

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MINISTER

FOR THE YEAR 1998/99

SUBMITTED August 1999

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

August 10, 1999

Honourable Janet Ecker
Minister
Ministry of Education
900 Bay Street
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Re: Annual report of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

Dear Minister Ecker:

It is with great pleasure that I submit to you this report on the activities of your Advisory Council on Special Education during the fiscal year 1998/99.

The year 1998/99 has been a significant year for education in Ontario, and during this year, Council has been very active on behalf of Ontario's exceptional students. The attached report includes a message to you documenting some of Council's principal observations and recommendations, and also includes a detailed description of the activities of your Council during 1998/99.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the issues raised by Council and summarized in this report. I also would like to extend an invitation to you to attend the next Council's meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 1999.

On behalf of all Council members, I would like to thank you for your attention and support to the needs of exceptional students.

Yours sincerely,

Lynn Ziraldo
Chair

**c/o Lynn Ziraldo, 9 Elston Court, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 8A6
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PART 1: COUNCIL'S MESSAGE TO THE MINISTER

August 10, 1999

Dear Minister Ecker:

As your Advisory Council¹, we believe it to be our role to document successful practices as well as the concerns of the special education community and to recommend to you appropriate actions in response to this information. This message highlights some of the significant observations and positions of the Council over the 1998/99 year.

Successful Practices

The release of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Resource Guide has been a significant positive step in ensuring individualized attention for every exceptional student. We look forward now to the release of the revised Special Education Information Handbook, including the Transition Planning Resource Guide, and the special education pages on the Ministry of Education web site. These resources will go a long way to clarify communication and perceptions among the ministry, parents and school boards.

With support from the Ministry of Education the Special Needs Opportunity Window (SNOW) has become an exciting new resource for special education teachers, students and parents. Staff of the SNOW project have assisted Council to understand some of the potential benefits to exceptional students, their teachers and parents to be found in the new technologies.

We also look forward to the introduction of the planned program for recognizing school boards' successful practices in special education. We believe that Ontario school boards offer examples of special education programs and services which deserve to be highlighted for the benefit of educators and parents across Ontario and around the world. The identification, recognition and publication of our most successful practices will facilitate the spread of these practices throughout Ontario and may provide opportunities for the export of Ontario expertise world-wide. This program will fulfil a number of recommendations which the Council has made to the ministry.

We would also like to commend the ministry for its decision to request the submission this year of school board special education plans in their entirety. This has served to profile special education with the newly amalgamated school boards. Also the requirement in the new Regulation 464/97 that the plans be reviewed and endorsed by the school board Special Education Advisory Committees has facilitated the involvement of local parent associations in the development of special education plans. Finally, the request to school boards that they also submit their new parent guides has ensured that these guides have been completed and made available to parents in a timely fashion.

As in our previous reports, we would like to express our appreciation to the government and to the staff

¹ A description of the mandate and structure of the Council is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

of the ministry for supporting the work of the Council. We believe that our meetings with Ministers Snobelen and Johnson and our frequent meetings with senior managers and ministry staff have fostered mutual understanding and a valuable working relationship. We also appreciate the involvement of Council members on many of the resource and task groups formed by the ministry in developing policy and curriculum materials. The support of ministry staff at Council meetings and subcommittee meetings (arranging meetings, preparing minutes and reports) contributes immeasurably to the effectiveness of your Council. Finally, we appreciate the attention given by the ministry to the resolutions of the Council and the comprehensive reports prepared by the ministry showing the ministry response to each resolution.

Council's Priorities for 1998/99

At each meeting of the Council, each Council member is encouraged to table a report on the recent consultation with the organizations in his or her constituency. These reports are shared among Council members in order that the perceptions of successful practices and of issues and concerns are known to all members.

At its June 18, 1998 meeting the Council identified five priorities for the 1998/99 year:

- special education funding model;
- elementary / secondary policy and curriculum;
- student transitions (during their elementary / secondary school years and from school to work, further education and life in the community);
- interministry coordination (in the provision of support services for exceptional students); and
- governance and school board accountability in special education.

For each of these priority areas, Council has an active standing subcommittee. The subcommittees meet several times yearly, usually by teleconference, to examine issues and draft resolutions for the consideration of the full Council at its three yearly meetings.

To the extent possible, the consideration by Council of concerns which are generated through our consultation process results in recommendations to the minister which take the form of resolutions of the Council. A list of Council's 47 resolutions for 1998/99 is included as Part 3 of this report.

The following sections are organized in accordance with Council's five priority concerns for 1998/99. The material summarizes some of the key resolutions of the Council and also identifies some issues and concerns for which Council has not yet formulated resolutions.

Special Education Funding

While Council continues to be supportive of the concepts of transparency and portability of special education funding which are embodied in the student focussed funding model we share with school boards and parents some concerns with the proposed implementation of this approach. Council members participated intensively on the ministry's Expert Panel on Special Education Funding and despite difficult negotiations and compromise supported the report of the panel. We note with regret that some of the more significant recommendations of the ministry's Expert Panel on Special Education Funding were not acted upon by the ministry in its revision of the *Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount (ISA)*.

The principal source of concern with the revisions to the ISA process is with the proposed student profiles. There is considerable confusion among board officials and parents concerning the intent and principles underlying the profiles and other aspects of special education funding. We are advised by school boards that they are concerned that this approach will restrict their flexibility in the administration of special education programs and services by promising parents that their children will receive funding at certain levels. Parents advise us that the ISA criteria are restrictive and that students who fail to match the profiles in some minor respect will be denied needed programs and services by school boards. There is also concern from parents that programs and services may be identified in student's Individual Education Plans for the sole purpose of obtaining funds and that some school boards may then use the funds for other purposes.

There is also growing confusion between the proposed funding profiles and the ministry's official definitions of exceptionalities which Regulation 181/98 requires school boards to use in the formal identification and placement process. Despite the modest revisions to some titles of exceptionalities last year, the ministry definitions remain outdated. The many months of work and consultation in revising the definitions remains unfruitful because the ministry has chosen to withhold any changes to the definitions pending the results of the ISA review. Because the existing definitions are inappropriate in some respects, boards are left to their own devices in the identification and placement process. This leads to growing differences among boards and among communities in the identification and placement of exceptional students and consequently in the nature of programs and services provided to these students. With due recognition of the need for careful review of the ISA funding model, the ministry is urged to resolve these matters as quickly as possible and end the debilitating uncertainty in which boards are currently operating.

Two other areas of uncertainty among school board officials and parents are (1) the availability of funds for special education programs and services other than those funded through ISA, and (2) the availability of funds to cover the cost of transportation for exceptional students.

Messages from the ministry concerning the funding model have appeared to change frequently and sometimes seem to contradict each other. We hope that the current year of review will result in an effective, understandable and stable funding model which can be quickly, clearly, accurately and consistently communicated to school board officials and to parents.

Secondary School Reform and Curriculum

Council and its Elementary / Secondary Policy and Curriculum subcommittee have been actively involved in secondary school reform and curriculum development. Council was particularly pleased with the way in which policy and approaches to meeting the needs of exceptional students were described at appropriate places throughout the Ontario Secondary Schools document. Council encourages the ministry to use this approach as a model for future policy documents.

A number of issues in the implementation of the new secondary school policy continue to concern members of the Council. We recognize that policy decisions have now been made and that time is needed to assess the impact of the new policy on students. In some areas, however, we believe that particularly careful monitoring is warranted so that problems may be detected early and swift corrective action taken where necessary.

Council is concerned about the possible impacts of the change to the new Ontario Secondary Schools policy in September 1999 on exceptional students. We are aware of the government's pledge to provide sufficient funds to Ontario's provincially funded postsecondary institutions to ensure that no student is disadvantaged with respect to college or university admission by being part of the "double cohort". Still, we are concerned that exceptional students are more vulnerable than most to these changes and we encourage the ministry and the postsecondary institutions to give specific attention to the needs of exceptional students in planning for the "double cohort".

One specific challenge for exceptional students comes from the need of some of these students for additional time to complete their course requirements for graduation. This means for example that some students who commenced Grade 9 in September 1998 under the existing secondary school policy (OS:IS²) and who are required to repeat courses or to take a lighter course load will face the stress of switching from old curriculum to new curriculum courses at points during their time in secondary school. In addition, some of these students will be seeking admission to postsecondary institutions having met the OS:IS graduation requirements at a time when other students are meeting the new graduation requirements. We are aware that the government has made provision for "reaching back" and "ahead" and for students to graduate with credits from a mix of old and new courses. However, we again urge the ministry to give special attention to the needs of exceptional students in these unusual and stressful circumstances.

Council is also concerned about the transition of some exceptional students into secondary school under the new Ontario Secondary Schools policy. Students who, in the past, would have enrolled in basic level courses will no longer have that option. Once again, we are aware that the ministry is advising school boards that they may develop local courses in English, math and science for these students and that other strategies such as substitution of credit courses may be employed. Once again, we urge the ministry to monitor this issue closely to determine whether a more directive provincial strategy is required in order to ensure that these exceptional students receive the programs and services which they need and are consequently entitled to under the *Education Act*.

Council has expressed its concern that the implementation of the Grade 10 literacy test not penalize exceptional students unfairly. Some exceptional students (especially those with learning disabilities and those who are deaf or hard of hearing) process language in ways which require special accommodations. With appropriate accommodations many of these students can perform at levels comparable to students who do not have disabilities -- but without appropriate accommodations the literacy test could be an insurmountable barrier. The ministry is encouraged to work closely with the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) to ensure that the Grade 10 literacy test does not become systemic barrier for students with disabilities.

Finally, as the government's decision with respect to Grade 12 exit examinations has yet to be made, we would like to reiterate Council's opposition to the introduction of such examinations. We believe that Grade 12 exit examinations would distort the education process for all students and would create inappropriate barriers for exceptional students.

Student Transitions

Council, through its Transitions Subcommittee has contributed to the *Transition Planning Resource Guide* and the *Transition Planning Guideline for Students with Developmental Disabilities* both of which are under development by the ministry. Council supports the development of both of these documents and encourages the ministry to complete and publish them as soon as possible.

The Transitions Subcommittee has also looked at the issue of available integrated placements for students with developmental disabilities and the availability of suitable counselling services primarily for deaf and hard of hearing students and those with physical disabilities in transition from secondary school to colleges and universities. The ministry is encouraged to give serious consideration to Council's resolutions on these matters.

Interministry Coordination

Council applauds the commitment of the ministry to initiate a review of the interministerial agreements on School Health Support Services (Policy / Program Memorandum 81) and the Interministerial Guidelines for the Provision of Speech and Language Services. We look forward to participating in all

aspects of this review. Council also appreciates the ongoing liaison with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Children's Secretariat and the Office of Integrated Services for Children, both at our regular meetings and through the Council's Interministerial Coordination Subcommittee. We also look forward to our continuing involvement with the Review of Services for Children and Youth with Multiple Special needs and the Review of Children's Treatment Centres which are being undertaken by these offices and with the government's early years initiatives which derive from the McCain and Mustard *Early Years Study*.

Governance and Accountability

A concern which appears to be emerging in many school boards is an apparent reduction in the range of placement options available to exceptional students. Despite the policy of the ministry that integration in regular classrooms is to be the placement norm for exceptional students in Ontario, we are hearing of school boards where integrated placements for some exceptional students (particularly those with developmental disabilities) is not considered by the IPRC and is not offered to parents. In some cases, we are advised, boards which formerly offered integrated placements are now ceasing to do so. We are also hearing of school boards which are eliminating or seriously reducing access to special classes for gifted students and for students with learning disabilities. Finally we are hearing of reductions in professional staff such as psychologists and speech and language pathologists with the result that students must wait in some cases six months or more for an assessment or treatment. These reports raise questions among Council members about the ability of these boards to provide the special education programs and services needed by these students in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Act*.

While Council appreciates the many steps taken by the government to improve accountability in special education – among them the specific identification of special education funding (as recommended by Council), the increased role for Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) in Regulation 464/97, and the ministry tracking system of concerns raised by parents and others – for these provisions to be effective, the ministry must continually signal its expectation concerning, and support for, school board accountability. For example, the ministry must devote sufficient staff time to review the special education plan submissions of the school boards and must follow up effectively with school boards where there are indications in the plans of non-compliance with legislation, regulation or ministry policy.

Council members have become aware of some instances where SEACs have not endorsed the special education plan as submitted by the school board. We understand and support the decision of the ministry to solicit detailed information from school boards on the nature of any disagreements between the board and its SEAC on the contents of the plan. We believe that these instances warrant careful investigation by the ministry. These disagreements may reflect unrealistic expectations on the part of the parent association members of the SEAC; or they may be symptomatic of a school board which is having difficulty meeting its obligations to provide appropriate special education programs and services for its exceptional students. Following its review of these matters with school boards, a public

statement by the ministry describing the nature of the resolution of these instances of disagreement between boards and SEACs would be a strong demonstration of system accountability.

Another way in which Council believes accountability could be improved would be to give parents some clear direction on procedures to follow in the event of disagreement with their school or school board on matters other than the identification and placement of their children. (The appeal process in the event of disagreements about identification and placement matters is well defined in Regulation 181/98 and well documented in the ministry's excellent Sample Parent Guide.) With the advent of Regulation 181, matters of program and service may now be discussed by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), but the decision on these matters still rests with the school board. Parents should be involved in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for their child but, once again, the decision on the plan rests with the board. At present, when a parent believes that a school board is failing to provide an appropriate special education program or special education services as required by the *Education Act*, there is no clear avenue of appeal. Ministry staff have indicated that the forthcoming Special Education Information Handbook and Special Education Web pages will provide parents with this needed information. We encourage you and ministry staff to ensure that this guidance is provided as soon as possible.

Other Matters

S Safe Schools

Council is concerned that government and school board safe schools initiatives take into account the needs of exceptional students. Council members are becoming aware of an apparently increasing number of instances where suspension and expulsion are employed in a seemingly arbitrary fashion with exceptional students who transgress behaviour codes and without due regard to the ability of the student to understand the code and to apply it successfully to his / her behaviour. In other words, it appears as if suspension and expulsion are being used in some cases (particularly in the case of students with Autism) in place of appropriate special education or other support services and accommodations which will effectively curb instances of aggressive behaviour.

Special Education Monograph 5 (which provides guidance to school boards on the implementation of safe schools policies with respect to exceptional students) is still in draft form. Council would like to see the release of Monograph 5 at the same time as any new safe schools policy. Ideally, the principles embodied in Monograph 5 should be interwoven as appropriate into the safe schools policy using a model similar to that employed in the Ontario Secondary Schools document.

S Sunset Review of Council

We are aware that the current mandate for the Council runs until March 31, 1999 and that a formal Sunset Review is required during this last year of the current mandate. Members of Council strongly

support a continuing role for the Council in advising the minister on elementary/secondary special education policy and practice in Ontario.

We believe that the current structure of the Council is working well but we feel that the limit of three days of meetings per year is insufficient time to permit Council to reflect fully on special education issues and to provide the reasoned and balanced policy recommendations which would be of most benefit to you in informing government decision making.

We also note that there are, at present, 7 vacancies on Council which are currently filled on an interim basis. It is our hope that these positions can be filled as soon as possible so that educators and members of the public in the constituencies involved can feel fully and effectively represented on the Council.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit this report, and look forward to meeting with you, hopefully at our meeting on October 21.

Yours Sincerely

Lynn Ziraldo
Chair
on behalf of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

PART 2: ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL IN 1998/99

The year 1998/99 has been a busy year for education in Ontario, and during this year, Council has been very active on behalf of Ontario's exceptional students.

Membership

During this year Council functioned with full membership. The membership of Council at the end of 1998/99 is shown in Appendix 2.

Meetings³

The Council held meetings on June 18 and October 29, 1998 and on February 18, 1999.

The June 18, 1998 agenda included topics on:

- S Secondary School Curriculum Development Process
- S Provincial Report Card
- S Elementary School Policy and the Curriculum Planner
- S Secondary School Reform
- S Ontario Student Transcript
- S Annual Education Plan
- S Teacher Advisor
- S Grade 10 Literacy Test
- S Community Involvement
- S Changes to the Categories and Definitions on Exceptionalities
- S Special Education Information Handbook
- S Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), transitional planning
- S Future role of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- S New funding model
- S ISA Funding levels 2 and 3
- S Student Focussed Funding model
- S Reg 181/98
- S Staffing of District Offices

³ Copies of the minutes of these meetings are available in English or French by writing to Ms. Savitri Ramhit, Administrative Coordinator, Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education, 15th Floor Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M7A 1L2; phone (416) 325-2784; e-mail savitri.ramhit@edu.gov.on.ca

The October 29, 1998 agenda included topics on:

- S Development of a Transition Planning Resource Guide
- S Healthy Babies and Healthy Children
- S Review of PPM 81
- S Review of Services for Children and Youth with Multiple Special Education Needs
- S Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)
- S Special Education Funding
- S IEP Resource and Sample Parent Guides
- S Expert Panel on the Refinement of the ISA Criteria
- S Ontario Student Transcript Policy
- S Secondary School report Card
- S Assessment and Reporting
- S Secondary School Curriculum
- S Elementary Policy and Curriculum
- S Core French Exemptions
- S Student Number and OSR

The February 18, 1999 agenda included topics on:

- S Safe Schools
- S Grade 10 Literacy
- S Special Needs Review
- S Special Needs Opportunity Window (SNOW)
- S Successful Practices
- S Special Education Information Handbook
- S Mediation
- S PPM 81
- S Funding Issues

The Honourable David Johnson, Minister of Education and Training joined the Council at its June 18, October 29, 1998 and February 18, 1999 meetings for an exchange of views on special education issues and on the government's accomplishments in education reform and current initiatives in special education. Members of the Council were reassured and pleased to hear from the Minister of his personal commitment to exceptional students and his appreciation for the role of his Advisory Council on Special Education.

Sub-Committees

Five standing sub-committees have been active:

- Funding Model
- Elementary/Secondary Policy School Curriculum
- Interministry Co-ordination/Support Services
- Transition to Work/Post Secondary
- Accountability and Board Governance.

In addition five Ad-Hoc Committees were formed:

- Violence Prevention Policy
- Categories and Definitions
- Educational Assistants
- Special Education Handbook
- Exemplary Practices

Sub-committee membership is detailed in Appendix 3.

Reports / Submissions

The work of the subcommittees resulted in reports being submitted to government and agency offices on:

- S** the Future Role of School Councils, and
- S** the Ontarians With Disabilities Act
- S** Standards of Practice for Teachers

Resolutions

Council passed 47 resolutions deriving from meetings held on June 18, 1998; October 29, 1998 and Feb 18, 1998. Council's resolutions are listed in Part 3.

Consultations

Council Chair Lynn Ziraldo and other members of Council met frequently with senior officials of the ministry in order to ensure that the perspective, concerns and recommendations of the Council are understood by those who have responsibility for developing and implementing policies and programs.

Council provided representatives to ministry consultation meetings on a variety of issues including: education finance reform; curriculum; provincial report cards; provincial testing; and secondary school reform, and assisted in the training of staff of the district offices.

Members of Council addressed audiences throughout Ontario providing information about the Council and inviting input. Members also continued to collect information on successful practices and concerns / challenges from the special education community to inform their understanding of issues and to assist Council in setting its agenda for future years.

Self -evaluation

Council also continued its practice of continual assessment of its own effectiveness. A summary of evaluative feedback from Council members is provided to all members and to ministry staff following each meeting.

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PART 3

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS

JUNE 1998 - FEBRUARY 1999

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MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS

FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 1998 TO FEBRUARY 1999

During the period June 1998 to February 1999, 47 resolutions were made by the Council. The resolutions are categorized as follows:

Accountability

98.2.10⁴ **Whereas** the roles and responsibilities related to the structure, governance and delivery of education are evolving and in some cases being redirected. (Result of new funding model Bill 118).

Be it resolved that the Minister's Advisory Council make as a priority an ongoing process that clearly defines such roles and responsibilities to support the Council's understanding of such restructuring.

98.2.12 **Whereas** there is increasing emphasis on public accountability. There is a new Regulation (181) which strengthen the role of parents in the IPRC and IEP processes. There is a new funding model intended to ensure the needs of exceptional students are met.

Be it resolved:

- 1) that the ministry establish a mechanism to monitor school boards' compliance with respect to their legal obligations and that the ministry develop sanctions for boards that do not comply; and
- 2) that the ministry recognize best practice and that this be done in consultation with the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education.

Psychological Assessment Services

99.1.18 **Whereas:** The Ontario Psychological Association has published a set of practice guidelines regarding psychological assessments for clients with learning disabilities, in consultation with the Ministry, and whereas these

⁴Three meetings are held in each calendar year - the first one in February, the second in June and the third in October/November. The numbering system used signifies the year (e.g. 1998) the meeting held (2nd) and the last number (10) represents the resolution.

standards are meant to ensure the portability of assessments when clients with learning disabilities move within the province...

Be it resolved that the ministry acknowledge the importance of these guidelines and further that the ministry encourage school boards to ensure that assessments performed under their auspices follow these guidelines.

Curriculum Development

- 98.3.8 **Whereas** the need for consistent practice within the province is apparent..
Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training develop a policy with regards to exemption issues in CORE FRENCH and other subject areas at the elementary level.

Definitions of Exceptionalities

- 99.1.19 **Whereas:** The ministry has released improved and updated Categories of Exceptionality but has not yet released the improved and updated version of the Definitions of Exceptionality, which were approved by the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education in November of 1997.

Be it resolved that the Minister release the revised and improved version of the Definitions of Exceptionality, approved by Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education in November of 1997, as soon as the ISA funding criteria are finalized.

District Offices

- 98.2.15 **Whereas** the many changes in education have prompted many questions about special education among educators and parents. Whereas many of those questions are directed to the District Offices.

Be it resolved that the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education ask the ministry to consider hiring more employees for the District Offices that have intensive special education knowledge and experience.

- 98.3.1 **Whereas** the Project Team in Operations and Field Services Branch (OFSB) has only English Language Staff as managers.

Be it resolved that there be a designated French Language Manager or an Education Officer in OFSB to ensure that there is adequate communications between French Language Education Officers, Regional District Offices and managers.

Early Intervention and Integrated Services for Children

98.2.2 **Whereas** the Minister's Advisory Council recognizes the importance of interministerial initiatives as central to the delivery of special education for many students.

Be it resolved that the review of Services for Children seek input from the Subcommittee on interministerial Coordination and the Council as a whole.

99.1.10 **Whereas:** In the review of services for those with special needs, mental health of students are central.

Be it resolved that the *Review of Services for Children and Youth with Multiple Special Needs* involve the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education in considering the delivery of mental health services within the range of services for students.

99.1.11 **Whereas:** The Office of Integrated Services for Children and the Policy Branch of the Ministry of Education and Training are both ongoing in reviewing of existing children's services.

Be it resolved that interministerial services be reviewed in the context of the "whole" child such that ministry responsibilities for services are seamless.

99.1.17 **Whereas:** Many students with learning and communication disorders are not fully serviced by the Ministry of Health, Social Services or the Ministry of Education and Training; and Whereas many of these students drop out of the system because they are frustrated or possibly suspended and whereas the impact on other students and staff is often negative.

Be it resolved that the Minister facilitate a more aggressive and immediate interministerial resolution to include children with psychological behavioural, and communication needs disorders, and address funding issues to facilitate access to treatment, programs and services.

Educational Assistants

98.2.9 **Whereas** the role of the educational assistant is unclear and appears to be

threatened in the new funding formula.

Be it resolved that a sub-committee within Council be struck to further explore with MET the issue of the role and responsibilities of educational assistants in this province.

EQAO

99.1.14 **Whereas:** Equity and consistency of practice are essential.

Be it resolved that EQAO/MET develop a (multi-level) appeal process with regards to deferrals, exemptions and remediation for the grade 10 literacy test.

99.1.15 **Whereas:** Ensuring that the needs of all students are met.

Be it resolved that EQAO and/or MET design a clearly defined deferral policy with regards to the grade 10 literacy test.

Funding

98.2.1 **Whereas** the Advisory Council requires precise details of the funding of education in order to discuss, evaluate, and make recommendations to the Minister.

Be it resolved that the Expert Panel funding Papers be released in its entirety to Council.

98.2.5 **Whereas** the Ministry of Education and Training only provides funding for adult education at the continuing education level. Whereas school boards no longer have the right to raise money through taxation to fund adult day schools and, whereas continuing education classes do not provide special education modification of programming, and whereas students, children or adults have the right to those accommodations and modifications under Human Rights legislation.

Be it resolved that the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education ask the Ministry to provide funding for special education resources and services for adult students.

98.3.2 **Whereas** many boards experience new students after the reporting dates for ISA Grants (i.e., immigration implementation of J.K., transfers from Section 27) and this influx of new students places stress on school board

resources to provide programs and services.

Be it resolved that the ISA application process be aligned with the attendance reporting structure (for Grants) required by the Ministry.

98.3.3 **Whereas** transportation dollars are provided to boards in an all-inclusive format.

Be it resolved that within the transportation grant that Special Education be protected for the exclusive purpose of transporting Special Needs Students.

98.3.5 **Whereas** clarity and consistency in terms of communication to boards and parents are key to implementation.

Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training ensure that all boards are cognizant of the “layering component” of the special education funding in particular in terms of the foundation grant.

98.3.6 **Whereas** clarity and consistency are key to successful implementation.

Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training develop a strategic communication policy in terms of funding, in particular, with the special education funding process and that this policy include communication to SEAC and parents and provincial associations.

99.1.13 **Whereas:** The relationship between Special Education and Guidance is usually very close. All students deserve equitable access to programs and services.

Be it resolved that the appropriate funding allocation for teacher counsellors (guidance staff) (2.6 counsellors per thousand as a minimum) be reviewed and mandated as to provide equitable services.

99.1.16 **Whereas:** The Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education has promoted positive changes in the delivery of programs and services for students with special needs, and the need to access appropriate funding.

Whereas: The recommendations of the Expert Panel on the Refinement of the ISA Structure and Criteria are consistent with the Resolutions put forward by Council.

Be it resolved that the Council support the recommendations of the Expert Panel Report on the Refinement of the ISA Structure and Criteria and encourage the Minister to support and approve them in their entirety.

Individual Education Plan

98.2.6 **Whereas** Regulation 181 mandates the development of an IEP. Whereas the Resource Manual for the Special Education Grant Intensive Support Amount includes the IEP template.

Be it resolved that a standardized and electronic version of the IEP template be developed and communicated to Boards by September 1.

Co-operative Education

99.1.5 **Whereas:** Co-operative Education is an opportunity for all students to experience a career while participating in the work environment. The student earns credits for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. There is a need to be concerned about quality of learning, safety of student and support for the workplace supervisor.

Special Education students require additional time and energy for this program. Cooperative Education teachers are eager to encourage all students to participate in the program, to increase learning and to ease the transition to work. We need to work together to increase opportunities for students with special needs.

Be it resolved the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education endorses the resolution of the Ontario Co-operative Education Association (OCEA) encouraging the Ministry of Education and Training to provide:

- policies and procedures for experiential learning programs for special education be written by a team to include representation from: Co-operative Education, Special Education, Educational Assistants, Administration, Parents and Community.

This document be prepared for use in the schools by year 2000 - to provide leadership and resources for the teachers, parents, and students.

- Financial resources for staffing, transportation and workplace modifications.

Non-Diploma Students

99.1.6 **Whereas:** The needs of all students must be addressed within the context of the new OSS policy document.

Be it resolved that a Workplace Achievement Certificate be designed and incorporated into the OSS policy document. A strategy to market the value of this certificate both within the school and community must be developed and implemented swiftly.

99.1.7 **Whereas:** The needs of all students must be addressed within the context of the new OSS policy document.

Be it resolved that, Ministry of Education and Training develop appropriate courses recognized for workplace entry at the grade 9 and 10 level and that these courses/programs be aligned with the grade 11 and 12 workplace courses. These courses should be designed to meet the needs of those students who will not be working towards achieving an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. This curricula must be congruent with the needs, abilities and competencies of these students. This curricula will be the foundation for the achievement of the Workplace Achievement Certificate.

Professional Development

98.3.4 **Whereas** the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education has identified the intensive need for in-depth professional development in new initiatives in special education.

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education and Training clearly define a professional development strategy for all stakeholders in special education, in particular, school principals and classroom teachers. This strategy should be clearly articulated in terms of expectations, strategies and timelines.

98.3.7 **Whereas** given the new formation of Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), new legislation - Regulated Health Professionals Act (1991), updated and new ministry documents Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 81, and the Interministerial Guidelines for the Provision of Speech and Language Services require updating.

Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Health develop a plan to review Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 81 and the Interministerial Guidelines for the Provision of Speech and Language Services and consider the attached recommendations and the review of services for

children with complex needs and programs developed by the Office of the Integrated Services for Children (e.g., those related to behavioural, social-emotional, autism/PDD, Downs Syndrome...)

99.1.8 **Whereas:** Implementation is vital to successful transition to the OSS policy.

Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training develop an in-depth professional development and in-service training program to specifically address special education issues as they relate to policy and the delivery of programs, curricula and services. This program should include all stakeholders (principals, teachers, support staff, SEAC, school councils, community, etc.).

99.1.9 **Whereas:** Professional development and preparedness are key to successful implementation.

Be it resolved that Ministry of Education and Training release the OSS policy document immediately.

Safe School Policy

98.3.9 **Whereas** the issue of safety and provision of adequate programming for all students are paramount.

Be it resolved that Council be kept apprised of the development of the Safe School Policy in particular as it relates to students with behaviour disorders and other exceptionalities.

Be it resolved that Council recommends to the Minister that a directive be sent to boards outlining the obligation to establish and implement SEAC in the restructured boards as of January 1, 1998. (This directive may outline varying models for implementation).

Special Education Plans

99.1.20 **Whereas:** Special Education Advisory Committees generally meet once a month. Communications from Ministry of Education and Training may arrive too late for consideration at the current month's meeting. Regulation 464 requires a SEAC to be actively involved in a school board's annual report on

special education.

Be it resolved that Chairs of SEACs receive a separately addressed copy from the Ministry of Education and Training of letters to school boards outlining instructions for the preparation of these annual reports.

Special Education Handbook

98.2.11 **Whereas** the Special Education Handbook is under revision.

Be it resolved that consideration of a “Best Practices in Physical Sensory Accessibility in Schools” list be considered by the Special Education Handbook Committee.

98.2.13 **Whereas** the Special Education Handbook will include Regulation 181.98.

Be it resolved that Monograph 2 which supports this regulation also be included in the Handbook, and, be it further resolved that all PPMs, monographs and guidelines that pertain to the provision of special education programs and services be included in the Special Education Handbook incorporated in whole or by reference.

98.2.14 **Whereas** the Special Education handbook is in development and whereas Regulation 181/98 comes into effect September 1, 1998.

Be it resolved that two sections of the Handbook be released prior to September 1, 1998 to facilitate their implementation, specifically the section on the required Individual Education Plan and the required transition plan, and that official documentation (e.g., a Policy Program Memorandum) accompany these sections and that in-service be provided.

Special Needs Opportunities Window (SNOW)

99.1.12 **Whereas:** SNOW has proven to be a valuable tool enabling special education resource teachers to become more efficient programme facilitators in delivering services to students and teachers.

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education and Training continue to recognize and support (through continued funding) the Special Needs Opportunities Window (SNOW).

Standard Report Card

98.2.7 Council recognizes that evaluation and assessment are critical components of the learning process for all students including exceptional students.

Council recognizes the importance of reporting to parents of all students in a fair and equitable fashion.

Be it resolved that Council be actively involved in the review process for the Provincial Report Card in particular with regards to the need for clarification of the issue of the IEP.

98.2.8 **Whereas** Council recognizes that evaluation and assessment re critical components of the learning process for all students including exceptional students.

Council recognizes the importance of reporting to parents of all students in a fair and equitable fashion.

Be it resolved that Council be actively involved in the development of Secondary School Report Card.

Transition Planning

98.2.3 **Whereas** the requirement to work with community agencies in developing transition plans is new to school boards and will require them to develop new links with local community agencies

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education and Training in conjunction with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and other ministries develop a list of local community agencies to include with the joint guidelines provided to school boards and community agencies.

98.2.4 **Whereas** success in the implementation of transition planning will be facilitated by well placed Ministry support for school boards.

Be it resolved that the Ministry of Education and Training consider sponsoring:

- pilot projects for transition programs from secondary school to post-secondary institutions, work and community living; and/or
- a series of regional one day conferences or workshops which will focus on successful practices in transition planning and programming; and/or
- exemplary practice awards in transition planning modelled on the Ministry's recent successful exemplary practice in integration awards

initiative.

- 98.2.16 **Whereas** Regulation 181/98 excludes exceptional students identified as gifted from the requirement for a transition plan.

Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education recommends that the ministry develop a similar requirement that will address post-secondary planning needs for gifted students in a comparable manner.

- 99.1.1 **Whereas:** The Council strongly supports the principle of transition planning as mandated in Regulation 181/98.

School principals, named in the regulation as accountable for transition planning, have limited resources to implement this requirement.

Much can be done at the school board level to facilitate transition planning at the school level.

The Council supports the suggestions in the draft *Transition Planning Resource Guide*, concerning a school board transition planning coordinator and a school board transition planning advisory committee, as facilitating transition planning in schools.

Be it resolved that Council request the ministry to "strongly encourage" each school board to (1) assign staff responsibility for transition planning coordination and (2) arrange to receive advice from the community on transition planning by creating a transition planning advisory committee or by arranging for an existing body to perform this function.

- 99.1.2 **Whereas:** The Council strongly supports the principle of transition planning as mandated in Regulation 181/98;

Students, their parents and families, as recognized in the draft *Transition Planning Resource Guide*, must play a key role in the development and implementation of the transition plan.

Be it resolved that Council request the ministry to prepare a parent version of the *Transition Planning Resource Guide* for the benefit of students, parents and families and parent associations.

- 99.1.3 **Whereas:** Students, their parents and families are critical to the success of transition planning and, consequently, must support the transition plan if it is

to be successful.

Regulation 181/98 does not require school boards to ensure that parents are in agreement with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or transition plan.

Regulation 181/98 does not identify a specific avenue of appeal for parents who disagree with their child's IEP or transition plan.

Be it resolved that Council request the ministry to inform parents and their families, in the transition planning resource guide and other ministry documents, of appropriate steps parents may take in the event that they do not agree with the school board concerning the content of their child's IEP or transition plan.

99.1.4 **Whereas:** Successful planning for exceptional pupils requires coordination of several planning and administrative documents.

Such coordination is very difficult or impossible when these documents are prepared at different times by different people using different processes.

Coordinated, student centred planning has proven effective in other contexts.

Be it resolved that Council request the ministry to ensure that the *Transition Planning Resource Guide* and other ministry documents encourage an integrated, student centred planning model, which will bring together all persons and organizations which provide support to the student (both in and out of school) to develop a comprehensive plan encompassing all of the student's needs.

This comprehensive plan be reflected in the student's:

1. IPRC statements of strengths and needs, statement of decision and any recommendations concerning program;
2. Annual Education Plan (AEP)
3. Individual Education Plan (IEP)
4. Transition plan
5. Intensive Support Amount application, and
6. Resources provided by outside sources such as the Ministry of Health Assistive Devices Program, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services Individual Support Agreement.

Exit Exams

99.1.21 **Whereas:..**

Be it resolved that the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education reiterates its position on exit exams. The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education does not support the notion of developing and delivering exit exams at secondary.

Students at Risk

99.1.22 **Whereas:** The need to meet the needs of all students.

Be it resolved that a prescribed number of locally designed courses be used as compulsory credits for students at risk.

APPENDIX 1

MANDATE AND STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

The Advisory Committee on Special Education was established in 1974 and has been renewed continually from that date, with a name change to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education in 1986.

The Council advises the Minister of Education and Training on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for exceptional students, including the identification and provision of early intervention programs for students with special needs.

In particular, the Council:

- responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education and Training or other ministries, as submitted to the Advisory Council from time to time;
- identifies concerns in the delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils and provides information, advice and recommendations for ministry consideration;
- submits an annual report and recommendations to the Minister; and
- meets up to three times a year for a maximum of three days per year.

The basis of membership on the Council was changed in 1996 following a sunset review. Instead of seats for specific organizations, the Council now has:

- one seat for each of nine exceptionalities;
- one seat for each of nine professional categories;
- one seat for a student member;
- two non-voting seats for the Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services; and
- two representatives each for the Francophone and Roman Catholic communities, appointed from among the members above.

Members are appointed by the Minister from nominations received from over 80 organizations with an interest in special education. Each member is responsible for liaising with and representing the interests of all organizations in his or her constituency. Details of the nomination and appointment process have been published by the ministry on its World Wide Web site at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca> (see Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education under Agencies, Boards and Commissions).

In 1997 the Council was given a three year mandate from April 1997 to March 31, 2000, with a sunset review to occur during the final year. Members are appointed to three year terms (subject to continuation of the Council) with one third of the terms coming due each year.

**MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
SPECIAL EDUCATION: MEMBERS
April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999**

<p align="center">Exceptionality/ Community of Interest Represented</p>	<p align="center">Members</p>
<p>Exceptionalities</p> <p>Emotional/Behaviour Disorder Pervasive Developmental Disorder Deaf & Hard of Hearing Learning Disabilities, All Exceptionalities, Chair Gifted Developmental Disability Blind & Low Vision Physical Disability Multiple Disabilities</p> <p>Student/Youth</p> <p>Educator Groups</p> <p>Trustees, Vice Chair Supervisory Officers, French Language Community Principals Teachers, French Language Community Educational Assistants</p> <p>Professional Support</p> <p>Medical Psychologists Social Workers, Catholic Community Speech and Language Pathologists</p> <p>Non-Voting</p> <p>Ministry of Community and Social Services Ministry of Health</p>	<p>James Arthur Raymond LeBlanc Jim Roots Lynn Ziraldo Joanne Lee Patrick Worth Beverley Ginou Derryn Gill Carol Clarke</p> <p>Laurie Alphonse</p> <p>John Hendry Jean-Luc Bernard Terry Geddes Suzan Garlock Jeanne Robinson</p> <p>Greg Gillis Janice Prock John Wilhelm Susan Bassili</p> <p>Philippa Wild June Feanny</p>

**MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION
SUBCOMMITTEES
June 1998 - March 1999**

FUNDING MODEL

John Hendry (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Tracy Odell
Terry Geddes
Joanne Lee
Jean-Luc Bernard
James Arthur
Jim Roots
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)

ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY POLICY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Susan Garlock (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Bruce Drewett
Terry Geddes
Joanne Lee
Derryn Gill
John Wilhelm
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)
Carol Clark

INTERMINISTRY CO-ORDINATION/SUPPORT SERVICES

James Arthur (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Tim Higgins
Janice Prock
Susan Bassili
John Wilhelm
Jeanne Robinson
Bev Ginou
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)
Laurie Alphonse
Raymond LeBlanc

TRANSITION TO WORK/POST SECONDARY

Bev Ginou (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Bill Wyman
Derryn Gill
Jeanne Robinson
Pat Worth
Jim Roots
John Hendry
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)
Laurie Alphonse
Raymond LeBlanc
Greg Gillis

ACCOUNTABILITY AND BOARD GOVERNANCE

Terry Geddes (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Bruce Drewett
Susan Bassili
Jeanne Robinson
Joanne Lee
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)
Jean-Luc Bernard
Pat Worth

AD HOC COMMITTEES

VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

Jeanne Robinson Ministry Resource Person: Tim Higgins
Janice Prock
James Arthur
Greg Gillis
John Wilhelm
Lynn Ziraldo (ex officio)

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

Janice Prock Ministry Resource Person: Louise Moreau
Joanne Lee
Lynn Ziraldo
James Arthur
Susan Bassili
Jim Roots

SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION HANDBOOK

Joanne Lee (chair) Ministry Resource Person: Louise Moreau
Carol Clark
Janice Prock (Mediation - part of Special Education Handbook
Derry Gill including John Wilhelm)
Lynn Ziraldo
Susan Bassili
Susan Garlock
Jim Roots

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

Jeanne Robinson (chair) Ministry Resource Person: TBA
Janice Prock
James Arthur
Jean-Luc Bernard
Terry Geddes
Lynn Ziraldo