

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

June 12, 2023

Leadership Report

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Assistive Technology (AT) a Focus at Unleashing the Learning Conference

At the TDSB *Unleashing the Learning* conference, assistive technology was a prominent feature in many sessions. The main 20 minute and 50 minute sessions focussed on the TDSB's Multi Year Strategic Plan framed by Global Competencies and Deep Learning through Technology. The Assistive Technology (AT) Teachers, Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Occupational Therapists/Physiotherapists (OT/PT) led sessions on:

- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) apps available to non-verbal and minimally-verbal students in the TDSB;
- WeVideo Online Video Editor: Supporting UDL in the classroom;
- Using Mindomo to Connect Student Voice to the NEW Science Curriculum and Beyond; and
- Using Boardmaker 7 to Support and Engage Early Learners.

The Assistive Technology Coordinator and Consultant shared resources with over 100 teachers and administrators in the vendor area at the Assistive Technology table.

The Digital Lead Learners (DLL) Marketplace showcased how digital learning tools and resources are leveraged to inspire, foster and support culturally responsive teaching practices and equitable learning experiences with educational technologies. Many of the Marketplace sessions featured the AT Tools WeVideo and Mindomo in action in classrooms across the TDSB. This is a result of the learning partnership between the AT Team and the DLL Team.

Parent Session #3 - Transitions

On Tuesday, May 30th and Wednesday, May 31st, Special Education and Inclusion held a third parent engagement session with a focus on ways families can support their children over the summer months. This session featured information on summer transitions and included practical ideas to engage students, such as fun home activities for literacy and numeracy development, library resources and information on various Assistive Technology (AT) tools, and how to use Read & Write at home. Information on TDSB and community resources and programs for parents of children with special education needs was also shared. The sessions were facilitated by Special Education and Inclusion Centrally Assigned Principals (CAPs), Coordinators and Consultants. The managers from Professional Support Services joined to share information related to Mental Health and Well Being, Occupational and Physical Therapy, and Speech and Language. Attendees were

provided the opportunity to ask questions while the presentations were being held. The recorded session can be accessed on the public website [here](#).

TDSB Guide to Special Education for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers (Updated June 2023)

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils, and to communicate this information to parents/guardians/caregivers. An updated Guide to Special Education for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers has been developed to include information required by the Ministry of Education, such as information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), procedures involved in identifying a pupil as “exceptional” and deciding the pupil's placement, and steps for appealing such decisions if a parent does not agree with the IPRC. The guide is available in a digital format with audio, as well as in the accessible MS Word version. As the guide was just completed this week, we will be looking to have them translated as soon as possible. Parents/guardians/caregivers requiring translation assistance are asked to contact the principal of their child’s school.

[Guide to Special Education and Inclusion for Parents/Caregivers/Guardians](#) (with Audio)
[Guide to Special Education and Inclusion for Parents/Caregivers/Guardians](#) (MS Word Download)

PA Day Professional Learning Sessions for Support Staff

On June 2nd, 2023, Special Education and Inclusion staff from the Special Equipment Amount (SEA), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Behaviour, Prevention and Intervention (BPI) teams presented a variety of interactive professional learning sessions for support staff on a number of topics such as: *ABCs of ABA: Using Basic ABA Strategies in the Classroom; Positive Reinforcement; Structuring Unstructured Time; Behaviour Prevention and Supporting De-Escalation; and Effective Strategies to Support Students Who Have an Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) Device.*

These hands-on learning sessions provided an opportunity for support staff to learn, further develop their skill set and explore effective inclusionary practices to implement accommodations in classrooms that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). Participants deepened their understanding of the intersection of anti-ableism, anti-oppression and anti-racism and discussed ways in which students can effectively be integrated and supported.

Supporting Transition to High School: Secondary Congregated Sites

Professional Support Services (PSS) received mental health and well being funds which were used to support transitions for students with disabilities. These funds have been offered to secondary congregated school sites and high schools with DD/PD-ISPs and 15 participating schools expressed interest. School staff, with the support of their PSS team (i.e. Child and Youth

Services, Occupational Therapists/Physiotherapists, Psychology Services, Social Work Services, Speech-Language Services), have arranged transition events to offer incoming Grade 9 students and their parents/guardians/caregivers opportunities to visit the future school sites. During these visits, students and families were able to familiarize themselves with the school space, meet with future educators and PSS teams, enjoy food and refreshments, receive valuable transition resources (e.g., visual social stories, sensory/motor transition items, etc.), and most importantly, initiate connections and relationships to foster smooth transitions with school staff. Currently enrolled high school students also provided school tours for their incoming peers and received honorariums for their participation and efforts. In future years, it is hoped that advanced notice and additional Ministry funds will be provided so that more programs, students, and schools may benefit from these opportunities to promote care, a sense of belonging and mattering centred in mental health and well-being.

Be the Change Project and Showcase

The Be The Change Project, hosted by TDSB's Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services, involved 24 TDSB schools with Developmental Disability (DD)/Diagnostic Kindergarten (DK)/Physical Disability (PD) Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) this year. There were 3 virtual learning modules teaching students about neurodiversity, inclusion, equity, allyship and activism along with a parent/guardian/caregiver module to spread the knowledge and strategies on how to best support schools. Each module included a keynote speaker to deepen the understanding of lived experiences and inspire students to "Be The Change" in their schools and communities. This project was centered on students leading an initiative at their school and families at the local school level. Students and educators then worked to launch an initiative at the school to promote diversity, inclusion, connection, and compassion within their school communities. On May 25th, students showcased their initiatives with participating schools and system leaders. Participating schools will be encouraged to share their learnings and provide mentorship for future participants next year.

Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationship Series for Parents/Caregivers with Students with Special Education Needs

Professional Support Services (PSS), in collaboration with our partners from Montage Support Services, and Community Living Toronto, hosted three virtual sessions for parents/caregivers, on May 17th, 24th and 31st from 6pm-8pm, on how to better discuss healthy relationship making. Details of each session are listed below and in the flyer attached. These series support TDSB's [Anti-Sex Trafficking Policy](#) and initiatives and recordings of these sessions can be found [here](#).

These sessions were led by Deanna Djos, Sexual Health Promoter from Montage Support Services and Tracey O'Regan, Community Inclusion and Advocacy Supervisor-Educational Consultant from Community Living Toronto.

Session #1: May 17th, 2023: What is consent? What is a unhealthy vs. healthy relationship? -

There was a discussion about the importance of consent in the context of learning about healthy relationships.

Session #2: May 24th, 2023: Explore values, beliefs, love and self-esteem - The group learned about the key elements to a healthy relationship. Through the exploration of values, beliefs, goals, dreams, love and self-esteem the group learned the power of these foundational skills and how they relate to living a healthier life.

Session #3: May 31st, 2023: Learn about the importance of boundaries. What is abuse? - What are the signs of an unhealthy relationship? These elements are: boundaries, kindness, respect, manners and communication which help build character and how it can play an important role on emotional development. The group learned how to determine what is a healthy, unhealthy or abusive relationship and what to do when someone is in an unhealthy relationship.

Update on SEAC Motions

Special Education and Inclusion Service Level Data (2022-2023) Report

At the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 24, 2023, the Board received the Special Education and Inclusion Service Level Data (2022-2023) Report. This report was presented to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee (FBEC) on May 15, 2023 in response to SEAC's motion for staff to provide service-level data directly linked to students with special education needs to the Board of Trustees to help inform the Board's budget decisions.

Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee on SEACs Calendar

At the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 24, 2023, the Board decided that the motion requesting data from staff and a calendar aligned with "PAAC on SEAC" (the Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees) be referred to staff for the development of a calendar that includes the information requested and outlined by SEAC, that is aligned to the Board's timelines and capabilities.

SEAC Year-at-a-Glance

As per discussions with the chairs, staff have created a draft calendar based on the Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee (PAAC) on Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC) calendar which was included in the June meeting mailout. Items in the draft calendar are aligned with the Board's timelines and capabilities.

Budget Work Group

The SEAC Budget Working Group is meeting to review budget information and special education data in order to advocate to the Board of Trustees to support students with special education needs while making budget decisions.



**Assessment Statistics
May 2023**

Month-By-Month	LC1	LC2	LC3	LC4	Total
Completed	76	91	74	90	331
Total Referrals	70	44	49	67	230
Cumulative (since September 2022)					
Completed	823	815	571	914	3123
In Progress	156	163	193	212	724
Waiting*	167	113	236	301	817
Removed	101	92	81	210	484
Total Referrals**	1247	1183	1081	1637	5148

*97% of total waitlist are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 3% are gifted assessments

**73% of total referrals are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 27% are gifted assessments

IPRC Data - May 2023

May IPRCs	
Learning Centre 1	135
Learning Centre 2	171
Learning Centre 3	155
Learning Centre 4	164
IPRCs Completed	625
IPRC Cumulative since August 2022	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2022	3056

