

**LDAO SEAC CIRCULAR**

**May 2021**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) SEAC Circular is published 5 times a year, usually in September, November, February, April and June.

The following are some topics that your SEAC should be looking at. Action items and/or recommendations for effective practices will be underlined.

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.

 **Topics covered by this SEAC Circular:**

1. Planning for the 2021-22 School Year
2. Special Education Budget
3. Learning Recovery, Summer and Transition Programs
4. De-streaming Issues for Students with Special Education Needs
5. Right to Read Project Update

**List of Supplementary Materials:**

1. May 4, 2021 Memo Planning for the 2021-22 School Year

2. May 4, 2021 Memo Special Education Grant & Mental Health Funding

3. Special Education Grant in Technical Paper 2021-22

4. May 4, 2021 Memo Learning Recovery & Renewal

5. March 25, 2021 Memo Federal Safe Return to Class Fund: 2020-21 Spring & Summer Learning Opportunities for School Boards

6. De-streaming Issues for Students with Special Education Needs

**Note:** You can access the SEAC Circular and supplementary materials at
[www.ldao.ca/about/public-policy-advocacy/seac-circulars/](http://www.ldao.ca/about/public-policy-advocacy/seac-circulars/).

You can access Ministry funding (B & SB) memos by date at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/>

1. **Planning for the 2021-22 School Year**

A May 4, 2021 memo, [Planning for the 2021-2022 School Year](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B07_EN.pdf), outlined plans for continued Covid supports, including the requirement that online learning be available as an option for parents in the fall of 2021.

Some other highlights:

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test** (OSSLT)
Students graduating in the 2021-22 school year are exempted from the literacy graduation requirement. With respect to notations for the report card and the Ontario Student Transcript, schools are expected to follow the guidance provided in the 2020-21 school year. The literacy graduation requirement will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year. Students in Grades 10 and 11 and non-graduating students, including those who are learning remotely, are required to work towards the literacy graduation requirement, 8 through participating in the OSSLT, adjudication or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). EQAO will provide a Fall 2021 administration of the OSSLT in addition to a Spring 2022 administration

**EQAO Assessments**In 2020-21 EQAO assessments for Grades 3 and 6 were paused while EQAO aligned assessments with the new elementary math curriculum and transitioned to a new online adaptive platform. Field tests were provided for the new online Grade 9 math assessment and the online OSSLT. In 2021-22, regular EQAO assessments will resume, with the following adaptations: • All students in Grade 3 and 6 attending in-person learning will participate in the online EQAO math, reading, and writing assessments. • All students enrolled in Grade 9 math attending learning in-person will write the Grade 9 math assessment. Results of this assessment may count towards up to 10% of the student’s final mark. • Where applicable, students will continue to receive individual reports. For EQAO assessments, including the OSSLT, students who are learning remotely and wish to participate in the assessments can, at the discretion of the school board, attend in-person for the purpose of participating in the assessment so long as all applicable health and safety measures can be met.

**School Board Electronic Meetings**
In 2020, the Ministry of Education brought forward amendments to Ontario Regulation 463/97 (Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance) under the Education Act to most recently waive the requirement for school board trustees to attend meetings in person until November 30, 2021. To continue to support the ongoing operation of school boards in the upcoming school year, the ministry will recommend regulatory amendments that, if approved, would extend the ability for trustees to continue meeting by entirely electronic means until November 14, 2022 (the end of the next trustee period).

**NOTE:** SEAC meetings can continue to be virtual until November 14, 2022 (until trustee elections and the appointment of new SEACs) and must be open to the public, whether they are in-person or virtual.

**2. Special Education Budget**On May 4, 2021 the Ministry released a series of memos, and posted information on projected funding for the 2021-22 year on the Ministry website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html).

Attached is the memo on [Special Education Grant and Mental Health Funding Changes for 2021-22](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/SB2021/SB06_EN.pdf), as well as a document I created summarizing the amounts allocated for different sections of the Special Education Grant (excerpted from the [Technical Paper 2021-22](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-technical-paper.pdf)).

A good descriptive summary of the components of the Special Education Grant can be found in [2021-22 Education Funding: A Guide to the Special Education Grant](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/special-education-guide-2021-22.pdf)

Also of interest are Special Education Funding Guidelines:
[Special Equipment Amount (SEA), 2021-22](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-sea-guidelines-en.pdf)
[Special Incidence Portion (SIP), 2021-22](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-sip-guidelines-en.pdf)

**Note** a Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Clarification for 2021-22**:**School boards may purchase software that is required to access to the Ontario curriculum to support students with special education needs, through the SEA Per Pupil Amount. This can include reading intervention software.

This will be a challenging year for SEACs to get a full understanding of their board’s Special Education Budget, with all the various announcements of funding that have been made over the last year, and changes to locations of some funding allocations. It will be especially important to have a presentation to SEAC on their board’s planning for special education funding.

For effective practices see: [www.paac-seac.ca/home/paac-on-seac-effective-practices-handbook-for-seac-members/section-3-seac-roles-and-responsibilities/3-6-special-education-budget-and-financial-statements/](http://www.paac-seac.ca/home/paac-on-seac-effective-practices-handbook-for-seac-members/section-3-seac-roles-and-responsibilities/3-6-special-education-budget-and-financial-statements/).

**3. Learning Recovery, Summer and Transition Programs**

The May 4, 2021 memos, [Planning for the 2021-2022 School Year](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B07_EN.pdf) and *Learning Recovery & Renewal* (attached) both speak to a learning recovery and renewal approach to include a focus on student mental health and well-being, early reading and math, re-engaging students, special education, targeted French language supports, and educator readiness including professional learning communities and opportunities to share effective practices.

Some highlights:

**Early Reading**

The decline in Kindergarten enrolment and the disruption to learning, particularly for our youngest learners, requires a focus on early reading and math. School boards were provided with funding for evidence-based reading intervention programs or programs that have been shown to be efficacious in improving student outcomes for struggling readers in 2021: March 25, 2021 Memo *Federal Safe Return to Class Fund: 2020-21 Spring & Summer Learning Opportunities for School Boards Opportunities* (see attachment).

SEACs should ask how this funding is being used to provide evidence-based reading intervention programs.

**NOTE**: To support effective instruction in reading, the ministry will also work with experts to release an educator guide that outlines evidence-based, high-yield classroom strategies to support students in Kindergarten to Grade 3. This guide will be released at the start of the 2021-22 school year.

**Special Education**

Special Education Grant (SEG) funding is projected to increase to over $3.21 billion for the 2021-22 school year. School boards can use this SEG funding to retain additional educational staff, provide professional assessments, purchase resources or evidence-based programs or interventions to support learning for students with special education needs. Additionally, school boards are permitted to use their 2020-21 After School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) funding during summer 2021.

**NOTE:** Prior to the start of the school year, school boards will be provided with a Remote Learning Guide for Students with Special Education Needs to support students who continue to learn remotely.

SEACs should ask their boards to share both the *Educator Guide that outlines evidence-based, high-yield classroom strategies to support effective reading instruction in Kindergarten to Grade 3*, and the *Remote Learning Guide for Students with Special Education Needs*, as soon as they are available.

**Summer Learning**

The March 25, 2021 memo, *Federal Safe Return to Class Fund: 2020-21 Spring and Summer Learning Opportunities for School* (attached) outlines funding available for summer and transition programming.

Appendix 3 of the memo lists board by board allocations for various programs covered.

Some highlights:

**Math and Literacy Transition Supports** **Funding** will be available for targeted math and literacy transition supports for Grade 8 students to help prepare them to transition into the de-streamed Grade 9 math course in the 2021-22 school year. A focus will be on supporting students with learning gaps in math and literacy and/or from vulnerable and underserved population groups, including Indigenous, Black and otherwise racialized students, students from low income households, *and students with special education needs.*

**Provincial and Demonstration Schools**, including the Centre Jules-Leger, will be able to offer expanded summer learning opportunities focused on literacy, numeracy and skills building for their students. Schools will be contacted directly by ministry staff regarding this funding

**Supports for Students with Special Education Needs**

To support students with special education needs in summer program offerings in both credit and non-credit granting courses, additional funding may be used by school boards for additional staffing resources such as special education resource teachers, and educational assistants.

**Summer Transition Program**

School boards will be able to provide a summer program for students with high special education needs who may find the return to school challenging, with a focus on closing gaps in skills development, learning, and on establishing classroom routines prior to the opening of schools.

**Mental Health Supports**

Funding will be provided to allow for the ongoing provision of mental health support over the summer months to students who are struggling with mental health concerns. Providing a connection to school-based mental health professionals will also help to facilitate a smooth transition back to school for students for whom a return to school would be challenging.

SEACs should ask for details on how these funding envelopes will be used for students with special education needs.

**4. De-streaming Issues for Students with Special Education Needs**

On April 1, 2021 the Ministry of Education held a Roundtable stakeholder consultation to give input into a draft De-streaming Guide for school board leaders. This was in preparation for de-streaming of Grade 9 Mathematics in the September 2021. The attached **PAAC on SEAC submission** to the Roundtable is shared to inform SEAC discussion on how the new de-streaming policy will be implemented in their school board. SEACs should ask to receive the final version of the De-streaming Guide when it is released.

**5. Right to Read Project Update**

In an April 30, 2021 Update on the Right to Read Inquiry, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) summarized progress:

The inquiry team has received documents, data and information from the eight representative Ontario English language public school boards and the Ministry of Education (MOE). We have also received and reviewed documents, data and information from Ontario’s 13 English-language public faculties of education. The evidence-gathering phase is now complete, and the inquiry team and OHRC’s experts are analyzing the large amount of data, information and documents received and drafting a final report.

This report will address concerns with how Ontario’s public education system meets the needs of students with reading disabilities or at risk for these disabilities in areas such as curriculum and teaching, early screening, reading interventions, accommodations and psycho-educational assessments. Inquiry findings will also help other students (low-income, racialized, First Nations, Métis and Inuit, newcomer, English Language Learners, other disabilities etc.) who are not realizing equitable opportunities to succeed.

COVID-19 and other factors have delayed some elements of the inquiry.

A final inquiry report, which will include detailed findings and recommendations for government and education stakeholders, is now planned for release in fall 2021.

[www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-read-public-inquiry-on-reading-disabilities](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-read-public-inquiry-on-reading-disabilities)

**Questions?** Email Diane Wagner at dianew@LDAO.ca