

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

December 11, 2023

Leadership Report

Learning Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

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Special Education and Inclusion in the TDSB

Special Education and Inclusion is pleased to offer a number of “Fact Sheets” that provide information on students with Special Education Needs (SEN) in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). These fact sheets will include insights on:

- processes and criteria for identifying students as exceptional;
- the demographics of students with special education needs within the overall TDSB student population;
- exceptionalities and classroom settings; and
- the academic achievements and post-secondary trajectories for students with special education needs.

[Fact Sheet #1. An Introductory Overview of Students with Special Education Needs](#), is the first in a series of fact sheets examining a range of topics impacting students with special education needs within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). This fact sheet provides an introductory overview of TDSB students with special education needs in the 2022-23 school year.

By offering a detailed snapshot of our current landscape, we hope this document will serve as a valuable resource for all stakeholders as we work together to support students with special education needs.

67th Ontario Council of Exceptional Children Annual Special Education Conference

On November 24 and 25, 2023 a number of TDSB staff presented at the 67th Ontario Council of Exceptional Children Annual Special Education Conference. The theme of the 2023 conference was Well-being, Equity and Success for All. Presentations focused on evidence-based practices, instructional strategies, and technology to equitably support the well-being, learning and achievement of students with special education needs.



Sessions included:

- Strengths-based Resilience: Incorporating Cultural Context and Learning Needs to Foster Resilience and Well-being
- Occupational Therapists & Physiotherapists in Ontario Schools: Galvanizing Students' Learning and Participation through Collaborative Practices, Capacity Building, and Barrier Breaking
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility: Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, CRRP (Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy) – Oh My!
- Building Rapport with Students on the Autism Spectrum: An Evidence-based Approach Using the Principles of ABA, Social Emotional Learning Theory, Positive Behaviour Support Theory, and Cognitive Load Theory

New and Experienced Administrator Sessions

Two sessions for newly appointed Vice Principals and Principals are being offered in December. These sessions will provide an overview of Special Education and Inclusion practices, opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue to deepen understanding of the role of school leaders in interrupting and disrupting oppressive practices within special education and inclusion. Participants will strengthen their confidence and competence to lead staff to develop inclusive practices while serving students with special education needs and intersecting identities.

TDSB Suspension Data Over Time

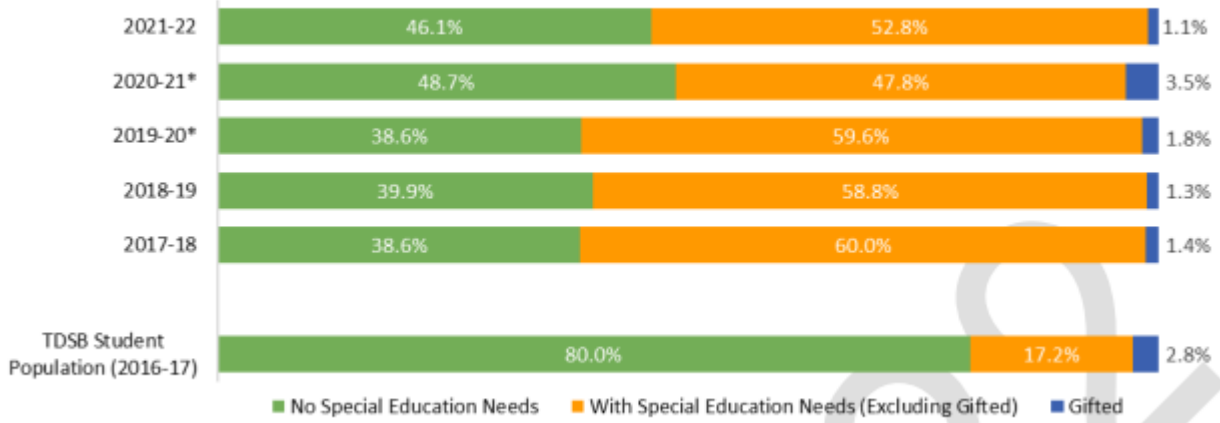
The graph below shows the number of suspensions and expulsions of students with special education needs in relation to the total number of TDSB students. In the most recent public reporting (2021-22), the TDSB had 3,505 suspensions and 20 expulsions across the entire district. The suspension rate for the TDSB stands at 1.13%.

While students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) made up approximately 15% of the student population in 2021-2022, in 2021-22 students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) represented over half (53%) of all suspensions/expulsions.

Please refer to the TDSB Caring and Safe Schools report attached to this Leadership Report.



Figure 7: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Special Education Needs



TDSB Students with Exceptionalities

Over the past 5 years, the proportion of students with exceptionalities in the TDSB has remained fairly consistent. For many years it has hovered between 19% and 20% of the TDSB population. The number of students in many of the exceptionality categories have either been declining or remaining stable as the number of students with special education needs has been declining. This is consistent with the overall decline in enrolment at the TDSB. It is notable that autism and giftedness continue to rise, while declines can be seen in mild intellectual disability, learning disability, language impairment, physical disability, and behavioural.

EXCEPTIONALITY	Develop Disab	Autism	No Exceptionalit	Giftedness	Mild Intel Disab	Learning Disab	Language Impair	Blind Low Vision	Deaf Hard Hear	Physical Disab	Behaviour	Speech Impair	Multiple Excerpt	DHH Pre	BLV/DHH	Exceptionality Total	TDSB Total	Proportion of Exceptionalities
2018-2019	1114	2682	29193	7279	1588	6532	110	43	261	265	646	1	3	16	0	49733	244623	20.3%
2019-2020	1154	2828	30157	7441	1509	5847	97	42	255	246	614	0	1	34	0	50225	245371	20.5%
2020-2021	1135	2853	27748	7381	1398	5295	85	37	262	212	532	0	1	21	2	46962	236982	19.8%
2021-2022	1126	2964	26581	7360	1344	4665	73	35	259	194	451	0	2	23	2	45079	234125	19.3%
2022-2023	1101	3170	26218	7331	1296	4111	56	37	247	173	379	0	0	18	2	44139	237884	18.6%



Virtual Special Education and Inclusion Information Sessions for Parents/Guardians/ Caregivers

Two virtual sessions for Parents/Guardians and Caregivers were held on November 28th and 29th with almost 100 parents joining Special Education and Inclusion for overview of Special Education and Inclusion supports, programs and services available in the TDSB. These sessions were recorded and are housed on the [TDSB Special Education website](#) for parents to access at any time.

Assistive Technology & SEA Team 2-Part Professional Learning Communities

The Assistive Technology (AT) and SEA Team is leading three Professional Learning Communities (PLC) this year, focused on building staff capacity with regards to assistive technology, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and positive outcomes for students. The PLCs support student engagement, joy, and increasing voice in activities.

Supporting Student Learning and Communication in Developmental Disability (DD) and Diagnostic Kindergarten (DK) Classrooms using SEA iPad Bundles & 1:1 SEA iPads: Supporting educators in DD and DK classrooms who have received iPad bundles and 1:1 SEA iPads. This PLC, in collaboration with Apple Canada, provides educators with the opportunity to learn about the selection of paid apps on the SEA iPads focusing on communication, early literacy, academic skills, and ABA supports

Using 1:1 Devices and Assistive Technology to Design Your Classroom Around UDL: Supporting classrooms with accessing 1:1 student devices. These sessions provide collaboration opportunities with other educators to engage students with assistive technology and the principles of Universal Design.

Using Mindomo to Connect Student Voice to the New Science Curriculum and Beyond!: Designed in collaboration with the Science and Technology, STEM, Mathematics and Robotics team, participants explore the Science and Technology Curriculum, engage in Universal Design for Learning discussions and activities, and learn about Mindomo and other assistive technology programs. Time is provided to plan and debrief classroom activities with colleagues.

So far 155 educators have participated across the three PLCs, with additional staff registered for future cohorts for all three PLC groups.



IPRC Data - November 2023

November IPRCs	
Learning Centre 1	41
Learning Centre 2	34
Learning Centre 3	37
Learning Centre 4	69
IPRCs Completed	181
IPRC Cumulative since August 2023	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2023	463