

LDAO SEAC CIRCULAR

September 2007

Welcome back to the school year. I hope that everyone has had a good summer, and is ready for a productive year ahead. Here are some items of interest as you begin the SEAC year. The Ministry has been making a series of announcements, which I will attempt to summarize for you.

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 Review
2. Ministry funding announcements
3. Programs for students who are on long-term suspension or expelled
4. Provincial Parent Board and Parents Reaching Out Grants
5. Dispute Resolution initiatives
6. CODE Professional Development Projects
7. Ministry of Education/OPA partnership for assessments
8. SEAC Training Opportunities
9. PAAC on SEAC Calendar

List of attachments:

1. Memo on IEP Collaborative Review Common Trends
2. Memo on IEP Template Sept. 07
3. Key messages from Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee June/July 07
4. PAAC on SEAC Calendar

1. IEP Collaborative Review

The **IEP Collaborative Review** is complete and the board specific reports went out to Directors of Education. There will be follow-up to Boards on what they plan to do in response, and support to implement change. Reports to boards are very direct and succinct. Boards have been requesting inservicing about IEPs from the Ministry, including for principals. An outline of provincial Common Trends from the Collaborative Review is attached. SEACs should ask to see the board specific report sent to their board

Significant highlights of the Common Trends included:

- “Many IEPs provide the source and date of assessment, but the summary of results is limited to diagnosis, .. Additional information vital to program planning, such as ... the nature of the learning disability, ...is frequently not recorded.”
- “a significant number of boards appropriately delineate areas of strength and areas of need.”
- “the vast majority of IEPs do not include a parent/student consultation log, or if included, it contains minimal entries that seldom document the outcome of consultations with parents.”

The Ministry has produced a provincial **IEP Template**, which will be offered but not mandated, since some boards still have contracts for use of templates. Boards will, however, have to align their templates with the provincial template. The letter announcing the template is attached. SEACs should ask how their board is planning to use the provincial template.

2. Ministry funding announcements

On August 14, 2007 the Ministry of Education announced an additional \$182 million for the 2007-08 school year, in addition to the \$781 million funding increase announced in March, for the following:

- \$41 million to fund 300 more vice-principals in large schools
- \$20 million to improve the maintenance and operation of schools
- \$12 million to continue transportation funding reform by ensuring boards receive funding that more accurately reflects the real costs of school bus operation and maintenance
- \$20 million to improve support for Education Assistants
- \$52 million to ensure funding for support workers, secretaries and supply teachers more closely reflects actual school board costs
- \$20 million to fund 240 more primary teachers to help create smaller primary class sizes
- \$5 million for school office supplies
- \$12 million in additional support for rural schools

<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1606&Lang=EN>

On August 22, 2007, as part of its Safe Schools initiatives, the Ministry announced:

- An annual investment of \$10.5 million to fund 170 psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers, attendance counsellors and others.
- One-time funding of \$1.7 million to provide 18 police officers who will work with school boards in Toronto, London and Hamilton to prevent bullying.

<http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2007/08/22/c9350.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html>

3. Programs for students who are on long-term suspension or expelled

The Education Act, as amended by the Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007, requires school boards as of February 1, 2008, to provide programs for students on long-term suspensions and students who are expelled from all schools in the board.

On August 24, 2007 the Ministry issued two Policy/Program Memoranda giving direction to school boards on programs to be set up for students on long-term suspension and expelled students.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 141: [School Board Programs For Students On Long-Term Suspension \(PPM 141\)](#): The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards regarding the development of board programs for students on long-term suspension. *In the case of students with special education needs, boards are required to provide appropriate support consistent with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).*

While boards are not required to provide programs for students who have been suspended for less than 6 days, boards are expected to provide homework packages for these students to help ensure that they do not fall behind in their school work.

A Student Action Plan (SAP) must be developed for every student on a long-term suspension who makes a commitment to attend the board program for suspended students. For suspensions of 6 to 10 school days, the program provided for in the SAP must include an *academic component* to support the student on a long-term suspension of six to ten school days in continuing his or her education. Boards are not required to provide a non-academic component for suspensions of this length.

For suspensions of 11 to 20 school days, the program provided for in the SAP will consist of both an *academic and a non-academic component* to support the student.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 142: [School Board Programs For Expelled Students \(PPM 142\)](#): The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards regarding the development of board programs for expelled students. In accordance with this memorandum, boards must establish programs that include the following elements:

- a planning meeting to determine the specific *academic and non-academic* program requirements
- a Student Action Plan (SAP) that outlines goals, objectives, and learning expectations, including provision for a review of the student's progress with regard to his or her SAP
- a re-entry plan to assist with the student's transition back to school and integration in the school

In the case of students with special education needs, boards are required to provide appropriate support consistent with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A student who has been suspended pending an expulsion hearing shall be assigned to a board program for students on long-term suspension.

LDAO is pleased to see that there is an emphasis on providing continuing academic support to these students who are not in school, and that the IEP must be taken into account. We support the statement "In all cases, every effort must be made to maintain the student's regular academic course work throughout the suspension period".

SEACs should ask to be involved in their board's planning of programs for students who are on long-term suspension or expelled.

4. Provincial Parent Board and Parents Reaching Out Grants

The new Provincial Parent Board has been announced, and the applications are now available for the Parents Reaching Out Grants:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html. Applications for school level and for regional/provincial level grants can be made online, by October 19th, 2007.

SEACS could consider partnering with School Councils to educate parents on accessing special education services or on the role of SEAC.

5. Dispute Resolution initiatives

The Ministry of Education has been working on a handbook for parents and educators on welcoming schools and informal dispute resolution: *Shared Solutions: A Resource Guide on Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs*. Once it is released, there will be training for boards, and SEACs should ask to participate in the training. In addition, a Provincial Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution has been meeting over the last few months to provide input to the Ministry concerning a continuum of dispute resolution processes, and the design and implementation of a formal dispute resolution pilot. LDAO is represented on this committee through PAAC on SEAC (Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees). The Key Messages from the June and July meetings are attached.

6. CODE Professional Development Projects

The CODE funded projects are into their third year. The amount of money has been reduced, but this time the projects can continue with the same populations.

7. Ministry of Education/OPA partnership for assessments

The OPA/EDU project is focusing on use of assessment information for specific recommendations to teachers. All boards submitted capacity building plans in January, which had to include plans for stakeholder communication (including to SEAC, parents). All but 5 boards have submitted year end plans. A group will be working on Promising Practices Guides over the next academic year. A report on the 2006-2007 projects will appear on the OPA website: www.psych.on.ca/?id1=117

8. SEAC Training Opportunities

Saturday, September 15th Webcast Training Opportunity: Current Initiatives in Special Education and the role SEAC holds in effectively addressing these initiatives within their board. Any SEAC member in the province with internet access can join the live Webcast at 10 am to 12 pm. A copy of the Webcast will also be available on the same site for 30 days afterwards. To assess your computer capacity to receive webcasting, go to – <http://www.webcasting101.ca/tech-support/tester.html>

To join the webcast presentation on Saturday, September 15, or to view the webcast for the next 30 days, go to – <http://oafccd.canadacast.ca>

Saturday November 3rd VOICE SEAC Workshop, 9:30 - 4:00 p.m., at the Quality Inn, Oakville. Free to VOICE SEAC reps and members. \$50 for non-VOICE members. For more information and an application form: www.voicefordeafkids.com/

LDAO Online SEAC Training Course to begin in early November. This course was run as a successful pilot in the spring for LDAO SEAC reps, and the revamped version will be available to all SEAC reps and alternates. It runs for 8 weeks, with small weekly assignments, an interactive bulletin board, and a final assignment to be submitted in order to receive a certificate of completion. \$75 for LDAO SEAC reps and alternates, \$150 for others. Details to follow.

Ministry of Education SEAC Learning website: www.seac-learning.ca/index2.htm

9. PAAC on SEAC Calendar

PAAC on SEAC has revised this attached calendar, which suggests topics to address at SEAC meetings for each month. Some topics are for every year, and some are particular to this school year.

ACTION ITEMS:

- SEACs should ask to see the board specific report on the IEP Collaborative Review that was sent to their board.
- SEACs should ask how their board is planning to use the Ministry IEP template.
- SEACs should ask to be involved in their board's planning of programs for students who are on long-term suspension or expelled.
- SEACs should ask to be involved in the training provided to boards on informal dispute resolution.
- Parents Reaching Out Grants -- consider partnering with School Councils to educate parents on accessing special education services or on the role of SEAC.

Questions?

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