

# LDAO Public Policy Manual 2002

## Section I: Parents' and Students' Rights

The policies in this part relate to the basic right of parents to be involved in their child's education and the need for parents to act as advocates for their child.

### Policies

I1 Parent Advocates

I2 Parents' Right to be Informed

I3 Parents' Guide

I4 Involvement of Parents and Community in Classroom Programming

I5 Students' Right to be Involved

### Policy I1 – Parent Advocates

LDAO advocates that parents have the right and the responsibility to be an advocate for their child.

#### Rationale

Parents are an integral part of the education of their child, both as primary care givers in the home and as the strongest advocates for the child within the educational system. Parents must be aware of their rights and responsibilities in this position.

Parents have the right to participate in every aspect of the decision making process concerning their child. This involvement continues beyond educational placement in school, as an appropriate and comprehensive program involves reinforcement and encouragement in the home. Parents must strive to be knowledgeable regarding the child's disability and the role they have to play in the remediation of that disability. It is important that the parents assume clear responsibility for training their children in the skills of self- advocacy.

#### References

Response to the consultation on the IPRC process, LDAO, 1995

“Still Putting the Pieces Together”, LDAO, 1994

“Your Child is Worth It! LDAO parent advocacy handbook”, LDAO, 1995

### Policy I2 – Parents' Right to be Informed

LDAO advocates that parents be informed of the exact nature and consequences of their child's exceptionality, the extent of the strengths and needs and full details of the recommended placement. These must be included in the IPRC written statement of decision, as set out in Regulation 181/98.

#### Rationale

Parents cannot help their child if they do not fully understand the problems that their child is facing as a result of having learning disabilities. Knowledge is the essential prerequisite to parents becoming an integral part of their child's educational program.

Despite the requirement that this information be included in the IPRC decision, parents do not always receive it.

## **References**

Regulation 181/98

See also: IPRC Process

## **Policy I3 – Parents’ Guide**

LDAO advocates that school boards be required to distribute their “Parents’ Guide to Special Education” (prepared in accordance with the relevant sections 1of Regulation 181/98 and MET recommendations) to all parents upon their child entering the school system and again to any parent whose child is experiencing difficulty in school.

### **Rationale**

Parents must be informed of their rights within the education system to ensure their ability to act as effective advocates for their children. The Guide will include a statement that all school boards must provide special education programs and services for all exceptional students and describe the placement options available including Provincial and Demonstration Schools. Many parents are not aware of all their rights and options until long after the first difficulties appear and sometimes not even then. For this reason it is also most important that the Guide include a listing of all the relevant advocacy organizations and associations both locally and provincially.

### **References**

Regulation 181/98

Response to the consultation on amendments to the IPRC process, LDAO, 1995

Response to the consultation on the Parents’ Guide, LDAO, 1998

See also: Policy C5

## **Policy I4 – Involvement of Parents and Community in Classroom Programming**

LDAO advocates that the Ministry of Education encourage the active involvement of parents and other community members in classroom programming, mentorships and in-service programs.

### **Rationale**

Many adults who are not professional educators have valuable skills and insights to contribute to classroom programs. Involvement will help these adults to gain a better understanding of what is happening in the classroom and school system. Involved parents are in a better position to support both students and teachers.

Teachers may understand their students better, if they communicate with and understand the students’ parents or guardians.

### **References**

Response to policy documents on volunteer involvement, school councils, secondary school reform, LDAO, 1995-98

## **Policy I5 – Students’ Right to be Involved**

LDAO advocates that students be informed and involved to the greatest extent possible in all aspects of decision making relating to their special education programming, services and placement, including attending IPRCs and other relevant meetings.

**Rationale**

Although a student is not required by law to be informed or included until he or she is an adolescent, it is important that parents involve their children in making decisions about their education to the greatest extent possible, dependent on the age and maturity of the child.

This is important for two reasons. First, involving the student in the process will enhance his or her understanding on the nature and impact of his or her learning disabilities. This will generally have a positive impact on his or her self-esteem and will facilitate the student becoming an active and willing participant in his or her education. Secondly, after age 16 the student has the right to act on his or her own behalf and exclude parents from many aspects of his or her education. Including the student earlier than this age will enable the student to make informed and proper decisions as he or she becomes increasingly responsible for his or her own education.

**References**

Regulation 181/98

Education Act s8(3)

Response to the new Regulation on Identification and Placement of Exceptional Students, LDAO, 1995

McLean v Simcoe County Board of Education, Leave to Appeal Tribunal, 1992