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**Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario submission on the**

**Initial recommendations of the Education Technical Sub-Committee on Accessible Transitions**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Education Technical Sub-Committee on Accessible transitions, based on input from the LDAO Legislation and Policy Committee.

LDAO strongly supports the importance of transition planning and supports for students with disabilities including students with learning disabilities.

**Transitions to and within K-12**

**LDAO supports recommendations 1 to 20 with the following comments:**

* LDAO strongly supports the role of the Ministry of Education in developing and sharing with school boards transition resources as outlined in 1 to 6. Included in the repository should be the Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities: [www.transitionresourceguide.ca/](http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/).
* The Ministry of Education should have a role in developing and sharing with school boards curriculum resources as outlined in (7) and (8). School boards should be mandated to develop *and utilize* such resources.
* LDAO strongly supports the focus in (8) on the development of learning skills including executive functioning skills (for example, emotional and physical self-regulation, working memory, self-monitoring, organizational planning and prioritizing, and task initiation). Development of these skills needs to begin in the elementary grades.
* LDAO supports keeping options and pathways open to postsecondary education and employment (9) for students with learning disabilities. It is important that this process starts in elementary school by allowing students to access grade level curriculum with accommodations (including assistive technology) rather than offering only modified curriculum expectations.
* LDAO strongly supports the concept of a Transition Facilitator/Navigator role at the school board and at the school level (12). This recommendation needs to be aligned with similar recommendations in Section 6 of the K - 12 Recommendations and with the postsecondary Transition/Navigator positions outlined in recommendation 37 of this document.
* LDAO strongly supports recommendations that promote development of learning strategies and self-advocacy skills for students (15 -19).
* Review of curriculum and learning expectations (17) should adapt development of self-advocacy/self-awareness/resiliency skills to different courses and levels of education.
* Students should disclose their *disability needs* rather than their disability (18).
* Instruction development for educators and students (19) should take into account intersectionality with race, religion and gender identity.
* LDAO strongly supports the importance of accommodations and supports in co-operative education (13) and in summer and night school courses (20).

LDAO supports recommendations 21 to 26 with the following comments:

* While parents and students need to be aware of the need for updated assessments for postsecondary purposes, the recommendations do not address the issue of inequitable access to updating assessments. Options presented are not available to all families.
* LDAO points out that recommendation 26 is inaccurate. Students do not “need an identification, placement and review committee if they will be requesting accommodations when they enter postsecondary education” and parents need to be aware that an IPRC identification is insufficient by itself to access accommodations at postsecondary, although sometimes interim accommodations can be accessed pending documentation.

**LDAO supports recommendations 27 and 28 with the following additions:**

* Students should be advised to contact the Accessibility office as soon as they are accepted at a postsecondary institution in order to understand processes such as OSAP application issues.
* Students need to be aware of the requirement of a Disability Verification Form through OSAP in order to be eligible to access BSWD/CSG-PDSE funding. Getting this form completed might have a cost and/or it could be completed at the time of an updated assessment.
* Information should be added in (27) about the resources available for assessment through the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) and the Northern Ontario Assessment and Resource Centre (NOARC), as noted in recommendation 28.
* Regional Assessment Centres could work with the school boards in grade 11/12 to ensure that the assessments were valid and supportive for the remainder of the secondary career, as well as for postsecondary purposes.
* It would be helpful for students and parents to have a flow chart to help understand the processes described in this recommendation.

**Transitions from K-12 to postsecondary education**

**LDAO supports Recommendations 19 – 35 with the following comments:**

* For consistency Recommendation 29 should align with Recommendation 59 in Section 6 of the K – 12 recommendations.

* A centralized transitions hub (29) should include the Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities: [www.transitionresourceguide.ca/](http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/).
* Enhancement of existing transition programs (33) should include several options for when and how students can access transition programs, from transition credits offered in secondary school, to summer programs and ongoing programs during the initial postsecondary year. These should be available in both in-person and virtual formats.
* Under the list of components to be included in transition programs (33), “understanding how to manage synchronous/asynchronous course work” and “navigating learning management systems” are core components that should not be a subset of “articulating and negotiating accommodation needs with peers in group work.”

**LDAO supports Recommendations 36 – 47 with the following comments:**

* LDAO strongly supports the need for ongoing collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.
* LDAO supports the funding of transition/navigator positions (37) with the provision that this would be a different role from accessibility counsellors, and funded separately.
* Recommendation 41 suggests that the Ministry of Education should budget for students with disabilities in grade 11 or 12 to receive new or updated formal professional assessments. There should be a more specific recommendation on school board funding at the secondary level for such assessments.

**Transitions from secondary school to the workplace and community**

**LDAO supports Recommendations 63 – 69 in principle**.

 **Alternative transition programs/pathways**

**LDAO supports recommendations 70 – 75 in principle**.

Respectfully submitted,

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