

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

February 14, 2022

Leadership Report

Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Andrew Gold, Associate Director Leadership, Learning and School Improvement
Lucy Giannotta, Acting System Superintendent of Special Education & Inclusion

Welcome

We welcome Director Colleen Russell-Rawlins this evening.

Elementary Switch Updates:

Over the past couple of weeks, elementary schools and central staff have been supporting Switch Requests of elementary students.

The effective start date for the switch is February 22.

Reductions/re-organizations occurred with Virtual and In-Person classes to support increase/decrease in number of students in either Virtual or In-Person classes based on the requests of families.

We had over 5300 students moving from the in-person to virtual and vice versa. This only required an addition or removal of 16 classes across the entire system. In special education we had only one class extraction.

Any further switch requests will not be considered until after February 22 and only for exceptional circumstances. They will be dealt with on a case by case basis and ONLY if there is space.

K-Gr. 1 IEP Strategy and Gr. 2-12 School IEP Review

Analysis of demographics of the JK/SK and Gr. 1 students in TDSB who had an IEP during the 2015-16 to 2019-20 school years suggests:

- Male students, Black students and students from families in low socio-economic status, such as less parent education, single-parent households, and low family income were disproportionately high in Kindergarten and Grade 1 special education.
- Additionally, more than half of the students continued to not have an identified exceptionality after three or four school years when they entered Grade 4.

Staff developed and are currently continuing to implement the K-Gr. 1 IEP Strategy to interrogate and interrupt practices that lead to the overrepresentation of marginalized students in special education programming.

K-Gr.1 IEP Strategy PHASE I:

Special Education worked in collaboration with Early Years to provide learning sessions for teachers and administrators to promote a deep understanding of the context of a child's learning through unpacking the Kindergarten Program; engagement in explicit and intentional conversation on Equity; Anti-Oppression; Anti-Racism; and culturally relevant teaching practices.

Our common inquiry is "Why an IEP for this child, at this time?"

As principals worked with their K-1 IEP strategy team, they were asked to consider a Student of Wonder? What support/learning is required to support teachers with their Wonder Students?

Gr. 2-12 School IEP Review PHASE I:

This course spanned over three modules and all classes were compulsory.

Staff reviewed IEPs through the exploration of IEP journeys, ILPs and Inclusionary practices and using the Resource model to better service students.

K-Gr.1 IEP Strategy/Gr. 2-12 School IEP Reviews PHASE II:

For this coming March, staff will participate in in-depth work with Dr. West-Burns looking deeper at the intersectionality of special education, equity, anti-black racism and anti-oppression. This course spans over three modules.

Data:

Table 1 shows the total enrolment numbers of JK to Grade 1 students who had an IEP in special education in the past four school years:



SPED	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Junior Kindergarten	701	716	705	367	300
Senior Kindergarten	1,011	971	915	638	393
Grade 1	1,848	1,852	1,589	951	625
Total	3,560.00	3,539.00	3,209.00	1,956.00	1,318.00

Enrolment	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Junior Kindergarten - Enrolment	17,129	16,940	16,826	14,811	14,754
Senior Kindergarten - Enrolment	18,288	17,764	17,563	16,612	15,801
Grade 1 - Enrolment	17,608	18,065	17,694	16,937	16,227
Total	53,025	52,769	52,083	48,360	46,782

Percentage of SPED to Enrolment	7%	7%	6%	4%	3%
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Next Steps:

Moving forward we will have a better understanding of the demographics of JK/SK/Gr. 1 students with IEPs when we have the results of the 2022 Student Census data that will be available in the fall.

We look forward to sharing the results with SEAC in November, 2022.

Voice from Schools

After the K-1 IEP meeting in January, my VP and I started to review our IEPs for K-1 students. We had 1 in kindergarten mostly about self-regulation and 1 in grade 1 for focus/attention as a result of a parent request. We realized that neither of these IEPs were needed, and that the interventions/programming supports that were required were either part of the kindergarten curriculum or inclusive strategies that were required for the student. We included parents and teachers in the conversation and after discussions, agreed that formal IEPs were not needed for these students. We discussed with teachers what supports/learning was needed to support them and the students and set out a plan. We are continuing to monitor the progress of these students. This is an example of the work that we're focused on as we're trying to challenge our own biases and beliefs about learning/teaching.

Service Delivery During Staff Shortages



To avoid having to move in-person classes to virtual learning due to staff shortages, the system was provided with the following directions:

- Follow process to secure Occasional Teacher coverage as soon as the absence is known.
- Assign Occasional Teachers who are currently at the school or other teachers who are on prep to assist in covering classes not yet covered.
- Deploy other staff (e.g. Teacher-Librarians) to classroom vacancies.
- If available, re-assign an Employee Services approved Teacher Candidates (TC)
- Emergency Replacement Persons (ERP) may be deployed to replace absent teachers. Lunchroom Supervisors may work as an ERP.
- If a Prep teacher is absent, no redeployment is needed. The classroom teacher can stay with the class and prep-payback is done as soon as possible.
- Assign the Vice-Principal (if applicable) to cover the class.
- Deploy Special Education teachers. Based on IPRC and student accommodation needs, please utilize special education resource teachers with less frequency and as a last resort.
- If the above options do not yield a replacement teacher or coverage, as a last resort in an emergency situation (i.e. staff becomes ill at work and must leave) classes may be combined to ensure supervision and coverage. Principals should taking the following into consideration:
 - Number of students being combined and class size caps/averages
 - Size of the space available and ability to practice physical distancing
 - Availability of additional HEPA filters from unoccupied rooms
 - Providing additional PPE (face shields) to staff
 - Preference given to combining cohorts, when possible
 - Preference given to combining within grade divisions (primary/junior, intermediate)
 - A maximum of two cohorts may be combined

Special Education Plan

The process of reviewing the annual TDSB Special Education Plan for submission to the Ministry has begun and we are currently in the consultation phase.

Psychological Assessments - January 2021

Provided below is the report of assessments completed in January

January	LC1	LC2	LC3	LC4	Total
Completed	51	70	86	201	408

Referrals	137	215	139	460	951
Cumulative stats from September 2021					
Completed	274	424	306	427	1431
In Progress	154	224	201	309	888
Waiting*	374	321	283	689	1667
Removed	71	119	73	181	444
Total Referrals**	873	1088	863	1146	3970

IPRC - January 2021

January IPRCs	
IPRC Completed	237
IPRC Scheduled	245
IPRC Cumulative since August 2021	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2021	1,715