



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

July 13, 2007

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, MPP  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Wynne,

On behalf of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), I would like to congratulate you and the Safe Schools Action Team on the unanimous passing in the Legislature of Bill 212, the Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007. We were pleased to see that many of the recommendations LDAO made in our submission to the Safe Schools Action Team were included in these amendments to the Education Act. In particular we are in favour of "supporting a progressive discipline approach to choose the appropriate course of action in the case of inappropriate behaviour", and of "requiring that mitigating factors be considered before students are suspended or expelled," as stated in the Ministry news release of June 5, 2007

The new legislation states that the Ministry may establish policies and guidelines with respect to suspensions of pupils, and further, "in considering whether to suspend a pupil ... a principal shall take into account any mitigating or other factors prescribed in the regulations." 311.1 (4). It is clear that these Ministry policies and guidelines, and the relevant regulations, will be extremely important in determining how students with special education needs, including students with learning disabilities, are dealt with by their schools. We strongly urge you to consult with organizations representing such students and their parents, when developing these policies, guidelines and regulations.

In our Safe Schools submission LDAO had recommended that students who are suspended or expelled have access to alternative educational programming, and we are pleased to see a requirement in this legislation for programs for suspended and expelled pupils. An earlier version of Bill 212 contained the provision "Programs provided under subsection (1) must contain both academic and non-academic elements" 312 (2). *This statement was omitted in the final version.* In 312 (3), it does say that the "Minister may establish policies and guidelines with respect to programs for suspended and expelled students." LDAO wishes to stress once again that there must be an educational component to such alternative programs.

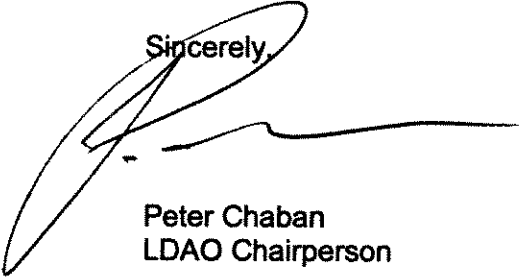
In conclusion, we would like to commend Liz Sandals and her Safe Schools Action Team for all their hard work, and to thank you, Ms Sandals and your Ministry for drafting

[www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)

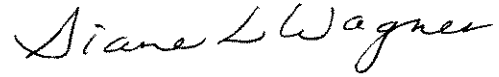
365 BLOOR STREET EAST, SUITE 1004, BOX 39, TORONTO, ON M4W 3L4 TEL: 416.929.4311 FAX: 416.929.3905

and shepherding these amendments through the Legislature. We wish to ensure that the revisions are implemented in schools across the province in such a way as to be fair and helpful to students with learning disabilities and other special education needs, and we look forward to being part of that process.

Sincerely,



Peter Chaban  
LDAO Chairperson



Diane Wagner  
Coordinator, Public Policy &  
Client Services

c.c. Liz Sandals, Parliamentary Assistant, Min. of Education  
Bruce Drewett, Director, Special Education Policy & Programs Branch  
Bob Stone, Chair, MACSE  
Marilyn Dolmage, Chair, PAAC on SEAC