

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting October 8, 2024

Learning Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Student Learning and Equitable Outcomes
Nandy Palmer, Executive Superintendent, Special Education Programs and
Equitable Outcomes



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we reside on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognise the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, as well as the importance of establishing and maintaining Cultural Safety through learning from Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives.



Agenda

Chair/Vice Chair 7:00 – 7:05 pm Call to Order (quorum)

- Announce Live Streaming of meeting.
- Land Acknowledgement
- Review/Approval of Agenda
- Declarations of Possible Conflicts of Interests
- Review/Approval of Minutes (September)

1. Follow up to June Motion (presented to PSSC on September 25, 2024) – Chair 7:05 – 7:20
2. Follow up to September SEAC discussion regarding Parent Concern Protocol – Chair 7:20 – 7:40
3. Budget Discussion – Craig Snider 7:40 – 8:00
4. Town Hall Discussion – Chair, Nora Green, Leo Lagnado 8:00 – 8:20
5. Leadership Report 8:20 – 8:40
6. Trustee Report 8:40 – 8:50
7. Association Report 8:50 – 8:55
8. Other Business/Correspondence/Adjournment 8:55 – 9:00 **NEXT MEETING – November 4, 2024 Town Hall**

Special Education and Inclusion Goals

Staff Development

Staff in departments and schools engage in professional learning opportunities throughout the school year. Learning opportunities include compliance training such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Supporting Children with Prevalent Medical Conditions, and mandatory learning such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Strategy and Chairing Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) Meetings.

Over the next two years, staff will focus on the following four areas for professional learning:

1. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples(UNDRIP)
2. Inclusion (anti-ableism), Equity (anti-oppression) and Well-Being;
3. Learning Conditions; and
4. Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy.

The Special Education and Inclusion Department continues to create coherence and alignment of special education and inclusion practices, programs and structures across the TDSB by focusing on the following areas:

- Challenging and Dismantling Oppressive Structures;
- Capacity Building;
- Changing Mindsets; and
- Communication and Engagement.

Professional Learning

To support coherence, alignment and consistency of special education and inclusion practices and to build capacity, a number of professional learning opportunities have been offered to staff at all levels since the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

The following sessions, which align with the **Professional Learning** section of the TDSB Special Education Plan, were specifically designed for school and system leaders:

- **Special Education for Newly Appointed Administrators**
- **Sessions for New and Experienced Administrators**
- **Drop-in Office Hours for Administrators**
- **School-Based IPRC Principal Chair and Committee Member Training**

For your reference, please find the learning sessions offered since the start of the school year below:

[Learning Sessions September 2024.docx](#)

[Learning Sessions October 2024.docx](#)

Parent Engagement Session

- On September 24, the *Let's Talk, Read, and Write!* series for parents/guardians/caregivers launched virtually. This initiative began as an in-school literacy series with sessions for parents with students in Senior Kindergarten. This school year, in continued collaboration with TDSB Parent Engagement and Community Support Worker Donna Cardoza, and with support from Troy Langevine, Centrally Assigned Principal (LC1), Special Education and Inclusion's Speech Language Pathology Services piloted the series virtually in an effort to reach more families.
- Parents of Grade 1 students were invited to register for five consecutive sessions to support literacy and language in the home. In each session, parents and children have an opportunity to practice strategies together that focus on word level skills as well as language development, and walk away with activities to practice at home.
- The five sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30, from September 24 to November 12. To date, 1300 families have registered, with 646 parents logging on with their children to participate in the first of five sessions.

Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities Ministry Grants

Special Education and Inclusion, through Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy (OT/PT) Services, was successful in being awarded four ministry grants through their “Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities” funding opportunity for the 2024-25 school year.

Grant 1: Let’s All be Friends

This pilot project is focused on supporting students with autism in both regular and ASD ISP classes in integrated school sites.

Grant 2: This is How I Keep on Rolling

During the 2023-24 school year, OT/PT Services embarked on a pilot project to test out a strengths-based, self-actualization, and identity-affirming disability pride project with a small group of students with physical disabilities.

Grant 3: An exploratory assessment of vocational skills programming, its applicability to job experiences, and how it accommodates students with disabilities

This initiative is intended to support secondary students with disabilities who are enrolled in Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) and/or Autism (ASD) in integrated school sites.

Grant 4: Hire this Kid - Developing a Job Opportunities Outreach Support Package

This project can be viewed as a complementary support for the project highlighted in *Grant 3*. This project aims to bridge relationships, build understanding, and bolster cooperative educational employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

Transition Navigators

The K-12 and Post-secondary Education Standards Development Committees (SDC) identified transitions as a potential organizational barrier for students with special education needs and/or disabilities, which included transitions into school, between schools, and out of secondary school to postsecondary education, workplace or community. Some key areas related to transitions for these students, identified by the SDC, include a lack of:

- consistency of planning for entry to school
- integration in transition planning between elementary and secondary schools
- coordination between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions.

TDSB has received \$646,007.98 to support work in this area. We have hired four Transitions Navigators to support the work that is to be done in this area.

October is ADHD Awareness Month

October is ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) Awareness Month. This October, the Center for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) is raising awareness about the additional mental health conditions that often come with an ADHD diagnosis. Did you know:

- 80% of adults and 44% of children with ADHD have at least one additional mental health condition
- 46% of women are misdiagnosed with another mental health condition disorder before being diagnosed with ADHD
- Up to 40% of children and 50% of adults with ADHD also have an anxiety disorder.
- 40% of individuals with ADHD also have a mood disorder
- As many as 50% of individuals with substance use disorder also have ADHD
- Early intervention is shown to prevent further mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders

Please find information on ADHD in this [ADHD Fact Sheet](#) created by members of TDSB SEAC and staff. For more information, visit the [CADDAC website](#).

Mark it Read for Dyslexia Awareness Month 2024

The theme for Mark it Read 2024 is **Breaking the Silence**.

Mark it Read is the official Canadian celebration for Dyslexia Awareness Month. October 1st, 2024 marks the start of the 7th annual national awareness-raising campaign. Each year across Canada, monuments and buildings are lit up red, schools and workplaces wear red, and cities and towns sign proclamations to officially declare the month of October as Dyslexia Awareness Month.

Learning Disabilities Month

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month (**#LDmonth**). The focus this month is to stop the stigma and realize students have ABILITIES! For more information, please visit the [LD@School website](#).

IPRC Data - September 2024

September IPRCs	
Learning Centre 1	9
Learning Centre 2	20
IPRCs Completed	29
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	29

Psychological Services

Assessment Statistics - September 2024



Psychological Services Assessment Statistics September 2024

Month-By-Month	LC1 (West)	LC2 (East)	Total
Completed	34	48	82
Total Referrals	626	504	1130
Cumulative (since September 2024)			
Completed	34	48	82
In Progress	176	204	380
Waiting*	365	225	590
Removed	51	27	78
Total Referrals**	626	504	1130

**98.6% of total waitlist are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 1.4% are gifted assessments*

***98.6% of total referrals are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 1.4% are gifted assessments*

Summer 2024	Comp. Assessments	SEPRC/IPRCs
Completed	21	(See previous slide)

