

Meeting Summary
Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
February 8 & 9, 2012

The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) held its most recent meeting on February 8 & 9, 2012 in Toronto. Below are highlights of the meeting:

February 8, 2012

- John Wilhelm, Chair of MACSE provided an overview of the *Conflict of Interest* rules to members of the Council. Council members were reminded of the requirement to declare any potential conflict at each meeting.
- The Chair reminded members that since February marks the end of MACSE's fiscal year priorities for the upcoming year will be discussed and finalized before the June meeting.
- The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) provided an update on the following:
 - The branch continues to work on the funding formula for special education and has made significant gains.
 - The Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) *Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs* has not yet been released. This PPM will provide direction to school boards regarding the development of student transition plans.
 - The Ministry of Education (EDU), the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) have implemented different service delivery models for integrated speech and language services in seven Demonstration Sites. An external provider, Deloitte is currently evaluating the services.
 - The Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG) has met on several occasions. Additional working groups will be formed for the following exceptionalities: Giftedness, Developmental Disability and Mild Intellectual Disability.
 - Barry Finlay clarified that the memo sent to school boards regarding the categories of exceptionalities reaffirms the existing categories of exceptionalities and the approach boards are to take in working with them to serve the needs of students with special education needs.
 - EDU, MOHLTC and the MCYS continue to meet bi-weekly on the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
 - EDU and the MOHLTC will be working closely with Dr. Doug Willms and the Institute for Clinical Evaluations Services (ICES) to support the sharing of health data to improve student learning.
- Barry Finlay asked members for direction with respect to Education Quality Accountability Office (EQAO) and whether students with special education needs who are not accessing the curriculum should be included in the total number of students potentially writing the tests. The majority of members agreed that the EQAO testing should include all students.
- Ruth Flynn, Director of the Inclusive Education Branch, consulted MACSE on the draft copy of the resource *Approaching Student Behaviour from a Human Rights Perspective* which the Ministry has developed jointly with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. This resource is designed to support school and system leaders in their work with teachers, staff, students, families and the community to foster and promote student achievement and well-being while addressing student behaviour from a human rights perspective. It is intended to help school and system leaders foster a bias-free approach to student discipline to support positive behaviour and early intervention processes.

- MCYS, MOHLTC and EDU provided an update on the implementation of some of the initiatives under the Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. While MCYS is the lead for the overall three year plan, each ministry is leading some of the initiatives. The ministries are working together to support the implementation and coordination of many of the initiatives. The update showed how services and service coordination are being improved for children, youth and families.
- MACSE members were presented with an overview of the School Mental Health ASSIST program by Dr. Kathy Short. School Mental Health ASSIST is an implementation support team funded through the strategy to support school boards with student mental health and well-being. It has a specific focus on:
 - District leadership for effective school mental health
 - Capacity-building for education professionals
 - Support for effective implementation of school mental health promotion and prevention programming
- ASSIST works closely with EDU and aligns with related initiatives led by MCYS and MOHLTC.
- Members divided into two working groups to discuss Transitions and Mental Health.
 - Transitions: This working group provided feedback on the Student Transitions draft position paper. An updated version will be sent to members.
 - Mental Health: This working group discussed and created a draft resolution to emphasize the importance of having a mental health lead in every board starting 2011/12.
- The Minister of Education, Honourable Laurel Broten expressed her appreciation for the commitment of MACSE members and for being an important source of advice. She welcomed a new member, Marcia Brown who represents Educational Assistants and also thanked four members whose terms have come to an end, Ruth Jones representing Speech and Language Pathologists, Jean-Baptiste Arhanchiague representing Teachers and the French Language Community, Raoul Romain representing Learning Disabilities and Bonny Cann representing the Aboriginal Community. The Minister thanked MACSE for the advice they have been providing on mental health and transitions and looks forward to hearing about the priorities for the upcoming year.

February 9, 2012

- MACSE members reviewed their achievements for 2011-2012.
- MACSE members heard presentations on a variety of initiatives underway within MCYS and MCSS. A written update of each ministry is now part of the Special Education Update.
- Julie Williams from SEPPB provided an update on Learning for All, K-12, Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Expertise Professional Learning Day scheduled for March 1st, 2012.
- SEPPB provided an overview of ministry activities supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of the Individual Education Plans (IEP). After the presentation, members divided into groups to provide the ministry with feedback regarding potential future ministry priorities related to IEPs.

- Each member of MACSE shared the successes and challenges experienced by the exceptionality, the group or the community they represent. The information gathered helps to inform MACSE's priorities' setting and various initiatives of EDU.
- James Maloney from the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) provided an update on the Additional Qualifications Guideline Review. The presentation focused on the revisions to Schedule D: Special Education Part I, II and Specialist Additional Qualification (AQ) course guidelines and included key recommendations from written feedback from school boards and an online survey from the summer of 2010. Also discussed were the key additions to be included in the guidelines for the AQs.
- The Chair asked members to volunteer to provide feedback on the Additional Qualifications Guidelines. Feedback is required before April 12, 2012.
- Staff from SEPPB provided an update on the Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG). This group has met on several occasions to provide input into the development of Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities and assist with the review of PPM 8 on Learning Disabilities. The PPM and guidelines are scheduled for release in 2012.
- A resolution was passed by MACSE members to have a mental health lead in every school board. The resolution will be included in the minutes.
- Once finalized, MACSE's minutes will be posted on the MACSE repository and will be shared with members. Minutes from previous meetings, as well as MACSE's annual reports can be reviewed at www.macse-on.ca.
- Certificates of Achievement were presented to members who will not be returning to Council: Jean-Baptiste Archanchiague, Ruth Jones and Raoul Romain. Jean-Baptiste, Ruth and Raoul were thanked for their dedication, commitment and advocacy on behalf of students with special needs.
- MACSE's next meeting is scheduled for June 6 & 7, 2012 in Toronto.
- Members are reminded that all meeting material from the February 2012 meeting is confidential unless otherwise stated.