

LDAO Response to

**People for Education Report on Special Education**,
released on April 28, 2014

LDAO commends People for Education for bringing forward issues relating to access to special education supports and services in Ontario. We agree with their statement that “Receiving timely and appropriate support is critical to the success of students with special education needs”.

On November 9, 2012, in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the appeal of the Moore family, who claimed that their local school district failed to provide the special education supports that Jeffrey Moore, a student with a severe learning disability, needed in order to get meaningful access to general education. Justice Rosalie Abella’s written decision contains the statement, “Adequate special education, therefore, is not a dispensable luxury”.

LDAO shares the concerns raised about equitable access to psychoeducational assessments, but we understand that there are many factors involved in this issue. For example, creative solutions need to be found for timely provision of psychological and other professional services in northern and rural areas of Ontario.

The upcoming changes to special education funding may lead to greater equity, although it is too early to judge the results. We do agree that “without more information on the effectiveness of a range of special education programs and supports, and without more consistent standards across school boards, it may be difficult to judge”.

LDAO supports the People for Education recommendation to: “develop a framework to support ongoing evaluation of special education services, which should include common definitions for a range of special education services”, and to “standardize processes for assessment, identification and placement to provide adequate, timely and equitable services and access to education for every Ontario child”.

The recommendation for a special education ombudsman is an idea that merits further exploration.

To read the full People for Education Report:
[www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/special-education-2014-WEB.pdf](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/special-education-2014-WEB.pdf)