

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE**  
**FEBRUARY 2016**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS.....	2
Progress in Achievement for Students with Special Education Needs .....	2
The Development of a Provincial Alternative Curriculum .....	2
Supports for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing .....	3
Draft Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (K-12),.....	4
Learning for All, A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12.....	4
Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities.....	6
Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Transition Planning.....	7
Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12.....	8
Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement (BIPSA).....	8
Mental Health and Addictions Strategy .....	9
Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) .....	12
Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) Capacity Building Projects	15
Special Needs Strategy.....	15
Supporting Students with Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Giftedness) or Behavioural Needs .....	16
Transformation of Educational Programs .....	17
FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION .....	18
Special Education Funding Overview.....	18
Evolution of Special Education Funding.....	19
Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disability .....	20
ADVICE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION .....	21
Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE).....	21
UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES.....	22
Ministry: Children and Youth Services.....	22
Ministry: Health and Long-Term Care .....	28
Ministry: Training, Colleges and Universities.....	29
Ministry of Community and Social Services .....	33

# **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**

### **KEY FACTS**

- In summer 2015, a writing team consisting of Education Officers from SEPPB, CAPB and FLEPPB drafted the overall and specific expectations for each competency.
- 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), 334,311 students (16.6%) of the total provincial student population, from grades 1-12 were receiving special education programs and/or services.
  - Of the 334,311 students, 194,697 (58%) were in elementary schools, and 139,614 (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 are 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**

#### **KEY FACTS**

- *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 continues 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.
- *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 WAS distributed to school boards. All school boards received \$17,000 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 continues 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 2013-14, district school boards reported that 41.4% (75,543) of exceptional students identified by an IPRC had a learning disability. This is the largest exceptionality group of the twelve exceptionalities. It is a reasonable hypothesis that a significant portion of students receiving special education programs and services but are not identified by IPRC have LDs (144,987 or 7.1% of total enrolment).
- Implementation of the new policy requirements for [Policy/Program Memorandum 8 \(PPM\): Identification and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities](#) 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 \(2013\)](#). PPM 8 promotes 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 Adobe Connect information sessions to 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 at Regional Special Education Councils, Council for Exceptional Children Conference (2014), Learning for All K-12 professional learning networks, etc.

### FUNDING

- In 2014, 2015 and 2016, 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.
- LDAO's 2nd Annual Educators' Institute took place on August 25 & 26, 2015. It provided participants 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.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Ministry and board developed resources to support the implementation of PPM 8 will continue to be posted on [EduGAINS](#) (English) and [ÉduSource](#) (French). The ministry intends to continue posting relevant resources on these websites to support boards' implementation.
- SEPPB will continue to collaborate with other branches and divisions in the ministry to ensure integrated work in supporting students with learning disabilities.
- SEPPB will continue work on the LDs Guidelines and align them with other Guidelines in development.
- In 2015-16, SEPPB facilitated the establishment 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 a consistent understanding and application of the new definition of LDs in PPM 8. SEPPB will support SEAWG with dissemination of their recommendations on professional practices supporting implementation of PPM8.
- The ministry will continue to fund LDAO to develop a range of online educator resources and conduct Summer Educators' Institute in August 2016. In 2016-17, LDAO will develop learning modules related to learning and teaching of students with LDs. Modules may include videos, webinars, lesson plans, handouts, blogs, and supporting research summaries.

## **Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Transition Planning**

### **KEY FACTS**

- 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.
- 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 has provided district school boards with funds to support the continuous improvement of IEPs including transition plans.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Continuous improvement of IEP/Transition planning continues 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.
- When invited by a board, 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**

### **WHAT'S NEW**

- The Ministry of Education is working with boards and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education to support the Syrian Refugee Settlement in Ontario by:
  - providing current information about settlement plans (e.g., destination points for refugees);
  - ensuring, in partnership with the federal government, that school boards have the resources and support required (e.g., financial, language, mental health, community) to successfully integrate Syrian refugees into our education system; and
  - working together to problem-solve situations as they arise.
- At the request of the Ministry of Education, School Mental Health ASSIST has formed the School Mental Health Newcomer Resource Group to support school boards in their efforts to promote mental health and respond to any social emotional needs of refugee students and their families. The SMH Newcomer Resource Group consists of 25-30 school mental health professionals and senior administrators (Mental Health Leaders, Superintendents, and Chief Social Workers / Psychologists) from across the provincially funded (Catholic, Public, French, and English) school boards. The Resource Group will primarily offer a monitoring and mobilization role and work specifically with school boards to:
  - Observe and monitor the mental health needs of students and families as refugee families transition to our school system
  - Provide a platform for sharing of materials and resources in support of student mental health and well-being
  - Fill any gap areas with resources that are co-developed across boards and in collaboration with other ministries, settlement services, etc.
- New resources were developed (e.g., info-sheet) and/or existing resources will be disseminated to school leaders, educators and board Mental Health Leadership Teams as needed.
- The ministry will support the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council and its five working groups who will provide advice on the Strategy's investments, promote collaboration across sectors and report annually on the Strategy's progress.

## KEY FACTS

- The Government's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## FUNDING

- For the 2015-16 school year the Ministry will:
  - **Continue to fund School Mental Health ASSIST program:** \$1M allocated to the School Mental Health ASSIST.
  - **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**

- In Phase 2 of the Strategy, the following initiatives are underway through the Ministry of Education:
  - 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.
  - 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 strategies.
  - 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).
- 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.

### **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 and sectors to support the alignment of initiatives to support students.

- 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.
- Continue to implement initiatives through School Mental Health ASSIST, including parent and youth advisory groups.

## **Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

### **WHAT'S NEW**

- The ministry continues to work closely with MCYS and MTCU, making connections with our community and post-secondary partners to support continuity in programming for school-aged children and youth and more seamless transitioning for youth entering college or university
- Geneva Centre for Autism has developed a free online module with a focus on effective practices of collaboration of schools, parents and community providers in supporting students with ASD. The course includes 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 was 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. The pilot will begin in Spring 2016.
- 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.
- 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 18,899.

- 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**

### **KEY FACTS**

- 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](#)
- In 2013, the Ministry launched the [EduGAINS SEAC](#) / [ÉduSource CCED](#) 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 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](#).
- The ministries are meeting with individual proposal development tables, including the recommended coordinating agency, to confirm and/or clarify the proposed model, discuss potential modifications and available resources and next steps for implementation.
- Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services for Children and Youths scheduled to be implemented in 2017-18.
- 2016-17 will be a building year for Coordinated Service Planning. Coordinating agencies will receive limited new resources (up to \$110,000 per service delivery area) to help support capacity building and implementation of the new service model.

### **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.

## **Transformation of Educational Programs in Government Approved Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities**

### **KEY FACTS**

- The Ministry is continuing with the ongoing transformation of CTCC programs.

### **New Programs for the 2015-16 school year**

- 9 new Enhanced Education/Treatment (EET) programs and 8 new Community Based Youth Justice (CBYJ) programs started in September 2015.
- Overviews of some of the new programs were presented at the CTCC Administration Group Meeting in January 2016, and there are continued plans to have new programs share their key learnings and effective practices using the CTCC Administration Group meetings as a venue.

### **Provincial E-Learning Strategy**

- E-Learning pilot sites are continuing to advance their e-learning projects.
- 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 is in the process of working with school boards and their student management system vendors to begin collecting elemental student achievement data from secondary CTCC facilities in June 2016 for the 2015-16 school year.

### **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 has responded to the additional increase in youth being ordered by the courts to attend community programs by approving the 8 new and 2 re-purposed CBYJ programs. The Thunder Bay region, which was the only region without a CBYJ program, now has 2 CBYJ programs.

## **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 remained the same as 2014-15 at \$96M. Funding for the 17 new CTCC programs in 2015-16 within the existing \$96M envelope occurred as a result of reallocation of resources within the envelope.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- The ministry will review and evaluate the new programs and support school boards with sharing their new program models, innovations, key learnings and successes with the sector.
- SEPPB will continue to work closely with school boards, stakeholders and our intra and inter-ministerial partners to facilitate ongoing improvements to CTCC programs and improve educational outcomes for students.

## **FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Special Education Funding Overview**

#### **KEY FACTS**

- 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.
- In 2015-16, the Ministry intends to 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. Of this \$73 million investment in ASD, nearly \$49 million has been allocated to training.

## **Evolution of Special Education Funding**

### **WHAT'S NEW**

#### 2016-17 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Consultations

- During the Fall of 2015 the Ministry conducted province-wide consultations on the 2016-17 Grants for Student Needs (GSN). These consultations focused on identifying further efficiencies and opportunities for reinvestment; continuing to make more efficient use of school space; expanded accountability measures; and ensuring equity in education within the context of some special purpose grants.
  - The Special Education Grant was one of the special purpose grants discussed during these consultations.
- A consultation session with MACSE was held on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### **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**

- Prior to the release of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding for 2016-17, the ministry plans to reconvene the Special Education Funding Working Group to continue to support the transformation of special education funding and other key special education initiatives going forward.
- 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**

### **KEY FACTS**

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

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- MACSE's next meeting: June 8 and 9, 2016.

## **UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES**

**Approved by respective MCYS, MHLTC, MTCU, MCSS Directors**

### **Ministry: Children and Youth Services**

#### **Child and Youth Residential Services Review**

- Residential settings include group homes, foster homes, provincially operated facilities and youth justice open and secure custody/detention facilities. Children and youth may be placed in residential settings by parents, children's aid societies or in the case of youth justice, ordered through the courts.
- The children and youth come from a variety of backgrounds and may have a multitude of needs. Residential settings provide a range of services from basic accommodation, care and supervision in a family home setting to specialized programs in treatment settings for children and youth with complex special needs, including complex medical needs.
- Residential services are provided by a number of service providers who are licensed and/or funded (directly or indirectly) by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Service providers must meet the requirements and regulations of the Child and Family Services Act.

#### **Status Update / Timing**

- In July 2015, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced a Residential Services Review Panel consisting of:
  - Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi, Director of the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University;
  - Deborah Newman, former Deputy Minister in the Ontario Public Service; and
  - Dr. Nico Trocmé, Philip Fisher Chair in Social Work and Director of the McGill School of Social Work.
- The Panel is tasked with consulting with stakeholders including associations, service providers and individuals with lived experience of child and youth residential services and providing the Deputy Minister with a report and recommendations on the most effective and efficient way to deliver care and treatment services in a residential setting to optimize positive outcomes for children and youth.
- The work of the Panel builds on the government's efforts to improve outcomes for all children and youth. It complements transformations already underway in child welfare, youth justice, mental health and special needs.
- The Panel will submit their Final Report to the Deputy Minister by the end of February 2016.

#### **Linkages to Special Education**

- Children and youth in care have lower rates of educational attainment compared to Ontario children and youth. For example, in 2013 just 46 per cent of youth in

children's aid societies' care attained an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, compared to the Ontario average of 83 per cent.

### **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**

- 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.
- A whole government approach to the FASD strategy provides a provincial framework for programs and services that addresses the complex needs of individuals living with FASD.
- The FASD Strategy will focus on five priority areas:
  1. Awareness and Prevention
  2. Screening, Assessment and Diagnosis
  3. Programs and Services
  4. Support for Families and Caregivers
  5. Data Collection and Performance Measurement

### **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 Tele-Mental Health Service is providing more than 2,800 psychiatric consults in 2015-16, which are benefitting children and youth in rural, remote and underserved communities.

- All publicly funded mental health professionals working with children and youth are able to refer to the Service, including those working in school boards.
- The youth suicide prevention plan is in its third year.
- In 2015-16, 33 communities have plans in place on key activities to:
  - Enhance communities' capacity to build awareness and mobilize collaboratively across the child and youth mental health, education and health sectors; and
  - Support the implementation of the best practices available to prevent death by suicide.
- Dedicated supports are being provided to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal organizations in recognition of their communities' unique cultural and organizational needs.
- The Ontario Centre for Excellence in Child and Youth Mental Health (Centre) is supporting *Together to Live*, a web-based toolkit that supports community mobilization.
- Provincial Mobilization forums, including five e-forums and an Aboriginal youth life promotion forum are being organized and hosted by the Centre to bring together community-based mental health providers, partners and gatekeepers to provide education and training on youth suicide prevention.
- Coaching supports are also available to support community groups to plan, implement and evaluate youth suicide prevention efforts.
- Phase two of the Strategy includes a component focussed on addictions. MCYS is now providing secretarial support for the Youth Addictions Working Group.
- The Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council created the Youth Addictions Working Group in April 2015. It is one of five Working Groups supporting the Council in its mandate to provide the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with advice on the implementation of the second phase of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
- The Youth Addictions Working Group is responsible for assessing gaps and challenges, setting strategic directions and providing advice on specific issues to inform the Government's approach to delivering services and supports to youth with addictions. Services delivered in schools fall within the purview of this work. The Working Group recently finalized a work plan to guide its activities.

### **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.
- The first signs that youth are struggling with a mental health and / or addictions issue may be at school. Including school-based service delivery in the work of the Youth Addictions Working Group responds to this reality.

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

### **Status Update/Timing**

- As of December 2015, the ministry has announced lead agencies in 31 of 33 service areas with ongoing work continuing in the remaining service areas.
- 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.
- Proposals for how service providers and educators recommend implementing coordinated service planning and integrated delivery of rehabilitation services have

been received and reviewed by the ministries of Children and Youth Services, Education, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community and Social Services .

- We are now working with identified coordinating agencies, along with partner children's service providers, Community Care Access Centres and school boards, to implement coordinated service planning across Ontario. Implementation will be phased across the province beginning in 2016.
- The ministries will communicate about next steps for implementation of the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services for implementation of the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services by 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.
- Once in place, families will have a single, identifiable coordinating agency in their community where they can connect with a Service Planning Coordinator who will:
  - Work with families to develop coordinated service plans;
  - Help connect families with the range of services and supports that will meet their children's needs; and
  - Monitor progress.
- As part of coordinated service planning, Service Planning Coordinators will connect with school staff, as needed, so that the child/youth's coordinated service plan can inform planning for the transition to school and Individual Education Plan (IEP) planning. In this way, families will not have to unnecessarily repeat their stories and coordinated service planning and school processes will be mutually supporting the child/youth's needs and goals.
- 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 conduct an arms-length evaluation of its Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based services and supports for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- The Request for Bids for the procurement of the services of a consultant to evaluate the ABA program was posted on publicly on the government's tendering site, Bravosolution, on January 8<sup>th</sup>. The closing date is February 19<sup>th</sup>. The evaluation will begin in Spring 2016 and be completed in Fall 2016.
- 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 is working closely with the Ministry of Education throughout the process.

### **Supported Employment Demonstrations for Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) will launch Supported Employment Demonstrations for Young People with ASD in winter 2016.
- The demonstrations will help young people (aged 14-30) attain and maintain paid employment, and build employer capacity to recruit, hire and retain young people with ASD.
- The demonstrations will gather information and evidence about best practices for supporting 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 educational institutions to transition successfully into the workforce. The agencies will be expected to work in partnership with local schools and postsecondary institutions to recruit participants and deliver the demonstrations.

## Ministry: Health and Long-Term Care

### Patient's First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario

- On December 17, 2015, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) released *Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario* (Proposal), a discussion paper that outlines proposed changes for the health system.
- The proposed structural changes would see Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) assume responsibility for home and community care and system integration, and have greater involvement with primary care, and improved linkages with population health planning.
- The discussion paper can be accessed [here](#).
- With the release of the discussion paper, the ministry will begin an engagement process to discuss the proposal. The ministry is committed to listening to staff and clinicians, patients, clients and caregivers, other health care partners, Indigenous peoples, and municipal and other community and government partners. The feedback received from our partners is critical to ensuring the continuity and improvement of high-quality services, and a well-thought out and carefully implemented plan.

### Status Update / Timing

- Announced on December 17, 2015.
- As the proposed model would require changes to legislation, the ministry is reviewing relevant acts and the feedback received from partners. The ministry intends to propose draft legislation for consideration by the Legislative Assembly in the spring of 2016.
- The ministry is currently receiving feedback through the Health Feedback account ([health.feedback@ontario.ca](mailto:health.feedback@ontario.ca)). The deadline to submit feedback is February 29, 2016.

### Linkages to Special Education

- Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) provide School Health Support Service (SHSS) to enable children with special needs who require assistance to attend publicly funded schools (i.e. public and separate schools) private schools or to enable children to be home schooled.
- Ensuring that there is no disruption to health care services is a top priority for the ministry, and is our commitment to the people of Ontario.
- Under the Proposal, home care services would continue to be provided by current service providers and front-line staff.
- The ministry's *Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care* does outline an objective to modernize service delivery, including contracts.
- Over time, it is expected that contracts with home care service providers would be better coordinated and more consistent within the geographic model of the LHIN sub-regions. Should the proposal be implemented, the ministry would work closely with CCACs, LHINs and other health system partners on planning for the continuity of client care.

## 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.
- For 2014-15 and onwards, the ministry has integrated the Summer Transitions Program funding with the Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities (AFSD).
- Final allocations for the integrated fund for 2015-16 were announced in December 2015.

#### 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 an "Action Plan to strengthen transitions to postsecondary education for students with disabilities". The goal of the plan, implemented in 2013-14, was to support students transitioning from secondary school to postsecondary education, with an early focus on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- **[The Web Transitions Resource Guide](#)**: The website, launched in 2013 now has an average of 2000 visits per month and has been distributed in hard copy, to all school boards in the province. 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. It continues to undergo development, through outreach activities to promote the website and with input from its Advisory Board to support its activities it can be found [here](#).
- **The Demonstration Projects**: York University and Algonquin College have partnered with local school boards to pilot a proposed transitions model. In 2015, students were enrolled in the programs and 83% of those students completed their academic year. The projects continue to use their research to inform the

development of a model 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 established a working group comprised of members selected based on their experience and expertise on transitions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and who represent secondary and postsecondary education, families, community agencies and healthcare providers, and several Ontario government ministries.
- The group has met four times with a final meeting planned for the spring of 2016. The group is on track to advise the Ministry on a Transitions Model for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders by the summer of 2016

### **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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. A total of 15 projects continue to receive funding through 2016-17.
- One of the successful projects is the Centre for Innovation on Campus Mental Health. 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 committing over \$3 million annually through 2017-18 for Kids Help Phone and their partners to provide a dedicated mental health helpline-service to postsecondary students. 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**

- In 2014/15, MCSS accelerated the pace of the investment so that more individuals could benefit from the investment sooner.
- For some programs this meant that we over-achieved our year one targets for the number of people served.
- More than 14,000 people and families are getting new direct funding so they can choose the programs that will help them achieve their goals.
  - In the case of Special Services at Home (SSAH) we eliminated the 2014 SSAH waitlist two years ahead of schedule, providing SSAH funding to 8,000 families.
  - In the case of Passport we met our year two target one year ahead of schedule; providing Passport funding to more than 6,000 people.
- The ministry is on target to eliminate the 2014 Passport waitlist by 2017/18.
- The ministry has resumed approving new direct funding to more individuals for 2015/16. By the end of 2017/18, 13,000 individuals and their families will have received new Passport funding – including thousands of new individuals who have been waiting for supports prior to December 31, 2014.
- The Passport program will continue to expand throughout the three year investment as we expect that there will be more than 20,000 individuals in receipt of Passport funding by 2017/18.
- We know that even with these significant increases in direct funding, there remain many individuals and families needing supports.

### **Sheltered Workshops**

- In November 2015, the Minister of Community and Social Services announced that the government was moving to end all new admissions to sheltered workshops.
- Ontario wants to make sure people with developmental disabilities have every opportunity for inclusion and independence, just like other citizens in our communities.
- No programs will be closed or supports taken away without appropriate alternatives in place.
- Meaningful community participation can include work, volunteering or recreational activities.
- The Ministry of Community and Social Services will be engaging with stakeholders in the coming months to carefully plan this transition.