



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 19-051

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Peter Symmonds, Superintendent, Learning Support Services

DATE: 22 March 2019

RE: **Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services – Ontario Autism Program announcement, 21 March 2019**

This memo is to provide an update on the Thursday, March 22, 2019 announcement from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) regarding plans to reform the Ontario Autism Program (OAP).

The morning of Thursday, March 22, Minister of MCCSS, Lisa MacLeod, held a press conference in which she announced several enhancements to the OAP.

Specifically, the Minister made the following commitments:

- Recognizing the needs of children with autism vary, the government will be receiving input for the next several months on how best to support those children with autism who have the most complex needs;
- The government will explore options to address the waitlist for children with autism to receive support within the next 18 months;
- The government has eliminated the income testing previously announced. All children under the age of six will receive \$20,000 annual indirect funding, while those six and over will receive \$5,000 annually;
- All children who currently have an Ontario Autism Program Behaviour Plan will continue in that plan until its end date. Families will then be able to renew it for six months at its current level of intensity.

While no additional announcements have been made by the Ministry of Education, the proposed amendments to the OAP by MCCSS do change the potential impact on the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). While it remains to be seen what may happen over the next several months, the ability for families to renew their OAP Behaviour Plan for six months will likely affect the number of students who are likely to enrol in the OCDSB or increase their level of attendance at school as they will be able to continue to receive Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI)/Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

Learning Support Services (LSS) continues to monitor this situation to ensure that the District is in the best position to respond to meet the needs of children with autism.

Further memoranda will be provided as new information emerges.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Symmonds at peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca or at 613-596-8254.

cc Senior Staff
SEAC
Manager, Board Services
Corporate Records