

**Vision and Mission**

LDAA envisions a society of strength through diversity where exceptional learners are identified early, understood, and supported throughout their lives. Our mission is to promote public understanding and cultivate support networks to build resilience and discover potential in people with learning disabilities.

**History**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta (LDAA) was incorporated in 1968 as the Alberta Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. In 1980, it obtained charitable status. As its mandate expanded, the association added “Adults” to the name in 1982, before arriving at its current name in 1987. Its initial purpose was to help local chapters and community groups become more effective in advocating to the provincial government, and in particular, the provincial ministry of education.

Over the years, LDAA hosted provincial learning conferences. The last, in 2013, was a provincial policy forum. The association developed the Reading Readiness Screening Tool which was incorporated into the *Right to Read Program*, which is successfully being promoted to school divisions and teachers province-wide. Today, the LDAA advocates at the provincial level on behalf of people with learning disabilities, supports local chapters, collaborates with like-minded community organizations, educates and empowers teachers of early literacy, administers two scholarship funds, and maintains a web site and social media presence.

**National Structure**

Chapter membership confers automatic membership in the provincial and national associations. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) was founded in 1963 as the national voice for persons with learning disabilities and those who support them. LDAC is dedicated to building a level playing field for individuals with learning disabilities to enable them to function as citizens with equal opportunities and to develop to their chosen potential. LDAC accomplishes these goals through public awareness about the nature and impact of learning disabilities, advocacy, research, health, education and collaborative efforts. The LDAC has one member organization in each province and territory except Nunavut.

Each provincial/territorial association, in turn, has local chapters, all independently run societies with their own charitable status. Where the provincial association devotes itself mainly to advocacy and systemic change, local chapters offer direct service to the community through providing resources, workshops, camps, tutoring, awareness, and more. As of April 2017, the LDAA has chapters in Edmonton and Red Deer. Calgary’s chapter folded at the end of 2013. The LDAC policy manual outlines the respective roles of local, provincial and national levels of the organization.

## **Board Structure and Terms of Office**

The Board has nine directors who serve for two years, not exceeding three consecutive terms. The Board Executive is elected from these Directors. The Board elects a Treasurer and Vice-President. LDAA members at the AGM elect the President. Chapter presidents or their delegates are *ex officio* members of the Board. The Board may appoint other *ex officio* members to provide on-going consultation. Board membership is not required to serve on a committee of the Board.

The Board serves without financial remuneration; however, directors are reimbursed for out-of-town travel and accommodations when they attend meetings on behalf of the association.

The Board hires a part-time Executive Director to record, coordinate, and participate in its activities and advocacy, and to carry on the day-to-day activities of the association.

### **Board Standing Committees**

- Fund Development
- Education and Resource Development
- Scholarships and Awards
- Nomination
- Ad hoc committees to further specific Board objectives (e.g. Strategic Planning and Policy Development)

### **Board Meetings**

The Annual General Meeting is held in September. The Board meets approximately five times a year; usually three are in-person in Red Deer, and two are by teleconference. The Executive also meets, usually by teleconference, another five times. Committee meetings are called as needed. No meetings are scheduled during July and August. The meeting schedule is published in fall, with opportunity for input.

In-person meetings are traditionally held on Saturdays between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm in Red Deer. In September, the Board meets in the afternoon following the morning AGM.

Teleconferences take place in the evening from 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

### **Scope of Decision-Making**

- Establish and support the implementation of policy
- Approve budgets as required, receive financial reports, review financial statements, and make decision on money matters
- Review and approve in-year and long range plans
- Chapter development
- Education and supports for persons with learning disabilities and/or educational and service providers

## Board Member Expectations and Benefits

- Administrative
  - Be a member in good standing of a chapter: LD Edmonton or LDAA Red Deer
  - Fulfill your fiduciary responsibility to the organization
  - Demonstrate a sense of integrity and good judgment
    - Declare conflicts of interest
    - Interact with fellow board members and the public respectfully and constructively
      - Adhere to human rights legislation
      - Accept and offer discussion on diverse points of view with civility and good taste
    - Maintain confidentiality
    - Help promote evidence-based approaches to learning
  - Regarding meetings:
    - Attend conscientiously
    - Arrive well-prepared
    - Know and follow parliamentary procedure
- Technical
  - Offer a skillset that complements other Board Members' abilities
- Aspirational
  - Demonstrate leadership
    - Contribute to discussion on issues and motions
    - Serve on committees when called upon
    - Show initiative in offering your skills
    - Weigh decisions carefully
      - Ask for more information if needed
      - Consider the organization's sustainability
    - Consider promoting the LDAA and expanding community linkages where appropriate
    - Aid in recruitment of new Board Members
  - Contribute to the learning disability community through board representation, policy development, advocacy, and other LDAA initiatives
    - Shape the mission and accomplishments of the LDAA
  - Grow personally
    - Gain access to larger platform to support oneself or loved ones with learning needs
    - Gain satisfaction from applying and developing skills in a new context
    - Gain provincial board experience and exposure
    - Learn advocacy skills
    - Learn about and participate in fund-raising
    - Practice presenting in meetings and to the community
    - Expand one's professional and personal networks
    - Feel good about volunteering for a worthy cause.