

LDAO Right to read response

Executive Summary.

LDAO was involved with the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC's) Right to Read from 2019 and continues to advocate, alongside its partners in the Literacy Alliance of Ontario (LAO), for the implementation of the OHRC's core recommendations. The report is over 500 pages and contains 157 recommendations.

The easiest way to support the work of the OHRC, the LOA and the LDAO community is to realize the key requirements and recommendations from the OHRC.

Right to Read includes recommendations to the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education on how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read, including:

- Adopting a new Kindergarten Program and Grades 1 to 8 Language curriculum that includes direct and systematic instruction in foundational reading skills, and preparing current and future teachers on evidence-based approaches to teaching students to read
- Screening every student, at least twice a year from Kindergarten to Grade 2, to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, using standardized, evidence-based screening tools
- Standardizing and providing stable funding for evidence-based reading interventions
- Making access to interventions equitable for all students
- Providing and supporting timely and effective accommodation, including greater access to evidence-based software and assistive technology
- Improving access to professional assessments and ensuring greater consistency and transparency in the assessment process
- Setting clear and consistent standards for school boards and mandating better data collection, analysis and reporting
- Improving communication with students and parents
- Working with experts in the science of reading to implement the OHRC's recommendations.
- The OHRC calls on all partners in Ontario's education system to meet their responsibilities and legal duties under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to remove barriers that limit students' opportunities to learn and succeed. This work will require many partners to collaboratively implement system-wide changes. It will also require sufficient, stable and ongoing funding.

LDAO has always fought to improve student outcomes, support parents and professionals in guiding students to reach their potential. Our response to this wide-ranging report will continue to hold that focus. LDAO supports the Right to Read's focus on early reading and a majority of the recommendations. There are a few recommendations that require further consultation and

discussion, to make sure the rights of students with learning disabilities are protected and the right to read and learn secured for future generations.

Nothing should deflect from the core recommendations and language used above by the OHRC itself. LDAO also welcomes Minister of Education Stephen Lecce immediately responding to with the following commitments:

Minister Stephen Lecce Via Twitter

“With 1 in 6 CA adults plagued by low literacy skills & 25% of ON grade 3 students not meeting reading standard, the status quo is not working.

We thank @OntHumanRights for the seminal “Right to Read” report & affirm our strong commitment to reform to strengthen literacy skills.”

“LDAO and its Chapters strongly support the OHRC Right to Read report’s focus on early reading and its call to change how reading is taught in our schools. LDAO will continue as always to engage with the Ministry of Education to maximize the positive impacts these changes can have in the lives of students living with LDs”

Lawrence Barns President and CEO. March 9 2022