

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

SEAC CIRCULAR

April 2007

Spring is right around the corner, we hope, and we are into the final stretch of the school year. Here are some of the issues your SEACs should be addressing 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. IEP Collaborative Reviews
2. Dispute Resolution Initiatives
3. Assistive Technology for OSSLT
4. 2007-2008 Education Funding
5. October Reports
6. SEAC Training Conference

List of attachments:

1. EQAO/OSSLT Accessibility announcement
2. SEAC Conference Announcement and Agenda
3. SEAC Conference application forms

1. IEP Collaborative Reviews

Over the last couple of months there have been a series of regional sessions across the province to review with boards the IEPs and report cards they had submitted to the Ministry. Each district school board was also requested to invite its SEAC to choose two parent representatives to attend a half-day meeting on the afternoon prior to the regional

meeting, to provide a parent perspective to their respective school board's IEP review process. Some of you may have participated.

Issues to be addressed in the regional meetings included:

- a review of the Ministry's expectations for the development and implementation of IEPs;
- a collaborative review of samples of IEPs and PRCs which were submitted to the Ministry;
- an opportunity for school boards' leadership to review their own IEP processes and practices based on the collaborative discussion and to devise a preliminary improvement action plan;
- a large group debriefing focussing on common trends;
- an opportunity to discuss how the Ministry may be able to provide further assistance (e.g., professional development, electronic tools, etc.,) with respect to IEPs and the reporting of measurable student achievement to parents.

The Ministry shared the trends that came up in their review of the sample IEPs, including the need for improvement in:

- connection with assessment data
- delineation of measurable, appropriate performance tasks
- parent-student consultation
- transition planning

School boards will be provided with a report from the Ministry based on review of their sample IEPs and the discussions at the regional meetings.

SEACs should ask for a copy of the report and a presentation on the board's improvement action plan

2. Dispute Resolution Initiatives

PAAC members participated in a consultation meeting to provide input into the development of a handbook for school boards on creating 'welcoming schools' and informal dispute resolution processes (for issues to do with special education programs and services). This resource guide is to be released in June, and professional development will be provided to school boards in the fall.

An external advisory group has been established to deal with the development of a more formal dispute resolution process. PAAC was asked to send a representative, and I have been nominated to attend. There are a number of meetings scheduled over the next four months, and there are plans to eventually pilot a process in six school boards.

3. Assistive Technology for OSSLT

As a result of a pilot project spearheaded by the Provincial Schools Branch and ASET (Association for Special Education Technology), this year's Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) was made available to school boards in all requested accessible formats, e.g. in a format ready to be used with text-to-speech software.

An announcement is attached. Students who are using such technology accommodations and have them listed in their IEPs should find the access easier in the future.

4. 2007-2008 Education Funding

The Ministry website now has funding documents for 2007-2008: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/0708/index.html. There is an increase in funding for special education, and boards with declining enrollment will stay at the same level as last year. The funding envelopes for special education have not changed.

A new Supported Schools Allocation of the Geographic Circumstance Grant will provide financial support for schools in small communities that have low enrolment and are a significant distance from other schools in their board. Information on this and other funding changes, and a list of schools affected, can be found in the following 'B' Memos: http://bmemos.edu.gov.on.ca/Memos/B2007/B_02.pdf
http://bmemos.edu.gov.on.ca/Memos/B2007/B_02E%20Attach%20Appendix%201.pdf

5. October Reports

School boards were to submit the information in October Reports to the Ministry in the usual format, as well as in a format that will be part of a whole new data collection system being developed. SEACs can ask to see the regular October Report figures that were submitted in the fall of 2006.

6. SEAC Training Conference

A group of parent organizations received funding from the Parents Reaching Out Grants to run a **SEAC Training Conference in Toronto on June 2nd and 3rd**. Priority will be given to SEAC reps and alternates from the partner organizations, and subsidies are only available to them. I have been told that registration will be limited to the first 25 non-partner SEAC reps or alternates, and a waiting list will be kept in case there are spots still available after the May 11th deadline. Registration forms in PDF and Word (for online registration) are attached, as well as an announcement and agenda.

There might be some inexpensive accommodations left over after all the partner reps have registered, so if you are coming from out of town you could contact one of the people listed at the bottom of the announcement. It sounds like a great opportunity.

The **online SEAC course** for LDAO SEAC reps and alternates went very well, with good contributions to discussion by the participants. Since there is a SEAC conference this spring, a second session of the online SEAC course will be postponed until the fall, if there is enough interest.

ACTION ITEMS:

- SEACs should ask for a copy of the Ministry report to their board on the IEP review process, and a presentation on their board's improvement action plan.
- SEACs can ask to see the regular October Report figures that were submitted in the fall of 2006.
- Regular updates on the CODE projects and the OPA/EDU Assessment project should be on the SEAC agenda.
- Register early, before May 11th for SEAC Training Conference

Questions?

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