

PUBLIC POLICY ROUNDUP Fall 2008

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Standards Development

The **Information and Communication Standards Development Committee** has just completed a constituency consultation on a draft standard, after several subcommittees met over the summer to develop this draft. At a full committee meeting on October 1st and 2nd, the final draft for public review will be approved, and this should be released a month or so later. Watch for a notice on the LDAO website.

The **Employment Accessibility Standards Development Committee** met in early August and late September. Over the summer four subcommittees (Task Forces) met to develop proposed standards in four major categories: 1) recruitment; 2) selection and hiring; 3) retention; and 4) accommodation, confidentiality, and occupational health and safety.

Ministry of Education Initiatives

Two important Ministry of Education (EDU) multi-year projects are coming to an end of their funding. The special education professional development projects funded through the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) ran for three school years, starting in 2005-06. Research reports on the projects are posted on the CODE website, www.ontariodirectors.ca, and a symposium in November 2008 will showcase the successful practices.

The Student Assessment Project partnership between EDU and the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) ran for two years starting in the 2006-2007 school year. Projects are described on the OPA website, www.psych.on.ca. In October there will be a conference for educators, *Sharing Promising Practices*, and a *Promising Practices Guide* will also be released at that time.

After consultations in the spring, EDU has been working over the summer on an expansion and revision of *Education for All* (2005) into a new K to 12 Ministry of Education resource document. The final version should be released early in 2009 and Regional training sessions will follow the release. *Education for All* was the Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6. LDAO's contribution to the consultation can be read at: www.ldao.ca/aboutLDs/legislation.php

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Initiatives

On September 16, 2008 the Government of Ontario announced plans to establish a new professional College of Trades, designed to promote the skilled trades and modernize the apprenticeship system. The government intends to introduce legislation in the spring of 2009 that, if passed, would implement the College. The creation of a new College of Trades was one of the key recommendations of the [Compulsory Certification Review](#) (Armstrong Report), released in May 2008 (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ccr/index.html).

Over the past several months the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has made a number of announcements about new programs designed to support education for the skilled trades and retraining of laid-off workers. You can read more about the *Second Career Strategy* elsewhere in this issue of *Communique*.

Human Rights Reform

The new **Human Rights Legal Support Centre** opened on June 30, 2008. Information on their mandate and procedures can be found on their website: www.hrlsc.on.ca. The website contains explanations of how to make an application to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), how to access services of the Legal Support Clinic, and how to proceed if you already have a human rights complaint in the old system through the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) now has a plain language document on their website outlining their processes, at: www.hrto.ca/NEW/application/newapps.asp

On July 2, 2008 an organization called the *AODA Alliance* held a news conference where they pointed out the commitments that had been made by the McGuinty government on human rights reform. The AODA Alliance promised to monitor the implementation of the new human rights system to make sure that these commitments are kept. You can read their press release at: www.aodaalliance.org/reform/default.asp .