

# LDAO SEAC CIRCULAR

**April 2010**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) SEAC Circular is published 5 times a year, in September, November, February, April and June.

The following are some topics that your SEAC should be looking at in the next couple of months. As usual action items will be underlined, and summarized at the end. Feel free to share any of this information or the attachments with other SEAC members. As always, when you are planning to introduce a motion for the consideration of SEAC, it is particularly important that you share all related background items with your fellow SEAC reps.

## **The topics covered by this SEAC Circular:**

1. Communication from Minister Dombrowsky to SEACs
2. PAAC Parents Reaching Out project
3. LDAO Response to Learning for All, K – 12
4. IEP 101 for Parents and Students
5. Provincial Interest Regulation
6. October Report data and budget forecast
7. Special Equipment Amount
8. Symposium for Parent Involvement Committee members
9. Revised Sample School Climate Surveys

## **List of Supplementary Materials:**

1. Memo to Directors on SEAC
2. Minister letter to SEACs
3. LDAO Response to Learning for All, K – 12
4. IEP PEI 101 Announcement

## **1. Communication from Minister Dombrowsky to SEACs**

Your SEAC may have already distributed and discussed the attached letter from Minister Dombrowsky. Minister Dombrowsky asked that SEACs hold a discussion about the SEAC e-learning website ([www.seac-learning.ca/index.htm](http://www.seac-learning.ca/index.htm)) and provide suggestions for making it more useful. There is a place on the website to provide feedback, so individual SEAC reps/alternates should take the opportunity to review and comment on the site in addition to the group discussion.

Christine Reidel at the Special Education Policy & Programs Branch will be keeping chairs of SEACs updated on issues pertaining to special education, once they register with her, as outlined in the letter. It is encouraging to see that the new Minister is committed to SEACs, and that Julie Williams, Acting Director of the Special Education Policy & Programs Branch, has conveyed this commitment to Directors of Education in the attached memo.

## **2. PAAC Parents Reaching Out project**

PAAC on SEAC will be developing a SEAC Effective Practices Guide. The project is funded by the Ministry of Education Parent Engagement Office, Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Regional/Provincial Grant Program. The Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) will be the lead partner for the project.

The PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Guide will build on the original PAAC on SEAC handbook, and the results from the recent SEAC Effectiveness Survey. The project is to be completed by the end of September.

## **3. LDAO Response to Learning for All, K – 12**

Included with the February SEAC Circular were a set of answers to questions about **Learning for All, K – 12** posed by one school board to its SEAC. Attached to this SEAC Circular is the formal LDAO response to **Learning for All, K – 12** submitted to the Special Education Policy & Programs Branch.

## **4. IEP 101 for Parents and Students**

Directors of Education, school board special education administrators and Chairs of SEAC will be receiving a memo and the attached flyer about the English and French versions of LDAO's online workshop **IEP 101 for Parents and Students.**

## **5. Provincial Interest Regulation**

The new Provincial Interest Regulation, enacted on March 1<sup>st</sup>, grants the Minister of Education power to review school boards' performance in a number of areas, including: academic achievement, student health and safety, parent involvement, cooperation among trustees and between trustees and their directors of education in providing good governance of the school

board, and performance of the board and director of education in carrying out their duties under the Education Act.

Academic achievement may be measured by EQAO results, number of secondary school credits accumulated, and average grades or marks on provincial report cards.

Parent involvement may include participation by parents in school councils and participation by parents in parent involvement committees.

Under the new regulation, if the Minister of Education has concerns about a board's performance, there is a progressive process for intervention. The only circumstances that would lead to consideration of board supervision are if a board refused or did not fully participate in a review process, or refused to give full and fair consideration to recommended changes arising out of the review.

According to the People for Education March newsletter, "the new regulation was developed after an extensive consultation with a wide range of education stakeholders. An initial draft of the regulation focused heavily on EQAO scores and had the potential for being highly punitive. The province listened to the many concerns raised, and made substantial changes." You can read a [synopsis of the regulation](#) by People for Education or read [the full regulation](#).

It is unfortunate that there is no mention of students with special education needs in this regulation, as recommended in LDAO's [Submission on Provincial Interest Regulation Consultation Paper](#).

## **6. October Report data and budget forecast**

SEACs should be asking for copies of information related to special education and suspensions/expulsions sent by their school board to the Regional offices, as part of the October Reports.

April is the time for SEACs to request a preliminary budget forecast for special education.

## **7. Special Equipment Amount (SEA)**

April 30<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for school boards to submit to their regional offices their final composite list of SEA purchases for equipment that has been purchased for students enrolled in the current school year. SEACs should ask for information on the number of SEA claims made by their board.

## **8. Symposium for Parent Involvement Committee members**

The Parent Engagement Office at the Ministry of Education has organized the first province-wide symposium for Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) members on April 16. PIC members from school boards across the province will be gathering in Toronto to share ideas and clarify the role of these committees. SEACs should have established an ongoing relationship with their school board Parent Involvement Committee, and a way to share information. SEACs could ask

for a report from members of their school board Parent Involvement Committee who attend the PIC Symposium.

## **9. Revised Sample School Climate Surveys**

The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, as outlined in the revised Policy/Program Memorandum 145, requires school boards to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of their students every two years, and to share the results with their safe schools teams. There are new sample surveys for students, parents and teachers on the Ministry website:

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html)

SEACs could ask their board to track responses to the school climate surveys that relate to issues of disabilities, and suggest that their boards to use the term 'special education needs' instead of, or in addition to, 'disabilities' in the surveys since this is the term that students and parents are familiar with in education. Tracking these responses would be a useful way to gage how comfortable students with special education needs and their parents feel in their schools.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Individual SEAC reps/alternates should take the opportunity to review and comment on the SEAC e-learning website.
- SEACs should be asking for copies of information related to special education and suspensions/expulsions sent by their school board to the Regional offices, as part of the October Reports.
- April is the time for SEACs to request a preliminary budget forecast for special education.
- SEACs should ask for information on the number of SEA claims made by their board.
- SEACs could ask for a report from members of their school board Parent Involvement Committee who attend the PIC Symposium.
- SEACs could ask their board to track responses to the school climate surveys that relate to issues of disabilities and suggest that boards to use the term 'special education needs' instead of, or in addition to, 'disabilities' in the surveys, since this is the term that students and parents are familiar with in education.

## **Questions?**

E-mail: Diane Wagner at [dianew@ldao.ca](mailto:dianew@ldao.ca) or call (416) 929-4311 Ex. 22

FAX: 416-929-3905.