

# Special Education and Inclusion

## Trustee Virtual Forum

**May 21, 2024**



# Setting the Context

- As parents and educators, we work in a partnership with each other to set high expectations to maximize student success.
- TDSB staff values input from and partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers to ensure student success.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers offer valuable insights into their children's strengths and needs.
- The TDSB follows expectations outlined in Regulation 181/98 and directions from the Ministry of Education.

# My child is having learning challenges. What happens?

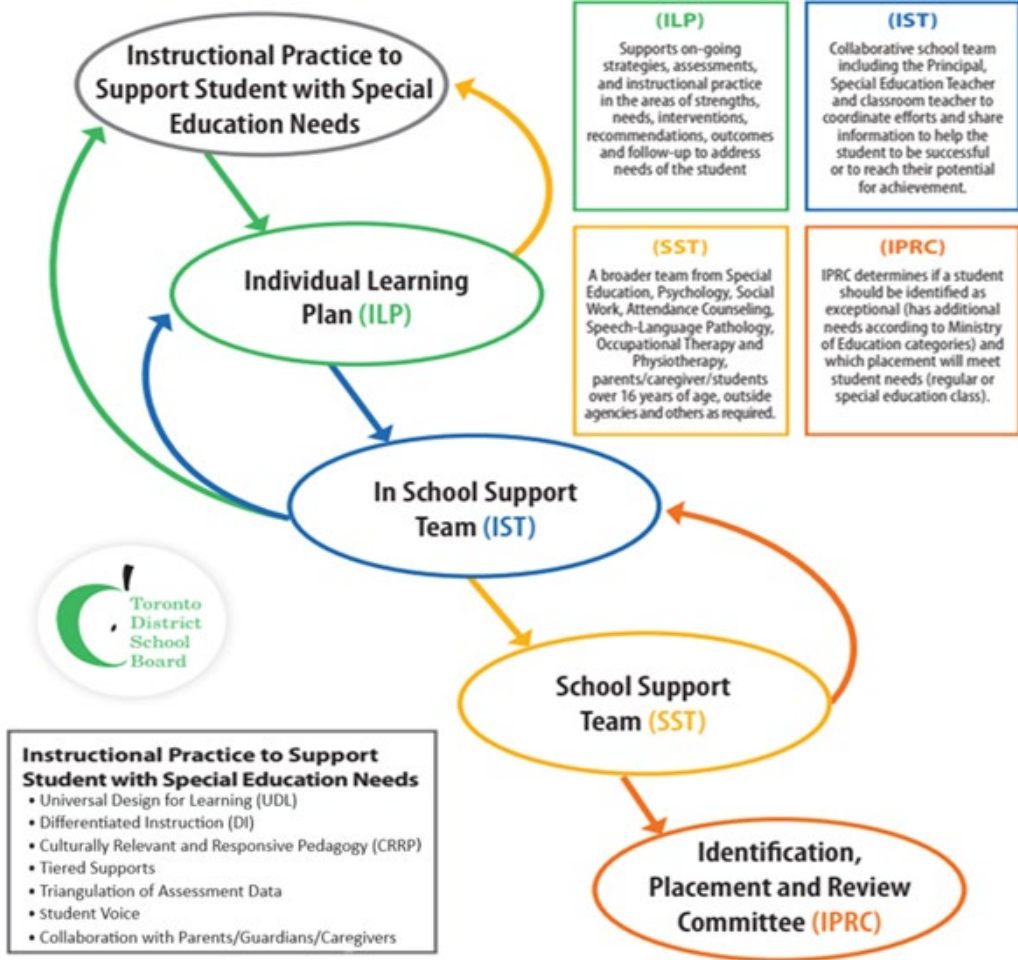
## Teacher Initiated

- Based on observations, the teacher sees learning challenges and gathers information to develop a complete picture of the student. The teacher contacts the parent/guardian/caregiver/student to communicate findings and co-plan next steps.

## Parent/Guardian/Caregiver/Student Initiated

- When a parent sees their child is having challenges, the parent approaches teacher and provides any information that will give a complete picture of the child and next steps are discussed.

# The Referral Process



# ILP - Individual Learning Plan

(ILP)

Supports ongoing strategies, assessments and instructional practice in the areas of strengths, needs, interventions, recommendations, outcomes and follow-up to address needs of the student

- The first step in supporting students who may not be meeting their achievement, and/or social/emotional goals
- A tool for school to track and monitor assessments, instructional strategies, interventions, and follow-up strategies to address the needs of the student
- Involves parents/guardians/caregivers and the student (as appropriate)

# ILP - Individual Learning Plan

- Implemented and assessed for 6-8 weeks to determine next steps and adjusted to meet student learning needs
- If the planned interventions are successful in supporting the student to meet their learning needs, those interventions will continue
- If the planned interventions are not successful, the teacher(s) will bring the student to IST where further interventions may be recommended (4-6 weeks) or where a recommendation may be made to proceed to SST

# IST - In School Support Team

## (IST)

Collaborative school team  
Including the Principal,  
Special Education Teacher  
and classroom teacher to  
coordinate efforts and share  
information to help the  
Student to be successful  
or to reach their potential  
for achievement.

- Parents/guardians/caregivers should be informed of the meeting - permission is not required
- The recommendations from the IST meeting should be communicated
- In some cases, the student is referred to the SST process

# SST - School Support Team

## (SST)

A broader team from Special Education, Psychology, Social Work, Attendance Counseling, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, parents/caregivers/students over 16 years of age, outside agencies and others as required.

- Parent/guardian/caregiver attendance is not mandatory, but recommended. If not in attendance, they will be informed of any recommendations
- Referrals for regional central support teams may be made
- The SST may recommend a referral to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)



# SST - School Support Team

The **purpose of the SST** is to:

- Review and discuss strategies used to address student needs
- Work collaboratively to develop, monitor and evaluate action plans and strategies to help the student
- Offer ***additional knowledge*** by including psychologists, social workers, attendance counsellors, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, parent/guardian/caregiver and students over 16 years of age
- Provide **Tier 3 level of support** for resources that are specific to your child and this is why your participation is encouraged

## How long are the waitlists for assessments?

*Wait time for a psychological assessment varies. Once a referral has been initiated, the average wait time is typically less than one year.*

*The School Support Team determines the priority in which students will be seen relative to the nature and complexity of student needs and all referral requests from the school.*

# SST - School Support Team

## Parent/Guardian/Caregiver **VOICE**:

- contributes to the discussion about your child and is valued
- presents your child as a competent and capable learner
- if you suspect a bias about your child, you can address it with the school team
- when possible, attend school meetings involving your child; your active involvement and participation is vital to your child's success
- if you cannot attend an IST/SST, request a copy of the ILP to be informed about the recommendations made at the meeting

# IPRC - Identification Placement Review Committee

## (IPRC)

IPRC determines if a student should be identified as exceptional (has additional needs according to Ministry of Education categories) and which placement will meet student needs (regular or special education class).

The formal process for a student with an IEP to be determined

- an EXCEPTIONALITY (has Special needs) and if so,
- an appropriate PLACEMENT or program setting (Regular class vs. Special Education Classroom for part of the day or full time)

*\*An IEP is required to engage in the IPRC process.*

# IPRC - Identification Placement Review Committee

**IPRC MEETINGS** - the purpose of an IPRC meeting is to understand the student's learning strengths and can offer an exceptionality and placement offer. Parents/guardians/caregivers and students over the age of 16 to attend these meetings and take part in the discussion

**ANNUAL REVIEWS** - are IPRC's that are yearly school-based reviews to determine if the support is still needed

**APPEALS** - the process to appeal an IPRC decision. Contact your school Principal first and have a discussion. If concern is not resolved, a formal appeal process is provided in the [Guides to Special Education for Parents](#)

# IPRC - Identification Placement Review Committee

## Parent/Guardian/Caregiver **VOICE:**

- How will placement in an Intensive Support Program impact on my child's educational pathway?
- How can my child's needs be supported in a regular classroom setting?
- If an Intensive Support Program is recommended, what efforts will be made to integrate/include my child in regular class programs and activities?
- How often will my child's exceptionality and placement be reviewed?

# How do I address Identification and Placement-related concerns?

- *The first step is to connect with the principal and/or superintendent of your child's school, as per the Parent Concern Protocol.*
- *An annual IPRC review - This process is a review of students' progress, especially in Intensive Support Programs (ISPs). It is intended that a student in an ISP is there for a short duration and will return to the regular classroom with special education support as needed.*
- *Parents/guardians/caregivers may request a Review IPRC any time after a student has been in a special education program for three months.*
- *As part of the IPRC process, principals ensure that parents/ guardians/caregivers receive a copy of the [Parent's Guide to Special Education](#) which outlines the entire IPRC process, including how to appeal decisions.*

# Inclusion

Ontario Regulation 181/98 requires school boards to consider placing students with exceptionalities into regular classes with appropriate special education supports before considering placement in special education classes.

## **Benefits for students with special education needs**

- students with special needs either do better or no worse academically in inclusive settings
- they are more likely to find friends, and children benefit from learning about and understanding each other
- they are more involved in extracurricular activities
- they build a network of friends



# Inclusion

## Benefits for students not identified with special education needs:

- students have increased interactions with, and understanding of, students with disabilities
- academic achievement is the same or higher in inclusive settings for students without special education needs
- better social interactions are exhibited due to this increased understanding of diverse populations of students

# Identification - Exceptionalities

## Intellectual

- Giftedness
- Mild Intellectual Disability
- Developmental Disability

## Communication

- Autism
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Speech and/or Language Impairment
- Learning Disability

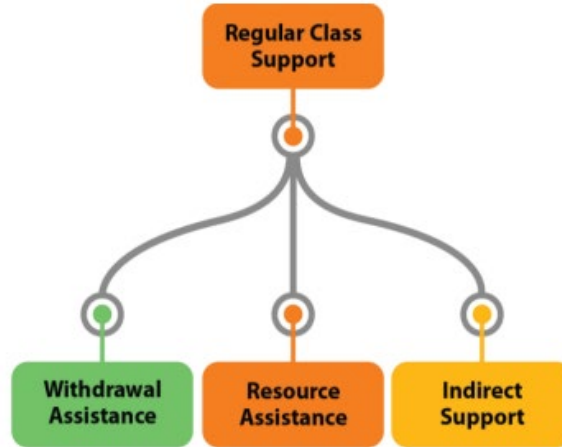
## Behaviour

## Physical

- Blind and Low Vision
- Physical Disability

## Multiple Exceptionalities

# Regular Class Placement



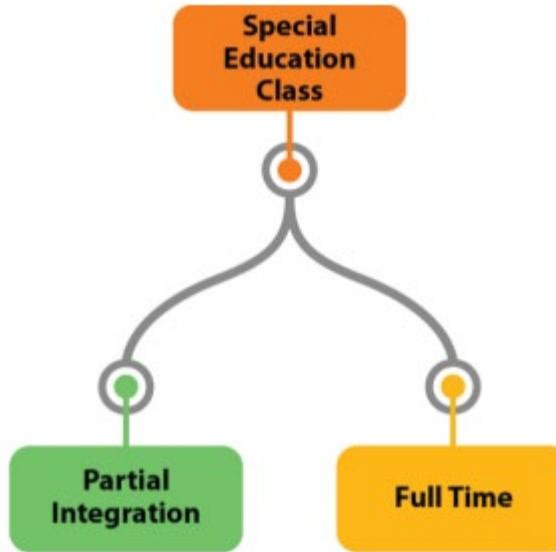
**Withdrawal Assistance** - student receives instruction outside the regular classroom for less than 50% of the school day from a special education teacher.

**Resource Assistance** - within regular classroom student receives direct, specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, from a special education teacher  
\* *Elementary schools*

**Indirect Support** - within regular classroom student receives direct instruction from classroom teacher, who receives specialized consultation from a special education teacher.

# Special Education Class Placement

- Mild Intellectual Disability
- Autism
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disability
- Behaviour



- Diagnostic Kindergarten
- Developmental Disability
- Physical Disability
- Giftedness

# How is support being provided with inclusive models and how we can deal with the challenges arising?

- *In public education, every student has the right to access learning in a regular class in their homeschool.*
- *The majority of students' needs are met in the regular classroom in their neighbourhood school. Strategies such as the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI), Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), appropriate accommodations and a tiered approach to intervention support students in their learning goals.*
- *Some students with unique strengths and needs (behaviour, communication, intellectual and physical) may require more specialized or intensive programs and supports. TDSB staff work with parents/guardians/caregivers to determine the most appropriate supports and enabling environment for their children.*



# IEP - Individual Education Plan

An IEP is developed for a student for one of the following reasons:

- must be developed for every student who has been identified as an “exceptional pupil” by an IPRC to plan special education programs and/or services in order to achieve curriculum expectations and to demonstrate learning.
- may be developed for a student who has not been identified by an IPRC as exceptional, but who requires a special education program and/or services in order to achieve curriculum expectations and/or to demonstrate learning.

# Tips for Family and School Collaboration

- Share information or documentation on medical needs or developmental milestones to assist planning for your child.
- Follow up on school requests for further information (hearing and/or vision).
- Give written permission for the school to communicate with community resource people that are supporting your child. No information is ever shared without your permission.
- Make sure your child knows you are in a partnership with their school.



# Parent Concern Protocol

<b>Questions or concerns about your child?</b>	<b>Step 1 - Classroom Teacher</b>
	<b>Step 2 - School Principal</b>
	<b>Step 3 - School Superintendent/Executive Superintendent</b>
	<b>Step 4 - Trustee</b>

# Resource Links

- [TDSB Special Education & Inclusion Website](#)
- [TDSB Special Education Plan](#)
- [Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#)



Toronto  
District  
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