

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE
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IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Progress in Achievement for Students with Special Education Needs

WHAT'S NEW

- Students with special education needs (excluding gifted) have shown improvement in their academic achievement, as demonstrated by Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test results for grades 3 & 6 (reading, writing and mathematics) for the period from 2002-03 to 2013-14.
- Grade 3 EQAO results for students with special education needs (excluding gifted) from 2002-03 to 2013-14 have demonstrated an increase of 24% in reading, 43% in writing, and 6% in mathematics.
- Grade 6 EQAO results for students with special education needs (excluding gifted) from 2002-03 to 2013-14 have demonstrated an: increase of 31% in reading, 34% in writing, and 1% in mathematics.
- In both Grade 3 and Grade 6, the improvement in the performance of students with special education needs (excluding gifted) from 2002-03 to 2013-14 exceeded that of “All Students” population in reading and writing.
- Grade 9 EQAO results for students with special education needs (excluding gifted) from 2002-03 to 2013-14 have demonstrated an increase of 24% in academic mathematics and 24% in applied mathematics.
- Since 2002, the percentage of fully participating first-time eligible students with special education needs (excluding gifted) who completed the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) successfully has increased by 14 percentage points. The success rate has remained the same at 51% in 2013 and 2014.

The Development of a Provincial Alternative Curriculum

WHAT'S NEW

- In summer 2015, a writing team consisting of Education Officers from SEPPB, CAPB and FLEPPB drafted the overall and specific expectations for each competency.

KEY FACTS

- A provincial alternative curriculum for students who do not access the provincial curriculum supports Ontario's commitment to the success and well-being of every student.
- Special Education Policy and Programs Branch (SEPPB) completed regional consultations with school boards, parent and provincial organizations between fall 2013 and spring 2014.
- In summer 2014, the Front Matter of the provincial alternative curriculum was drafted by a writing team, and SEPPB has finalized the draft Front Matter and gathered feedback from key ministry branches.

- Currently, district school boards (DSBs) provide various forms of alternative programming. A dedicated provincial alternative curriculum would provide consistency and uniformity of programming and assessment for all students.
- Based on 2013-14 data from the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 334,312 students (16.6%) of the total provincial student population, from grades 1-12 were receiving special education programs and/or services.
 - Of the 334,312 students, 194,697 (58%) were in elementary schools, and 139,615 (42%) were in secondary schools.
 - Of these students receiving special education programs and/or services, approximately 1% were identified as those who did not access the provincial curriculum and/or partially accessed the provincial curriculum.

NEXT STEPS

- Gather feedback from selected stakeholder groups on draft Front Matter, overall and specific expectations.

Supports for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

KEY FACTS

- Since 2008, the ministry has been funding the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) and VOICE for Hearing Impaired to enhance the capacity of the education sector in teaching students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- The Barrier Free Education Initiatives for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, led by CHS, is intended to assist school boards in identifying access and accommodation needs of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing who use American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ), and students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing who use oral language as a means of communication and use assistive devices, hearing aids and FM systems.
- CHS has developed and will be posting Webinars/Webcasts on: Technology and Resources in the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students; on Communication Accessibility and Anti-Audism and anti-Ableism; and on Language Foundations for Classroom Teachers. These resources will be posted on the CHS website.
- VOICE for Hearing Impaired led the VOICE Ontario School Board Training and Mentorship Program to increase the capacity of qualified professionals and broaden the understanding of decision-makers in Ontario's district school boards to meet the needs of students who are oral Deaf and Hard of Hearing who use oral language as a method of communication and use assistive devices such as cochlear implants, hearing aids, FM systems and other technology.
- VOICE continues to enhance classroom teachers' knowledge of effective strategies and interventions for students with cochlear implants through workshops, and print resources such as guides and tip sheets. These resources can be accessed on the VOICE for Hearing Impaired website.

- VOICE and CHS have collaborated in the development of a parents' guide on mental health and addictions needs of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The guide can be accessed through both the [CHS](#) and [VOICE](#) websites.

FUNDING

- The ministry will continue to fund CHS and VOICE for Hearing Impaired for additional deliverables to enhance educators' capacity in teaching students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Draft Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (K-12), Draft Guidelines for Programs and Services for Students Who Are Blind or have Low Vision (K-12)

KEY FACTS

- The Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students who are Blind or have Low Vision are resources intended for district school boards to use when providing special education programs and services for students with these exceptionalities.

NEXT STEPS

- SEPPB intends to revisit the guidelines as part of a broader guideline development process and consult with relevant stakeholders prior to their release.
- Electronic release of the guidelines is to be determined.
- SEPPB will work with leadership networks and other stakeholders during the rollout of the guidelines.

Learning for All, A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Learning for All, K-12) (2013) and Regional Projects

WHAT'S NEW

- ***Learning for All, K-12 (2013)*** is available electronically on the [ministry website](#) along with 2013-14 Learning for All K-12 regional project reports.
- In 2015-16 the ministry will continue to provide funds to all 72 district school boards to support the use of this resource guide and related professional learning that integrate the following areas of focus:
 - “knowing your student” and “students knowing themselves as learners” and the use of an integrated process of assessment and instruction through collaborative inquiry
 - deep understanding of student growth and learning and inclusive practice

- critical thinking and evidence-based decision making in responsive, personalized and precise teaching
 - collaboration and shared professional learning in a tiered approach to support student learning
- The ministry will continue to use the [Learning for All K-12 EduGAINS](#) website to facilitate sharing of resources and to support the use of the document.
- All 72 school board teams will be invited to attend a provincial Learning for All K-12 Professional Learning Day.

KEY FACTS

- SEPPB has led the development and implementation of the resource guide *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)*. The document is available on the [Ministry of Education website](#).
- *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* builds on the guiding principles outlined in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6 (2005)*.
- *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* describes an integrated framework for assessment and instruction that supports the learning of all students.
- This resource guide is designed to share information with educators about evidence-based and research-informed educational approaches that have proven to be effective in supporting the learning of all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. These approaches include Assessment for Learning, Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and the Tiered Approach.
- The resource guide also presents sample planning tools including class and student profiles.
- Since 2009, district school boards, under the regional leadership of 18 school boards across the province, have sustained knowledge mobilization, built educator capacity, and shared their learning in providing personalized and precise teaching and learning. District school boards have used this resource as an integrating framework to identify, prioritize and address system needs centered on student needs.

FUNDING

- From 2009-14 the ministry provided funding to all district school boards to encourage their participation in regional professional learning activities. Additional funds are provided to 18 lead school boards to coordinate regional Professional Learning Communities and develop sharable resources to support the use of the document in elementary and secondary schools. In 2014-15 approximately \$1.5M has been distributed to school boards. All school boards receive \$17,000 each with adjustments based on their enrolment to continue participation and contribution to their regional Professional Learning. In addition, 18 lead school boards received \$5,000 to support their leadership roles and responsibilities in regional collaboration.

NEXT STEPS

- The ministry will continue to support all district school boards in their use of the resource document and facilitate sharing of resources developed by school boards provincially.
- The ministry will continue to collaborate with other branches and divisions to build alignment and scale the use of *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* in depth and spread (e.g., working with Early Learning Division, Curriculum Assessment Policy Branch, Literacy Numeracy Secretariat to develop Pedagogical Leadership K – 3 training sessions and web conferences across the province).
- In 2015-16 the ministry will continue to use the same funding formula to support the use of *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* and professional learning in all 72 school boards.

Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities

KEY FACTS

- In August 2014, the ministry issued a revised [Policy/Program Memorandum 8 \(PPM\) Identification and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities](#). Implementation of the new policy requirements started in January 2015. The PPM introduces a new definition of LDs and describes an approach to program planning for students with LDs that promotes the principles and approaches described in [Learning for All, K – 12 \(2013\)](#). Revised PPM 8 is intended to promote consistency across the province in the identification and program planning for students with LDs.
- The ministry supported the implementation of PPM 8 by delivering English and French information sessions through Adobe Connect intended for Supervisory Officers and Coordinators of Special Education from district school boards, school authorities, Demonstration Schools as well as representatives from Provincial Schools Branch and Field Services Branch; conducting presentations on revised PPM 8 at Regional Special Education Councils, Council for Exceptional Children Conference 2014 Annual Conference, Learning for All K-12 professional learning networks, etc.
- In 2013-14, district school boards reported that 41.4% (75,544) of exceptional students identified by an IPRC had a learning disability. This is the largest exceptionality group of the twelve exceptionalities.
- The ministry's PPM 8 on Learning Disabilities (LDs) was issued in 1982 and had not been substantially revised since then. PPM 8 was revised to remove the deficit-based language and reflect the most current research in LDs and effective practices in school boards.
- The Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG) was established in September 2011 to provide advice on the review of PPM 8 and the development of guidelines. The working group included stakeholders, educators, parents and academics with expertise in LDs.
- The LDWG has also contributed to developing the Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students with LDs. The ministry is

currently reviewing the guidelines to align them with the guidelines for other exceptionalities.

FUNDING

- The ministry provided funding to the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) to develop summaries of evidence-based and evidence-informed research, effective practice-informed teaching tools, webinars, videos, podcasts and other online resources as well as conduct Summer Educators' Institutes to further enhance the understanding of evidence-based and research informed assessment and instructional strategies in the field of LDs (2014, 2015 and 2016).
- LDAO 2nd Annual Educators' Institute took place on August 25 & 26, 2015. It provided attendees with practical information on effective assessment and instructional strategies, new perspectives, and knowledge in the field of learning disabilities (based on current research), and an opportunity to network with other professionals in the field of LDs.

NEXT STEPS

- Ministry and board developed resources to support the implementation of revised PPM 8 will continue to be posted on EduGains (English) and Édusource (French). It is the ministry's intent to continue posting relevant resources on these websites to support boards' implementation of revised PPM 8.
- SEPPB will continue working on the LDs Guidelines and align them with other Guidelines being prepared.
- SEPPB facilitated establishing of a Special Education Assessment Working Group (SEAWG) that includes members of the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA). Phase One of the SEAWG's work focused on providing guidance and resources to support school psychologists and other relevant professionals to promote consistent understanding and application of the new definition of LDs in PPM 8. OPA will communicate SEAWG's recommendations regarding PPM 8 implementation to its members through multiple venues. SEPPB will support SEAWG with disseminating its guidance and resources on the application of the new definition of LDs in PPM 8.
- LDAO is funded by the ministry to develop a range of online educator resources and conduct Summer Educators' Institute in 2016 to further enhance the understanding of evidence-based and research informed assessment and instructional strategies in the field of LDs. LDAO, in particular, will develop a few learning modules relating to learning and teaching students with LDs. Modules may include videos, webinars, lesson plans, handouts, blogs, and supporting research summaries.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Transition Planning

WHAT'S NEW

- On August 31, 2015, the electronic IEP provincial template was discontinued in response to the declining usage as district school boards continue to develop their own IEP templates that adhere to the ministry IEP Standards (2000).
- The ministry continues to post resources on EduGAINS website (English) and ÉduSource website (French) under the Special Education domain. Resources include, IEP samples including transition plans and board developed materials to support educators with IEPs including transition planning.

KEY FACTS

- IEPs are an important tool in driving student achievement and well-being for students with special education needs.
- The ministry released the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Provincial Trends Report 2012: Student Achievement and Narrowing Gaps based on the results submitted by district school boards, school authorities and Provincial and Demonstration Schools. The report confirms the commitment of district school boards to the continuous improvement of IEPs. In particular the report highlights that district school boards reported that they are meeting all of the standards for IEPs at the satisfactory and/or proficient level.
- Since 2012, the ministry provided district school boards with funds to support the continuous improvement of IEPs including transition plans.

NEXT STEPS

- Continuous improvement of IEP/Transition planning will continue to be one of the areas of focus through Learning for All K-12 EPO funding in 2015-16.

Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12

KEY FACTS

- SEPPB is publishing a comprehensive and integrated special education guide that updates and consolidates information currently found in: *Standards for School Board's Special Education Plans (2000)*; *IEP Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation (2000)*; *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)*; *Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)*; and *Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)*.
- Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 will set out the policies and requirements of the Ministry of Education that govern special education programs and services in publicly funded elementary and secondary schools in Ontario. The sector has expressed the need for clarification of special education policies and requirements through the consolidation of information found in documents developed over time by the ministry.

- The document is intended for school and school board administrators but will be of interest to the broader educational community.
- The guide is targeted for electronic release in 2016.

Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement (BIPSA)

WHAT'S NEW

- Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement (BIPSA) continues to grow and evolve; Special Education Regional Office Leads continue to be on the Ministry Regional BIPSA Teams.
- Over 2015-16 the Ministry Regional BIPSA Teams will visit every school board twice:
 - 1) Visit One to be completed between November and January with a focus on implementation
 - 2) Visit Two to be held between March and June with a focus on monitoring.

KEY FACTS

- Board improvement planning processes establish a greater focus on and accountability for student achievement as school boards are required to identify targeted goals and strategies based on needs assessment that focus on improving the achievement of all students, including those with special education needs.
- SEPPB continues to better understand the achievement of students with special education needs by examining how boards consider, monitor and work to improve their achievement.
- SEPPB continues to work closely with the Student Achievement Division (BIPSA ministry lead) to ensure that BIPSA processes include students with special education needs.

NEXT STEPS

- SEPPB will continue to have an active role on the ministry's BIPSA Steering Committee to help inform strategic directions in support of students with special education needs.

Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

KEY FACTS

- Beginning in 2014-15, the ministry will be providing \$8.76M through the GSN to support the salary and benefit costs of a Mental Health Leader position in each district school board, including \$120K for the cost of one Mental Health Leader to be shared by the four isolate and remote school authorities.
- The ministry has translated into French the *ABCs of Mental Health* from the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre and it will be posted online in mid-2015.
- The Draft K-12 Mental Health and Addictions Educator Resource Guide, *Supporting Minds, An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being*, was released in August of 2013. The guide promotes student mental health and well-being, and provides supports for educators to

recognize problems early and support students in the classroom. Feedback is being gathered for the next version of the document.

- The ministry is continuing to support School Mental Health ASSIST, an implementation support team designed to help all school boards and school authorities in their efforts to promote student mental health and well-being by building system and school capacity. In the first three years of this initiative, the supports have focused on helping district school boards sequence their *activities to: (1) create the organizational conditions for effective school mental health; (2) enhance mental health awareness, literacy and expertise amongst district school board professionals; and, (3) select, implement and monitor evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programs.* By maintaining this scope, and attending to principles of implementation science, significant foundational work has been accomplished in school boards across the province.
- Ongoing development of further enhancements to the Ontario curriculum to promote healthy development and mental health is underway, including:
 - English- and French-language video resources and viewer guides for K-12 educators to support student learning about mental health and well-being through the current curriculum and build supportive learning environments are available on [EduGains](#) and [ÉduSource](#).
 - A new preface has been added to the beginning of recently revised curriculum documents which sets the context for the educators' role in promoting and supporting healthy development for all students. The preface will continue to be included in curriculum documents as they are revised and released as part of the curriculum review cycle.
- In November 2014 the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care established a Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council to advise government on implementing phase two of the Strategy. The members of the Council represent diverse sectors that work on mental health and addictions issues. The council will provide advice on the Strategy's investments, promote collaboration across sectors and report annually on the Strategy's progress.
- *Achieving Excellence*, the government's renewed vision for education has elevated promoting well-being to one of four interconnected goals for the education system.
 - This goal emphasizes the need to focus not just on academic success but also on the whole child – the child's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.
- Launch of ICES Baseline Scorecard in March 2015
- The Government's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (Strategy) responds to the reports from the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and the Minister's Advisory Group to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on the 10-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

- The Strategy was first announced in the May 2011 Ontario budget, and was provided in *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* released in June 2011. There are four guiding goals for the Strategy:
 1. Improve mental health and well-being for all Ontarians,
 2. Create healthy, resilient, inclusive communities,
 3. Identify mental health and addictions problems early and intervene; and
 4. Provide timely, high quality, integrated, person-directed health and other human services.
- For the first three years, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and their partner ministries, the Ministries of Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Training, Colleges and Universities as well as the Attorney General and Aboriginal Affairs worked together with their sectors and communities to support children and youth who have mental health and addictions challenges to reach their potential and thrive.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is leading Phase 2 of the strategy, which will build on the accomplishments of the first three years, in partnership with other ministries including the Ministry of Education.
- Phase 2 of the Strategy will help to ensure Ontarians and their families have better access to quality services and supports for their mental well-being. The Strategy will:
 - Promote mental health and well-being for all Ontarians;
 - Ensure early identification and intervention;
 - Expand housing and employment support;
 - Expand an integrated health and social service coordination model for people coping with mental illness and addictions; and
 - Provide funding based on need and quality.
- A high-level evaluation of the Strategy is being established by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care with partner ministries through the Institute of Clinical Evaluation Sciences to provide a framework for evaluation and a mental health and addictions scorecard of quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- In June 2014, the Ontario Human Rights Commission released a Policy Paper on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions (Policy). The Policy provides practical guidance on the legal rights and responsibilities set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code as they relate to mental health and addiction issues. Ontarians with mental health disabilities and addictions are protected under the ground of “disability”, including when they receive services in schools.

FUNDING

- The government’s investments totalled \$257 M over the first three-year period of the Strategy.
- Phase 2 of the Strategy will see additional investments of over \$65M in 2014-15, growing to approximately \$83M annually by 2016-17.

- For the 2015-16 school year the Ministry will:
 - **Continue to fund the implementation of School Mental Health ASSIST program:** \$1M allocated to the School Mental Health ASSIST team, contracted through the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
 - **Continue to fund Mental Health Leaders in all 72 School Boards, and 1 shared resource for the four School Authorities** by providing \$8.76M through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) to support the salary and benefit costs of one Mental Health Leader position in each school board, including the cost of one Mental Health Leader to be shared by the four isolate and remote school authorities.
 - **Bundle funding for the continued development and implementation of board mental health strategies into Well Being: Safe, Accepting and Healthy Schools and Mental Health:** \$1.4M for board mental health strategies bundled with \$5M for safe and accepting schools for a total amount of \$6.4M.

NEXT STEPS

Phase 2 started in 2014 and continues to build on the first three years of the Strategy to:

- Ensure that the on-going transformation of the children and youth mental health system will be aligned with Phase 2 initiatives; and,
- Expand the scope and scale to focus on adults, transitional aged youth, addictions, transitions, funding reform, and performance measurement across the system.

In Phase 2 of the Strategy, the following initiatives are underway:

- The Mental Health Leaders are working with School Mental Health ASSIST to provide leadership support in their board for the development and implementation of a board level comprehensive student mental health and addictions strategy.
- School Mental Health ASSIST has developed several resources as part of increasing mental health awareness that are available to all school boards. These resources include the following:

Mental Health Awareness Level

- Webinar for all district school boards providing a broad overview of the Strategy, and information about specific supports for school boards (all education sector audiences).
- Decision Support Tool on selection of capacity building resources, developed with the School-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium (SBMHSA).
- Interactive web platform providing information about School Mental Health ASSIST and mental health awareness resources for all district school boards, including a closed on-line community for Mental Health Leaders.

- Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention slide presentations and resource guide (resource for senior administrators and clinicians in district school boards).

Mental Health Literacy Level

- Administrator's Guide and slide presentation (companion to *Supporting Minds, An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being*).
- Mental Health Literacy Modules for school staff and administrators (in development).

The Ministry of Education continues to work with other ministries to support the alignment of initiatives to support students.

In addition to completing the work of 2014-15, EDU Mental Health and Addictions deliverables for the 2015-16 school year will be to:

- Continue to collect feedback on Supporting Minds, An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health, a K-12 Educator Resource Guide/Website to promote healthy development and provide educators with information on early signs of mental health and addiction issues, and strategies that can be used in the classroom to support students.
- Continue to implement initiatives through School Mental Health ASSIST, including parent and youth advisory groups.
- Continue to fund Mental Health Leaders in all 72 School Boards, and one shared resource for the four School Authorities (now funded through the GSN, enveloped for this purpose).
- Bundle funding for implementation of board mental health strategies funding into Well Being: Safe, Accepting and Healthy Schools and Mental Health (see Memo 2015:B8, dated March 26, 2015 regarding EPO Funding).
- Support the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council who will provide advice on the Strategy's investments, promote collaboration across sectors and report annually on the Strategy's progress.
- Support the five Working Groups of the Leadership Advisory Council: 1) The Community Mental Health and Addictions Funding Reform Working Group; 2) The Strategic Alignment and Capacity Working Group; 3) The Youth Addictions Working Group; 4) The Promotion, Prevention and Early Identification Working Group; and 5) The Supportive Housing Working Group.

Response to the Reference Group on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

WHAT'S NEW

- The Ontario Auditor General Office (OAGO) completed its audit of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' autism services and supports for

children. The report is available on the [Office of the Auditor General of Ontario website](#). (School-based ASD supports and services references begin on Page 69 of the report).

- In response to recommendations from the Report of the Auditor General, the ministry developed a list of requirements that may be included in training opportunities provided by district school boards to educators who work or may work with students with ASD. All district school board ABA Expertise Professionals were provided the opportunity to offer input into the developed training requirements through each regional ABA professional learning community. The ministry communicated the list of [training requirements at ABA Day](#) in 2014.
- The formal or informal training opportunities and/or mentoring on ABA should be practical and oriented at developing classroom educators' skills to apply and individualize ABA and cover the following content:
 - Behaviour
 - Functions of Behaviour
 - Assessments and data collection to inform ABA instructional methods
 - Development, implementation and monitoring of effective Individual Education Plans and Transition Plans that incorporate ABA methods in a variety of educational settings
 - Principles of ABA, with a focus on ABA instructional methods to support students with ASD and other students who may benefit.
- District school boards will be expected to monitor the availability and participation of educators in ABA training opportunities provided by the board.
 - The ministry is monitoring the provincial implementation of training requirements through the annual Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 140 Survey.
 - In the 2014-15 survey, 57% of respondents indicated that in all situations, training opportunities provided to school board staff align with Training Requirement content areas.
- The ministry is currently working on revising the existing methodology for monitoring school boards' compliance with the requirements of PPM 140, with a focus on deeper implementation.
- The ministry hosted its fourth ABA Professional Learning Day on June 3rd, 2015. All 72 district school boards were invited to participate and engage in this knowledge mobilization event and share current evidence-based resources and effective practices. Information and resource sharing will continue the development of regional professional learning communities to further develop ABA capacity in Ontario's publicly funded schools.
- The ministry has launched EduGAINS and ÉduSource ASD pages, as part of the Special Education domain.
- The ministry funded Geneva Centre for Autism to develop 12 bilingual e-learning modules on autism. They became available free of charge to all educators employed by publicly funded district school boards in Ontario in July 2013.

- Geneva Centre for Autism has developed another free online module with a focus on effective practices of collaboration of schools, parents and community providers in supporting students with ASD. The course will include in particular effective strategies to promote collaboration and better alignment between Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services provided by MCYS-funded community agencies and ABA instructional methods in school. This module launched in September 2015.
- The Summer Training Institute in 2015 will now be delivered online throughout the 2015-16 school year and contribute in two ways to strengthening school boards' capacities to meet the training requirements through a series of online training.
 - In September 2014, Geneva launched an ABA Certificate Course for Educators through online e-Learning modules that focus on comprehensive training on ABA, including evidence-based behavioural strategies that can be incorporated into the classroom setting to promote student achievement and well-being.
 - In September 2015, Geneva launched Introductory Level Online Training: *Charting a Path to Success in Your Classroom: An Introductory Autism Certificate Course for Educators*.
- The Applied Behaviour Analysis Certificate Course for Educators is aligned with the training requirements to assist existing and future educators to use ABA principles in the classrooms, and with *Charting a Path to Success in Your Classroom: An Introductory Autism Certificate Course for Educators*. This training will target over 2800 educators in 2015-16.
- The ministry has provided \$250K to the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) to support a pilot, Conscious Classrooms (CC) supporting well-being of students with ASD, Developmental Disability and other exceptionality groups, including the prevention and de-escalation of challenging student behaviours, in four district school boards for the 2015-16 school year.
- Conscious Classrooms (CC) is tailored specifically to an education setting. CC is a highly successful training and development program for agencies and families who support individuals in Ontario with autism and other developmental disabilities.
- Conscious Classrooms will complement ABA by taking into account multiple factors affecting student behaviour such as changes to their environment, diet, etc. In addition to supporting students in developing useful repertoires, it will provide training to educators on how to better understand themselves and properly react to students' challenging behaviour. Educators will benefit, for instance, from training in mindfulness, which is the intentional cultivation of moment-by-moment non-judgmental focused attention and awareness.
- The participating boards are Algoma District School Board, Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and Peel District School Board.
 - Educator training will begin in the Fall of 2015.

- The ministry is partnering with TCU on a Transitions Model that is centred on multi-disciplinary, student-specific, postsecondary Education Disability Services Offices-led transition teams to support transitions of students with ASD to post-secondary education (PSE). The demonstration projects are partnering with coordinating school boards. Funding of \$270,000 (\$90,000 per board) has been provided to the coordinating boards by the ministry.
- Algonquin College is partnering with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board and York University is partnering with the Toronto District School Board, and the York District Catholic School Board.
- The three identified school boards are required to:
 - implement the preliminary Transitions Model in collaboration with PSE institutions and other partners;
 - engage multiple district school boards from their regions to review current practices, identify gaps and set targets to strengthen boards' capacities to implement the Transitions Model; and gather and share effective transition practices region and province-wide;
 - participate in professional learning communities to develop resources, support documentation, evaluate the preliminary Transitions Model and provide recommendations for its enhancements.

KEY FACTS

- The total number of students formally identified as having an ASD by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) in publicly funded district school boards, including school authorities, as of the 2013-14 school year is over 18,880.
- The government has taken action in response to the majority of the Reference Group's recommendations.
- All district school boards and Ministry of Children and Youth (MCYS) funded Autism Intervention Program (AIP) providers are implementing *Connections for Students* model across the province. 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 MCYS funded AIP to ABA instructional methods in school, and continue for six months after entry or continuing in school
- All district school boards have now hired ABA expertise professionals that are responsible for supporting principals, teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and coordinating ASD training and resources, and facilitating collaboration between service providers and schools.
- MCYS has expanded community-based ABA services and supports to build on and improve the continuum of supports for children and youth with ASD. \$25M has been invested to provide a broader range of services to children and youth with ASD to develop skills in key areas and to address behaviours that interfere with their functioning. MCYS has selected providers to deliver these new services and supports in each region of the province.

- In 2007, the Ministry of Education released PPM 140. School boards have been directed through this PPM to use ABA methods with students with ASD where appropriate and in accordance with students' IEP. As required by PPM 140, the ministry has developed and implemented an annual process to monitor implementation of PPM 140 by district school boards.

FUNDING

- Since 2006 the ministry has invested \$73M through targeted funding outside the Grants for Student Needs to strengthen district school board capability and improve the learning environment for students with ASD.
- Since summer 2006, almost \$49M has been allocated for training, and to date more than 20,000 educators have been trained and prepared to support ABA in publicly funded schools.
- Beginning in 2008-09 all district school boards received new funding to hire additional board level ABA expertise professionals to support principals, teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and coordinating ASD training and resources, and facilitating collaboration between service providers and schools. Funding allowing school boards to hire additional board level ABA expertise professionals has been transferred into the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) through the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) beginning in 2010-11. The total 2015-16 BEA amount is approximately \$11.6M.
- In 2015-16, \$3M in Education Programs – Other (EPO) funding has been allocated to school boards to further ABA training.
- \$1,000,000 in EPO funding was allocated to Geneva Centre for Autism Summer Institute 2015.
- \$270,000 in EPO funding has been allocated to three coordinating school boards to support the Post-Secondary Transitions Model for Students with ASD.

Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) Capacity Building Projects

WHAT'S NEW

- In Spring 2015, the Ministry of Education held a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Provincial Conference in response to recommendations provided by the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) regarding building SEAC capacity.
- EDU SEAC webpage has been updated and includes an overview of the SEAC Provincial Conference including [Minister Sandals greetings](#)

KEY FACTS

- In 2013, the Ministry launched the [EDU SEAC web page](#).
- In Fall 2009, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) made recommendations to the ministry to build SEAC capacity. MACSE

proposed that the ministry could enhance the capacity of school boards to support SEAC members by:

- Improving communication processes so that all SEACs have access to up to date information
- Developing resources that all SEACs can access for training
- Developing a mechanism for the sharing of effective practices.

NEXT STEPS

- SEPPB staff will continue to scan district school board websites for resources that relate to SEAC recruitment, orientation, roles and responsibilities, committee procedures, community/parent outreach, and link them to the EDU SEAC web page.

Special Needs Strategy

KEY FACTS

- The Ministries of Education, Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community and Social Services are working with parents, youth, service providers and communities to improve outcomes for children with special needs through the Special Needs Strategy. Three goals of the strategy are:
 1. Identifying children earlier and getting them the right help sooner. Trained providers will have a new developmental screen for children in the preschool years. They will screen for potential risks to the child's development as early as possible.
 2. Coordinating service planning. New service planning coordinators for children and youth with multiple or complex special needs will connect families to the right services and supports.
 3. Making supports and service delivery seamless. Integrating the delivery of rehabilitation services, such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. Services will be easier to access and seamless from birth through the school years.

WHAT'S NEW

- Information, updates and the most recent Questions and Answers pertaining to the Special Needs Strategy can be found on the [Special Needs Strategy website](#).
- Coordinated Service Planning for Children and Youth will begin implementation November 2015.
- Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services for Children and Youth. Proposals are due October 30, 2015.

Supporting Students with Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Giftedness) or Behavioural Needs through a Review of Definitions and Development of Guidelines

KEY FACTS

- The ministry is proceeding with a strategy to improve the achievement and well-being of students with Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Giftedness) or Behavioural needs by reviewing current definitions (phase 1) and developing guidelines (phase 2) to support more consistent and effective practices across Ontario.
- Enhanced definitions and new guidelines will support:
 - More consistency among boards in supporting students with intellectual and behaviour needs;
 - More coordinated and seamless transitions into, through and between school boards; and
 - Enhanced focus on the intellectual or behaviour strengths and needs of students.

NEXT STEPS

- The advice of external working groups is currently under consideration.
- Once revised definitions are approved, external working groups will be struck to inform the development of guidelines to support the implementation of the revised definitions.

Transformation of Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correction (CTCC) Education Programs

WHAT'S NEW

- The Ministry is proceeding with the transformation of CTCC programs. Following are some of the transformative highlights:
 - New Programs for the 2015-16 school year**
 - The ministry approved 9 new Enhanced Education/ Treatment (EET) programs and 8 new Community Based Youth Justice (CBYJ) programs.
 - In addition, 2 new CBYJ program applications were approved based on re-purposing staff from existing CTCC programs.
 - The purpose of the new programs is to address service pressures that have emerged in relation to identified system and local needs related to Francophone students, students who are First Nations, Métis and Inuit, students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and students in rural, remote and under-served communities.
 - Evaluation of these new program models will be ongoing to recognize successful practices, and address implementation challenges and areas for further improvement. It is hoped that evaluation can form the basis for

professional learning to allow for the evolution of programs to best serve the needs of students.

Provincial E-Learning Strategy

- In 2013-14, 18 English-language district school boards were e-Learning pilot sites. Within those boards, 14 sites were in Care and Treatment programs and 8 sites were in Custody and Correctional Facilities.
- One e-Learning pilot project was implemented at three sites in a French language board.
- The three phases involved the following e-Learning tool(s):
 - Phase 1 – Ontario Educational Resource Bank and e-Community Ontario
 - Phase 2 – Blended Learning
 - Phase 3 – Online Courses; Seat Reservation System, Course Writing Software
- In 2014-15, 18 district school boards continued with blended learning and a select few agreed to begin on-line courses in Phase 3.
- Phase 3 of the provincial e-learning strategy will be implemented in 2015-16.
- The new goals for Phase 3 are:
 - To continue with the ongoing development of customized e-learning courses and resource materials to support technology enabled learning for students in CTCC programs.
 - To improve tech support and teacher resources to support and encourage the expansion of technology enabled learning in CTCC programs.
 - To develop processes to facilitate the transferring of course marks and progress to ensure the continuity of program and support course completion as students transfer in and out of CTCC programs, while also ensuring the privacy of confidential student information.
 - To develop a network (virtual hub) of teachers with different subject qualifications that can be accessed by CTCC programs where student course selection cannot be addressed by the teacher on-site.
- School boards with CTCC programs are welcome to participate and take leadership roles in supporting and shaping the e-learning strategy for all CTCC programs.

Student Achievement Data Collection

- The ministry has been collecting elemental student achievement data, including the student's name, Ontario Education Number (OEN), course codes and marks, for all students except those in CTCC programs through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).
- As the ministry reviews and transforms CTCC education programs and makes commitments to close achievement gaps, there is a need to collect achievement data about students in CTCC programs.

- Such data would provide an evidence base to inform improvements to CTCC programs and to improve success outcomes for students attending education programs in CTCC facilities.
- The ministry intends to work with Boards to begin collecting elemental student achievement data from secondary CTCC facilities in June 2016 for the 2015-16 school year.

KEY FACTS

Community Based Youth Justice Programs

- Youth serving a community sentence may attend a Community Based Youth Justice (CBYJ) Program, such as an Attendance Centre, that provides structured programming which can include education, addiction counselling, anger management, life skills, recreation and cultural programs. In order to respond to this trend, the ministry is focusing this year on a realignment of education programs in the YJ system to better serve students who are serving community sentences.
- The Youth Justice Services system has been repositioning from a predominantly custody focused system to one that offers a broad range of community and custodial programs and services to address the needs of youth, their families and communities.
- The education system is responding by exploring different models of education programs to serve these youth.

Enhanced Education and Treatment Programs

- New Enhanced Education and Treatment (EET) Programs for children and youth in care and treatment facilities will provide opportunities for the development of programs that increase the capacity of the system to meet the needs of students in care and treatment programs that could benefit from a program integrating health support services within an education program. The health support services that are expected to be integrated within the EET Programs include services provided by regulated health professionals (e.g. Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, etc.), regulated social service professionals (e.g. Social Workers, etc.) and paraprofessionals (e.g. Communication Disorders Assistants, Child and Youth Workers, etc.).
- Close to 80% of students in CTCC education programs are in care and treatment settings, many of which are mental health settings. .

FUNDING

- The total EDU funding envelope for 2015-16 CTCC programs is \$96M.

NEXT STEPS

The ongoing transformation of CTCC programs provides an opportunity to test new programs, remove existing or potential barriers to effective service delivery, improve the quality and distribution of programs and provide more tailored and personalized learning environments to better meet student needs.

SEPPB will work closely with boards and ministry partners to facilitate ongoing improvements to CTCC programs and improve educational outcomes for students.

FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Funding Overview

WHAT'S NEW

- The 2015-16 Special Education Grant (SEG) funding was announced in March 2015. The Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Regulation, which provides for these allocations has been approved.
- The Special Education Grant is projected to be approximately \$2.72 billion in 2015–16, which is an increase of \$225.7M or over 9 percent since 2012–13, and an increase of almost \$1.1 billion or nearly 68 percent since 2002-03.
- The ministry is making changes to be more responsive to the needs of students receiving special education programs and services, and to increase the focus on supporting student achievement and well-being, while responding to requests for a more fair and equitable High Needs Amount (HNA) allocation.
- In March 2014, after extensive consultations with stakeholder representatives, including the Special Education Funding Working Group, the ministry announced a four year transition to a new HNA funding model. This transition will provide greater fairness and equity within the system by phasing out the historical HNA Per Pupil Amounts and moving to an allocation composed of the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model (SESPM), Measures of Variability Amount (MOV) and Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration.
- As communicated last year, it is proposed that the legacy HNA Per Pupil Amounts will be phased out over four years, with a 25% reduction per year, beginning in 2014-15. In each of the following three years, the HNA Per Pupil Amounts will be reduced as follows: to 50% in 2015-16; to 25% in 2016-17 and completely eliminated by 2017-18.
- This transition to a more fair and equitable HNA model is fiscally neutral, but will have redistributive impacts among boards, thus will be phased in over four years.
- As promised in 2014-15, the Ministry is maintaining the current funding levels of the HNA allocation during the transition. To provide this stability and to mitigate projected enrolment declines in 2014-15 and 2015-16, the Ministry will hold the provincial HNA total at \$1.05 billion over the four year transition to the new HNA model.

KEY FACTS

- In 2015-16, the Ministry will continue with the four year transition to a new HNA allocation. The legacy HNA per-pupil amounts will be funded at 50 percent, while the proportion of funding that is allocated through both the HNA MOV and the SESPM will increase. The High Needs Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration will be maintained at \$450,000 per board.

- In addition, the ministry has invested approximately \$73M since 2006, through targeted funding outside the GSN, to build capacity and improve the learning environment for students with ASD.

Evolution of Special Education Funding

WHAT'S NEW

High Needs Amount (HNA)

- In 2015–16, the Ministry will continue to eliminate the legacy HNA Per Pupil amounts, which will be funded at 50 percent. The proportion of funding that is allocated through both the HNA Measures of Variability Amount (MOV) and the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model (SESPM) will increase. In addition, the High Needs Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration will be maintained at \$450,000 per board.
- This transition to a more fair and equitable HNA model is fiscally neutral, but will have redistributive impacts among boards, thus will be phased in over four years.

Facilities Amount (FA)

- For 2015–16, the Ministry is inviting school boards to submit applications to address service pressures that have emerged in relation to identified system and local needs, particularly with respect to Francophone students, students who are First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and students in rural, remote and under-served communities. The types of new programs being sought are Enhanced Education and Treatment (EET) and Community Based Youth Justice (CBYJ) Programs.

NEXT STEPS

- During the 2015-16 school year, the ministry will continue to work with stakeholders on the evolution of the HNA funding allocation to better reflect the variation among district school boards with respect to students with special education needs and the ability of district school boards to meet those needs.
- The ministry will also continue to review and refine other components of the SEG, and to consult with stakeholders to ensure that the evolution of the funding approach supports students with special education needs and improves student outcomes and well-being.

Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disability

WHAT'S NEW

- Protocols continue to be reviewed by regions annually and revised accordingly.
- Monitoring of integrated transition plans continues by MCYS/MCSS Regional Offices.

KEY FACTS

- A Tri-Ministry memo was released on January 31, 2013 emphasizing the shared goal of the ministries that district school boards, school authorities, provincial and/or demonstration schools and community service providers will work together to integrate current district school board and MCYS/MCSS transition planning processes by revising and building on existing regional protocols.
- The tri-ministry protocols outline an agreement between community organizations and school boards on how they will work together to help support the transition of a young person with a developmental disability to adulthood. The protocols build on existing regional transition processes to provide a more consistent and coordinated approach to supporting young people's transition to adulthood. The protocols specify that:
 - every young person with a developmental disability will have a transition plan;
 - planning will begin early; and
 - transition planning processes will be integrated, consistent, and transparent.
- Integrated transition planning is for young people (age 14 and older) who meet the definition of having a developmental disability under any of the EDU, MCSS and MCYS legislation frameworks or agency criteria.
- Integrated transition planning for young people with developmental disabilities went into effect September 2014. Lead agencies for integrated transition planning are monitoring implementation and reporting back to the ministries.

NEXT STEPS

- A parent and young person survey will be launched to determine their satisfaction with the transition planning process.

ADVICE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

WHAT'S NEW

- In Spring 2015, the Ministry of Education held a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Provincial Conference in response to recommendations provided by the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) regarding building SEAC capacity.

NEXT STEPS

- MACSE's next meeting: February 18 and 19, 2016.

UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES

Ministry: Children and Youth Services

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is among the leading causes of cognitive and developmental disability among children in Canada and is preventable.
- Ontario is committed to encouraging social responsibility when it comes to the sale and consumption of alcohol. We will continue to build our efforts to raise awareness of the risks associated with the misuse of alcohol to reduce potential harm and to provide the necessary information to make informed choices when it comes to alcohol consumption.
- The Ontario government is committed to the development of a provincial FASD strategy. We have engaged with service providers, advocates, families, caregivers, individuals affected by FASD, Aboriginal partners, and others, to inform this important work.
- We are working with our partner ministries to ensure that our programs and services address the complex needs of individuals living with FASD at different life stages.

Status Update / Timing

- To facilitate the development of an Ontario FASD strategy, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services:
 - Organized 25 cross-ministry roundtable sessions to facilitate dialogue among service providers, advocates, children's treatment centres, families, caregivers, and especially individuals affected by FASD. The sessions included insights from Francophone, Aboriginal communities, lived-experience and general attendance audiences. Individuals were also able to send informal and formal written submissions, as well as information and research on FASD.
 - Implemented a web-based survey on the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' website.
 - Established an expert group of FASD researchers and clinicians.
 - Conducted interviews with a number of other key informants from across Canada to seek evidence-based input and expertise.
 - Consulted with partners from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and International Trade, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Ministry of the Attorney General. They confirmed the project direction and provided input and participation where feasible.
 - Hired a researcher to conduct research to inform awareness, prevention and targeted intervention strategies to support women and their partners to have alcohol-free pregnancies.

- From May to August 2015, Parliamentary Assistant (PA) Granville Anderson hosted province-wide roundtables to engage with service providers, advocates, families, caregivers and individuals affected by FASD, to listen to the challenges they face and learn about what they believe is needed to better meet their needs.
- On September 9, 2015, PA Anderson released a report on what was heard at these roundtables. The report is posted on the [Ministry of Children and Youth Services' website](#).
- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services, in collaboration with partner ministries, is moving forward to develop a provincial FASD strategy, which includes engaging Aboriginal partners; service providers; families, caregivers, and individuals affected by FASD; and researchers.

Linkages to Special Education

- The FASD strategy is part of the Special Needs Strategy. Students with FASD may require specialized services and supports.

Mental Health

Update on the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

Status Update / Timing

- Ontario's new Tele-Mental Health Service provided more than 3,500 psychiatric consults in 2014-15, which benefited children and youth in rural, remote and underserved communities. Some of these consults have been provided to mental health professionals in school boards. The Service will continue to help children, youth and their families receive the specialized service they need within their communities, as close to their home as possible.
 - All publicly funded mental health professionals working with children and youth are able to refer to the Service, including those working in school boards.
- In 2015-16, year three of the youth suicide prevention plan, the Ministry will continue to leverage the momentum built in years one and two through the provision of:
 1. Local mobilization enabled through:
 - Provision of \$1M in funding to 33 communities (child and youth mental health service areas) across the province, to support the development and implementation of community-based youth suicide prevention planning; and
 - \$750,000 in dedicated First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal supports in recognition that these partners and their communities have unique cultural and organizational needs.
 2. Provincial Mobilization forums, including five e-forums and an Aboriginal youth life promotion forum, to bring together community-based mental health providers, partners and gatekeepers to provide education and training on youth suicide prevention. These will be organized and hosted by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

- 3. Coaching to support communities in developing long-term plans to sustain local youth suicide prevention efforts. Available through the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, one coach is Francophone, one is Aboriginal and two have extensive experience working with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and/or urban Aboriginal communities.
- Also as part of the plan, in 2013-14, the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health hosts the togethertolive/vivonsensemble web-based guide/toolkit to support mobilization efforts.

Linkages to Special Education

- Investments in mental health services continue to benefit students by providing the services, supports and tools that children and youth need to succeed in and beyond the classroom.

Update on the *Moving on Mental Health (MOMH)* action plan

Status Update/Timing

- As of August 2015, the ministry has announced 28 lead agencies. The remaining lead agencies are expected to be announced in 2015-16.
- Newly identified lead agencies are focusing on the development of leadership and planning functions such as:
 - Building their leadership team;
 - Beginning local engagement activities;
 - Raising awareness of the role of the lead agency;
 - Working together with partners to determine planning processes;
 - Documenting the status of core children and youth mental health services; and
 - Learning how to use data to support planning.
- Lead agencies are also developing their 2015-16 Core Services Delivery Plan and Community Mental Health Plan.
- Further information regarding *Moving on Mental Health* can be found [here](#).

Linkages to Special Education

- As part of their ministry direction, lead agencies are required to complete Community Mental Health Plans (CMHP). The CMHP's enables the lead agency to identify shared priorities and roles community partners have in meeting the needs of children and youth across the child and youth mental health continuum.
- Part of the work in completing CMHPs involves collaboration and consultation with local school boards. Engaging with special education teachers and resources at the school and district school board level is important for lead agencies to more fully represent those students; including those with mental health concerns.

Special Needs Strategy

- Ontario's Special Needs Strategy lays the foundation for a system where young people with special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare to achieve their goals for adulthood.
- First steps include:
 - Identifying kids earlier and getting them the right help sooner through a developmental screening process;
 - Coordinating service planning for children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs; and
 - Making rehabilitation services (speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy) more seamless from birth through to school exit.
- Local proposal development tables comprised of district school boards and service providers in each of 34 service delivery areas have been working collaboratively to develop proposals for coordinated service planning and the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services.
 - Proposal development tables submitted proposals for coordinated service planning in June. The ministries of Children and Youth Services, Education, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community and Social Services are currently finalizing their review of these proposals. The first phase of implementation is expected to begin by the end of 2015.
 - Proposals for the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services will be submitted to the ministries in Fall 2015, for phased implementation targeted to begin in Spring 2016.

Linkages to Special Education

- The ministries are encouraging school boards and community service providers to work together to coordinate service planning and provide stability and continuity of service for students.
- A child/youth's coordinated service plan may be used as a source of information to inform the programs and/or services outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). A coordinated service plan may also inform programs and/or services during transition processes including entry to school and/or transition to adulthood. A transition plan may already be part of a student's IEP or may be created, at the discretion of the board, for a student who is receiving special education programs and/or services but does not have an IEP and has not been formally identified as exceptional.
- The integrated delivery of rehabilitation services will provide a seamless and integrated service experience for children with rehabilitation needs and their families. This includes having speech and language services, occupational therapy and physiotherapy delivered in school settings wherever possible, according to the needs of the child.
- Rehabilitation services benefit students with special needs by providing the services, supports and tools that children and youth need to succeed in and beyond the classroom.

Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Program Evaluation of the MCYS Community-based Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based Services and Supports

- The ministry is competitively procuring the services of a vendor to proceed with an arms-length evaluation of its Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based services and supports for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- The evaluation will provide an assessment of the program's performance to date and identify opportunities to design and deliver ABA-based services and supports in the most equitable, effective, efficient and accessible manner possible.

Linkages to Special Education

- Given that many of the children and youth who receive community-based ABA-based services and supports also attend school, the program evaluation will include an assessment of the extent to which the ABA program is aligned with ABA instructional techniques used in schools.
- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services will work closely with the Ministry of Education throughout the process.

Improving Access to Early Intervention For Children with Developmental Concerns and/or Early Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder

- The ministry is working to improve access to pre-diagnosis, evidence-based intervention services for children with developmental concerns and/or who are showing early signs of autism.
- In July 2015, MCYS issued a Call for Applications to provincially funded organizations that deliver early intervention services, including the Infant Development Program, Pre-School Speech and Language, Children's Treatment Centres and agencies delivering the AIP and ABA-based services and supports.
- MCYS will identify four organizations, each of which will implement one of four early intervention models, which have been recommended by the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Expert Committee, over a three year period. Organizations will work closely with early intervention experts to implement the services in their communities.
- The goal of the demonstrations is to improve the availability of early intervention services and provide new behavioural interventions that are developmentally appropriate for children showing the early signs of ASD, before a diagnosis is necessarily confirmed.
- Demonstrations will launch in early 2016.

Linkages to Special Education

- The selected organizations will be expected to build on or initiate innovative and collaborative partnerships to implement a demonstration within their community. This may include child care or other early years providers.

Supported Employment Demonstrations for Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- In May 2015, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) issued a Call for Applications for the design and delivery of Supported Employment Demonstrations for Young People with ASD.
- Objectives of the demonstrations are to:
 - help young people (aged 14-30) with ASD attain and maintain paid employment, and in doing so, equip them with transferrable skills that lead to greater employability;
 - increase paid employment rates of young people with ASD; and
 - build employer capacity to recruit, hire and retain young people with ASD.
- It is expected that demonstrations will begin in fall/winter 2015-16.
- Goals of the demonstrations are to gather information on best practices that support people with ASD to inform Ontario's work in improving and integrating employment-related services.

Linkages to Special Education

- The demonstrations will support young people with ASD in secondary and postsecondary education institutions. The successful applicant agencies will be expected to work in partnership with local schools and postsecondary institutions on the recruitment of participants and delivery of the demonstrations.

Youth Justice

Update on the *Youth Justice Education and Skills Training Success Strategy* ("*Success Strategy*")

Status Update / Timing

- The "Success Strategy" launched in February 2013, brings focus to youth justice services policy development, program design and service delivery efforts to support improved academic achievement, attainment and increased school engagement of youth in or at risk of conflict with the law.
- One goal under the Strategy is to enhance youth's access to educational and skills training programming and supports through improved capacity of youth justice staff.
- Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) is establishing the *Internet for Education and Skills Development Working Group (IESD Working Group)* in 2015 to create standards for an effective, consistent, transparent and equitable approach to youth's internet access for education and skills development programming across the youth justice services continuum.

Linkages to Special Education

- YJSD continues to collaborate with the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, EDU to identify opportunities to improve educational outcomes for youth in Section 23 CTCC education programs in youth justice settings.

- Internet access standards for youth in the justice system support EDU's Section 23 E-learning Strategy for youth to have the access and support needed to effectively participate in e-learning.

Ministry: Health and Long-Term Care

Ontario Investing \$7.2 Million in Active and Healthy Communities

- Ontario is helping people in communities across the province lead healthier lives. Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that the Ontario government is investing \$7.2 million to promote active lifestyles through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund.
- As part of this investment, the province is providing more than \$224,000 to Special Olympics Ontario for the Partners in Play program. This project will introduce young special needs athletes to sports such as track and field, basketball, soccer and swimming.

Status Update / Timing

- Announced on August 20, 2015
- Partners in Play will be delivered through 24 partners, engaging 1,300 participants in 39 communities across the province over two years.
- The Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund will support 123 provincial, regional and local projects in 2015-16. These projects will increase opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get active.
- The Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund supported 117 projects across the province in 2014-15, providing programs and services to over 280,000 participants.
- \$21.6 million has been invested through the fund since it launched in January 2013.

Linkages to Special Education

- The Partners in Play program will introduce young athletes with special needs to sports. Sport, recreation and physical activity contribute to positive economic and social outcomes, such as improved student achievement.

Ministry: Training, Colleges and Universities

Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities (AFSD)

Status Update / Timing

- In 2014-15, over \$54 million in funding was provided to assist students with disabilities succeed in postsecondary studies.
 - The funding includes an additional \$6 million (introduced in 2014 budget but formally announced in June 2015) for 2014-15 and onwards to help serve the increasing number of students with disabilities at Ontario's publicly assisted institutions.
- In 2014-15, over 59,000 students were registered with Disabilities Offices at publicly funded postsecondary institutions.
- The ministry has integrated Summer Transitions Program funding with the Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities (AFSD) funding for 2014-15 and onward.
- Final allocations for the integrated fund for 2014-15 were announced in December 2014.
- Allocations for 2015-16 will be announced following the review of the annual reports submitted by institutions this summer. Funding is expected to be relatively stable since it is based on three years of data.
- The ministry also announced that it would be reviewing the existing AFSD guidelines for the integrated fund.
 - The ministry is working with the sector to update the guidelines for this fund, taking into account current objectives for the funds.

Linkages to Special Education

- The AFSD assists colleges and universities with costs related to the operation of offices for students with disabilities that provide a wide range of accommodations and services to students with disabilities, including: interpreter services; learning assessments; and providing access to computers and appropriate technological learning aids.

Strengthening Transitions to Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities

Status Update / Timing

- The ministry is in the final year of its three-year commitment of \$1.5 million to the Four Point Action Plan to strengthen transitions to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. The plan, implemented in 2013-14, will support students transitioning from secondary school to postsecondary education.
- [The Web Transitions Resource Guide](#): Since the launch in December 2013, there have been more than 109,940 page views. The website continues to undergo development, through outreach activities to promote the website and with input from the Advisory Board to support its activities. The website provides students, families, and educators with information about transitioning to postsecondary education. Students with disabilities can learn about the services and supports they need to succeed at college and university.
- **The Demonstration Projects**: York University and Algonquin College have partnered with local school boards to pilot a proposed transitions model. There are

63 students enrolled in the programs. Each institution continues to develop resources to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as they transition to postsecondary education.

- **The Multi-Sector Working Group on Transitions to Postsecondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder:** The ministry has held three meetings with the Working Group to date. The fourth meeting is planned for November 20, 2015. The group will advise on a Transitions Model for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Linkages to special education

- The early focus on students with ASD reflects the significant increase in the number of students with ASD transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education. At the same time, it is expected that the plan will result in strengthening transition supports for all students with disabilities.

Regional Assessment Centres

- In 2014-15, \$965,000 was allocated to the Northern Ontario Resource and Assessment Centre, and \$1.03 million to Queen's University Regional Assessment and Resource Centre. The centres used the funds to assist students with disabilities in Grade 8 and 9 with their transition to high school and encourage and support them to pursue postsecondary education.
- Collège Boréal entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to establish a Francophone Centre for psycho-educational assessments in Sudbury relating to learning disabilities for French speaking postsecondary education students in Northern Ontario in 2014-15. The total allocation in 2014-15 for the Francophone Centre was \$289,500.

Student Success

- In 2012-13, MTCU continued to work with EDU on two key student success initiatives - Dual Credit programs and the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM).
- In 2014-15, \$35.6 million has been allocated for the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) which includes dual credits.
- In 2014-15, \$25.3 million has been allocated for the Specialist High Skills Major Program.

Linkages to Special Education

- In 2013-14 (year 8), 42,000 students are participating in approximately 1,600 programs in over 640 schools
- 2012-13 OnSIS data indicates that 26% of SHSM students had an IEP
- Local data submitted by SCWI Regional Planning Teams indicate that 14% of dual credit students in 2012-13 had been reviewed by an IPRC and 23% had an IEP.
- For 2013-14, a pilot dual credit program involved 10 students at Durham College, Durham DSB and Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB to provide participants with an opportunity to experience college life and enhance their academic and vocational skills by participating in courses that are part of Durham College's Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) program. Results were impressive and the pilot is continuing in 2014-15.

Student Success

- On September 26, 2013, EDU released *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools, Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, a policy document describing a new education and career/life planning program designed to support students in developing the knowledge and skills they need to make informed education and career/life choices.
- Boards implemented Individual Pathways Plans for students in Grades 7 to 12 2013-14. Full policy implementation for every elementary and secondary school across Ontario began in September 2014.

Linkages to Special Education

- As part of the new education and career/life planning programs, students document their learning in an “All About Me” portfolio in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and in a web-based Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) from Grade 7 to Grade 12. Students have opportunities to share the portfolio or IPP with a teacher and/or guidance counsellor. They may also choose to share their learning with a parent or guardian.
- “All About Me” portfolios and Individual Pathways Plans may be used as a source of information, among various others, when developing the Individual Education Plan and Transition Plan, which are required for all students who receive special education programs and services.

Apprenticeship

- In 2014-15, \$2.7 million was provided to colleges for the Support for Apprentices with Disabilities (SAWD) initiative.
- SAWD assists colleges with costs related to providing accommodation, assessments and equipment modification for people with disabilities participating in apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs.
- On April 9th 2015, Premier Wynne announced an additional \$55 million investment in three apprenticeship programs; all aligned with the 2015 Ontario Budget, which includes:
 - The Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program, which will receive \$13 million more in funding over two years. This will help people considering careers in the trades develop their job skills and readiness to find work as apprentices through in-class training sessions and work placements.
 - The Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program supports and encourages projects which specifically improve access to apprenticeship for Persons with Disabilities.
 - An open Call for Proposals was released in late May, 2015, and colleges were encouraged to participate.

Mental Health

- As part of the Government’s \$257 million Mental Health and Addiction Strategy announced in 2011 Budget, the ministry launched the Mental Health Innovation Fund in September 2012 for projects that would lead to an improvement in mental health services and outcomes for Ontario’s postsecondary students.

- The ministry is making annual investments to improve mental health supports and services for Ontario's postsecondary students.
- Since 2013, the ministry has supported 32 Mental Health Innovation Fund projects to help the postsecondary sector and community partners develop new and innovative approaches to help postsecondary students and those transitioning to postsecondary institutions. A further two projects have received mental health funding.
- Nineteen projects have now been completed and we are starting to see results. We will continue reviewing the results and recommendations of these projects to help inform future decisions on how to best help students with mental health issues. There are 15 projects continuing to receive funding through 2016-17.
 - One of the successful projects is the Centre for Innovation on Campus Mental Health. Its initial three-year funding has been extended through December 2015 and the ministry is now working with project proponents on defining its support for an ongoing role for the Centre.
- On October 4, 2013, the Minister helped to officially launch Good2Talk//Allo j'écoute, a 24 hour-a-day, 365 day-a-year province-wide, bilingual, postsecondary mental health helpline being operated by Kid's Help Phone, the national community-based organization that has been providing telephone counselling services for young people since 1989. This service is being provided in partnership with CONNEX, 211 Ontario and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Youth Mental Health. The postsecondary mental health helpline is accessible at 1-866-925-5454 and is online at [Good 2 Talk](#) and [Allo j'écoute](#) websites. The ministry is providing Kids Help Phone \$3.29M in funding to continue operating the Good2Talk postsecondary mental health helpline in 2015-16. Since its launch in the fall 2013 the helpline has grown to serving approximately 2000 postsecondary students monthly with counselling and referral services.
- The ministry is continuing to work with partner ministries, Health and Long-term Care, Education, and Children and Youth Services, as the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy moves forward into Years 4+ of the Strategy. On November 25, 2014, the Minister of Health and Long-term Care announced that the Strategy would be expanded to support the transition between youth and adult services, and to improve the quality of services for Ontarians of all ages.
- The Ministry of Education is a full partner in Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy released in June, 2011.

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Developmental Services Transformation

- The 2015 Ontario Budget reaffirmed the government's commitment to the transformation of the developmental services (DS) sector in Ontario through a historic investment of \$810M over three years. Since the 2014 Budget commitment, the government has made great strides in:
 - Expanding direct funding
 - Providing services to individuals with urgent residential needs
 - Exploring broader options for residential support
 - Increasing person-directed planning options
 - Promoting integrated employment, and;
 - Supporting front-line workers who provide services in the community.
- The government continues to engage stakeholders in ongoing consultations to help improve consistency, access to services and supports, and to promote a culture of independence and inclusion in Ontario's developmental services sector.

Community Services

Interpreter Services

- MCSS funds interpreting services in specific health and community settings for adults who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or deafblind and use American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ). The Ministry also funds training and community-interpreting experience to eight interns over a ten-month session in order to increase the number of potential interpreters eligible to work.
- The goals of the programs are:
 - To deliver quality ASL or LSQ interpreting services across Ontario in a variety of health, mental health and community settings to facilitate communication between individuals who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or deafblind and individuals who do not use ASL or LSQ.
 - To support the development of skills and competencies of ASL and LSQ sign language interpreters.

Interpreting Services Program Framework

- The Ministry is working in collaboration with the Canadian Hearing Society to develop a program framework that will provide overarching direction for the planning, structure, and delivery of MCSS-funded interpreter services.
- The framework aims to:
 - Consolidate program policies and operational requirements;
 - Increase transparency;
 - Clarify ministry expectations and strengthen accountability; and
 - Support the program's long-term sustainability.