

LDAO Public Policy Manual 2002

Section K: Funding

The policies in this section relate to the funding of general and special education and services in Ontario. Policies address the current funding policy for special education and English as a second language education. Policies also address the need in exceptional cases to provide funding for students to attend private schools.

Policies

- K1 Funding of Education
- K2 Allocation of Funding for Every Student
- K3 Funding of Special Education I
- K4 Special Education Funding I: Special Education Per Pupil Amount
- K5 Special Education Funding II: Intensive Support Amount
- K6 Special Education Funding III: The ISA Profile for Learning Disabilities
- K7 IEP Based Special Education Funding
- K8 Funding for Students with Learning Disabilities to Attend Private Schools I
- K9 Funding for Students with Learning Disabilities to Attend Private Schools II
- K10 English as a Second Language (ESL) Funding
- K11 Funding of Services

Policy K1 – Funding of Education

LDAO endorses the decision of the Government of Ontario to fund education through direct grants to school boards.

Rationale

The provision of education should be equitable in terms of content, quality, accessibility and opportunity of access and outcome. Students, including exceptional students, should have the same opportunities and access to service no matter where in Ontario they reside or whether they attend a school in the public or separate system.

For many years, education in Ontario was funded through provincial grants and/or municipal taxes. This resulted in significant variation in the funds spent on students, depending on where in the province the students lived and what kind of school board they attended. LDAO has long advocated the substance of the recent changes in education funding. Provincial funding and control should ensure equity in the funding of education across Ontario.

References

- Report of the Property Tax Working Group of the Fair Tax Commission, 1996
- “For the love of learning”, Report of the Royal Commission on Learning, 1995
- Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Learning, LDAO, 1995
- Student Focused Funding document, Ministry of Education, 1998
- Response to the consultations on the funding of education, LDAO, 1997 - 2001

Policy K2 – Allocation of Funding for Every Student

LDAO endorses the decision of the Government of Ontario regarding the foundation grant, such that each school board receives the same allocation for each student, supplemented by a number of

different grants (including the special education grant) to address individual and local differences and needs.

Rationale

Although there are individual differences among students and school boards, it is logical that the foundation grant, which covers the base cost for a student (for example, teacher salaries, books, other resources) be the same for every student in Ontario. This process, supplemented by the availability of other grants, will allow for greater equity throughout Ontario. However, where the amounts of the other grants and the directions to school boards about how the funds are to be utilized are not adequate, inequity may continue. In particular, where school boards choose to spend a portion of their Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) funds on items other than special education, exceptional students may be the ones who pay the price.

References

Funding Formula, Ministry of Education, 1998

Response to the Ministry of Education consultation on the funding of education, LDAO, 1997 - 2001

See also: Policy R3

Policy K3 – Funding of Special Education I

LDAO endorses the general principles of special education funding contained in the Government's student focused funding model, where special education funds are intended to supplement the allocation of the per student foundation grant with a two tier special education funding formula: the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA), which is allocated on a census-based model, i.e. for every student enrolled within the school board (and the Intensive Support Amount (ISA), which is allocated on the basis of the incidence of high need/high cost students within the school board)*.

* No longer applicable

Rationale

Prior to 1992, each school board was expected to account for its special education expenditures separately from the funds that they spent on education as a whole. In spite of the concerns expressed by some school boards about the diversity in Government grants for education and the limits set on Government provided per student special education grants, this system enabled school boards, SEACs and the community to track the board's expenditures on special education. Many school boards spent considerably more on special education than their grants, others did not. There was significant diversity in the range and type of special education programming available to exceptional students from board to board. In 1992 this situation was changed and the special education grant was rolled into the per student allocation. This meant that special education allocations and expenditures by school boards were no longer reported in a transparent and accountable manner by school boards. The changes made in 1998 to fund education directly from the Province, with special education funding once again separate, should have restored the transparency and assured greater fiscal accountability.

References

Student focused funding documents, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1995 to 2001

Briefs, responses and letters related to the student focused funding model, LDAO, 1995 to 2001

Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001

Response to the ISA comprehensive review, LDAO, 2001*

Alternative model for the ISA funding process, brief to the Minister of Education, LDAO, 2000*

* No longer applicable

See also: Policy R3

Policy K4 – Special Education Funding II: Special Education Per Pupil Amount

LDAO advocates that the Ministry of Education hold school boards accountable for the way they allocate and spend their SEPPA funds, such that all exceptional students are assured appropriate special education programmes, services and accommodations as well as access to the most enabling special education placement to meet their needs, as set out in their written IPRC decision and their IEP.

(The level of accountability should match the reporting and tracking requirements instituted for the ISA funding and SEPPA funds should not be allowed to be diverted to “top up” apparent ISA shortfalls or other funding gaps on the grounds of encouraging school board funding flexibility or false claims of assuring equity for non-exceptional students.)*

* No longer applicable

Rationale * No longer applicable

As the student focused funding model has been introduced and school boards realized that the primary source of potential additional funding was the allocation of ISA dollars, they have significantly reduced their focus on assuring the appropriate allocation of SEPPA dollars for the benefit of the majority of their exceptional students who are not and should not be deemed ISA eligible. The Ministry of Education assisted in this potentially very negative process by indicating that students do not have to be deemed exceptional by an IPRC in order to be eligible for special education services and to have an IEP. Further, they have informed school boards that the Ministry is providing greater flexibility for school boards in how to manage their special education expenditures by not specifying a consistent process for allocating their SEPPA dollars. This has resulted in many school boards focusing almost exclusively on trying to increase the number of ISA eligible students and assigning a large part of the SEPPA dollars and their available professional services such as psychology, speech pathology, etc., to trying to identify more students for ISA eligibility. Exceptional students who are not and should not be ISA eligible, especially those who have learning disabilities or are identified as gifted have paid the greatest price for this in having their access to appropriate special education reduced or even eliminated. In spite of vigorous representation from many of the parent associations representing exceptional students, the Ministry of Education has chosen not to alter this process. For example, a recent memorandum to school boards about special education initiatives for 2001-02, makes no mention of school board accountability for the expenditure of SEPPA dollars or to meeting the needs of exceptional students who are not ISA eligible.

References

Student focused funding documents, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1995 to 2001

Briefs, responses and letters related to the student focused funding model, LDAO, 1995 to 2001

Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001

Response to the ISA comprehensive review, LDAO, 2001*

Alternative model for the ISA funding process, brief to the Minister of Education, LDAO, 2000*

* No longer applicable

Special Education Initiatives for 2001-02, Memorandum to school boards from N.J. Hartmann, ADM, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001

Policy K5 – Special Education Funding III: Intensive Support Amount*

* No longer applicable

LDAO advocates that the Ministry of Education modify the current process for determining and distributing the ISA funds and for determining ISA eligibility, including the application of the eligibility criteria and the revised ISA profiles, such that the distribution and allocation of special education funds

more accurately reflect the actual costs of meeting the high cost needs of the very small percentage of students who should be deemed ISA eligible and the much larger percentage of exceptional students who are not and should not be deemed ISA eligible, but who still have significant and often unmet special education programming and service needs.

Rationale

In 2000-01, 50% of the total special education funding allocation was directed towards ISA funding. The number of students deemed ISA eligible was approximately 22,000, which is just over 1% of the total school aged enrollment and approximately 10% of the total number of students that school boards report as being in need of special education programming and services. These percentages reflect a disproportionate allocation of the funds to the ISA envelope. At the same time, school boards consistently report to their SEAC and their community and tell parents of exceptional students that they do not have the resources to provide some of the programming and services that they wish to have for their children, even if those are specified in the student's IEP. LDAO and many other parent organizations have suggested to the Ministry that the problem is not a lack of adequate funding for special education, as is suggested by so many school boards, but a lack of appropriate funding allocations. LDAO presented an alternative model for ISA allocation to the Ministry of Education, which was supported by almost all other parent organizations representing exceptional students.

References

Student focused funding documents, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1995 to 2001
Briefs, responses and letters related to the student focused funding model, LDAO, 1995 to 2001
Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001
Response to the ISA comprehensive review, LDAO, 2001
Alternative model for the ISA funding process, brief to the Minister of Education, LDAO, 2000
Special Education Initiatives for 2001-02, Memorandum to school boards from N.J. Hartmann, ADM, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001

Policy K6 – Special Education Funding IV: The ISA Profile for Learning Disabilities* * No longer applicable

LDAO endorses the diagnostic directions set in the revised ISA eligibility profile for students with learning disabilities, as presented by the Ministry of Education for implementation by school boards in August, 2001.

Rationale

While LDAO still has concerns about the ISA process and the application of the ISA eligibility criteria, including the profiles, the revised profile and especially its diagnostic components closely match the new learning disabilities definition developed by LDAO and the accompanying protocol for the assessment, diagnosis and documentation of learning disabilities. As a result, LDAO has indicated to the Ministry of Education its support for this profile, although there are still some concerns about the description of the recommended intensive supports. These concerns relate to the suggestion that the required special education programme should be delivered by or in conjunction with a special education teacher.

References

Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001
Response to the ISA comprehensive review, LDAO, 2001
Revised ISA Profiles, Ministry of Education, 2001
Special Education Initiatives for 2001-02, Memorandum to school boards from N.J. Hartmann, ADM, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001

Policy K7 – IEP Based Special Education Funding

LDAO advocates that the Ministry of Education mandate and hold school boards accountable through their annual reporting requirements and the IEP audit process for allocating their foundation and special education grants such that every exceptional student is guaranteed access to all special education programmes, services and accommodations described in his or her IEP, regardless of the resources that the school board claims to have available.

Rationale

LDAO has long advocated for a direct link between the exceptional student's identified needs and the programs and services provided to that student. The IEP standards document confirms the need for this direct link. However, the IEP standards document also gives school boards an opportunity to claim that they do not have the resources available to deliver the components of the student's IEP. Given that the IEP is based on the student's needs, unless meeting those needs represents undue hardship for the school board, as defined in the Human Rights Code, school boards should not be able to make this claim. Therefore, the IEP standards document needs to be amended and school boards need to be held accountable for special education service delivery, in accordance with the student's human rights and IEP.

References

Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001
Response to the ISA comprehensive review, LDAO, 2001
Revised ISA Profiles, Ministry of Education, 2001
Special Education Initiatives for 2001-02, Memorandum to school boards from N.J. Hartmann, ADM, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001
IEP Standards Document, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2001
Response to the IEP Standards Document, LDAO, 2001

Policy K8 – Funding for Students with Learning Disabilities to Attend Private Schools I* [No longer Applicable](#)

LDAO endorses the general directions related to the provision of tax credits for students who attend private schools, the set out in *Section VIII of the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act (Budget 2001), which received Royal Assent on June 29, 2001

[*Revoked in June 2010](#)

Rationale

Despite the legislative provisions set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act, the special education related Regulations, Policy and Program Memoranda, resource documents, etc., many students with learning disabilities are being denied the special education programming, services and accommodations that they need and to which they are guaranteed a legal right of access. Some families, as a result, have chosen to send their children to private schools that focus on meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities or at least where there is a reduced student to teacher ratio, allowing for the delivery of a more individualized educational program. This option has not been available to many families for whom such a step would represent an untenable financial burden. LDAO has long advocated the introduction of funding for students with learning disabilities to attend a private school, where the local school board does not provide appropriate special education programming.

While the new legislation, providing for a tax credit for families whose children attend private schools, does not provide full funding for students who are disadvantaged and who are in need of private

schooling, it will assist many families in considering a greater choice in special education placement for their children.

References

Response to Bill 4, repeal of the hard to serve provisions of the Education Act, LDAO, 1992
Response to Bill 45, the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act (Budget 2001), LDAO, 2001

Policy K9 – Funding for Students with Learning Disabilities to Attend Private Schools II* * No longer applicable as the Equity in Education Tax Credit was revoked in 2010

LDAO advocates that all “eligible independent schools”, as specified in section VIII of the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act (Budget 2001), where parents will be able to apply the equity in education tax credit towards the fees to be paid and any charter schools that may be established in the future on the basis of parental request, be required, by Regulation, to comply with the legislative expectations set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and the relevant Regulations, including:

- the provisions of special education programmes and services,
- the accommodation of students with disabilities,
- delivering essentially the same basic Ontario curriculum as is required of publicly funded schools,
- satisfying the same accountability measures such as the participation of all students in the EQAO Provincial testing, and
- the hiring of teachers who are members of the Ontario College of Teachers and who are required to participate in the same upgrading, continuing education, testing and re-certification programmes, including access to special education training, as the staffs of the public system.

Rationale

Private schools are established for a number of purposes, including the delivery of alternative programmes, which may be religious in nature, special education programming, etc. The Regulations governing private and independent schools have not included the same requirements as have been and are in place for publicly funded schools, on the grounds that the parents paid the full costs of their children’s education and should have a clear choice about their children’s educational programming. The recent legislation has been introduced to provide greater equity for families who choose such alternative programming and who are paying education taxes as well as private school fees. The tax credits represent public funds, since they are provided through the total income tax pool. As a result, the Government of Ontario should use this opportunity to amend the Regulation related to private schools to assure equity of quality as well as funding.

References

Response to Bill 4, repeal of the hard to serve provisions of the Education Act, LDAO, 1992
Response to Bill 45, the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act (Budget 2001), LDAO, 2001

Policy K10 – English as a Second Language (ESL) Funding

LDAO advocates that funding for ESL programs in Ontario should be supplemented by an allocation from the federal government.

Rationale

At present, funding for ESL programs is made through the Ontario government Learning Opportunities Grant. However, the federal government controls the country's immigration policy, which allows immigrants to settle anywhere in Canada. Many immigrants choose to settle in Ontario. The Federal funding for adult ESL programs should be extended to cover such programs for children and adolescents, so that the tax burden is shared more equitably nation-wide.

Requiring the Ontario government to fund and staff ESL programs from existing resources reduces the funds and staff available for special education programming.

References

Student Focused Funding: technical paper, Ministry of Education, 1998
Funding formulae, Ministry of Education, 1998
Response to the consultation on the funding of education, LDAO, 1997
Letter to Hon Doug Peters, MP, LDAO, 1997

Policy K11 – Funding of Services

LDAO advocates that education, social services, support services, postsecondary education and adult support services for individuals with learning disabilities be funded by the relevant federal and provincial government ministries and agencies as they are for persons with physical and developmental disabilities.

Rationale

These services are essential to the success of persons with learning disabilities in the workplace and in the community. Funding for providing accommodations to individuals with learning disabilities should be provided in the same way as for individuals with any other disability.

References

Report of the Interministerial Working Group on Learning Disabilities, 1992
“For the love of learning”, Report of the Royal Commission on Learning, 1995
Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Learning, LDAO, 1995
Response to Bill 173, an Act Respecting Long Term Care, LDAO, 1974
Response to the Ministry of Health Guidelines for the Provision of School Health Support Services, LDAO, 1995
Response to the consultation on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, LDAO, 1998 and 2001
Promoting Early Intervention materials, LDAO, 2001