

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government, will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of Education's sixth annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

Among our accomplishments last year, the ministry required school boards to incorporate methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As well, the ministry funded and provided training to support ABA in schools. Training opportunities were also provided in partnership with Geneva Centre for Autism for school board teams, principals and school teams.

Within the ministry, relevant ODA resource materials were posted for OPS employees on ClusterNET, an intranet site that allows cross-ministry collaboration and information-sharing of Information & Information Technology solutions. In addition, a section was added to ClusterNET with links to current ODA standards and policies, videos and demonstrations, as well as tools for ODA support and compliance.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario

government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Education to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans09.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Ministry of Education was successful in achieving, and in some cases surpassing, planned commitments for Customer Service for the past year, outlined in its 2007-2008 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report as of August 22, 2008.

As well, in the coming year, the ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to deliver accessible customer service to persons with disabilities by January 1, 2010. This section summarizes these commitments.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Will be completed September 07 – November 08

The ministry will complete an initial review of the ministry's customer service practices, in preparation for the implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Implementation Timeline: 2007-2008

Results Achieved:

To prepare for implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, a regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the ministry will complete a survey of all offices in the fall. Survey results will identify gaps between existing service levels, and those required under the AODA.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

In preparation for the implementation of the Customer Service Standard under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the ministry will continue to address gaps identified in the 2008 initial review of the ministry's customer service practices.

Implementation Timeline: December 2008 – December 2009

Planned Actions:

Continuing the work initiated in the fall of 2008, the ministry will identify and prioritize the actions required to ensure compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – O. Reg 429/07.

The ministry will implement strategies in priority order to ensure compliance by January 2010.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will promote OPS training modules to employees, to ensure delivery of high levels of customer services to customers with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will continue to promote to all staff, the on-line training module *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities – Part A*. The ministry will promote the on-line training module *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities – Part B* when available.

Report on Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

The Ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to identify, remove or prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments as of August 22, 2008.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry through our Corporate Finance and Services Branch will ensure that the new Standards for Barrier Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities released in October 2004 to improve barrier-free accessibility in ministry buildings, are implemented. The ministry will continue to improve accessibility when planning major capital projects, especially converting washrooms to barrier-free washrooms. The ministry will undertake the same diligence with respect to the renewal of rental agreements to ensure that existing ministry properties are accessible.

Results Achieved:

To meet this commitment, the ministry

- began replacing all elevator lobby security doors with glass doors and automatic door openers in the entire Mowat Block,
- started re-designing Mowat Block and all new leased space to open space concept design to reduce the number of enclosed offices,
- continued to convert standard washrooms to barrier-free washrooms in the Provincial Schools; this includes classroom areas and residences,
- requested that all ORC contracts with design firms include a clause stating that all design must meet upcoming AODA requirements, and
- negotiated several upgrades with the landlord for staff with disabilities at 33 Bloor Street East.

Working with the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) as part of the PSB capital plan for its five sites, the ministry has completed the following projects to meet ODA requirements:

- Belleville – complete renovation of Teacher Education Building with all barrier-free features such as strobe lights and audible bells to indicate emergency evacuation;
- London – Converted two standard washrooms in the Roberts School to barrier-free washrooms; and
- Milton – Installed automatic access door at the playground, converted a number of standard washrooms to barrier-free washrooms, repaired existing and installed new ramps at various buildings to improve accessibility and acquired a new accessible van to transport students with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

To ensure that the new *Standards for Barrier Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* are implemented we will:

- continue to replace elevator lobby security doors with glass doors and automatic door openers in the Mowat Block;
- continue to re-design Mowat Block and all new leased space to open space concept design;
- continue to convert standard washrooms to barrier-free washrooms in the Provincial Schools; and
- continue to ensure all ORC contracts with design firms include a clause stating that all design must meet upcoming AODA requirements.

The ministry will continue to identify projects in the Provincial Schools to improve the quality of accessibility to existing buildings:

- Brantford – Conduct feasibility study to re-design 2 – 3 existing buildings to meet ODA and program requirements;
- Milton – Conduct feasibility study to re-design Trillium School to meet ODA and program requirements;
- Ottawa - Continue to improve communications equipment in the Provincial Schools to allow our non-hearing population access to vital information which is otherwise sent through a regular paging system.
- Continue to convert standard washrooms to barrier-free washrooms; and
- In collaboration with ORC, continue to install ramps and automatic doors to buildings.

The CSFB, PSB and ORC will continue to request capital funds until all the outstanding issues have all been addressed.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing from 2008-09

Centre Jules-Léger will continue to work with the Provincial Schools Branch, the French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch and the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) to improve the accessibility and overall environment of the school /residence installations. All new construction will comply with barrier free design standards.

Planned Actions:

Further improve our communications equipment to allow our non-hearing population access to vital information which is otherwise sent through a regular paging system. The Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) will allow Deaf and hard of hearing students or staff to be notified visually of a pending emergency through a network of monitors hooked in strategic areas of the building.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry will continue to support awareness initiatives for emergency preparedness for people with disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The ministries have posted a link on our intranet to Emergency Management Ontario's (EMO) website. EMO has developed a webpage for emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and has also developed an *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs*.

Planned Actions:

The ministries will continue to promote the *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs* developed by Emergency Management Ontario, via the intranet and during Emergency Preparedness Week.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to build on ministry managers' and employees' awareness of employment practices and continue to provide training opportunities to ensure improved accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Specifically, the ministry will

- implement a staff survey to promote awareness of disability issues and to promote the new on-line training module scheduled for release in 2007;
- promote corporate accessibility events/initiatives to staff;
- profile external accessibility initiatives such as World Usability Day – November 8, 2007;
- provide regular updates to senior management on AODA standards development process to ensure full participation and support, and readiness to implement; and
- continue to promote management training utilizing the online training module - *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act—Maximizing the Contributions of Employees with Disabilities*.

Results Achieved:

The ministry completed the following initiatives to ensure improved accessibility for individuals with disabilities -

- On December 3, the Deputy Minister, promoted the 2007 International Day of Disabled Persons via email to all staff,
- The Deputy also suggested that staff review the new online training resource – *May I Help You?* – to learn more about issues that are important to the ministries,
- On May 28 – via email announcement, the ministry encouraged staff to attend the Accessibility Expo, a corporate accessibility event,
- On May 30, the ministry provided advice on how to make information accessible, in the online document - *Tips on how to make information accessible: A guide to alternate formats*,
- Ongoing updates on AODA standards development were provided to the Senior Management Team and divisional management teams, and
- Deferred to 2009 – following the analysis of the survey of office service levels, the ministry will implement a staff survey to promote awareness of accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will

- continue to promote on-line training modules scheduled for release in 2008-09;
- promote corporate accessibility events/initiatives to staff;
- profile external accessibility initiatives such as the UN International Day of the Disabled;
- provide regular updates to senior management on AODA standards development process to ensure full participation and support, and readiness to implement;
- continue to promote management training utilizing the online training module - *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act—Maximizing the Contributions of Employees with Disabilities*; and
- implement a staff survey to promote awareness of disability issues.

Focus Area: Information & Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Lack of awareness of tools and resources on accessibility and the ODA can be a current and future barrier to the development of integrated, accessible I & IT business solutions.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to post on ClusterNET relevant ODA resource materials. (ClusterNET is a cluster-wide intranet that allows cross-ministry collaboration and information-sharing of I & IT knowledge.) Specifically, links to current ODA standards and policies, as well as tools for ODA-compliance will be made available for all staff across the seven ministries of the cluster.

Results Achieved:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries fulfilled its commitment to post relevant ODA resource materials on ClusterNET. This commitment expanded into developing a section of the Resource area that was populated with links to current ODA standards and policies, video and demos, as well as tools for ODA support and compliance. Please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_022782.html.

Planned Actions:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries continues its commitment to posting on ClusterNET relevant ODA resource materials for the cluster.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue to maintain and update links to current AODA standards and policies, as well as tools for ODA-compliance that are now available for all staff across the seven ministries of the cluster.

This commitment includes the expanded section of the Resource area that is populated with links to current AODA standards and policies, video and demos, as well as tools for ODA support and compliance. Please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_022782.html

Focus Area: Information & Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Successful integration into the workplace for persons with disabilities requires a variety of support tools (i.e. software).

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to the maintenance and updating as required, of the current checklist of software and applications, designed to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in day-to-day work activities.

Results Achieved:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries continued its commitment to the maintenance and updating as required, of the current checklist of software and applications, developed in 2004-05, designed to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in day-to-day work activities.

This checklist is now available to all OPS staff on ClusterNET – please see:

http://intra.cscluster.gov.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Accessibility/PUBLIC_LIVE_023162.html

Planned Actions:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue to maintain and update as required, the current checklist of software and applications in use across the cluster.

Focus Area: Information and Communications**Impact:** Service**Commitment:** Ongoing

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that the ministries' intranet and websites meet or exceed accessibility requirements.

Results Achieved:

The Communications Branch continued to ensure that both ministries' intranet and websites are ODA-compliant.

Planned Actions:

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that both ministries' intranet and websites are ODA-compliant.

Focus Area: Information and Communications**Impact:** Service**Commitment:** Ongoing

The Communications Branch will continue to ensure that ministry publications are available in alternate formats on the website.

Results Achieved:

Publications continue to be posted in HTML, PDF and/or plain text formats on the websites.

Planned Actions:

Publications will continue to be posted in HTML, PDF and/or plain text formats on the websites.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Complete

Within the broad context of identifying any barriers/issues and opportunities that could impact people with disabilities, the Ministry of Education will be exploring, and enhancing where appropriate, the accessibility potential of processes related to the delivery of its e-learning policies and programs, including design, procurement, development/modification and implementation.

Implementation Timeline: 2007-2010

Results Achieved:

E-learning Ontario (eLO) continues to comply with the ODA within budget guidelines. School boards determine the exceptionality of students and so far, they have not raised any accessibility issues with eLO offerings.

As an example, the Learning Management System (LMS) is W3C-compliant and course content is ODA-compliant, allowing students with hearing and visual disabilities to participate through scripts and screen readers. The eLO public website is also ODA-compliant.

As well, all courses in French-language curriculum have been developed using a technology permitting use by persons with visual disabilities using a text reader.

Planned Actions:

All e-learning courses in support of the French-language curriculum will continue to be developed using a technology permitting use by persons with visual disabilities using a text reader. Decisions regarding procurement requirements in support of future needs are pending approval.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program

Commitment: Complete

Students with special education needs may face barriers in their level of achievement due to the lack of effective instructional strategies using differentiated instruction and assessment.

The ministry will continue to support, through the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), innovative projects among school boards that will improve instruction and assessment practices for a diverse range of learners for the 2007-08 school year.

Implementation Timeline: 2007-08

Results Achieved:

The CODE projects in Year 2 supported Ontario school boards in making effective use of student achievement data to design instruction for students with special education needs. The projects supported boards in improving student learning, teaching practice and instructional leadership. The project is working toward the development of province-wide professional networks among superintendents with responsibility for special education. The project concludes in 2008, and the sharing of the learnings from this critical initiative will continue within and across boards through the networks and relationships that have been developed.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if their needs are not addressed in the revised curricula.

As revised curricula are released, the Introduction will include an enhanced section on Planning Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, and many specific curriculum expectations in the documents will include examples to address the teaching and learning needs of all students. The ministry will continue to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed in the revised curricula.

Results Achieved:

As part of the Ministry's curriculum review process the following revised curriculum policy documents, which include enhanced sections on Planning Programs for Students with Special Education Needs and curriculum expectations that enable teachers to meet the needs of all students in their classes, were released for implementation in schools beginning September 2007:

- English Grades 9 and 10, English Grades 11 and 12, and ESL/ELD Grades 9-12.

- Science and Technology Grades 1-8 was released in December 2007 for implementation beginning September 2008.

Revised French-language curricula that addresses the needs of students with special education needs was also released:

- Mathématiques, 12e année
- Anglais/English, 9e et 10e année
- Anglais/English, 11e et 12e année
- Français, 9e et 10e année
- Français, 11e et 12e année
- Sciences et technologie, 1^{re} à la 8^e année

Also, the following revised curriculum documents are scheduled for release in September 2008 for implementation in schools beginning September 2009: Science Grades 9 and 10, Science Grades 11 and 12, Technological Education Grades 9 and 10, Technological Education Grades 11 and 12, Computer Studies Grades 10-12, and The Arts Grades 1-8.

Planned Actions:

The Curriculum Review process will continue to develop revised curriculum policy documents that include an enhanced section on Planning Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, and many specific curriculum expectations with appropriate examples to address the teaching and learning needs of all students.

Health and Physical Education Grades 1-8 is scheduled for release in spring 2009 for implementation in schools beginning September 2010. The Grades 9 and 10 and Grades 11 and 12 curriculum documents for Health and Physical Education and Social Sciences and Humanities are scheduled for release in spring 2010 for implementation in schools beginning September 2011.

The curriculum review process for French as a Second Language 1-12, Native Languages 1-12, and Classical Studies & International Languages 9-12 begins September 2008.

Revised French-language curriculum policy documents which will address the needs of students with special education needs will be released:

- *Sciences*, 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années
- *Éducation technologique*, 9^e et 10^e années, 11^e et 12^e années

- *Éducation artistique, 1^{re} à la 8^e année*

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may not reach their full education potential if appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are not developed and/or implemented.

The ministry will continue to take steps to improve program planning by clarifying the connection between a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), the Ontario curriculum and the provincial report card with school boards. The ministry will also assist boards to streamline their administrative processes, so that they may focus their resources on program planning and implementation.

The ministry, under the guidance of the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), is currently exploring the possibility of creating a voluntary electronic IEP template for school boards.

Results Achieved:

In September 2007, following the IEP Collaborative Review during the 2006 – 2007 school year, the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch released a voluntary IEP electronic template and instruction guide accessible by all school boards, based on findings of the review and discussions with stakeholders.

Planned Actions:

The ministry, under the guidance of the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), will continue to implement a voluntary electronic IEP template for school boards.

The ministry will develop Phase II of the IEP template for release in 2008-2009

Data and information gathered through the implementation of the electronic template in 2007 – 2008 will inform the development of Phase II of the electronic template for release in 08-09.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may not benefit from special education programs and services if issues are not addressed in a timely and effective manner. The ministry will establish a formal dispute resolution pilot and an effective practice guide to address issues regarding special education programs and services.

Following recommendations made by the Working Table on Special Education, the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) initiated a project on informal dispute resolution and mediation. One of the deliverables includes a resource guide for parents and educators. Consultation sessions on the resource guide were held with English and French-language education stakeholders in January 2007. Participants included: parents, students, educators, parent advocates and a mediator. Feedback from the sessions will be incorporated into the guide, which is planned for release in June 2007. Professional Development to support the guide is intended to take place in the Fall 2007.

A Provincial advisory committee has been formed with representation from parents, students, educators and dispute resolution specialists to assist in the development of a formal dispute resolution pilot. This pilot is planned for September 2007 in selected school boards.

Results Achieved:

In consultation with stakeholders the branch developed and released a resource guide in the Fall 2007 entitled *Shared Solutions - A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students With Special Education Needs*.

Regional professional development sessions were held to support the release of the guide and provide the sector with an opportunity to share existing effective practices.

A pilot project will continue in the fall of 2008 to learn about a continuum of dispute resolution processes which will inform future decision making.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may not benefit from special education programs and services if issues are not addressed in a timely and effective manner.

The ministry has established a dispute resolution pilot and developed a resource to support students, parents and educators to prevent and resolve disputes over the provision of special education programs and services.

A Provincial Advisory Committee was formed with representation from parents, students, educators and dispute resolution specialists to assist in the development of the dispute resolution pilot. The pilot is planned for September 2008 in selected school boards.

A researcher/evaluator has been hired to evaluate the results of the pilot.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry is launching a pilot project in the fall of 2008 that will involve the use of informal and formal dispute resolution mechanisms in resolving disputes between educators and parents around the delivery of special education programs and services.

The pilot is being evaluated by an external researcher and the results will inform future policy making decisions.

The Provincial Advisory Committee will also review the results of the pilot and will submit a report with recommendations for future policy decision making.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if their learning difficulties are not identified at an early stage.

The ministry will continue to support the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) to make the early screening and intervention tool, known as the Web Based

Teaching Tool (WBTT), available to additional teachers in more school boards. It is anticipated that the expanded use of this tool will result in earlier identification of more students' learning difficulties and greater application of instructional strategies and targeted interventions. A new evaluation of the tool is in progress to assess its effectiveness in improving student achievement.

Results Achieved:

A total of 51 school boards and 25 school authorities have been registered to use the WBTT in the 2007-2008 school year.

During the 2007-2008 school year (September 07 – June 08), there were over 16,300 teacher visits to the WBTT Website and over 32,500 students were screened.

The new evaluation of the tool was completed through a case-group study assessment of the impact of the WBTT effectiveness on improving student achievement. The evaluation showed a strong link between WBTT use by a teacher and the activation of supports for students who are struggling, especially for students in JK and SK as they are twice as likely to get extra resources than students who have not been exposed to WBTT.

Additional Commitment: Ongoing from 2008

An evaluation of the tool was completed and showed its effectiveness in improving student achievement.

Additional features were built in 2008 to support schools in managing student information. A School Administrator Site (SAS) has been developed, along with plans for an export function to enable school principals to view their individual student WBTT information.

In January and February 2008, over 40 school principals participated in a professional development session on the School Administrator Site in order to pilot this new WBTT site.

Planned Actions:

A pilot related to the export function is planned for fall 2008.

The export function will enable school principals to download WBTT student information into the school boards' student management system to generate aggregate student achievement data.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will continue to provide textbooks and learning materials in alternate formats to students who are blind or who have low vision and are in district school boards. A recently created facility enabling special needs advisors in district school boards to order publications online has improved the service provided.

The ministry, through the Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) will continue to examine the feasibility of expanding access to learning materials in digital formats to all print-impaired students in district school boards and school authorities in order to ensure equity, improve service and reduce costs. Following a thorough review, a decision will be made regarding further efforts in future years.

Results Achieved:

The PSB and le Centre Jules –Léger (CJL) continue to provide textbooks and learning materials in print alternate formats for students in provincially funded elementary, secondary and post secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Database and search engine upgrades were completed to the business system used to manage the provision of this service. It improved service to schools, colleges and universities so that materials can be delivered in a more timely manner in the required format to students by enabling special needs advisors in district school boards to order publications online.

A project to store and expand access to alternate materials already created, improve service to students and reduce duplication of effort is underway with English and French language schools and school boards and with post secondary institutions.

PSB worked with the Information and Communications Standards Development Committee to consult on the draft Standard for Accessible Information and Communications.

Planned Actions:

The ministry, through the W. Ross Macdonald School and le Centre Jules-Léger (CJL) of the Provincial Schools Branch will:

- Continue to provide textbooks and learning materials in alternate formats to students who are blind or who have low vision and are in district school boards and to perceptually impaired students in colleges and universities.
- Continue to work with District School Boards (DSBs), the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, provincially funded postsecondary institutions and publishers to expand and improve access to learning materials produced in alternate formats including digital to print-impaired students in provincially funded institutions in order to ensure equity and reduce costs.

Focus Area: Act and Regulation

Impact: Act and Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

The Teaching Policy and Standards Branch will work with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) on their ongoing review of the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, to ensure that the terminology used in the Act and regulation reflects current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to work with OCT to ensure that any revisions to the Act and regulations reflect current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will continue to work with the OCT to ensure that any revisions made as part of their ongoing review of the Act and regulations reflect current and acceptable language related to people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Act and Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

The Legal Services Branch will ensure that Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards reflect the principles of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Results Achieved:

In accordance with this commitment, the Legal Services Branch continues to review existing Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards to ensure that the principles of the ODA are reflected.

Planned Actions:

In accordance with this commitment, the Legal Services Branch will continue to review existing Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Standards to ensure that the principles of the ODA are reflected.

Focus Area: Act and Regulations**Impact:** Act and Regulation**Commitment:** Ongoing

During 2007-08, the Legal Services Branch in the ministry commits to assess any new Acts or Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

Results Achieved:

The Legal Services branch has been reviewing all new Acts and Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the ODA.

Planned Actions:

The Legal Services Branch will continue to review all new Acts and Regulations to ensure that they are compliant with the ODA.

Focus Area: Other**Impact:** Policy and Program**Commitment:** Ongoing

Students with special needs, as well as English Language Learners and boys in literacy acquisition, are groups that consistently underperform on the EQAO provincial assessments.

Providing equity of outcome for Ontario students is one of the nine strategies identified by The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. In working with school districts to improve the achievement of all Ontario students, the LNS will identify initiatives designed specifically to address the performance of students in designated groups. Although improving, more needs to be done for students in special education, English language learners, boys and other members of our diverse community who have a history of underperformance.

Results Achieved:

2007-08 EQAO results:

- The 2007-08 results indicate a closing of the achievement gap in the performance of students with special needs.
- English-language students with special needs have sustained and improved their achievement while reducing the gap in the majority of assessment areas.
- French-language students with special needs have improved their achievement and reduced the gap in Grade 6 reading, writing and math.

Planned Actions:

EQAO assessment results show progress is being made, but there is still more work to be done to help students who are struggling to meet the provincial standard. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is continuing to work in partnership with school boards to raise achievement results overall and close achievement gaps.

In Phase 5, (September 2008 to August 2009) we are consolidating for deeper implementation. We are focused on personalization, instructional precision and collaborative learning through networks.

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has instituted several strategies which will lead to improved achievement by low-achieving students such as: *Ontario Focussed Intervention Partnership (OFIP)*, *OFIP Tutoring* and *Schools on the Move*. Support for the 2008-09 school year will continue, with further details to follow.

Focus Area: Other
Impact: Program
Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry provided innovation funding to the 27 school boards launching the new Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) in 2006-07. One of the deliverables associated with this funding support is the development of contextualized learning activities (CLAs) (teacher resources) to address the need for teaching/learning activities that are to be delivered in the context of the specific SHSM sector (e.g. learning activities in a Grade 11 or 12 English course that have contextualized activities geared to the Construction or Hospitality and Tourism sectors). In developing CLAs, boards are expected to include instructional, environmental and assessment accommodations.

SHSM programs expanded significantly from 27 boards and schools in 2006-7 to 153 programs in 212 schools in 2007-8. As part of the SHSM Implementation Guide, boards and schools are required to consider accommodations and/or modifications for students with special education needs, including appropriate supports and preparation for students participating in experiential learning work placements.

Implementation Timeline: 2006-2008

Results Achieved:

Implementation considerations for students with special education needs are included within the SHSM Implementation guide, and within guidelines for contextualized learning activities that boards develop.

The French-language contextualized learning activities continue to be posted on the Apprentissage électronique electronic community.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program

Commitment: 2008-2010

The ministry is approving and providing funding for an expanded number of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) in 2008-09, the third year since SHSMs were launched in 2006-07. Approved SHSM programs must include all four pathways – apprenticeship, college, university and workplace.

Students with disabilities may be enrolled in SHSMs if the program meets their interests and abilities. As part of the SHSM Implementation Guide, boards and schools are required to consider accommodations and/or modifications for students with special education needs, including appropriate supports and preparation for students participating in experiential learning work placements.

SHSM programs will be available in all boards with a secondary school, but not in all schools. In 2008-09, E.C. Drury Provincial School for the Deaf will be offering an SHSM in Arts & Culture. As part of more on-site visits to SHSMs, the ministry will ask SHSM program about access by students with disabilities.

Implementation Timeline: 2008 and ongoing

Planned Actions:

September 2008 - June 2009 – E.C. Drury Provincial School for the Deaf will be offering an SHSM in Arts & Culture. Reports and information from this SHSM may provide helpful advice to other schools about involving students with disabilities in SHSM programs.

EDU will post a discussion thread in the SHSM e-community site for boards to share ideas and successful practices regarding serving students with special education needs in SHSMs.

In the 2008-2009 school year, as part of ministry visits to SHSM sites to monitor the quality of programs, ministry staff will discuss participation by students with disabilities.

The ministry will continue to review French-language contextualized learning activities (CLAs) that are submitted by French-language school boards as part of their SHSM project funding in 2008-09. These CLAs will be posted in the *Communauté d'apprentissage électronique de la majeure* - the Apprentissage électronique electronic community. These teacher resources will also be posted in the *Banque de ressources éducationnelles de l'Ontario en 2008-09*.

French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) staff will determine a process by which these activities could be adapted for use by staff with students at the Centre Jules-Léger Provincial school (ie. transcribed in Braille). This will facilitate their participation in the Specialist High Skills Major program in 2009-10. FLEPPB will work in collaboration with the Centre Jules-Léger and Destination Réussite (volet 1) to plan the launch of an SHSM for the 2009-10 school year.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

In 2007-08, 4300 senior secondary school students in 67 boards were involved in dual credit programs in partnership with 24 colleges – a key component of the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy. Dual credit programs are aimed at Grade 11 and 12 students and provide new and varied learning opportunities, that is, courses that interest students who are disengaged or who may be at risk of not graduating. The target group includes students with special education needs.

Results Achieved:

Results achieved: data re: number of students participating in dual credit programs with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and number of students whose learning needs have been identified through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) will be available September 2008.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program, Policy and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers accessing education.

The ministry supports the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and will continue to provide the minister with advice on special education matters.

Led by the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB), Ministry staff will continue to support MACSE and its sub-committees to respond to ministry proposals and offer advice on:

- Accountability,
- Student Learning, and
- System Capacity.

Results Achieved:

With focused input and effort from MACSE's System Capacity Standing Committee, the Ministry has clarified messaging in the Special Education Funding Guidelines for 2008-09 specifically as they relate to the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) and the Special Incidence Portion (SIP).

With support from MACSE's resolution for an Education for All companion resource guide, EDU is currently developing an Education for All K – 12 resource document. MACSE input has been sought for development of the document.

Further, EDU received MACSE's "Service Coordination Logic Model" as a means to promote the implementation of coordinated services delivery.

Planned Actions:

Council's planned activities will be to continue to examine and respond to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education and other ministries that have potential impact(s) on students with special education needs, participate on/with various Ministry work groups and other stakeholder advisory bodies and document successful practices and challenges that are evident in the special education community.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in Student Success/Learning to 18 initiatives

All Student Success/Learning to 18 implementation and training initiatives will continue to be designed and planned to support the diversity of all students in Ontario schools, including those with special education needs.

Results Achieved:

The Learning to 18 Working Table continues to provide advice on implementation and program development.

A Special Education Policy and Programs Branch representative also attended the Learning to 18 Working Table.

Representatives from the Centre Jules-Léger (CJL), the French-language Provincial school attended provincial training sessions (i.e., student engagement in May 2008). Representatives from CJL will continue to be included in training sessions in 2008-09.

Planned Actions:

The Learning to 18 Working Table will continue to provide advice during 2008-2009.

Provincial training sessions in 2008-09 will include representatives from CJL.

Focus Area: Other
Impact: Policy
Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs may face barriers if they are not taken into account in the revision/updating of provincial policies governing secondary school programs and diploma requirements.

Work is underway to revise/update the provincial policies governing secondary school programs and diploma requirements, in keeping with the government's announced policy commitments for Student Success/Learning to 18 Phase 3. Similar to the current policy provisions (under "Ontario Secondary Schools"), the revised/updated policies will apply to all students in secondary schools, including those with special education needs. The revision process includes an inter-branch steering committee overseeing the work, with representation on the committee by the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch.

Results Achieved:

The Inter-branch steering committee has provided significant insight into the revision of the policy document throughout the 2007 – 2008 school year.

A separate section on “Supporting Students with Special Education Needs” has been created, with input from the Special Education (Spec Ed) representatives. This section has been edited, and revised again by the Spec Ed reps on the committee.

The Spec Ed reps participated in ongoing meetings with stakeholder groups around the revisions to Ontario Secondary School, Program and Diploma Requirements, Grades 9 – 12.

The Spec Ed reps also read each others’ relevant section of the revised policy document to ensure that the needs of these students are appropriately represented.

A new section on alternative, or ‘non-credit courses’ has been added to the document.

Once created, the Provincial Skills Certificate (see next commitment) will also be included.

Planned Actions:

Revision of the secondary policy documents has been expanded to be released potentially as a K-12 policy document.

There is a dedicated section on “Supporting Students with Special Education Needs” across all grades.

Each section of the document includes, where relevant, the appropriate instructions for accommodating students with special education needs in every aspect of programming (e.g., literacy test, assessment & evaluation, ways to earn credits).

The inter-branch steering committee on the revision of Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12 continues to meet on an ongoing basis. The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch representatives on the inter-branch steering committee continue to sit on the committee for the revision of the policy document. They attend various meetings with stakeholder groups on the revision of Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12.

As documents such as “Education for All” and other Spec Ed policy documents are revised, these revisions will be incorporated into the revised policy document.

The Special Education representatives also attend the regular meetings of the Learning to 18 Working Table where proposed policy revisions for Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12 as well as other issues pertaining to Student Success/Learning to 18 are discussed.

The ministry, through the French-language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB), will continue to work in collaboration with Student Success/Learning to 18 in the revision/update of the provincial policies governing French-language secondary school programs and diploma requirements, in keeping with the government's announced policy commitments for Student Success/Learning to 18 Phase 3. This collaboration will develop materials to support the Provincial Skills Certificate.

Focus Area: Other
Impact: Policy
Commitment: Ongoing

Some students with special education needs, who are not working toward, or unlikely to achieve the requirements for the secondary school diploma, may not receive positive recognition for their achievements.

The ministry is committed to creating a new Provincial Skills Certificate in order to give positive recognition for achievements to the small number of students not working toward, or unlikely to achieve the requirements for the secondary school diploma.

Under the direction of the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch (SSL18SPB), this design and development work will be undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders in the special education community, and with full consideration given to respecting and meeting the needs of students with special education needs, consistent with provincial policies governing special education and the provisions of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Implementation Timeline: 2007-08

Results Achieved:

March 2008 – present: Conduct the Curriculum Essential Skills Linkages (Action Research) Project to design and develop a methodology for teachers to simultaneously assess and evaluate students' demonstration of curriculum expectations and Essential Skills. This will allow teachers to gather evidence of demonstration of Essential Skills as part of regular classroom work for the purposes of preparing a Provincial Skills Certificate.

Results of action research:

- 1) a draft version of a teacher guide has been prepared that illustrates how teachers can identify Essential Skills and skill levels in classroom activity sets which are also linked to curriculum expectations. The guide also illustrates how skills building activities that may or may not be linked to curriculum connect with the Essential Skills framework, allowing teachers to capture progress in Essential Skills development;

2) a draft inventory has been prepared of hundreds of ready to use classroom activity sets with linkages to Essential Skills and skill levels and English, Math, français and mathématiques courses, grade 9-12 and all course types.

Guide and inventory are currently being reviewed and next steps will be determined in fall 2008.

Teacher resources that meet the needs of French-language students with special needs are being developed by teachers in order to support the Provincial Skills Certificate.

Planned Actions:

Resources related to a Provincial Skills Certificate are currently being reviewed and decisions regarding next steps will be determined in fall 2008, including possibility of a Provincial Skills Certificate pilot in 2009-2010.

The French-language Education Policy and Programs Branch (FLEPPB) will continue to work in collaboration with Student Success/Learning to 18 Branch in the creation of the new Provincial Skills Certificate. FLEPPB will also pursue the development of resources that identifies the Essential Skills and work habits in teacher classroom resources. This collaboration will develop materials to support the Provincial Skills Certificate.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program, Policy and Service

Current Commitment: Ongoing

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may face barriers in the classroom if they do not receive effective support from school board staff.

Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 140, *Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)* was released May 17, 2007. School boards have been directed through this PPM to incorporate ABA methods into the special education programs of students with ASD, where appropriate.

The Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) are supporting Collaborative Service Delivery Models for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in seven sites involving eight school boards and relevant community agencies in 2007-08.

Implementation Timeline: 2007 - 2009

Results Achieved:

School boards began implementation of PPM 140 in the 2007-08 school year. The ministry funded and provided training to support implementation, beginning in May 2007 and continued throughout 2007-08. Training opportunities were provided in partnership with Geneva Centre for Autism for school board teams, principals, and school teams.

In 2006, the government invested \$5 million through Geneva Centre for Autism to provide training for Teachers' Assistants who work or may work with students with ASD. The project was expected to be completed in two years (2006-2007, 2007-2008). To date, 4,800 Teachers' Assistants have been trained. In May 2008, Geneva Centre for Autism announced that the current funding will allow training to be extended to at least June 2009. The training includes components for sustainability that will go beyond the planned two years of the project, such as on-line resources for TAs, teachers and administrators.

Collaborative Service Delivery Models are at the end of the first of their two years.

Future Commitment:

EDU and MCYS are continuing to support Collaborative Service Delivery Models (CSDM) for students with ASD in 2008-09. Phase 1 involves seven sites in eight district school boards (two coterminous). There are six English-language sites and one Francophone. Each model has established a focus: transition to school, transition to a new division in a different building, transition from the elementary to the secondary panel, transition from grade to grade / semester to semester, engagement of parents in diverse communities, creation of data collection and behavioural intervention plans, building and enhancing individual support teams and integration of high-functioning students with ASD into regular classrooms.

An expansion of CSDM is in the planning stages for 2008-09. The focus for the additional models of Phase 2 will be transition of school-aged children with ASD from IBI therapy to ABA instructional methods in school. Phase 2 is in keeping with PPM 140 and would begin implementation of the platform commitment to prepare schools to deliver IBI therapy on-site for the first time.

Planned Actions:

A Phase 1 Provincial Advisory Team (PAT) was established to advise EDU/MCYS on how to maximize the dissemination of good practice with the provincial sites and school

boards across the province to support educational outcomes for students with ASD. To date, PAT meetings are scheduled for January 28 and March 25, 2009.

Through an RFP process a Research Team has been chosen and is working with the boards to identify the research design that meets the needs of each model of collaborative service for Phase 1. A draft preliminary report is expected to be submitted by the Researcher by August 31, 2008 and a final report will be submitted by the Researcher Spring 2009.

Regular meetings are held between members of the PAT and the Research Team to discuss the team's progress and outcomes of the Phase 1 models.

Phase 2 Planned Actions are still TBD.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Program and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Students with special education needs face barriers if they do not receive timely assessments and subsequent effective programs and services.

The ministry will continue to support the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) to work with school boards to reduce wait times for students who require assessments and to enhance the capacity of teachers to provide appropriate special education programs and services. Monitoring teams from the OPA will be meeting face-to-face with all school boards. In cooperation with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB), Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) will be hosting a Provincial Symposium in 2008 that will address Assessment and Student Evaluation. The completion of the OPA Assessment Project is scheduled for Fall 2008.

Implementation Timeline: ongoing to October 2008

Results Achieved:

All key result areas of the OPA project will be released to the ministry and the school boards on October 15, 2008.

A Promising Practices Guide of the 75 projects will be released on October 15, 2008 at the Provincial Symposium.

A report to the ministry with recommendations from participating school boards will be submitted by October 31, 2008.

Focus Area: Other
Impact: Program
Commitment: Complete

Students with special education needs or disabilities may not benefit from the evaluation of the 2006-07 Learning to 18 projects if they are not adequately factored in through the evaluation process.

In evaluating the Student Success / Learning to 18 strategy, the evaluators looked for evidence of the implementation of the strategy's initiatives with respect to all students. Secondary school staff including Special education teachers provided input on the SS L18 strategy and its implementation. Students with special education needs were invited to participate in an online survey, and teachers and principals confirmed that there was some participation. They also took part in focus groups.

Implementation Timeline: 2007-2008

Results Achieved:

Final Report submitted May 2008.

The report is being reviewed by ministry staff with respect to meeting the needs of French-language students with disabilities or special education needs.

Focus Area: Other
Impact: Policy, Service
Commitment: 2008-09

Language is certainly the key to universal access. There is currently no curriculum defining the requirements of the Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and therefore no set standards for the efficient learning of the language. The ministry, in providing what is to become a curriculum for the learning of the signed language, is promoting a universal access to information by the Deaf or hard-of-hearing student.

Planned Actions:

Centre Jules-Léger will complete its K-8 document on curriculum content in Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Information technology goods and services (hardware/software) may pose barriers if there are no processes to check for ODA-compliance.

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to the OPS procurement guidelines to ensure that accessibility has been considered in the procurement of goods and services.

Results Achieved:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries continued its commitment to OPS procurement guidelines to ensure that accessibility has been considered in the procurement of goods and services.

The *ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist* is used by the Project Management Office (PMO) to ensure ODA-compliance across developing business solutions.

Planned Actions:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will continue its commitment to update and apply the *ODA Procurement Requirements Checklist* to ensure ODA-compliance across developing business solutions in the Learning Ministries.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: New

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will investigate the use of Web 2.0 technologies and other social networking tools in relation to their possible support of accessibility for OPS users in the workplace environment.

Implementation Timeline: Ongoing from 2008-09

Planned Actions:

The Technology and Business Solutions Branch of the Learning Ministries will explore these new tools to research and measure how they may enhance I & IT accessibility in the OPS workplace for all employees, including those with special needs.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, led by the Corporate Finance and Services Branch, will continue to adhere to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services.

Results Achieved:

All procurement projects in the Ministries have adhered to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services.

Planned Actions:

The ministries will continue to adhere to the guidelines for procurement of accessible goods and services, will use applicable checklist and include the appropriate wording in all solicitation documents.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-325-2929 or 1-800-387-5514

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1-800 number: 1-800-263-2891

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Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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