



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

February 10, 2009

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, MPP  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Wynne,

On behalf of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) we would like to clarify LDAO's position on the issue of inclusive education, or educational inclusion. In September 2007 there was a National Forum, *Defining a Right Based Framework: Advancing Inclusion of Students with Disabilities*, which promoted the idea that all students should be educated in regular classes. Inclusive Education Canada is also presenting a forum in February on *Making Special Education Inclusive*.

All stakeholders would agree that we should pursue the goal of full inclusion in society for individuals with disabilities. However the path to reaching that goal varies from individual to individual depending on their needs at different points in their lives.

A policy on Inclusion in the LDAO Public Policy Manual (2002) states:

LDAO does not support inclusion as a goal, when this term is interpreted as the exclusion of all other special education placement options. LDAO advocates that special education placement should always be determined based on the needs of the child and parental wishes.

The LDAO Board of Directors has recently adopted a policy statement on Educational Inclusion developed by LDA of Canada. We have attached a copy to emphasize our commitment to education policies that are flexible enough to take into account individual needs and choices. 'One size does not fit all' in education, and it is important not to take away rights from some disability groups in order to promote the rights of other groups.

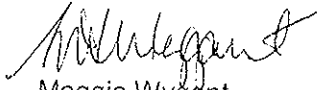
LDAO would like reassurance that the Ministry of Education intends to maintain its commitment to placement decisions that "meet the pupil's needs" and are "consistent with parental preferences" (Regulation 181/98, Section 10, Subsection 17). Further, we strongly advocate that the Ministry continue to promote a range of placement options, and outline these options in any revision of *Special Education: A Guide for Educators*.

[www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)

365 BLOOR STREET EAST, SUITE 1004, BOX 39, TORONTO, ON M4W 3L4 | TEL: 416.929.4311 FAX: 416.929.3905

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views and concerns.

Sincerely,



Maggie Wygant  
Executive Director



Diane Wagner  
Coordinator, Public Policy &  
Client Services

c.c. Barry Finlay, Director  
Special Education Policy & Programs Branch

**LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO**  
**POLICY STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION FOR**  
**STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

The following policy statement of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), as recommended by the LDAO Legislation and Policy Committee, on November 17, 2008.

**Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) Policy Statement on Educational Inclusion for Students with Learning Disabilities** (presented to the LDAC Executive Committee in February 2005, the LDAC Board of Directors in June 2005 and ratified on November 26, 2005).

**STATEMENT**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) does not support full educational inclusion or any policies that mandate the same placement, instruction, or treatment of all students with learning disabilities or the idea that all students with learning disabilities must be served only in regular education classrooms at the exclusion of all other special education placement options. LDAC believes that full inclusion, when defined this way, violates the rights of parents and students with disabilities guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedom* and *Human Rights Codes* which guarantee education equality and freedom from discrimination and rejects the arbitrary placement of all students in any one setting.

LDAC supports the availability of a continuum of education services as prescribed in an individual educational plan for each student with learning disabilities to ensure success and must be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of students with learning disabilities by:

- 1) Providing a range of options and services and diverse learning environments (placements) to meet the specific needs of each student;
- 2) Providing the most enabling environment for that student that will effectively meet the student's best interests socially, emotionally, behaviourally, physically and educationally; and,
- 3) Focus on what is in the best interest of the student and, in that context, consider all the needs of the student as expressed by the student and his/her parents and that of their consulting professionals.

**RATIONALE**

Because each student with learning disabilities has unique needs, an individualized education plan and placement must be tailored on individual strengths and needs. For one student, the plan may be provided in the regular classroom yet for another student, the regular classroom may be an inappropriate placement and may need alternative instructional environments, teaching strategies, and/or materials that cannot or will not be provided within the context of the regular classroom environment. The severity and nature of the individual needs should determine the alternative teaching strategies, accommodations, resources, supports and placement required.