

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 325-2600
Facsimile (416) 327-9063

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 325-2600
Télécopieur (416) 327-9063



Memorandum To: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers and Supervisory Officers
of School Authorities
Director of Provincial Schools
Ginette Plourde, Director
French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch

From: Philip Steenkamp
Acting Deputy Minister

Date: July 4, 2007

Re: **New ASL/LSQ Regulation**

I am writing to inform you of an amendment to Regulation 298 of the *Education Act*, regarding the use of American Sign Language (ASL) and Langues des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) as languages of instruction in school boards, school authorities, and Provincial Schools. I am attaching a copy of the regulation for your information.

As you may know, the *Education Act* was amended to permit ASL/LSQ to be used as languages of instruction in accordance with regulations. To date, such regulations had not been enacted. Some members of the Deaf community have raised concerns about the clarity of school boards' authority to provide instruction in ASL/LSQ. Enacting this regulation removes any perceived barrier to school boards providing instruction in ASL/LSQ in any subject or course.

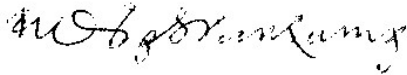
Ontario Regulation 258/07 amends Regulation 298 by adding a provision, section 32, related to Sign Language. It permits a teacher employed in a provincial school or in a publicly funded elementary or secondary school to use ASL/LSQ as languages of instruction in the classroom and in communications with regard to discipline and management of the school, where it is practical to do so and having regard to the pupil's understanding of ASL or LSQ.

The Ministry of Education supports the ongoing participation of parents in decisions about how their children will be educated, including whether or not a child will use ASL/LSQ or another method of communication. The ministry acknowledges the challenges that school boards may face in offering ASL/LSQ as languages of instruction and that labour market realities may impose challenges in hiring/retaining qualified staff. The intent of the regulation is to encourage school boards to make all reasonable efforts to offer ASL/LSQ as languages of instruction.

The Ministry is currently working on a number of initiatives that, over time, will increase the opportunity for school boards to hire qualified staff. These initiatives include:

- The development of a sign language curriculum;
- Partnering with post-secondary institutions to increase the number of institutions that offer ASL/LSQ for Teachers of the Deaf and interpreters;
- Offering an employee support program to assist staff who work in the Provincial Schools to improve their ASL and English communication skills; and
- Working with the Ontario College of Teachers to offer a new qualification program with a minimum level of ASL/LSQ proficiency for teachers of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

The ministry appreciates the work done to date by school boards to meet the educational needs of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The ministry continues to take steps to improve student achievement, to close the gap among learners and to build confidence in the publicly funded education system. Building capacity and providing a regulatory environment in which to achieve these goals remains a priority for the government. It is expected that this new regulation will provide more opportunities for access to publicly funded education for students who are Deaf.



Philip Steenkamp
Deputy Minister

Attachment

ONTARIO REGULATION 258/07

made under the

EDUCATION ACT

Made: May 15, 2007

Approved: June 6, 2007

Filed: June 11, 2007

Published on e-Laws: June 12, 2007

Printed in *The Ontario Gazette*: June 30, 2007

Amending Reg. 298 of R.R.O. 1990

(Operation of Schools — General)

Note: Regulation 298 has previously been amended. Those amendments are listed in the Table of Regulations – Legislative History Overview which can be found at <http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/>.

1. Regulation 298 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 is amended by adding the following section:

SIGN LANGUAGE

32. Where it is practical to do so and if the pupil understands American Sign Language or Quebec Sign Language, as the case may be, a teacher or temporary teacher may use American Sign Language or Quebec Sign Language,

- (a) in the classroom; and
- (b) as a language of instruction and in communications in regard to discipline and management of the school.

Made by:
KATHLEEN O'DAY WYNNE
Minister of Education

Date made: May 15, 2007