

Section E: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING; POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Special Education Plan 2020

Special Education and Inclusion Professional Learning

Policies and Procedures

Transportation Policies and Procedure

Special Education and Inclusion Professional Learning

Professional Learning Plan

Building capacity for staff is the underpinning of moving toward inclusion.

Professional learning is determined by the goals in the Multi Year Strategic Plan, local School Improvement Plans (SIP) and data collected through a variety of resources. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members also provide their critical lens in advising the Board on areas of focus.

We continue to collaborate with Research and the Leadership, Learning and School Improvement (LLSI) teams to work innovatively to ensure that each student is thriving in an accessible, inclusive and engaging environment. The next three years will focus on three areas of professional learning:

- Inclusion, Equity and Well-Being
- Learning Conditions
- Universal Design & Differentiated Instruction

Areas of Learning Focus

Inclusion, Equity and Well-Being

The transformational actions being taken to support

Inclusion is interconnected to equity and well-being. A strategic and coordinated approach to lead to the thoughtful and intentional systemic change and the cultural shifts necessary to make a difference in schools and classrooms as it relates to serving students with special education needs.

Students are more successful when they are engaged in their learning. A focus on providing educators opportunities to deepen their understanding of how to effectively be responsive to the identities, strengths, interests, gifts, and lived realities of students so as to ensure equitable access, increased opportunities to all pathways and anti-oppressive; anti-racist and inclusive practices are implemented. This will safeguard enhanced learning outcomes for all students.

Learning Conditions

Learning conditions, the operating environment of a classroom, supports a dynamic interrelationship between students, teachers, and curriculum and learning.

A quality learning environment optimizes students' independence to access learning opportunities and resources and is pivotal in providing students with an equitable chance for long-term success.

When implementing effective classroom learning conditions (*teaching strategies, assessment, evaluation, third teacher, flex seating, student voice, culturally relevant and responsive resources and pedagogy*) educators must consider:

- students' social identities, histories, and lived experiences
- resources and pedagogy used must foster a healthy self-identity by affirming, respecting, and promoting cultural knowledge(s)
- building on students' experiences in ways that promote well-being and belonging
- Student as a Learner
 - Who is being referred and why?
 - How is the identity of the student and lived experiences being leveraged to enhance learning opportunities?
- Teacher/Staff as a Learner
 - As there are no neutral spaces, what bias or barriers (systemic, attitudinal, other) have been identified and dismantled?
 - Data shared by the teacher of student assessment and evaluation indicates evidence of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction principals; culturally relevant and responsive resources, tasks, assessment and evaluation strategies; evidence of student voice (parallel tasks) or is there an opportunity for professional learning?

Universal Design & Differentiated Instruction

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) means designing

innovative ways to make curriculum accessible in any learning situation/context, for individual learners with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities.

Principles of UDL focus on adapting teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment to suit the learner rather than the other way around. It means creating flexible materials and methods before they are offered to students, understanding that the kinds of support needed by one student can be beneficial for all the students. For example, if one student needs colour coding as a method of organizing notes, all students in the class may find this strategy helpful. UDL means planning learning opportunities that will extend the learning of all students, whatever their level of achievement, and help each one reach his or her potential. ([Rose & Meyer, 2002](#))

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is based on the idea that, because students differ significantly in their strengths, interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn, instructional approaches need to be adapted to match these differing characteristics and provide multiple learning paths for students. The learning content, process, products and environment can be differentiated in any learning situation to support student learning to achieve greater success. ([Tomlinson, 2004](#))

Instructional interventions are monitored by the classroom teacher. When a student begins to show signs of persistent learning difficulties, full understanding of how a student learns is needed to decide the best ways to use student strengths to address areas of need. This is obtained through a review of classroom support strategies, educational assessment and consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student.

Information is gathered and reviewed by teachers through development of an Individual Learning Profile (ILP) and consultation at a variety of In-School Support Team (IST) and School Support Team (SST) meetings. With parental permission, information from existing professional assessments and/or community-based resource people is also collected and reviewed. Teachers use this information to create a learning plan that is differentiated to best support the student's unique learning needs.

IEP and Programming

On-going professional development continues throughout the year to support schools with developing and implementing effective IEPs. The Special Education & Inclusion team works closely with teachers and principals in offering guidance and support with the IEP process.

Intentional work is being implemented to address motions received by SEAC as it relates to the IEP process. The intent of the recommendations is to ensure that parents, guardians, and where appropriate, students are informed and included in every step of the development and implementation process of the IEP.

Policies and Procedures

The following Board Procedures are related to Special Education and may be connected to other departments:

- [PR 699](#) Students with Special Needs: Management Process for Risk-Of-Injury Behaviours
- [PR 575](#) Access to Schools by Third Party Professionals
- [PR 696](#) Kindergarten Registration (see Entry Plan for Students With Special Needs section)
- [PR 548](#) Promotion, Transfer and Retention: Grades 1 to 8
- [PR 543](#) Promotion, Transfer and Retention: Grade 8 to Grade 9
- [PPM 140](#) Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into the Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- [PR 724](#) Refusal to Admit - Caring and Safe Schools
- [PPM 81](#) Provision of Health Support Services Settings
The [Ministry of Education](#) also provides detailed information about Special Education

Transportation Policy and Procedures

The Toronto District School Board is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation for resident students in accordance with the Education Act, Section 21 and the [Operational Procedures \(PR 504\)](#) of the TDSB [Transportation Policy \(PO20\)](#).

Transportation is provided for students who are placed by the [Identification, Placement, and Review Committee \(IPRC\)](#) to a Special Education program that is not located in their home school and who meet the eligibility criteria.

Special Education does not oversee Transportation. These guidelines have been developed to provide general information about the transportation service for students who are eligible for transportation, and to outline the responsibilities of all parties involved in the safe transportation of students.

Further information can be obtained through the school principal or Area Supervisor of Transportation.

Additional information and all forms can be found on the [Student Transportation](#) pages of the TDSB website or through the Transportation Portal below.



Looking for your child's transportation information?

1. Transportation Portal: Access information specific to your child's transportation, including route number, stop location, times and bus company contact details. [Learn more and register.](#)

2. Toronto Student Transportation Group:

Phone: 416-394-4287

Fax: 416-394-3806

Email: transportation@torontoschoolbus.org

Web: www.torontoschoolbus.org

Delay Notifications: www.torontoschoolbus.org/school-bus-delays/

3. Your School: Schools have access to the transportation information and often post the Big Bus routes on the main doors of the schools when they open in late August. Route maps identifying all the stops on the large capacity buses are also available on the [Toronto Student Transportation Group website.](#)

Transportation and IPRCs

When a special education placement is offered at a school other than the home school, transportation needs should be discussed with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine if transportation arrangements are required. If so, the sending school arranges for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to complete a Student Transportation Application form and forwards it to the transportation office once the school section is also completed.

Parents shall ensure that all relevant information as it pertains to the student's ability to access transportation is documented, any limitations clearly identified, and a safety plan is noted on Page 2 of the application or forwarded as an attachment. Parents shall also be provided with a copy of the [Transportation Brochure for Students with Special Needs](http://tdsbweb/webdocuments/Transportation/docs/Transportation%20Brochure_tstg_special2016.pub) available at: http://tdsbweb/webdocuments/Transportation/docs/Transportation%20Brochure_tstg_special2016.pub

It highlights roles and responsibilities for the various parties including the boarding, securement, and de-boarding of students from transportation vehicles.

The transportation office forwards a copy of the application form to the receiving school, indicating on the form whether or not a student has met board criteria and been approved for transportation. In late August, the administrator of the receiving school is asked to ensure that school bus information (bell times, pick-up and drop-off locations, documented student disabilities/accessibility issues, etc.) is correct for the students at their school.

Method of Transportation Service

For the 2020-2021 school year please note that method of

transportation services and student cohort may change in order to support the Covid 19 pandemic adaptive model for return to school.

For eligible students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 transportation is provided by contracted carrier services (70 and 18 passenger buses, wheelchair buses, mini-vans or taxis). Each student is entitled to a total of two trips per day. Mid-day routes are intended for students attending half-day programs. Methods include:

- School to school transportation
- Designated site-to-school transportation as a result of an Identification, Placement, and
- Review Committee or for medical reasons
- Home-to-school transportation for Special Education students in district-wide programs
- Mini-van or taxi service for eligible students in warranted circumstances

For students in Gifted programs up to and including Grade 5, the method of service is school to school or school to designated stop (stop determined by Student Transportation Services). Students must walk to a school or designated stop to meet the bus. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for the supervision of students before they board and after they disembark from the school bus. Transportation service is not provided from the home or daycare addresses (unless the address is located at a TDSB designated stop).

For all eligible students from Grade 6 through 8, TTC tickets are provided at the request of parent(s)/guardian(s). Grade 6 students may be provided with bus transportation if the most direct TTC route requires more than one transfer. Also please note that a recent policy change allows students age 13 and under to ride for free. Students in Grades 9 to 12 may receive TTC tickets, provided the distance and financial criteria are met.

Requirements and Responsibilities

Changes to Transportation Arrangements

1. Temporary Cancellation of Service

If a child will be absent from school due to illness or for other reasons, parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to inform the transportation company.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must notify the transportation company before 7:00 a.m., or the evening beforehand, when transportation is to be resumed following their child's absence. (A directory of companies is listed at the end of the Provision of Transportation section.)

2. Permanent Cancellation/Changes of Pick-up and Drop-off Locations

The transportation company and its drivers are NOT authorized to accept changes of pick-up and

drop-off locations (either permanent or temporary). Changes to transportation must be communicated by completing an updated transportation application and re-submitting it to the attending school office, may require up to 10 working days to process.

If there is a permanent cancellation of service or change in pick-up and drop-off location, parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to advise the principal of the school where the child attends. The principal must then ensure that a student transportation form is completed and forwarded to Student Transportation to cancel or change information.

3. Requiring Return from School Only

When a student is on two-way transportation and comes to school by other means of transportation on any occasion, the parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to call the transportation company to ensure that the transportation company returns their child from school to the designated drop-off location. (For example, if a child is brought to school in the morning, the bus company needs to be informed that the child will need a ride back in the afternoon.)

Pick-up and Drop-off

It is essential that a responsible adult be present for a child at both pick-up and drop-off.

It is not possible for daily transportation services to be reorganized to accommodate parent(s)/guardian(s) work or daycare schedules. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may designate an alternate adult (i.e., caregiver) to be present for a child's pick-up and drop off. However, parent(s)/guardian(s) must inform the school and bus company if someone unexpected will be meeting their child at the end of the school day (the alternate person should have a picture ID available to show the driver).

Parent Responsibilities

The success of transportation services depends on parent(s)/guardian(s) assuming the following responsibilities:

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are expected to have the child ready for transportation at least 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, and to be prompt in meeting the vehicle at the usual drop-off time.
- If the child misses the bus, it is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to transport the child to school. A student who is regularly late for pick-up may lose the privilege of being transported.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to maintain open communication with the driver about the unique characteristics of their child, (such as behavioural concerns, seizure information, anxiety, vision or hearing impairment). This is in the best interests of the child, especially if an emergency situation were to occur.

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should initially discuss transportation problems or concerns with the school principal. If the problem cannot be resolved at the school level, the school principal should contact the Student Transportation office.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to keep the following in mind:

- In September, routes may not settle for up to 4 weeks.
- Drivers do their best to pick up and drop off children on time and strive to ensure that schedules are kept. However, bus schedules are affected by traffic, weather, students' behaviour, and promptness of caregivers in meeting the vehicle.
- It is not always possible to maintain consistent drivers or pick-up and drop-off times. Transportation schedules may vary throughout the year, when new students begin school in your area or transfer to another school.
- No consumption of food or drinks are allowed on buses due to the hazard of choking or the possibility of another student on the bus with food allergies.

Drivers are expected to report to the principal in writing when a student's behaviour is causing problems or an unsafe condition on the bus. The principal will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to seek cooperation in solving the problem.

If the problem cannot be resolved, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be requested to provide alternate transportation for their child.

Driver Responsibilities

The transportation company shall transport students from the nearest curbside in front of their pick-up location to their respective schools and return to the nearest curbside in front of their drop-off location. **Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for their child to and from the curbside.**

No student shall be left by a driver at the student's designated location for drop-off unless the student is met by a responsible adult – parent(s)/guardian(s) or caregiver designated by parent(s)/guardian(s). A driver will not leave a student unattended or with a person unknown to him or her. If a responsible person is not available to meet the student upon arrival from school, the driver may be instructed to exercise the following options after notifying dispatch:

- Continue to drop off the remaining students on the run and return to the drop-off location
- Deliver the student to the emergency contact person, if available and within reasonable distance
- Return the student to the school, if staff is available to receive the student
- Deliver the student to the nearest Police Division or Children's Aid Society

The driver must call the parent(s)/guardian(s) of new students to advise them of the pick-up and drop-off times the evening before transportation service is to start. The driver must notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any change in pick-up or drop-off times.

Seat Belts, Seat Belt Covers, Car Seats, Booster Seats, Safety Vests

Car Seats

- Car seats may be used on 18-passenger buses for daily home to school transportation
- Car seats must be used for students who require them because of their medical condition and the student's weight is under 40 lbs

Booster Seats

The following is mandatory by law for a student riding in a minivan or taxi:

- If student is between 40 and 80 lbs., under 145 cm tall and up to 8 years of age, a booster seat is required
- All car and booster seats must be Transport Canada approved, have a current validation date and be tethered into the school vehicle as required by the Ministry of Transportation before transportation can start
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must provide the car or booster seat and must leave them on the vehicle for the school year
- Trained staff from the bus company will inspect and install the car seat or booster seat

Seat Belts, Seat Belt Covers, Safety Vests

Students who remove their seat belts or seat belt covers and fail to remain seated while in transit, or are aggressive to other students create an unsafe condition for both students and driver. A safety harness vest may be required to provide safe transportation. If a student requires a safety harness, a "Harness Request Form" must be completed and authorized by a medical practitioner. Where appropriate and prior to a request for a safety harness vest, a seat-belt buckle guard/cover may be considered. Additional equipment may be required to further secure a safety harness vest, by adding other apparatus.

Collective Responsibility

Parent(s)/Guardian(s), school staff, and drivers are collectively responsible for ensuring that each student is secured by a seat belt and/or in a car seat or safety vest, where applicable:

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for securing their child when the bus arrives in the morning and when unloading in the afternoon

- School staff is responsible for unloading in the morning and securing students when they are dismissed from school
- The driver is responsible for ensuring that students are safe and secure while the vehicle is in motion

Transportation for Students in Wheelchairs or with Severe Mobility Limitations

Transportation may be provided, regardless of distance, for students who have a medical condition or *disability that severely limits walking*. A medical certificate, along with a TDSB *Medical Form to Determine Eligibility* (obtained from the school principal and signed by a physician) is required. The Board reserves the right, with the signed consent of parent(s)/guardian(s), to discuss transportation issues with the physician.

- Transportation is not provided to students due to the medical condition of the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Transportation is not provided for students attending any school or special program at their request, even when distance or medical condition is a factor
- Students utilizing walkers are not permitted to use wheelchair ramps

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Staff:

- At school, staff must physically assist the child to and from the wheelchair bus, and at home parent(s)/guardian(s) must assist the child between the residence and the vehicle
- Are responsible for securing all personal chair restraints such as wheelchair seat belts, harnesses, and trays

The Driver:

- Is responsible for ensuring that all "Q Straint" belts are secured on the wheelchair vehicle
- Only the driver or authorized personnel shall operate the wheelchair ramp. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and school staff may not assist at this time
- In a circumstance where the student rocks in the chair to the point where the chair is in danger of tipping over, the driver may need assistance holding the wheelchair on the ramp to ensure the child's safety

Cancellation of Service Due to Inclement Weather

Inclement weather may force the closure of schools and/or the cancellation of transportation service.

- Radio, television stations and the TDSB website will communicate a public-service announcement to inform parent(s)/guardian(s) about schools closures and transportation cancellations

- If parent(s)/guardian(s) are concerned about inclement weather, they have the right to keep their child at home (especially in the case of medically fragile students), even if transportation is not canceled by the School Board

September Start-up

For the 2020-2021 school year please note that method of transportation services and student cohort (e.g., number of students on a bus) may change in order to support the Covid 19 pandemic adaptive model for return to school.

Transportation planning for the next school year begins in the spring, when parent(s)/guardian(s) receive a Student Transportation Application from the school. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to complete the Student Transportation Application and return it to their child's school according to the due date. The applications should be forwarded to the Transportation Department by way of the child's school office as soon as possible but no later than the end of June. Applications not received by the end of June may not receive transportation by the first week of school

Transportation service will not start for a student unless the Transportation Department has a completed application on file.

For students routed on 72-passenger vehicles, route information is posted at the program school the week prior to school beginning in September. For students routed on smaller vehicles, parent(s)/guardian(s) are contacted during the last week of August by the bus driver, to advise them of their pick-up and drop-off times. If contact is not made prior to the first day of school, parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for contacting the school to find out which transportation company is providing the service, in order to confirm the times. Parents may also register for the Parent Portal located on the TSTG (Student Transportation Group) website at: <https://www.torontoschoolbus.org> to view their child's transportation information.

In an emergency, information on the application may be released to a medical practitioner. It is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to keep the school and transportation company up-to-date on any changes to their child's medical health. **It is critical that phone numbers for parent(s)/guardian(s) and emergency contacts be accurate at all times throughout the year.**

For more information about Transportation, please visit the Toronto Student Transportation Group website - <https://www.torontoschoolbus.org/>.

Transportation Safety

Transportation safety is the number one priority. A list of Mandatory Performance Requirements can be found in [PR 504 Transportation of Students](#).

Additionally, all transportation suppliers must adhere to strict safety requirements. In the event of unsafe practices, transportation may be suspended.

Appeal Process

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may appeal the decisions made regarding transportation. The appeal process is outlined in PR 504, Section 3.2. A copy of the Appeal Form can be found within the PR504 information.

Transportation Company Contact Information

Student transportation in the TDSB is provided by a number of transportation companies, which may change from year to year. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should refer to the transportation notification they receive prior to the start of the school year, to learn which company will be transporting their child, and record the contact telephone number in a convenient location.

(AR)	Attridge Transportation	416-255-5199
(CL)	First Student Toronto	416-444-7030
(DT)	Dignity Transportation	416-398-2109
(MC)	McCluskey Transportation	416-246-1422
(SH)	Sharp Bus Lines	416-477-4804
(ST)	Stock Transportation West	416-244-5341
(SC)	Stock Transportation East	416-754-4949
(SN)	Stock Transportation North	416-757-0565
(SW)	Switzer Carty Transportation	905-361-1084
(WA)	Wheelchair Accessible Transit	416-884-9898