

PUBLIC POLICY ROUNDUP Spring 2009

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Standards Development

The proposed **Information and Communication Standard** was released for public review from November 17, 2008 to February 6, 2009. A total of 478 organizations contributed feedback either at regional consultation meetings or in writing, and more than 300 written submissions were received. Most respondents considered the draft standard to be a good start, but there was consensus that proposed timelines were unrealistic and that more clarity was needed to improve understanding of the standard. The standards development committee met in March to review specific recommendations and after meeting again in April a final draft will be sent to the Minister.

The proposed **Employment Accessibility Standard** was released for public review from February 18, 2009 to May 22, 2009. The proposed standard requires organizations in Ontario to provide information about jobs in accessible formats, give disability awareness training to all employees, and prepare accommodation plans to help employees with disabilities perform their job. Information on the standard and the feedback process can be found at:

www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/accesson/business/employment/

Ministry of Education Initiatives

The Ministry of Education has posted a series of presentations for educators on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at www.ontariodirectors.ca/PA_Day-Spec_Ed/index.html. The series of four slide decks are titled: *Knowing Your Student*, *Individual Education Plans (IEPs) 101*, *Developing More Effective IEPs*; and *Collaborating for Better IEPs*.

Sample IEPs for various exceptionalities can be viewed at: www.ontariodirectors.ca/IEP-PEI/index.html

The Ministry has also posted a read-only version of its **IEP template**, including pull down menus, for parents and students to look at. It can be accessed at

<https://iep.edu.gov.on.ca/IEPWeb>

The user access is: **Username:** IEPDemo **Password:** demo

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Initiatives

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) is providing funding to Ontario colleges for **Support for Apprentices with Disabilities**, to assist colleges in meeting accommodation and accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs. Funds are to be used for accommodation purposes as well as for disability assessments or the modification of equipment for training apprentices with special needs.

Provincial Auditor's Report

In December 2008 the Provincial Auditor's Report was released, and you can read it at: www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_2008_en.htm. The report covers several areas that are relevant to persons with learning disabilities, including chapters on Special Education, Adult Institutional Services (Corrections), Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies, Community Mental Health, and Employment and Training. Among the findings in the Special Education chapter:

- IPRCs do not adequately document the rationale for their decisions and the evidence they relied on.
- There was not enough evidence of parent contribution to the IPRC process and to the development of IEPs

LDAO will be preparing a response to the report.