

Ministry of Education

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December 17, 2010

Dear Stakeholder,

This year marks the 30th anniversary since Bill 82, *The Education Amendment Act, 1980*, received Royal Assent on December 12, 1980. I invite you to join me in reflecting on the significance of this date and acknowledging the work school boards and Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) have done in Ontario to support the achievement of students with special education needs.

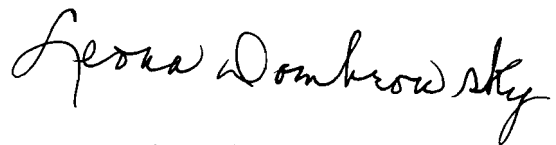
The passage of Bill 82 meant that, for the first time, all children, regardless of disabilities, were to be provided with the opportunity for a publicly funded education, and that school boards in Ontario were required to ensure special education programs and services were provided to exceptional pupils.

Bill 82 established the vital function that SEACs fulfill in providing advice to boards. We recognize the important role parents and other stakeholders play as partners in students' education experiences. The collaborative efforts of boards, families and community partners are necessary to effectively meet the needs of the approximately 300,000 students across the province who now receive special education programs and services in schools.

Bill 82 also provided the foundation for the establishment of Identification, Placement and Review Committees, as well as the development of Special Education Plans and Individual Education Plans. Over the past 30 years, we have learned how focussed improvement planning is necessary to reduce gaps in student achievement, and support improved achievement and well-being for students with special education needs. As a result of focussed efforts, we are pleased to note that the most recent EQAO scores show that the achievement of students with special education needs continues to increase.

The past 30 years have been an exciting journey for special education. Thank you for your ongoing work and efforts to ensure the most effective programs and services are available to support students' learning needs. I look forward to our continued work together to provide the programs and services required to reach every student, especially for those with special education needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leona Dombrowsky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'L' and 'D'.

Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education

c: SEAC Chairs