



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2011-2012

ODA Accessibility Plan

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2010-11	7
Customer Service	7
Information and Communications	7
Employment	10
Built Environment.....	10
Procurement.....	11
Other	11
Section Two: Measures Planned for 2011-12 and Beyond	19
Customer Service	19
Information and Communications	19
Employment	21
Built Environment.....	22
Procurement.....	22
Other	23
Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies	31
Glossary of Terms/Acronyms	32
For More Information	34

Introduction

Each year, the Government of Ontario sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through its annual accessibility plan, as required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is Ontario's roadmap to become barrier-free by 2025. It includes accessibility standards in:

- customer service
- information and communications
- employment
- transportation
- the built environment.

This year, the accessibility plans will help to inform planning requirements under the new Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) enacted last summer under the AODA. The IASR requires the Government of Ontario to develop a multi-year plan to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Each ministry presents its annual accessibility plan each year and outlines the specific steps the ministry is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Building on last year's plan, the 2011-12 accessibility plan of the Ministry of Education will continue moving the ministry towards the goal of making programs and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

To view other ministries' accessibility plans, please visit Ontario.ca.

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2010-11

The Government of Ontario is working to make programs and services more accessible for all Ontarians by 2025.

In 2010-11, the government continued to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation and continued to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in the following areas: employment, information and communication, transportation, the built environment and procurement.

This document includes a summary of the initiatives and activities the Ministry of Education implemented in 2010-11, as of September 2011.

Customer Service

The ministry continues to be in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the AODA:

- The ministry held a staff learning event, Accessible Formats Conversation, on May 24, 2011.
- The ministry, through the Corporate Coordination Office, sent email reminders to new staff about the requirement to complete training modules under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Training information, including required training modules, has been posted on the accessibility page of the intranet.
- Feedback contact information and the feedback process have been updated and posted on the ministry's public website.

Information and Communications

- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a student. When a student is identified as exceptional by the school board Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), the IPRC makes recommendations to develop an IEP to meet the student's needs for the special education program and/or services. This includes the IPRC placement decision.

Electronic IEP samples:

The ministry's Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) has posted 50 IEP samples on the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) website. 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 mechanism on the website that asks users to share the usefulness of the samples and their comments/questions.

Provincial IEP template:

The 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 use the provincial template.

- E-learning is consistent with the concept of differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is an understanding that there are many ways to learn, recognizing that some students learn differently than others, and providing those students with opportunities to learn in ways that work best for them.

E-Learning Ontario has supported differentiated instruction in a number of ways. This includes providing:

- o Teacher training sessions on blended learning (a combination of face-to-face instruction and using online tools). These sessions were mostly face-to-face and webinars (online training).
- o Teacher training on developing secondary school courses and resources for teachers and students.

E-learning training and course design supports differentiated instruction.

- o E-learning Ontario: using the provincial e-learning strategy's Seat Reservation System, guidance counsellors can indicate, when reserving a seat for a student in a different board, that the student has an IEP.
- o Screen readers (a software application used to identify and interpret what is being displayed on a computer screen) have the capability to read equation formats to facilitate expanding accessibility to mathematical equations in online courses.
- Differentiated instruction was encouraged to meet the needs of all learners, both in training and in course design of e-learning teachers.
- English-language curriculum, the revised curriculum for The Arts, Grades 9 to 12, was released. Implementation of the revised curriculum began in September 2010.
- The Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) has explored possibilities for creating alternate format materials for ministry employees and other applications.

Collaboratively with Infrastructure Ontario, the ministry, through the PSB, conducted a business process system audit and expansion feasibility study of the Alternative Education Resources for Ontario pilot project. The ministry is currently exploring the potential for implementation.

- Growing Success, the newly released guidelines for assessment, evaluation and reporting, mandate in the fundamental principles and in its policies the need to support the needs of all students, including those with special education needs. A chapter has been specifically written for special education.

As a part of this commitment:

- o In-servicing presentations have been posted in multiple formats and provide slides with narration and closed captioning.
- o The teacher resource site has been re-designed and does not require multiple links to access information.
- o Videos are posted. Posting script is planned for fall 2011.
- o Parent pamphlets in multiple languages have been issued.
- The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) is a bilingual web-based resource used by learners and job seekers to assess, build, and gather evidence of their demonstration of essential skills and work habits.

An internal assessment of the OSP website was completed, which resulted in an OSP user interface redesign project. This project included a usability assessment of the current interface and a recommended redesign for the new interface.

The OSP website is undergoing a “refresh” as part of the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Web Modernization Initiative and in compliance with the AODA.

- The ministry's internal internet and public website met all the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). Advice and explanations on the ODA compliance were given to all areas of the ministry.
- Alternate formats of publications were posted on the ministry's public website to meet accessibility needs. All areas of the ministry were encouraged to provide documents that are ODA compliant.
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster fulfilled its commitment to post relevant AODA resource materials on ClusterNET.
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster maintained the current checklist of software and applications in use across the cluster; the checklist remained available to all OPS staff on ClusterNET.
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster explored Web 2.0 technologies and their use regularly to ensure that the accessibility requirements are met in the workplace environment.
- Two French-language curriculum policy documents with enhanced sections on planning programs for students with special education needs were published:

- o Éducation physique et santé 1-8
- o Anglais pour débutants 4-8.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0-Level A were used to develop new digital resources.

Employment

- The ministry, through the PSB will continue to offer American Sign Language (ASL) instruction to staff. The branch provided job-embedded coaching in ASL and ASL instruction (summer 2011) for staff.
August 2011 – Ernest Charles Drury Campus – one week immersion of ASL skill enhancement offered to staff in partnership with the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS).
- The ministry continued to build on ministry managers' and employees' awareness of employment practices and continued to provide training opportunities to staff to ensure improved accessibility for persons with disabilities.
 - o The ministry, through the Corporate Coordination Office, sent email reminders to new staff about the requirement to complete training modules under the Customer Service Standard.
 - o Training information, including the required training modules, have been posted on the internal internet.
- The ministry promoted the Emergency Preparedness Guide during the Emergency Preparedness Week.
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster explored Web 2.0 technologies and their use regularly to ensure that the accessibility requirements are met in the workplace environment.

Built Environment

- To ensure the context and circumstances of the education and training sectors are reflected in policy development, the ministry provided input to the development of the IASR and Accessible Built Environment draft standard under the AODA.
- The ministry, through our Corporate Finance and Services Branch, met all barrier-free requirements at new sites.
- A feasibility study for a new integrated mass notification system that provides a universal design for all provincial schools sites and takes into account the needs of students and staff with disabilities has been completed.

Barrier-free design standards are considered and incorporated into all capital projects for the provincial schools.

- o At the Belleville campus, a new accessible playground has been installed and accessibility improvements have been made in the main school and one residence.
- o New accessible ramps to the cafeteria and sports building have been installed at the Milton campus.
- o The campus way-finding signage design has been completed.
- o A barrier-free design project has been initiated for the Milton campus pool and change rooms.
- o A new residence design project at the Brantford campus has been initiated and the project incorporates barrier-free design principles.

Procurement

- The ministry, led by the Corporate Finance and Services Branch, followed the ODA directives, and adhered to the guidelines for the procurement of accessible goods and services.
- When issuing requests for services/request for proposals, the ministry requested accessible options to be included in vendors' responses; accessibility was included in the evaluation criteria to determine successful vendors.
- The ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist is a formal part of the ministry's procurement process.

Other

- The ministry has promoted and educated 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.

Through the PSB, the ministry held workshops for staff, students and parents.

Training on accessing and using the resources available in the Banque de ressources éducatives de l'Ontario (BRÉO) (Ontario Educational Resource Bank) has been provided to teachers at the Centre Jules-Léger along with what is available on the Télévision Franco-Ontarienne (TFO).

Follow-up training has been planned with both the BRÉO and the TFO consultants.

- The ministry, through the 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.

The branch has submitted the Grade 10 ASL curriculum to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB) for consideration as a credit course.

- Language is the key to universal access. Currently, there is 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 universal access to information by the deaf or hard-of-hearing student.

The LSQ curriculum is now completed for both the elementary and secondary levels. The content for the elementary level is currently being validated.

Authorization to use the LSQ curriculum as a locally developed course for Grades 9, 10 and 12 has been granted by the ministry.

Discussions with the French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) have been held in order to reconcile the LSQ curriculum with the French curriculum, in terms of the reading and writing components of both curricula. Recognition of the LSQ curriculum, as an international language curriculum, was part of that discussion.

A draft version of a proposed first course in the development of provincial LSQ curriculum has been completed.

- The ministry has been supporting the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and its sub-committees to respond to ministry proposals and provide the minister with advice on special education matters.

Four new members have been appointed to MACSE, representing the following communities: blind and low vision, physical disabilities, deaf and hard of hearing, and trustees.

- In March 2010, Connections for Students transition teams became available in all 72 publicly funded school boards for children who are ready to leave Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) services provided by the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) and are starting or continuing in the publicly funded school system.

Sample resources produced by partnerships were posted on the publicly accessible CODE website (www.ontariodirectors.ca).

Evaluation of the province-wide implementation for the Connections for Students model is completed. Key effective strategies and approaches will be shared provincially.

Funding of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) expertise in school boards has been confirmed. Beginning in 2010-11, all school boards received additional funding to hire more board-level ABA expertise professionals to support principals, teachers and multi-disciplinary transition teams (the total amount allocated in 2011-12 is \$11.3M).

Funding to district school boards to further ABA training has been provided since 2007-08.

Participation of educators in the Geneva Centre for Autism Summer Training Institute has been supported since 2007.

- The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) is now offering the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) to the First Nations Communities. The tool assists in screening, identifying intervention strategies, and developing educational programs that are designed to accommodate learning needs of students. The First Nations schools will benefit from WBTT's early screening and intervention tool in identifying their students' level of development, learning abilities and educational needs.

WBTT may be accessed through LDAO's website (www.WBTT.ca).

- In 2010-11, the ministry's SEPPB has been working towards finalizing the provincial guidelines for school boards to assess, monitor and report on the achievement of students who do not access the Ontario curriculum and are exempted from all standardized provincial assessments.

Various knowledge mobilization strategies are being investigated to determine an effective method for sharing the guidelines and findings from the regional projects with all school boards in 2011.

- The ministry has provided funds to all school boards to participate in regional Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Eighteen lead school boards have received additional funding to coordinate regional PLCs, use the resource in selected elementary and secondary schools, and develop sharable resources to support the use of the draft document.
- The ministry provided presentations to school boards and stakeholder groups upon request to support their usage of the resource, Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students With Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12, released in 2010. The 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.
- Work on Special Education In Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (working title) is in progress. This document takes into account students with special education needs.
- Draft Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (K-12) were released for consultation in May 2010. Work on the

guidelines continued through 2010-2011. The Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students who are Blind or have Low Vision are resources for district school boards to support students with these exceptionalities. Electronic release of the guidelines is targeted for 2011.

- Programs and services for students with special education needs were integrated into the Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (BIPSA) process. This allowed the ministry to:
 - o Monitor the board improvement planning process to ensure that data and evidence are collected and used for the planning of improved achievement for students with special education needs and to share promising practices.
 - o Identify areas where more targeted support may be required.
 - o Gather information and respond to stakeholder recommendations and concerns.

The BIPSA process establishes a greater focus on accountability for student achievement as school boards are required to identify targeted goals and strategies that are focused on improving the achievement of all students, including those with special education needs.

- The ministry, through the PSB's Centre Jules-Léger, has developed with the University of Ottawa an online course for Part 1 of the French-language Additional Qualification (AQ) course, Teaching Students Who are Blind. The course has been promoted and opened for fall 2011 registration on September 12, 2011.
- Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program is pending (release date TBD).
- A knowledge exchange/think tank, focussing on supporting English language learners (ELLs) with special education needs, was hosted by the ministry in early April 2011.

Representatives of instructional leaders and principals from school boards and representatives from the CAPB, the Literacy Numeracy Secretariat (LNS), and the SEPPB participated in the session to identify effective practices and a framework for the ELL resource.

- Through the Instruction and Leadership Development Division, the ministry funded seven Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Implementation Networks to support school board implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Parent Engagement Policy.

The ministry funded the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) for a symposium in January 2011 entitled Deepening the Understanding – Widening the Response, building on the success of the June 2010 Inclusive Boards – Inclusive Schools Symposium.

The ministry provided funding for the development of resources to further support effective board and school implementation.

- Amendments to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, were made in spring 2011. An effort was made to ensure that proper terminology was used to reflect current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.
- A Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) Special-Needs-Special Education Needs Inter-ministerial Work Group and the Special Needs – Special Education Needs Reference Group were established.

This reference group leverages tri-ministry collaboration to support children with special needs/special education needs and their families.

- The ministry's Early Learning Division is undergoing a child care program review. The responsibility for child care was transferred recently to the Ministry of Education. Review of the child care program began recently and will consider supports provided to children with special needs/special education needs in licensed child care (2011-12).
- The evaluation of FDK has engaged the special needs/special education needs community to consider the implementation of FDK for special needs/special education needs students.

The evaluation of FDK began in fall 2010.

- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) 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 LNS continued to work in partnership with school boards to raise achievement results overall and close achievement gaps and the work included:

- o Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership — funding for school boards to target areas of need, based on provincial results.
- o Schools in the Middle — funding and professional learning to raise student achievement from Level 2 to Level 3 and from Level 3 to Level 4.
- o Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry — supporting our youngest learners through study of student work and targeted student support.
- o Collaborative Inquiry for Learning - Mathematics — targeted professional learning support for teaching mathematics.
- o Student Work Study Teachers/Student Work Sample Study — personalizing instruction by studying student work samples.

For each of these areas, strategies included a focus on differentiated instruction and meeting the needs of students with special education needs.

Ontario's Character Development Initiative supports all students, including students with special education needs. Character development is clearly evident in initiatives that address areas, such as: respectful and accessible workplaces,

environmental awareness and protection, restorative practices, local and global health initiatives, athletic codes of conduct, student-led conferences, and student leadership development.

The LNS Research Evaluation and Data Management team continued their research in collaboration with schools boards on personalizing instruction to maximize success for all students, including students with special education needs and students with IEPs.

The Student Achievement Division, the CAPB and the SEPPB partnered to develop a resource document for supporting ELLs with special education needs.

- The ministry requested expressions of interest by boards in participating in pilots to track and record skills development of students in Supervised Alternative Learning, particularly those students engaged in non-credit activities.
- In 2010-11, about 12,100 students in secondary schools were involved in Dual Credit programs in partnership with 24 colleges.

Dual Credit programs are aimed at Grade 11 and 12 students and provide new and varied learning opportunities — courses that interest students who are disengaged or who may be at risk of not graduating. In the past, the programs have included a higher proportion of students with special education needs than are in the general school population.

The school boards' or schools' student success team determined, on a case-by-case basis, which students would be admitted to a ministry-approved dual credit program. The primary focus is on students, who have the potential to succeed but are at risk of not graduating from high school, and students who left high school before graduating and are now returning to school. Students with special needs may enrol in a dual credit program/course if it meets their interests and abilities. Additional funding was provided as needed for students with special needs, to address barriers.

The fall release of the 2011-14 School College Work Initiative (SCWI) and Dual Credits Request for Proposals (RFP) elicited a positive response from Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) with over 450 Dual Credit programs slated to begin in the 2011-12 school year.

In spring 2011, Ministry staff and SCWI Project officers completed visits to RPTs to discuss their "SMART" goals to support improved accountability for deeper implementation. SMART Goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

The annual SCWI Provincial Symposium held by the SCWI Co-Management Team took place at Humber College on May 10, 2011. This symposium provided an opportunity for boards, colleges, and RPTs to network and share best practices.

A dual credit reporting website was created to more robustly capture expenditures and student data information. This information was used to prepare

the Dual Credit Student Data Report, detailing the profile of students involved in the program and their successes, challenges and needs.

- The ministry approved and provided funding for an expanded number of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) in 2010-11, the fifth year since SHSMs were launched in 2006-07.

There are now a total of over 1,300 SHSM programs, in over 630 schools, in all school boards. Over 300 new SHSM programs have been approved to be offered in 2011-12.

Students with disabilities may be enrolled in SHSM, if the program meets their interests and abilities. The ministry implemented the Hospitality SHSM in the 2010-2011 school year.

Preliminary board and Ontario School Information System data (OnSIS) indicates that 17 per cent of students participating in SHSM programs have an IEP.

All SHSM programs continue to include all four pathways: apprenticeship, college, university and workplace.

An SHSM reporting website was created to more robustly capture expenditures and student data information.

Data results showed the integration of 390 students with IEPs within French Language SHSM programs (approximately 19.6 per cent of program enrolment).

- Students with special education needs are consistently not reaching the provincial standard on the EQAO provincial assessments.

The FLEPPB worked closely with twelve French-language school boards to identify targets in their 2010-11 BIPSA for groups of students with special education needs. The Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership, Schools in the Middle, Collaborative Inquiry, professional learning and other strategies included a focus on differentiated instruction to meet the needs of these students. French-language's 2010 EQAO results for the Test de compétences linguistiques (TPCL) showed an increase of 10 per cent of students with special needs having achieved the provincial standard.

The FLEPPB has been monitoring the inclusion of programs and services for students with special needs in BIPSA.

- Students with disabilities may be enrolled in Cooperative Education if the program meets their interests and abilities. As part of the expansion of Cooperative Education, boards and schools are required to consider accommodations and/or modifications for students with special education needs. This includes appropriate supports and preparation for students participating in experiential learning work placements. Additional costs for transportation and individual support by educational assistants have been covered by Student Success funding.
- Barriers for persons with disabilities may inadvertently be created when developing or revising ministry policies, programs and legislation or regulations.

The ministry has continued to identify, remove or prevent potential barriers for persons with disabilities during the development or the revision of ministry policies, programs and legislation/regulations.

The OPS Inclusion Lens was launched and adopted by the ministry. Staff have been made aware of the tool and its applications.

The Ministry held a staff learning event, Conversation on the OPS Inclusion Lens, led by the OPS Diversity Office, to explore and explain the uses of the tool.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2011-12 and Beyond

This year, the Ministry of Education's accessibility plan focuses on a number of areas. These initiatives will support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. They will also help us enhance accessibility in other areas:

- Employment
- Information & Communications
- The Built Environment and
- Procurement.

Customer Service

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities receive accessible goods and services from us. This means they will receive goods and services with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

- The ministry will continue to be in compliance with the Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and will communicate and/or update the staff intranet with applicable information as needed (ongoing).
- The ministry will continue to promote Ontario Public Service (OPS) training modules and communicate training requirements to new employees to ensure that staff are trained as required under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (ongoing).

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Education is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our programs and services to the public.

- Curricula will continue to be revised. The revised Social Sciences and Humanities, the revised Health and Physical Education, Grades 9-12, the revised Social Studies, Grades 1-6, and the History and Geography, Grades 7-8, are also planned to be released in 2012 for implementation in fall 2012. Learning

expectations and examples will address the teaching and learning needs of all learners, including students with special education needs.

- The revised curriculum for Sciences humaines et sociales 9 -12 will be released in winter 2011 for implementation in fall 2012 (ongoing).
- Professional development commitments for teachers will continue on a wide range of topics and through a diverse set of delivery venues (webinars and face-to-face format).

Differentiated instruction will continue to be encouraged to meet the needs of all learners, both in our course design and in our training of e-learning teachers (ongoing to 2012).

- E-Learning policies and programs will continue to be enhanced (2010-2012).
- Special Education In Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (working title) is in progress and scheduled for release in 2012 (ongoing to 2012).
- Upon approval, the ministry will launch the Alternative Education Resources for Ontario expansion project which, if feasible, has potential for creating alternate format materials for ministry employees and other applications (ongoing to 2012).
- Growing Success, the newly released guidelines for assessment, evaluation and reporting, mandates in the fundamental principles and policies to support the needs of all students, including those with special education needs. The guidelines include a specific chapter on special education.

Under this commitment:

- o Additional presentations are being prepared and will be available in multiple formats.
- o Scripts will be available and posted for all of the videos.
- o Looking at ways to ensure PowerPoint presentations posted on websites are more accessible for all.
- o Learnings from the presentation by Corporate Coordination Office will be applied to communication and presentations (ongoing to 2012).
- The French Language, Aboriginal Education and Research Division will continue to use the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0-Level A as a standard for the development of all new digital resources until legislative requirements change (ongoing).
- The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) is a bilingual web-based resource used by learners and job seekers to assess build and gather evidence of their demonstration of essential skills and work habits.

An internal assessment of the OSP website was done, which resulted in an OSP user interface redesign project. This project included a usability assessment of the current interface and a recommended redesign for the new interface.

The OSP website will be refreshed during 2011 and 2012 in order to comply with the AODA and the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

The OSP web site refresh will include:

- o Researching, reviewing and editing existing OSP web pages and resources, and developing new content in English and French.
 - o Redesigning the user interface of the OSP to make it more accessible and user friendly.
- The ministry's Communications Branch will continue to ensure that the ministry's internal internet and public website are compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) (ongoing).
- Ministry publications will continue to be posted in HTML, PDF and/or plain text formats on the websites to ensure accessibility (ongoing).
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster will continue to expand the accessibility resource area of ClusterNet and conduct yearly reviews to ensure accuracy of content including AODA standards, policies, videos and tools for AODA support and compliance (ongoing).
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster will continue to maintain and update, as required, the current checklist of software and applications in use across the cluster (ongoing).
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster will continue to explore Web 2.0 tools to enhance I & IT accessibility in the OPS workplace for all employees, including those with disabilities (ongoing).

Employment

The Ministry of Education is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities.

- The Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will continue to provide job-embedded coaching in American Sign Language (ASL) and support opportunities for ASL instruction for staff (ongoing to 2012).
- The ministry will continue to promote OPS training modules and communicate training requirements to new employees to ensure that staff are trained as required under accessibility legislation (ongoing).
- The ministry will continue to promote the Emergency Preparedness Guide during the Emergency Preparedness Week. (ongoing).
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster will continue to explore Web 2.0 tools to enhance I & IT accessibility in the OPS workplace for all employees, including those with disabilities (ongoing).

Built Environment

The Ministry of Education is committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings we use.

- The ministry will continue to provide input to the development of accessibility standards of the AODA until the final standard, the Built Environment Standard, comes into effect as regulation (ongoing until standards are in regulation).
- The ministry will continue to meet barrier-free requirements at new and existing sites where required (ongoing).
- A request for proposals (RFP) is being prepared to implement a mass notification system within the provincial schools on a rolling basis over the next five years.

The construction phase for the Milton campus is proceeding during the fiscal year of 2011-12. Upgrading the fire strobes is included in this initiative to meet 2006 building code requirements.

The branch will be proceeding with construction and implementation of complete interior and exterior way-finding signage at all campuses.

The branch will be completing the barrier-free design for the Milton pool and change rooms and the architectural designs of the new barrier-free residence in Brantford. Construction on the latter will then proceed.

The branch will continue to work with the Ontario Realty Corporation and the ministry's facilities unit to improve accessibility of the built environment and comply with barrier-free design standards (ongoing).

Procurement

The Ministry of Education is committed to integrating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes.

- The ministry will continue to follow the ODA directive and checklist for procurement of accessible goods and services (ongoing).
- Potential vendors will continue to be asked to provide accessible options in their responses to Request for Services/Request for proposals. Accessibility considerations will continue to be part of the evaluation criteria to determine successful vendors.
- The Community Services I & IT Cluster will continue its commitment to update and apply the ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist in developing business solutions (ongoing).

Other

- The ministry, through the PSB, will be involved with the 21st Century Learning: Pilot for System Learning Research project to build capacity with school boards using iPods with students.

A planned follow-up on the Banque de ressources éducatives de l'Ontario (Ontario Educational Resource Bank) will include an assessment process of the available contents and request evaluation from the teachers of the Centre Jules-Léger on the value of the accommodating factors to improve the accessibility of these resources to the Deaf student population.

Teachers will be trained to use smart boards, specifically in terms of using the equipment for accommodation purposes (highly visual contents) (2010-2012).

- The ministry's PSB will continue to work on the development of the Grade 11 ASL curriculum.

Once this phase is complete, the curriculum will be submitted to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB) for approval (2010-2012).

- Language is 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.

As part of the ongoing curriculum review cycle, the French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) and PSB will continue their work with the Centre Jules-Léger to develop an approved provincial LSQ curriculum to be included in the International Language curriculum and taught by French-language school boards. Release of the curriculum is targeted for 2012.

The ministry's PSB plans to continue offering locally developed LSQ courses.

- Students with special education needs may face barriers accessing education.

The ministry will continue to support the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE), which will continue to provide the minister with advice on special education matters.

For the 2011-12 fiscal year, the MACSE has identified mental health and transitions as key priorities. Working groups have been established and will continue to meet throughout the fiscal year (2010-2012).

- 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 the 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 continue to provide funding to hire additional board-level ABA expertise to support principals, teachers and multi-disciplinary transition teams.

The Ministry of Education 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 for Students with ASD (Phase 2).

The Connections for Students model is centered on multi-disciplinary, student-specific, school-based transition teams, which are established approximately six months before a child prepares to transition from the Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) services. The IBI services are provided through the MCYS-funded Autism Intervention Program to Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) instructional methods in school.

To support this commitment in the coming year, the ministry will:

- o Host a behaviour expertise professional learning day for special education senior administrators and one ABA expert from each of the 72 district school boards to strengthen system capacity in supporting students with ASD.
 - o Update relevant resources on the publicly accessible Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) website: (www.ontariodirectors.ca).
 - o Monitor implementation of the PPM 140 by school boards. In spring 2012, the ministry's Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) will once again survey all school boards regarding their compliance with requirements set out in the PPM 140, and boards' ability to support ABA instructional methods. The survey will identify further needs of school boards to build ABA capacity (2011-2012).
- The ministry will continue to use the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT), an early screening and intervention tool, for early identification of learning difficulties.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) is now offering the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) to the First Nations Communities. The tool assists in screening, identifying intervention strategies, and developing educational programs that are designed to accommodate the learning needs of students. The First Nations schools will benefit from the WBTT's early screening and intervention tool in identifying their students' level of development, learning abilities and educational needs.

LDAO will work together with school boards to initiate a program evaluation on the impact and effect of the WBTT program (2010-2012).

- Work will continue towards finalizing the provincial guidelines for school boards to assess, monitor and report on the achievement of students, who do not access the Ontario curriculum and are exempted from all standardized provincial assessments. The guidelines will support school boards to enhance assessment practices and identify broader measures of success for students with special education needs.
- The ministry is planning to continue supporting school boards in using the Learning for All K-12 in draft through the Integrated Regional Learning for All, K-12 Projects in 2011-12. After the posting of a revised draft document, the

ministry will continue to collect public feedback to inform the finalization on the document (2011-2012).

The ministry will continue to support the school boards in the usage of this resource through the Integrated Regional Learning for All, K-12 Projects.

- The SEPPB will collaborate with the Learning Environment Branch to support the further implementation of the Safe Schools Strategy (2011-2012).
- Special Education In Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (working title) is scheduled to release in 2012 (ongoing to 2012).
- Students with special education needs may face barriers if they are not taken into account in the revision and/or updating of provincial special education policies, and resources governing special education programs and services.

Work on the guidelines continued through 2010-2011. The Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who are Blind or Have Low Vision, are resources for district school boards to support students with these exceptionalities.

Electronic release of the guidelines is targeted for 2011.

The SEPPB will work with leadership networks and other stakeholders during the rollout of the guidelines (ongoing to 2012).

- The SEPPB will continue 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 Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) process includes students with special education needs.

In 2011-12 ministry teams will continue to meet with school boards to support them through the BIPSA process.

In addition, every ministry team will include a special education representative (ongoing to 2012).

- The ministry, through the PSB and the FLEPPB, will partner with postsecondary institutions to increase the supply of specialist teachers of the Deaf, the Blind, and the Deaf-Blind.

The ministry, through the PSB and the FLEPPB, will continue to partner with faculties of education to offer Additional Qualification (AQ) courses for teaching students who are deaf, blind, and deaf/blind.

The Centre Jules-Léger will continue to partner with the University of Ottawa to provide an online course for the AQ - Teacher for the Blind Certification (ongoing).

The ministry will continue to work with the University of Ottawa to monitor registration and level of satisfaction as well as to assess content (ongoing to 2012).

- Students with special education needs are consistently not reaching the provincial standard on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial assessments.

Although EQAO results indicate ongoing improvement, more work needs to be done to support learning for students with special education needs.

- o The SEPPB will continue to partner with the Student Achievement Division and the CAPB to develop a resource document for supporting English language learners (ELLs) with special education needs (ongoing to 2012).
- o The Student Achievement Division, the CAPB, and the SEPPB will continue their partnership to support ELLs with special education needs. This includes expanded symposia for information sharing across school boards with attention to students with special education needs.
- o The FLEPP will continue to work closely with the twelve French-language school boards and provide required support to meet their 2011-12 board improvement plan targets for students with special education needs.
- o The Literacy Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) continues to work in partnership with school boards to raise achievement results overall and close achievement gaps.

Work with school boards includes the following initiatives: Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership, Schools in the Middle, Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry, Collaborative Inquiry for Learning – Mathematics, and Student Work Study Teachers.

LNS's initiatives include a focus on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of students with special education needs (Ongoing).

Schools in the Middle has added a focus on moving student achievement from level 3 to level 4.

Student Work Study Teachers has an explicit focus on student work for all students, with attention to students with special education needs.

Implementation in district school boards and research studies in collaboration with school boards and schools are ongoing.

Through the K-12 Mathematics Teaching and Learning Working Group, further study and recommendations for supporting teaching and learning of mathematics are underway, with attention to students with special education needs (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; Ontario Schools, K-12 is pending final approval for release in 2011.

The SEPPB will work with the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch to ensure that elementary and secondary school policies for students with special education needs are clarified during the roll-out of the document (2011-2012).

- The SEPPB, in collaboration with the CAPB and the LNS, will develop a resource guide to support classroom teachers, ELL/ESL teachers and special education teachers.

Canadian Council on Learning has completed a comprehensive literature review to support the development of this resource document.

In addition, the SEPPB has completed a review of the current school board protocols and the CODE research projects to inform the development of this guide.

- 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. Policy/Program Memorandum 119, Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools, reinforces that school boards are to adhere to the ODA.

The ministry funded seven Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Implementation Networks to support school boards' implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, and Parent Engagement Policy.

Funding for the networks will continue in the 2011-12 school year.

Regional (and French-language provincial) sessions will further support local implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in the fall of 2011.

The ministry remains committed to supporting schools and school boards to further embed the principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of their operations and learning environments. The ministry will be working with and providing funding to a diverse range of education and equity community organizations to offer additional training, workshops and resources for students, teachers, school and system leaders, parents and community leaders, to support the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Parent Engagement Policy in the year ahead (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 the regulation reflects the current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

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.

- The Leadership Development Branch (LDB) will continue to reflect in its work, the practices and procedures of the Ontario Leadership Framework, which model skills, knowledge and attitudes that reflect inclusionary policies and awareness related to persons with disabilities.

The LDB will engage with the SEPPB to ensure alignment with leadership policies and programs.

- The Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) Special-Needs-Special Education Needs Inter-ministerial Work Group, and the Special Needs – Special Education Needs Reference Group will have quarterly meetings to engage individuals and organizations, representing and/or serving children with special needs/special education needs in the implementation of FDK.

This reference group leverages tri-ministry collaboration to support children with special needs/special education needs and their families.

The working group will continue to work collaboratively in the interests of children with special needs/special education needs.

The role of the Special Needs/Special Education Needs Reference Group will be further defined as FDK's implementation continues.

- The ministry's Early Learning Division is undergoing a child care program review. Review of the child care program will consider supports provided to children with special needs/special education needs in licensed child care (2011-12).

The responsibility for child care was transferred to the Ministry of Education recently.

- The evaluation of FDK has engaged the special needs/special education needs community to consider the implementation of FDK for students with special needs/special education needs.

The evaluation of FDK began in fall 2010 and will continue to 2012.

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

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

The ministry will continue supporting students at the Centre Jules-Léger and French-language school boards that require special assistance to participate in Cooperative Education programs. Additional funding can be accessed for this support. The ministry will continue to foster partnerships between French-language boards and francophone postsecondary institutions in the delivery of

Dual Credit programs for all students, including students with special needs and address barriers (ongoing).

- There are now a total of over 1,300 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs in over 630 schools in all school boards. Over 300 new SHSM programs have been approved to be offered in 2011-12.

School boards will be able to apply for SHSM program approval for 2012-13 in November 2011.

The SHSM will continue to be offered in all eighteen economic sectors, including Arts and Culture and Hospitality and Tourism (2011-2012).

The ministry will continue to integrate students with special needs and continue to analyze data by boards to determine the rate of participation in SHSMs of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and address barriers.

Implementation will continue in seventy-nine secondary schools in the province with four new schools coming on board for the 2011-12 academic year.

The ministry will conduct a more detailed analysis to determine participation and success of students with IEPs in the SHSM. Data to be used for analysis includes board level SHSM reports and OnSIS data.

Programs will be offered to 2,700 students of French-language schools in sixteen sectors (two new sectors: Energy and Sports) for 2011-12 (ongoing).

- The ministry requested expressions of interest by boards in participating in pilots to track and record skills development of students in the Supervised Alternative Learning, particularly those students engaged in non-credit activities.

Several pilots will be running during the 2011-12 school year (ongoing).

- In 2010-11, about 12,100 students in secondary schools were involved in the Dual Credit programs in partnership with twenty-four colleges.

Dual Credit programs are aimed at Grade 11 and 12 students and provide new and varied learning opportunities — courses that interest students who are disengaged or who may be at risk of not graduating.

The target group includes students who are disengaged and/or underachieving. In the past, the programs have included a higher proportion of students with special education needs than are in the general school population. To support this initiative, the ministry will:

- o Refine data collection and conduct deeper analysis to ensure that dual credit programs remain focused on the needs of the primary target group.
- o Refine operational mechanisms to prepare the program to move from a pilot to a regular part of board and college operations.
- o Increase opportunities for boards and colleges to network and share exemplary practices.

- o Increase involvement of ministry staff with regional planning teams to foster better knowledge of field practices and encourage deeper implementation of ministry policy (ongoing).

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of Ministry of Education's commitment to improving accessibility for people with disabilities, the ministry will continue to review programs, initiatives, and services, including legislation and policies, to identify and remove barriers.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2010-11

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that acts and regulations are reviewed for potential accessibility barriers.

In April 2011, the Ministry of Education participated in training for multidisciplinary teams from all ministries on how to use the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Inclusion Lens to review laws and to remove accessibility barriers. Going forward, the OPS Diversity Office and the Ministry of the Attorney General will be working together to support a coordinated approach to legislative review across the government.

Inclusion Lens

In 2011, the Ontario Public Service launched the Inclusion Lens which is an innovative tool to help address diversity and accessibility. Using this tool, ministries can identify and target potential barriers that may be present in existing or proposed legislation, policies, programs, practices or services, to persons with disabilities.

This year, a number of regulations were reviewed for potential barriers to persons with disabilities using the Inclusion Lens by a multidisciplinary team, including the Legal Services Branch.

The Legal Services Branch reviewed new and existing acts, regulations, guidelines and standards and advised on whether the principles of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), are reflected.

In the future, the ministry will:

- Remain committed to ensuring that its acts and regulations are reviewed for potential accessibility barriers.
- Continue to use the OPS Inclusion Lens, where appropriate, to make policies, programs and legislation more accessible.
- Ensure the Legal Services Branch continues to provide advice with respect to the assessment of new and existing acts or regulations on whether they are compliant with the ODA, and not inconsistent with the regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and will use the Inclusion Lens to do so.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

ABA – Applied Behaviour Analysis

AIP – Autism Intervention Program

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

ASL – American Sign Language

AQ Course – Additional Qualification Course

BIPSA – Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement

BRÉO – Banque de ressources éducatives de l'Ontario

CAPB – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch

CODE – Council of Ontario Directors of Education

EIE – Equality and Inclusive Education

ELL – English language learner

EQAO – Education Quality and Accountability Office

FDK – Full-Day Kindergarten

FLEPPB – French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IBI Services – Intensive Behavioural Intervention Services

IPRC – Identification, Placement, and Review Committee

LDAO – Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

LNS – Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

LSQ – Langue des signes québécoise

MASCE – Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education

OCT – Ontario College of Teachers

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

OPS – Ontario Public Service

OESC – Ontario Education Services Corporation

PLC – Professional Learning Communities

PPM 140 – Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140, Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

PSB – Provincial Schools Branch

SEPPB – Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound

TFO – Télévision Franco-Ontarienne

TPCL – Test de compétences linguistiques

WBTT – Web Based Teaching Tool

WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium

Web 2.0 – an umbrella concept encompassing a variety of technologies that facilitate collaboration and sharing on the web.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Education's accessibility plan can be submitted through the following methods:

Phone:

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

TTY number: 1-800-263-2892

1-800 number: 1-800-387-5514

E-mail: info@edu.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

For more information on the AODA and the ODA, please visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](#) web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make services in Ontario more accessible for everyone.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

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