



Hastings and Prince Edward
District School Board

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

Shannon Binder, Chair of the Board
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

June 4, 2019

The Honourable Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Thompson:

As representatives of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB), we are writing to express our concerns about the recent changes to the provincial funding model for autism services and the impact that it will have on children, families, and school boards.

The new funding model means that school-age children who have moderate to severe autism requiring Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy to teach them learning skills, behaviour management and communication will no longer have adequate funding from the government for the clinically recommended 20 to 40 hours per week. Expecting school boards to “close the gaps” in such clinical or therapeutic needs sets unrealistic expectations for both educators and parents/guardians. Many families within our board will be unable to pay for the therapy their children need out of pocket based on the new funding model. As a result, many of these children will enter the school system without the skills that they need to be successful.

We are also concerned that many children who have been receiving one-on-one therapy will be inadequately prepared to transition to school full-time, if the decision to send them is based solely on a lack of funding for further therapy. Placing these students in the classroom may create health and safety concerns for all. Children with autism are not the only children who require more supports than are currently available in school and in the community. We are concerned that the proposed changes in autism funding will also have a negative impact on what can be provided for all our students with special needs in our schools

We urge the Ministry of Education to review their funding decision and revise the Ontario Autism Plan based on the recommendations of relevant stakeholders, including parents and clinical experts. We also hope that the Ministry will also investigate and remedy the shortfalls in funding for other disabilities affecting the children in our province.

An invitation is being extended to our local members of provincial parliament to attend a fall SEAC meeting, to continue discussions and advocacy that the Ministry of Education review their funding decision. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Kelly Allan

Kelly Allan,
SEAC Chair

Carolyn Baldwin

Carolyn Baldwin,
SEAC Vice-chair



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c.c. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education
Shannon Binder, Chair of the Board
Ken Dostaler, Superintendent of Education – Student Services
Todd Smith, MPP Bay of Quinte
Daryl Kramp, MPP Hastings-Lennox & Addington
Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees