

PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR TDSB SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Prepared by the TDSB SEAC Priorities Working Group

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PRIORITY 1.

How can TDSB improve its process for deciding what educational services and supports a child with special needs will receive?

This priority area includes such things as:

- a) What steps TDSB should take to tell parents and students about the educational options available for students with special needs, about the rights to an I.E.P. and an I.P.R.C., and about any other ways parents and students can seek accommodation of their special education needs;
- b) What steps TDSB should take to create a welcoming environment for students with special needs and their parents to seek and receive accommodation of their education needs;
- c) How I.E.P.s should be developed and with what input from parents and students;
- d) How I.P.R.C.s should be conducted and with what input from parents and students;
- e) What avenues parents and students should have available to them to ensure that I.E.P. and I.P.R.C. decisions and recommendations are fully and effectively implemented;
- f) What other opportunities students with special needs and their parents should have to try to get TDSB to address and accommodate the educational needs of a student with special needs, outside the formal process of I.E.P.s and I.P.R.Cs.

PRIORITY 2.

How can TDSB improve the range of educational placements, programs and services offered to students with special needs?

This includes such things as:

- a) The availability of options for integration versus segregation for students with special needs;
- b) The options for intensive support programs and for blending integration and segregation, and eligibility for these;
- c) The specific supports available to assist students with special needs to learn to their maximum potential;
- d) The options for attending school near a family's home, and at the same school as siblings of a child with special needs;
- e) The supports for making a transition between different TDSB educational settings, and from school to post-secondary opportunities.

PRIORITY 3.

What can be done to more effectively make TDSB education fully accessible, barrier-free and inclusive to children with special needs?

This includes, for example:

- a) what TDSB should do to identify and remove existing recurring or systemic barriers, and prevent the creation of new barriers in TDSB that impede full participation in education programming and services by students with special needs. This includes such things as: physical barriers (like physically inaccessible buildings or classrooms); disciplinary practices that disproportionately affect students with special needs; attitudinal barriers (which can be founded in stereotypical or discriminatory beliefs about people with disabilities); and technological barriers (such as classroom computers, software or other equipment that is not designed based on principles of universal design);
- b) what training TDSB should provide for teachers and other school staff, to ensure that they can meet the needs of all students, including students with special needs (e.g. ongoing training to better ensure understanding of human rights duties, to remove barriers to accessing school services, curriculum and belonging in the classroom);
- c) What TDSB should do to ensure procurement of accessible classroom equipment and gym equipment;
- d) What TDSB should do to ensure use of curriculum based on principles of universal/inclusive design;
- e) What TDSB should do to educate children without disabilities on including kids of all abilities, to ensure that the school and classroom is a welcoming environment for students with special needs;
- f) What TDSB should do to ensure that staffing and other practices do not lead to exclusion from or reduction of opportunities for students with special needs.

PRIORITY 4.

Looking at “Big Picture” concerns regarding TDSB’s delivery of education to students with special needs.

This could include, for example:

- a) How should TDSB monitor for and make its employees accountable for ensuring full participation and inclusion of children with special needs, so they can learn to the maximum of their abilities?
- b) Why are so many students with special needs not having an I.P.R.C.?
- c) Why are far more students with special needs at TDSB placed in segregated programs than is the provincial average?