

President's Message

As I write this report, we are saying goodbye to Gerard Kennedy as Minister of Education, and welcoming Sandra Pupatello. We are hopeful that the ministry and government commitment to improving the education of all students is not only acknowledged, but funded. Our organization was fortunate to attend both the luncheon meeting with Minister Kennedy and the public information session with him, held in the evening at Sudbury Secondary School. Both opportunities stressed the importance of joining the business community with secondary schools and other educational institutions by providing practical work experiences, apprenticeships and training opportunities. These meaningful programs will enhance the provision of successful pathways for education to the workplace. We offer a challenge to community businesses and industry to provide these opportunities!

As a parent's organization, we also have an interest in participating in the new "Parent Involvement Committee" (PIC) initiative being set up by school boards. This will provide another forum to advance the interests of students with learning disabilities, and other exceptionalities through participation by parents on local PICs. Stay tuned, as this program develops locally to see how you can get connected locally. Another great way to get connected provincially is for you to sign up to the Ontario Provincial Education Network (OPEN). Through e-mail communication, you can keep abreast of new initiatives and announcements which affect our children. You can join OPEN by visiting www.edu.gov.on.ca.

Albert Einstein, who had learning difficulties said: "We do not solve problems with the same thinking that created them."

We believe that by "working together for rising stars", we can demonstrate that "a different way of learning can lead to success!"

Janet Guembel, Board President

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Executive Director's Report

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since we opened our office here at Lockerby Composite School! Two years have past since we received our first funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Next month, we will receive our final year of funding of \$30,000 from the Foundation. It's now time to finalize our Sustainability Plan to ensure that we continue to grow and provide programs and services necessary to support the thousands of individuals with learning disabilities in our community in order that they may reach their full potential.

We are off to a good start! With the United Way Funding announced this month for our Community Outreach Program and the development of a community-based Tutoring Program, we are laying the foundation blocks for the future of our local Chapter. We will continue to expand our existing partnerships and will be embarking upon several new funding mechanisms to ensure our sustainability. Local School Boards, Community Service Clubs and Organizations and the business community all have a stake in our organizational well-being and our capacity to support those we serve.

Our existence is based on community needs. That means you! Call our office for information or support, or drop us an e-mail at info@ldasudbury.ca. We are here to serve you.

Ron Lessard, Executive Director

Assistive Technology at it's Best!

Are you a student who finds learning difficult? Are you an adult who struggles with learning disabilities? Are you the parent of a child with a learning disability? The new "Bridges to Learning Assistive Technology Room" at the Main Library, 74 Mackenzie St, can help you! Computers with the latest version of Kurzweil software, (the only one available for public use in Sudbury, and probably all of Ontario) will read one of the over 500 books scanned into the computer to you.

This assists with reading difficulty, comprehension, notetaking and learning. Kurzweil is the leading reading, writing and learning solution for individuals of all ages with learning disabilities like dyslexia, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and other a literacy difficulties. Check it out at the library or give our LDAS office a call for more information.



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
Sudbury

Learning Disabilities Association of Sudbury

Working Together for Rising Stars!

Volume 3, Issue 2, Spring 2006

Quarterly Newsletter

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Breaking News! United Way Comes Through Again!

On April 24th, Learning Disabilities Association of Sudbury will receive \$15,000.00 from the "New Ventures" United Way Grant! In addition to providing funding to support our "Community Outreach Program", our Chapter will develop a "Tutoring Program" for Grades 7 and 8 students with learning disabilities. Starting this fall, in partnership with the City of Greater Sudbury Public Library and its 14 branches, we will be offering this tutoring program thanks to this funding from the United Way. The program will be developed and implemented with support from local school boards. Mr. Gord Ewin, former Director of Education with the Rainbow District School Board has agreed to chair a steering committee of parents, educators, and community members to lead the design

"Navigating the System" - How Can We Help You?

We are in the home stretch of this school year! Third term, second semester and only two months left of school! Where has the year gone?

By this point in the academic year, students with exceptionalities should be experiencing their greatest successes of the year. Through maturity at the grade level, implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) accommodations and strategies, and strong working relationships between student and teacher; home and school, the next two months are very important! This is the time of year that students with learning disabilities (LD) capitalize and benefit most by demonstrating success! Teachers celebrate the successes of students with learning disabilities and evaluate the implementation of the IEP.

But this is also an important time of year for another reason. It's time for parents, students and educators to think about the transition to next September with a new grade level and new teachers. For those moving on to high school, post secondary educational institutions or the workplace, it is now time to finalize the planning of these transitions to the next chapter in your life. For students 14 years of age, is your "Transition

and implementation of this exciting new initiative in Sudbury. "This partnership in education between the home, the school and the community reflects how we can do something meaningful to demonstrate that "a different way of learning can lead to success" said Mr. Ewin. "This program will make a difference to students with learning disabilities, both in how they learn and what they learn." This project will also provide parents and students with a list of community resources available for tutoring, a roster of tutors and a parent guide for home tutoring. Don't hesitate to give us a call if you have any suggestions or input for this program. Stay tuned at www.ldasudbury.ca for details of our tutoring program start up this fall!

Plan" meaningful and helpful to you? These Transition Plans should be specific, personalized and focused on the long-term planning for your postsecondary activities. Make sure there is one in place, if not do not hesitate to contact your school to find out more about Transitions Plans.

In May and June, Identification Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) will be meeting to identify the exceptionality of each student and placement for the next school year.

This edition of our newsletter focuses on psycho-educational assessments and the IPRC process. These are the important first steps to ensure that students with learning disabilities receive the different way of learning that leads to success!

How can we help you? Parents and students, if you need further support and assistance in "navigating" the system, don't hesitate to call us at 522-0100 or e-mail at info@ldasudbury.ca.

Watch for our Fall 2006 newsletter edition which will highlight the next steps, including accommodations and teaching strategies in the student's Individual Education Plan.

Our Speaker Series Continues - Wednesday April 26, 7p.m.

“Do You Need a Psychologist to Talk to? (about your child’s education)”

Dr. Bess Blackwell a Sudbury psychologist who has completed hundreds of psycho-educational assessments, will lead this community dialogue on learning disabilities and other exceptionalities in relation to student education. Parents and students with learning disabilities will hear firsthand about the assessment processes and identification of students with learning disabilities. You’ll also learn about accommodations, learning strategies and recommendations from assessments.

Success Story

Our Success story is from an article at SchwabLearning.org.

The article is written by parents of a child with a learning disability. Their son’s attempt at writing left the child full of frustration and tears. His handwriting was illegible, and he could not spell. After a learning specialist recommended giving the child a laptop, the results were dramatic. He used spell-check, wrote longer sentences and it gave him confidence.

To read the article, go to www.SchwabLearning.org, click on Managing School & Learning, Technology that Supports Learning, and How a Computer Helped My Son with Writing.

Calendar of Events - Mark Your Calendars!

Wednesday, April 26 - Community Outreach Speaker

Community Outreach and Speaker Series featuring Dr. B. Blackwell. Everything you wanted to know about psychological assessments and School Boards’ Identification Placement Review Committees (IPRC).

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at The Canadian Hearing Society at 1233 Paris Street, Boardroom .

Tuesday, May 2 - CSCNO Open House

The members of Le Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario’s Comite consultative de l’enfant en difficulté-CCED are planning an information fair for the different associations and organizations who directly or indirectly assist families of children with special needs.

5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Ecole secondaire du Sacre-Coeur, 261 Notre-Dame Avenue.

Wednesday, May 3 - Sudbury Catholic District School Board Parent Workshop on Advocacy and Disability Tax Credit.

Sudbury District Catholic School Board
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Catholic Education Centre(CEC), 165A D’Youville Street.

The evening will also provide an opportunity to learn about “Identification Placement Review Committees” (IPRC). This formal, legal first step in the annual special education process for exceptional students in Ontario will be explained in layman’s terms. At the end of the evening, you will understand your role in the process and how you can be an effective advocate for your child. There will also be an opportunity for sharing practical tips for parents on preparing for IPRC’s and being involved in assessments.

Please join us for this educational and informative evening session.

IPRCs

Some students may be formally identified as “exceptional pupils” by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

Ontario’s Education Act requires school boards to provide students who are formally identified as exceptional with special education programs and services that meet their needs.

IPRC’s are responsible for deciding whether a student should be formally identified as an exceptional students and in need of a special education program. The following five categories of exceptionalities have been identified in the Education Act’s definition of exceptional pupil: Behaviour, Communication, Intellectual, Physical, and Multiple. Learning Disability falls under Communication-Learning Disability.

The IPRC also decides what type of education placement is appropriate for each exceptional student. There are 5 types of placements: regular class with support, regular class with resource assistance, regular class with withdrawal assistance, a special education class with partial integration, and special education class full time. In a recent supreme court of Canada decision, the court concluded integration is to be considered the norm, the test to be used to decide placement whether the placement is “in the best interests of the child”. The child’s individual needs must be examined and must be accommodated. The Ministry of Education remains committed to the principle that the integration of exceptional pupils should be the norm for practice in Ontario, when such a placement meets the pupils needs and is in accordance with parental wishes.

In order to reach their potential, most Students identified with a Communications: Learning Disabilities exceptionality should receive placement in “Regular Class with Resource Assistance” or “Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance”.

If you have concerns, the first step is to discuss them with your child’s teacher, and if necessary, the school principal. Ask your school for a copy of the school board’s Parents’ Guide to Special Education.

Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC) Reports

Rainbow District School Board SEAC

The Rainbow District School Board SEAC continues with their ongoing review and revisions to the Special Education Plan with a focus on IEPs and Transitions.

Feedback was shared on the Feb. 22nd evening workshop on Advocacy Training / Disability Tax Credit, presented in partnership with the RDSB. It was well attended and comments from approximately 40 participants were very positive. Further discussion ensued regarding the value of presentations and the need for additional parent workshops.

As well, ongoing discussions with the RDSB towards various partnerships with LDAS are being proposed for the next school year.

It is encouraging to note the significant increase in the parent responses to the “Invitation for input into the Special Education Plan”. To date, approximately 167 responses have been received by the School Board. Providing input and feedback is critical to ensure the needs of all exceptional students are met.

Following a request by SEAC for a presentation on the programs available at Cambrian College-The Glenn Crombie Center for disability services, Director Susan Alcorn MacKay has agreed to host the June SEAC meeting in conjunction with the presentation.

Assessments

Performance Based Assessment

This assessment is conducted by the classroom teacher, or Special Education Resource Teacher under the guidance of the psychology staff. The types of assesment/tools include demonstration of knowledge, academic skill and skill as a learner. Performance based assessment is ongoing and a variety of assessment tools are used.

Educational Assessment

This assessment is conducted by the Special Education Teacher. Educational based assessments include demonstrations of knowledge, academic skill and skill as a learner.

Members look forward to hearing about services available at the post secondary level.

Sudbury Catholic District School Board SEAC

Learning Disabilities Association of Sudbury in conjunction with the Sudbury Catholic District School Board will be presenting an advocacy and tax credit session on May 3, 2006 at the Board office. Look for our booth at the Kindergarten Night April 12, 2006 at Marymount Academy. Along with other members of SEAC we are continuing to review and revise the special education plan, to ensure the needs of identified children are being met. Ms. Lydia Sapia, joins the board in the capacity of Academic Services-Special Education Co-ordinator for the Sudbury Catholic District School Board.

CSCNO SEAC

SEAC Report, prepared by Mr. Michael McKean. Le Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario (CSCNO) is holding an information fair on Tuesday, 2 May 2006 at École secondaire du Sacré-Coeur located at 261 Notre-Dame Avenue Sudbury. The public is invited to attend between 5 and 9 p.m. Representatives from many of the associations and organizations who assist families of children with special needs will have information booths set up. Information on CSCNO Assistive Technology initiatives will be updated.

Psycho-educational Assessment / Speech Language Assessment

This assessment is conducted by a psychologist, a psychological associate, or a psychometrist. The types of assesment/tools include intellectual, processing, behaviour/ personality and language.

To read more about assessments go to www.ldao.ca and click on “about learning disabilities” and “assessment”.

LDA Sudbury Would Like to Thank its Platinum Funders



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