current policy provisions (under "Ontario Secondary Schools"), the revised/updated policies will apply to all students in elementary and secondary schools, including those with special education needs. The revision process includes an inter-branch steering committee overseeing the work, with representation on the committee by the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch.

Planned Action(s):

Additional field testing activities to be developed and added to the Ontario Public Service (OPS) web-based activities bank.

Release of complete document is scheduled for September 2012.

Implementation Timeframe: To September 2012

Results Achieved:

Training for field testing the French-language curriculum Essential Skills linkage project was held in August 2009.

Education Policy and Program Update June 2009 was sent to Boards and posted on website.

Interim resource, Education Policy and Program Update, outlining all changes to secondary school policy as well as new policies, programs, initiatives and resources kindergarten to grade 12, was released in June 2009.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Students who leave school after age 18 without a secondary school diploma may not receive positive recognition for the achievements they accomplished.

Some students with special education needs, who are not working toward, or are unlikely to achieve the requirements for the secondary school diploma also may not receive recognition.

The ministry is committed to creating a new Provincial Skills Certificate in order to give positive recognition for achievements to the small number of students not working toward, or unlikely to achieve the requirements for the secondary school diploma.

Under the direction of the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch (SSL18SPB), this design and development work will be undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders in the special education community, and with full consideration given to respecting and meeting the needs of students with special education needs, consistent with provincial policies governing special education and the provisions of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Planned Action(s):

The French-language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) will continue its collaboration with SSL/L18 Strategic Policy Branch in the creation of the new certificate and support materials, and research on resources that identify Essential Skills (ES) and work habits in teacher classroom resources.

Currently underway for 2009-10 is the “Curriculum-Essential Skills Linkages (CESL) Field Test” to pilot possible implementation processes and procedures connected with recording and reporting student achievement for a Provincial Skills Certificate, based on a platform of teacher assessment of Essential Skills. CESL Field Test will assess teachers’ ability to gather evidence of ES demonstrations and the impact that this feedback has on learners in terms of engagement and enhancing school-work connections.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

FLEPPB continued to work in collaboration with Student Success/Learning to 18 (SSL/L18) Strategic Policy Branch in the creation of the new Provincial Skills Certificate.

The Curriculum-Essential Skills Linkages (CESL) Guide and an inventory of activity sets were developed in 2008-09, published in Fall 2009, and used to train teachers participating in the CESL Field Test currently underway.

Two day training was delivered August 2009 for 30 teachers.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Program****Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry is approving and providing funding for an expanded number of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) in 2008-09, the third year since SHSMs were launched in 2006-07. Approved SHSM programs must include all four pathways – apprenticeship, college, university and workplace.

Students with disabilities may be enrolled in SHSMs if the program meets their interests and abilities. As part of the SHSM Implementation Guide, boards and schools are

required to consider accommodations and/or modifications for students with special education needs, including appropriate supports and preparation for students participating in experiential learning work placements.

SHSM programs will be available in all boards with a secondary school, but not in all schools. In 2008-09, E.C. Drury Provincial School for the Deaf will be offering an SHSM in Arts & Culture. As part of more on-site visits to SHSMs, the ministry will ask SHSM programs about access by students with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to review French-language contextualized learning activities that are submitted by French-language school boards as part of their SHSM project funding.

French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) staff will determine a process by which these activities could be adapted for use by staff with students at the Centre Jules-Léger Provincial school (i.e. transcribed in Braille). This will facilitate their participation in the Specialist High Skills Major program in 2010-11. FLEPPB will work in collaboration with the Centre Jules-Léger and Destination Réussite (volet 1) to plan the launch of an SHSM for the 2010-11 school year.

The ministry will:

- work with SHSM board leads to deal with implementation issues identified in the initial report submitted in late October,
- assist in the organization and presentations in the regional SHSM in-service activities as well as the sector specific workshops,
- work with individual boards to assist with implementation and in particular boards which have self-identified or have been Ministry-identified as experiencing implementation issues,
- release the application for 2010-11 SHSM approvals for new and existing programs by November 13. As part of the application, school boards will be using the reviewed pathways charts submitted as part of their initial reports. Approximately 740 pathways charts have been reviewed,
- review the 2010-11 SHSM application due December 17 in a timely fashion to provide recommendations for approval to facilitate school board staffing timelines,
- release the new and revised SHSM sector and implementation guides to assist school boards with their SHSM implementation needs, and

- host a provincial SHSM professional development day(s) to address regional and sector specific needs.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

Specifically for 2009-10:

- November 13 – release of 2010-11 SHSM application
- December 17 – deadline for application
- End of January 2010 – provide recommendations for SHSM approvals
- End of February 2010 –upon Minister’s office approval, notify school boards of the status of their 2010-11 SHSM applications with enough notice to impact their September 2010 staffing decisions.
- November 2009 to June 2010 – continue to work with school boards to address SHSM implementation issues
- Early March 2010 - Release SHSM resources (sector and implementation guides)

Results Achieved:

In 2008-09, French-language contextualized learning activities (CLAs) were reviewed and posted in

- the Communauté d’apprentissage électronique de la majeure - the Electronic Learning Community and
- the Banque de ressources éducatives de l’Ontario.

A two-day training program for Board SHSM leads was delivered on September 23 and 24, 2009. The focus of the training addressed the five areas of highest need identified by the SHSM leads –

- pathways development,
- managing budgets,
- marketing,
- bringing additional schools on board, and
- implementation issues such as geography, small rural boards, and dealing with economic challenges.

16 SHSM sectors are represented in over 740 SHSM programs offered in over 430 schools in 2009-10.

In 2007-08, 1,891 of the approximately 14,000 (13.5%) students in SHSM programs were identified by boards as having an Individual Education Plan in any of their subjects.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in Student Success/Learning to 18 initiatives.

All Student Success/Learning to 18 implementation and training initiatives will continue to be designed and planned to support the diversity of all students in Ontario schools, including those with special education needs.

Planned Action(s):

During the 2009-10 school year, the ministry will continue to work with school boards in the Board Improvement Planning process to encourage the identification of steps/actions to implement to support full participation of students with special education needs in Student Success/Learning to 18 initiatives.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

Results Achieved:

Student Success/Learning to 18 improvement plans were reviewed by the ministry during visits to boards in 2008-09. To further address the need to ensure that students with special education needs can participate fully in the initiatives, the ministry has identified an additional pathway (destination) for students to follow upon leaving secondary school, and has expanded our destinations to include Community Living.

Information has been incorporated into presentations to a variety of stakeholders, which include Student Success Leaders, Student Success Teachers and Principals.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Act and Regulation****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Teaching Policy and Standards Branch will work with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) on their ongoing review of the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, to ensure that the terminology used in the Act and regulation reflects current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to work with the OCT to ensure that any revisions made as part of their ongoing review of the Act and regulations reflect current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

The ministry continues to work with OCT to ensure that any revisions to the Act and regulations reflect current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Other**Impact: Act, Regulation and Policy****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Legal Services Branch will ensure that Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards reflect the principles of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Planned Action(s):

In accordance with this commitment, the Legal Services Branch will continue to review existing Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards to ensure that the principles of the ODA are reflected.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09**Results Achieved:**

In accordance with this commitment, the Legal Services Branch continues to review existing Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards to ensure that the principles of the ODA are reflected.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act, Regulation and Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The Legal Services Branch in the ministry commits to assess any new Acts or Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2001.

Planned Action(s):

The Legal Services Branch will continue to review all new Acts and Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the ODA.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The Legal Services branch has been reviewing all new Acts and Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the ODA.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, led by the Corporate Finance and Services Branch, will continue to adhere to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services.

Future Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to adhere to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services, will use applicable checklist and include the appropriate wording in all solicitation documents.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

All Request for Proposal, Request for Tender etc. documents adhered to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Information technology goods and services (hardware/software) may pose barriers if there are no processes to check for ODA-compliance.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to the OPS procurement guidelines to ensure that accessibility has been considered in the procurement of goods and services.

Planned Action(s):

The *ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist* will continue to be used by the Project Management Office (PMO) to ensure ODA compliance across developing business solutions.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries continued its commitment to OPS procurement guidelines to ensure that accessibility has been considered in the procurement of goods and services.

The *ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist* is used by the PMO to ensure ODA compliance across developing business solutions.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy and Program

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special needs, as well as English Language Learners and boys in literacy acquisition, are groups that consistently underperform on the EQAO provincial assessments.

Providing equity of outcome for Ontario students is one of the nine strategies identified by The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. In working with school districts to improve the achievement of all Ontario students, the LNS will identify initiatives designed specifically to address the performance of students in designated groups. Although

improving, more needs to be done for students in special education, English language learners, boys and other members of our diverse community who have a history of underperformance.

Planned Action(s):

EQAO assessment results show progress is being made, but there is still more work to be done to help students who are struggling to meet the provincial standard. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is continuing to work in partnership with school boards to raise achievement results overall and close achievement gaps.

In Phase 5, (September 2009 to August 2010) we are consolidating for deeper implementation. We are focused on personalization, instructional precision and collaborative learning through networks.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has instituted several strategies which will lead to improved achievement by low-achieving students such as: Ontario Focused Intervention partnership (OFIP), OFIP Tutoring and Tutors in the Classroom.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

In 2008-09, 4,500 senior secondary school students in secondary schools were involved in dual credit programs in partnership with 24 colleges – a key component of the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy. Dual credit programs are aimed at Grade 11 and 12 students and provide new and varied learning opportunities, that is, courses that interest students who are disengaged or who may be at risk of not graduating. The target group includes students with special education needs.

Planned Action(s):

The Student Achievement division will:

- continue ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, colleagues within the Ministry of Education and the School-College-

Work Initiative to support 7,500 students in 300 approved dual credit programs in 2009-10,

- analyse and communicate approvals to 16 Regional Planning Teams in January 2010 to achieve enrolment of 10,000 students in 2010-11 dual credit programs,
- deliver Provincial Literacy Lesson Forums and its Annual Symposium (May 4, 2010) to support effective implementation of dual credit programs,
- implement an accountability framework, student selection criteria and SMART Goals to improve program quality, and
- develop benchmarks for school-college activities and refine dual credit program benchmarks.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing from Nov 09

Results Achieved:

Student Data Report 2008-09 indicates a student retention rate of 85% and a student success rate of 79.1% in dual credit courses.

School Within a College (SWAC) Programs involving 13 colleges and 22 boards partnered to provide 20 SWAC programs on college campuses. Retention rate was 85% and student success rate was 73%.

Student enrolment in dual credit programs increased by 33% over 2007-08.

Request for Proposals for 2010-13 was released October 30, 2009.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-325-2929 or 1-800-387-5514

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