

Public Policy Round Up

New Ministry of Education Policy on Learning Disabilities

LDAO enthusiastically welcomes the announcement by the Special Education Policy & Programs Branch of the revised [Policy/Program Memorandum 8: Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities](#). The previous PPM 8 on Learning Disabilities was published in 1982 and the field of learning disabilities has seen major advancements since that time. In 2011 the ministry convened a Learning Disabilities Working Group comprised of educators, internationally recognized researchers, psychologists and key stakeholders, including LDAO, to inform the development of the revised PPM and a resource document for educators.

The Definition of the term Learning Disability in the revised PPM is consistent with key concepts of the LDAO Definition of Learning Disabilities, developed through an extensive consultation process in 2001. While many school boards, in addition to Ontario postsecondary institutions, have been informally using the LDAO definition, the key concepts are now part of the ministry definition to be used for identification of students with learning disabilities through the IPRC process.

In addition to updating the definition, the revised PPM provides direction on Recognition and identification of Learning Disabilities (including Early and ongoing screening, and Assessments) and on Program Planning for students with learning disabilities. As stated in the memo to Directors of Education, the revised PPM “reflects the advancement in research and developments in special education policies and school board practices in supporting students with learning disabilities”.

The ministry is organizing information sessions for Superintendents of Special Education and intends to release *Guidelines for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities* in the 2015-16 school year. In addition, the ministry is funding LDAO to develop online research-based resources, webinars, and podcasts (LD@school/TA@l'ecole) and funded the very successful Educator's Institute, *Demystifying Learning Disabilities in the Classroom*, on August 27, 2014.

The requirements of the revised PPM 8 will take effect January 2, 2015.