

LDAO SEAC CIRCULAR

June 2025

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) SEAC Circular is published 5 times a year, usually in September, November, February, April, and June.

Each circular highlights key topics for your SEAC to consider, along with action items, questions to ask, and recommendations for effective practices where applicable.

Feel free to share any of this information and any attachments with other SEAC members. As always, if you plan to introduce a motion for the consideration of SEAC, it is particularly important that you share all relevant background materials with your fellow SEAC reps.

Topics covered by this SEAC Circular:

1. Ministry of Education Updates:

- [Back to Basics Kindergarten Curriculum](#)
- [Geography Curriculum - Grade 9 De-streamed](#)
- [School Year Calendar 2025-2026](#)

2. Educational Landscape

3. Key Takeaways: June Circular 2025

List of Supplementary Materials:

1. [Ontario's Back-to-Basics Kindergarten Curriculum Announcement](#)
2. [2025–2026 School Year Calendar \(Ontario Ministry of Education\)](#)
3. [ETFO Special Education Report](#)
4. [Ontario Education Staffing Crisis: Addressing the Shortage of Certified Teachers in Ontario Classrooms \(CODE\)](#)
5. [AODA Alliance Calls for the Creation of an Education Accessibility Standard](#)
6. [Access to Special Education in Ontario Schools \(People for Education\)](#)
7. [LDAO's Open Letter to SEACs \(2025\)](#)

Note: You can access the [SEAC Circular](#), [LDAO SEAC Policies](#), [LDAO Policy Statement on Educational Inclusion](#), and [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook](#).

You can access Ministry funding (B & SB) memos by date at: [Ministry Funding](#).

1. Ministry of Education Updates

a) Back to the Basics Kindergarten Curriculum

Background and Context

The Ministry of Education has announced a revised Kindergarten curriculum to be implemented in September 2025. This “Back to the Basics” approach emphasizes direct and explicit instruction in foundational literacy and math skills while maintaining play-based learning elements. The goal is to ensure students are well-prepared for Grade 1 with the core skills needed to succeed.

The curriculum aligns with the updated Language curriculum (Grades 1–8) and reflects recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Right to Read report, promoting evidence-based reading instruction beginning in early years. Students in Year 2 will be assessed using reading screeners selected by school boards to help identify learning needs early and guide appropriate supports.

Key Components:

1. Literacy

- a. Emphasis on sound-letter relationships and phonics knowledge
- b. Vocabulary development through purposeful language use
- c. Cultivating a passion for reading

2. Math

- a. Direct instruction in foundational numeracy skills
- b. Introduction to fractions, coding and patterns
- c. Daily exploration of math concepts through classroom activities

The structured approach aims to support early identification of learning needs, enabling timely interventions and smoother transitions into Grade 1. The use of direct, explicit instruction in the kindergarten program will allow educators to identify students earlier who may require support and interventions.

Implications for Students with Special Education Needs

The emphasis on structured, explicit instruction offers significant benefits for students with special education needs. However, successful implementation will require continued access to differentiated instruction, appropriate accommodations, and trained educators. Professional development will be essential to ensure educators are equipped with effective strategies for supporting diverse learning profiles.

Potential Action Items, Questions to Ask, and/or Recommendations

- What specific training and professional development will be provided to educators to support the implementation of direct and explicit instruction, especially for students with special education needs?
- What accommodations, interventions, or supports will be available for students who struggle with foundational literacy or numeracy skills?
- How will the effectiveness of the new curriculum be monitored and evaluated, particularly in relation to early identification and intervention?
- What information sessions, resources, or workshops will be offered to families to help them understand and support the new learning expectations at home?

For more information, see: [Ontario Unveils a Back-to-Basics Kindergarten Curriculum](#).

b) Geography Curriculum – Grade 9 De-streamed

Background and Context

The Ministry of Education's de-streaming initiative aims to provide equitable learning opportunities by eliminating academic streaming in Grade 9. Beginning in September 2025, Grade 9 Geography will join the list of de-streamed courses offered as a single course for all students, without academic or applied streams.

The new curriculum, titled *Exploring Canadian Geography*, builds on learning from Grades 7 and 8 and emphasizes real-world application and critical thinking. Key areas of focus include:

- Environmental and Economic Issues** – Exploration of natural resources, industries, careers, land use, responsible development, and sustainability.
- Geographic Thinking** – Use of geographic inquiry processes and geospatial technologies to analyze complex issues.
- Diverse Perspectives** – Integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, along with other diverse community viewpoints.

Implications for Students with Special Education Needs

While the goal of de-streaming is to enhance equity, realizing this goal requires intentional use of universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction. Assessment practices must also be flexible and responsive to meet the varied needs of learners, particularly those with special education needs.

Potential Action Items, Questions to Ask, and/or Recommendations

- What plans are in place to ensure the needs of diverse learners — including students with special education needs — are considered in the implementation of the new Geography curriculum?
- As the curriculum becomes available, how will accommodations and modifications be identified for students who may struggle with geographic concepts?
- What strategies will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the de-streamed Geography course in supporting all learners?
- What professional learning opportunities are being planned (or anticipated) to help educators deliver the curriculum using universal design and differentiated instruction?

c) School Year Calendar 2025–2026

The Ministry of Education has released the School Year Calendar for 2025–2026. While most school boards will follow the standard calendar, boards may submit requests for modified calendars based on local needs. These adjustments can be made at the board or school level with Ministry approval.

You can review the calendar and related information here: [School Year Calendar 2025-2026](#).

2. Educational Landscape

Background and Context

Across Ontario, public education is undergoing significant and rapid change — and students with special education needs are being disproportionately affected.

School boards across Ontario are under increasing financial scrutiny. The Ministry of Education has appointed oversight at the Thames Valley District School Board following an administrative review, and as of April 2025, the government has launched financial probes into three other school boards and ordered a fifth board to repay funds. These developments reflect broader pressures on boards to meet accountability demands. In response, many are shifting toward broad inclusive education models — often without clear planning or consultation. In some cases, specialized programs are being closed, and families are left without recourse.

A growing number of organizations have raised urgent concerns. The [Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario \(ETFO\)](#) has declared a crisis in special education. The [Council of Ontario Directors of Education \(CODE\)](#) reports a severe staffing shortage, particularly in specialized roles. The [AODA Alliance](#) has called for an Education Accessibility Standard. The [People for](#)

[Education 2024 report](#) highlights inconsistencies in access to supports, long wait times for assessments, and service gaps across the province. LDAO's own [Open Letter to SEACs](#) reinforces these concerns and outlines clear advocacy priorities.

Amid these systemic pressures, one thing remains unchanged: the specific, evidence-based supports required by students with learning disabilities and ADHD. These students continue to need:

- Direct, explicit instruction
- A continuum of tiered interventions (especially Tier 2 and Tier 3)
- Access to trained professionals (including SERTs, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and EAs)
- Consistent accommodations aligned with cognitive and learning profiles

Implications for Students with Special Needs

When access to appropriate supports is delayed or reduced, students face compounding challenges: declining achievement, increased anxiety, disengagement from school, and disrupted development of self-advocacy skills. Educators, too, face mounting expectations with limited resources or training — especially when supporting students with executive functioning needs, language-based learning disabilities, or complex profiles.

Potential Action Items, Questions to Ask, and/or Recommendations:

- What systems are in place to ensure timely access to direct, explicit instruction and individualized support?
- How are Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions being staffed, delivered, and monitored for effectiveness?
- What specialized program options remain available for students whose needs may not be met in a regular classroom setting?
- What professional development is being provided to build educator capacity in structured literacy, differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and strategies for executive functioning?
- How is the board ensuring that students with LDs and ADHD receive consistent, needs-based support across all placements and schools?

3. Key Takeaways: June 2025 SEAC Circular

- A new Kindergarten curriculum will be implemented in September 2025, emphasizing direct, explicit instruction in foundational literacy and numeracy, alongside play-based

learning. This aligns with Right to Read recommendations and supports early identification. SEAC members are encouraged to ask about training for educators, use of screeners, and how boards will monitor and respond to student learning needs.

- Grade 9 Geography will become a de-streamed course in September 2025 as part of Ontario’s broader equity initiative. While the goal is to expand access, the success of de-streaming depends on strong implementation. SEAC members should ask how boards are supporting diverse learners, monitoring outcomes, and preparing educators to use UDL and differentiated instruction.
- The educational landscape in Ontario is under significant pressure, with growing financial oversight, shifts in special education models, and increasing concern from unions, advocacy groups, and families. SEAC members are urged to stay informed and advocate for a continuum of tiered supports, structured transitions, and sustained educator capacity building.
- Amid system-wide changes, the specific needs of students with LDs and ADHD remain constant. SEACs play a critical role in ensuring boards provide evidence-based instruction, timely interventions, and consistent, needs-based support — regardless of placement or program delivery model.

A Note to SEAC Representatives

LDAO SEAC Representatives are encouraged to share this resource with other SEAC members in their school board. By spreading awareness and building collective understanding, we can strengthen advocacy efforts and improve outcomes for students with learning disabilities across Ontario.

About the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) has been a trusted voice for over 60 years, supporting individuals with learning disabilities and ADHD—as well as their families, educators, and communities. We provide expertly curated resources, advocate for systemic change, and promote equity in education and beyond.

Our signature initiatives—[LD@school](#), [TA@l’école](#), [LD@home](#), and [LD@work](#)—reflect our commitment to supporting individuals across the lifespan, from early learning through to adulthood and employment.

Learn more at www.LDAO.ca.