

Ministry of Education

Special Education Policy
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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Julie Williams, A/Director
Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

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Regional Office Manager
X Regional Office

DATE: May 5, 2010

SUBJECT: **School Board Professionals with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Expertise Funded through the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with more information on the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA). As announced on March 26th, 2010 in the Education Funding 2010-11 memorandum (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1011/2010_B5.pdf), all school boards will be receiving funding under the BEA to build capacity by hiring additional board level professionals with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) expertise. School board personnel with ABA expertise will provide and coordinate training on ABA instructional methods and resources at the board and school level to increase capacity to use ABA methods within the publicly funded school system. This will support deeper implementation of Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 140, *Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)*.

School board allocations are calculated using a base plus enrolment model. This funding formula allows all school boards to hire at least one ABA expertise professional. School boards with a larger student enrolment will be able to recruit more than one Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to perform these functions.

The ABA expertise professionals will provide support to principals, teachers and other school board staff as required, including coaching on ABA-based teaching strategies; coordinating ABA training and resources; facilitating collaboration between community partners and schools; providing ongoing learning for all levels of school board staff; representing the school board with community partners; acting as a liaison, in consultation with the school board, to board staff, parents, community providers and the ministry. ABA expertise professionals work to strengthen and facilitate collaborative working relationships among schools, parents, and community partners. The ABA training and capacity building activities may be broad and cover all areas of

ABA applicable to all students or be more specific and focus on students with ASD and other groups of students who may benefit from ABA.

This position plays an important role in increasing capacity within the publicly funded school system to use ABA instructional methods within their board. ABA expertise professionals will also play an important role in implementation of the *Connections for Students* model for students with ASD. As children transitioning to school from the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) need 12 months of support, it is recommended that the ABA expertise professionals should be recruited on a 12 months basis.

The *Connections for Students* model is centred on multi-disciplinary, student-specific, school-based transition teams that are established approximately six months before a child prepares to transition from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) services provided through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) funded AIP to ABA instructional methods in school.

As announced in the joint Deputy Minister of Education and Deputy Minister of Children and Youth Services memorandum (http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/march2010/ASD_studentsModel.pdf), beginning March 2010, *Connections for Students* transition teams will be made available in all 72 publicly funded school boards for children who are ready to leave IBI services provided by the AIP and are starting or continuing in the publicly funded school system.

It is recommended that the ABA expertise comprise formal education and training, and practical experience that includes but is not limited to the following competencies:

- completion of a postsecondary degree or diploma;
- postgraduate studies or equivalent field experience in behavioural science (e.g., in autism and behavioural science, psychology);
- experience providing and/or facilitating adult learning and training;
- experience working with children and youth who have special education needs;
- training and experience in implementing ABA principles;
- knowledge of the elementary and secondary education system in Ontario;
- familiarity with special education issues, particularly those relevant for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders; and
- excellent organizational and coordinating skills.

ABA expertise professionals will play a critical role in supporting school teams, families, students with ASD and all students. We would like to thank you for your continued assistance in supporting this role.

Please contact your local Ministry of Education regional office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Julie Williams

Regional Manager