

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

SEAC CIRCULAR

June 2007

It's almost the end of the school year, and I want to thank all SEAC reps and alternates for their efforts over the past months.

SEAC Learning website is back! You can find it at: www.seac-learning.ca/index2.htm. There is also a **new Ministry website for parents**: www.ontario.ca/abc123.

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. Dispute Resolution initiatives
2. Safe Schools amendments
3. Policies on home use of SEA equipment
4. EQAO Results
5. Postsecondary transition
6. Information & Communications Standard Development

List of attachments:

1. Dispute Resolution Key Messages April/May 07
2. Draft Motion on SEA Equipment
3. Letter from Cambrian College about transition
4. Information & Communications SDC Communique

1. Dispute Resolution initiatives

The Ministry of Education is on track to release the resource guide on informal dispute resolution in June and to provide professional development to school boards in the fall.

The Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution has met twice and will have meetings in June and July to consider a framework for the design and evaluation of six pilot projects across the province, to begin in the fall. Meetings of the committee will continue into 2008. The committee members include educators, parents, a student and independent mediators. Key Messages from the first two committee meetings are attached.

2. Safe Schools amendments

[Bill 212, Education Amendment Act \(Progressive Discipline and School Safety\), 2007](#) has been through the committee process, had final changes, and has been referred to the Ontario legislature for third reading. It will amend the Education Act and replace many provisions of the Safe Schools Act. If you select the above link, you can read the bill, with the crossed out pieces noting the sections that were changed in committee, after two committee hearings. The following is a summary of the amendments, from the Legislature website:

The Bill repeals sections 306 to 311 of the *Education Act* and replaces them with new provisions that substantially alter Part XIII of the Act with respect to the suspension and expulsion of pupils.

If a pupil engages in an activity set out in new section 306, a principal may suspend the pupil for up to 20 days. The list of activities mirrors the list in old section 306, with the addition of bullying. On suspending a pupil, the principal will be required to assign him or her to a program for suspended pupils provided by the board. A suspension imposed under new section 306 can be appealed to the board in accordance with new section 309. On an appeal, the board either confirms the suspension, reduces the length of the suspension or quashes the suspension.

If a pupil engages in an activity set out in new section 310, a principal must suspend the pupil for up to 20 days. The list of activities mirrors the list in old section 309. Following his or her suspension of a pupil under new section 310, the principal must promptly conduct an investigation, as required under new section 311.1, to determine whether to recommend to that board that the pupil be expelled.

If the principal decides not to recommend expulsion after completing the investigation, he or she must confirm the suspension, reduce its length or withdraw it altogether. At that point, the suspension can be appealed to the board unless it was withdrawn.

If the principal decides to recommend that the board expel the pupil, he or she must prepare a report containing his or her findings and recommendations. The board then holds an expulsion hearing in accordance with new section 311.3. The board is required to consider the submissions of every party to the hearing, such as the principal and the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian. The board must determine whether to expel the

pupil and, if it decides to expel, whether to expel the pupil from his or her school only or from all schools of the board. The board is not allowed to expel the pupil if more than 20 school days have passed since the pupil was suspended.

If the board does not expel the pupil, it must, with respect to the suspension originally imposed under section 310, confirm the suspension, reduce the length of the suspension or quash the suspension. The decision of the board on that matter is final.

If a board decides to expel a pupil, it must also decide whether to expel the pupil from his or her school only or from all schools of the board. A pupil who is expelled from his or her school must be assigned to another school. A pupil who is expelled from all schools of the board must be assigned to a program for expelled pupils provided by the board.

New section 312 requires boards to provide programs for suspended pupils and expelled pupils, which must be provided in accordance with policies and guidelines of the Minister.

An expelled pupil will be entitled to return to school under new section 314.1 if he or she has successfully completed a program for expelled pupils or has satisfied the objectives of those programs in another way. Boards are required to readmit expelled pupils who are entitled to return to school under section 314.1.

New sections 314.5 to 314.12 deal with several transitional matters related to the amendments to Part XIII. The transitional provisions describe how pupils suspended or expelled under the Act as it read before the changes to Part XIII come into force are to be dealt with once the changes are in force. Boards are given some flexibility in reassigning pupils serving limited expulsions imposed under old Part XIII into schools and programs for expelled pupils provided under new section 312.

3. Policies on home use of SEA equipment

The [Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount \(SEA\) and Special Incidence Portion \(SIP\), 2007–08](#) states on page 4 that “boards will develop policies that provide board staff with direction on issues such as: use of equipment in student’s home, in co-op placements and in other program settings”, and on page 9 that “boards should also have policies covering the loan of SEA funded equipment for home instruction.”

In order to influence the development of such policies, LDAO SEAC reps should consider introducing a motion at SEAC about home use of SEA equipment I have attached a draft motion, revised from a couple of years ago, that you could use or modify.

I also found an example of a document for high school situations from the TDSB website: [Form for Home Use of SEA Equipment](#).

On the same website I found a letter from Kurzweil about use of their software at school and home. Since it dates from 2003 it still talks about ISA 1 instead of SEA: [Home Use for Kurzweil](#)

SEACs should be asking to see their board's policies on SEA equipment, once they are drafted.

LDAO SEAC reps are requested to send a copy of their board's policy on home use to LDAO.

4. EQAO Results

Results of the Grade 10 literacy test (OSSLT) can be found on the EQAO website: www.eqao.com/categories/home.aspx?Lang=E. The results for students with special needs are at www.eqao.com/pdf_e/07/07P024e.pdf. The number of such students who have been successful on the test has fallen slightly in the last two years.

SEACs should be asking their boards for the board results, including results for students with special needs. They should also ask if the board results are tracked by exceptionality.

5. Postsecondary transition

One of our SEAC reps shared with me a letter from Cambrian College to guidance counsellors (attached) outlining requirements for students who are transitioning to college. The letter mentions the need for psychoeducational assessment for students with learning disabilities and talks about the use of the Northern Ontario Assessment & Resource Centre (NOARC). You can read about NOARC services at www.noarc-verno.ca. There is a similar program at Queen's University that serves southern Ontario, the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre: www.queensu-hcds.org/rarc/.

6. Information & Communications Standard Development

LDAO is represented on a committee that will be developing a standard for accessible information and communications, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The accessibility of many types of information will be looked at, including educational materials. The official communiqué of the first meeting is attached, and I will keep you posted as things progress.

ACTION ITEMS:

- LDAO SEAC reps should consider introducing a motion at SEAC about home use of SEA equipment
- SEACs should be asking to see their board's policies on SEA equipment, once drafted
- LDAO SEAC reps are requested to send a copy of their board's SEA policy on home use to LDAO

- SEACs should ask their boards for the board results on the OSSLT, including results for students with special needs. They should also ask if the board results are tracked by exceptionality.

Questions?

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