



Laura Elliott, Director of Education and Secretary

2019 January 22

Honourable Lisa Thompson  
Minister of Education  
Ministry of Education  
Mowat Block, 22nd Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Honourable Lisa MacLeod  
Minister of Children  
Community and Social Services  
Hepburn Block, 6th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Thompson and Minister MacLeod:

I am writing to express serious concerns for students with special needs who access occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech-language pathology at school through Thames Valley Children's Centre (TVCC), formerly the School Health Support Services provided by the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). In addition, I would ask that you urgently address the long waiting lists by increasing funding for this program.

Members of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) have been regularly consulted over the last 5 years as part of the provincial Special Needs Strategy. Some of our members and special education staff invested heavily in advising the process and identifying issues and needs, and our membership has participated actively in providing input as requested.

Having an inter-ministry approach with seamless transitions and integrated services has long been a vision for families and service providers to enhance the experience and outcomes for children and youth with complex special needs. Meeting the physical, medical, educational needs of students receiving services for complex conditions is important for their well-being and success at school. SEAC participated in the Special Needs Strategy with the expectation streamlining the services would greatly improve access to timely and appropriate services leading to improved access to learning, curriculum and improved student outcomes.

Last year we learned that the rehabilitation therapy services, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech-language pathology, provided through the School Health Support Services would be transitioned from the LHIN to the TVCC. With the reduction in the number of providers, and streamlining of referrals, it was hoped that more children/students would have access to timely service. At our January meeting, we learned that the transition had occurred and that there were over 3700 students from Grey-Bruce, Huron-Perth, London- Middlesex and Oxford Elgin on the program. We were very concerned to learn that more than half of these students are on a wait list for services. We also heard that there is no new funding to address the wait lists and hundreds of students will continue to wait for vital services. Members expressed their frustration with the length and number of students being put on a waitlist and noted that many essential needs/services for these students are not being met.

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**Thames Valley District School Board - Office of the Director of Education**

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*We build each student's tomorrow, every day.*

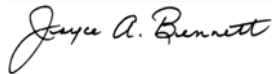
At the January 8, 2019 SEAC meeting, the following motion was moved and carried:

*SEAC members direct the Chair to send a letter to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services with concerns about the long wait lists and inadequate funding for therapy services for students with special needs. SEAC members are very concerned that many students will face long delays, or may never receive vital therapies that would assist in accessing curriculum and being successful in school.*

This letter is a request that the two Ministries look at the wait lists for rehabilitation therapy services for students and immediately increase funding allocated to the programs.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,



Joyce Bennett  
Chair of SEAC

cc: L. Elliott, Director of Education  
R. Culhane, Associate Director  
J. Pratt, Associate Director  
A. Canham, Superintendent of Student Achievement  
Chairs of All School Board Special Education Advisory Committees

## Andrew CANHAM

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**From:** Lisa MacLeod-co <lisa.macleodco@pc.ola.org>  
**Sent:** February 4, 2019 3:39 PM  
**To:** Sherry KILBOURN  
**Cc:** Laura ELLIOTT; Riley CULHANE; Jeff PRATT; Andrew CANHAM  
**Subject:** RE: Concerns For Students With Special Needs

Dear Joyce Bennett,

Thank you for taking the time to email this letter to the office of the Hon. Lisa MacLeod, MPP for Nepean regarding your concern for students with special needs.

Because this inquiry is Ministry related and you have emailed MPP MacLeod's constituency office in Nepean, I have taken the time to pass this letter on to the appropriate individual within the Ministry office at Queens Park.

Someone from within the Ministry should get back to you as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

Michael Sparling  
Office of the Hon. Lisa MacLeod, MPP for Nepean

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**From:** Sherry KILBOURN <s.kilbourn@tvdsb.ca>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 25, 2019 2:33 PM  
**To:** Thompson, Lisa <lisa.thompson@pc.ola.org>; Lisa MacLeod-co <lisa.macleodco@pc.ola.org>  
**Cc:** Laura ELLIOTT <laura.elliott@tvdsb.ca>; Riley CULHANE <r.culhane@tvdsb.ca>; Jeff PRATT <jeff.pratt@tvdsb.ca>; Andrew CANHAM <a.canham@tvdsb.ca>  
**Subject:** Concerns For Students With Special Needs

Dear Minister Thompson and Minister Macleod:

Please see the attached letter regarding our concern for students with special needs.

Thank you,

Joyce Bennett  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee  
Thames Valley District School Board

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