

TAB 5

Program Priorities



Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy 2020-2029

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Program Priorities

Secondary Program

How do we Support Secondary Program?

Staff conducted the Secondary Program Review to develop a new vision for secondary program and access which will include fewer schools, stronger programming, and increased access to courses that support all pathways, including apprenticeship and the workplace. Further, the vision supports the revitalization of neighbourhood secondary schools with a breadth of programs, many of which, over time, have experienced significant enrolment declines.

Current and projected enrolments at the secondary panel do not support the number of facilities currently in operation. The vision addresses both under and over-utilized schools as changes to any delivery model will have some degree of impact on all schools in a geographic cluster.

2019-2020 Update

- In June 2020, the Secondary Program Review Interim Report was presented to the Board Trustees for information.
 - The interim report of the Secondary Program Review highlighted the issues, gaps, and needs facing our system that are impacting our ability to support this vision. Using the comprehensive and data-rich information, including enrolment and population projections, this report acknowledged where we have been, where we are and where we could go, all while respecting and protecting many of the successful schools and programs that exist across our system.
 - The report supports the next step forward to re-imagine and re-draw our system in consultation and collaboration with our communities to enhance equity and support the achievement and well-being of each and every student in the TDSB, now and in the future.

Next Steps

- Presentation of final report of Secondary Program Review to the Board of Trustees in November 2020.
- Alignment with the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS)
 - Staff will embed the Secondary Program vision into the LTPAS and include future studies in future iterations of the LTPAS.

Program Priorities

- Review of Related Policies, Procedures and Practices
 - Staff will review related policies, procedures and practices that impact access, opportunity and outcomes. These include the Optional Attendance Policy and Procedure, Alternative Schools Policy and Procedure and the Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs Procedure.

Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

The Premier's "Highly Skilled Workforce Report" of 2016 made recommendations on how the province can build on its world-class skills, education and training systems to prepare Ontario's current and future workforce for the technology and knowledge-based jobs of today and tomorrow.

The report, which is still relevant today, includes several recommendations for education and industry partners. The following recommendations from the report are specifically related to education:

- Building stronger partnerships between educators and employers to drive solutions for skills and talent development, and for experiential learning;
- Increasing access to job market information;
- Expanding opportunities for learning by experience by funding more placements so that every student completes at least one experiential learning opportunity before graduating from high school;
- Promoting both traditional and non-traditional career paths by increasing students' exposure to options including the arts, science, engineering, technology, skilled trades and entrepreneurship; and
- Closing gaps in skills and competencies by finding ways to teach and recognize the skills that students learn, such as teamwork, problem solving and entrepreneurial spirit.

How do we Support a Highly-Skilled Workforce?

- By expanding the Specialist High Skills Major Program
- By expanding Co-operative Education Programming
- By promoting skilled trades as a viable pathway to Grades 7 to 12 students
- By expanding participation in Skills Competitions

Program Priorities

2019-2020 Update

- Expansion of Specialist High Skills Major Program
 - The Ministry’s Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program provides secondary students an opportunity to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests. It also helps with their career development by exposing them to opportunities in the workforce. SHSM programs are offered in 17 sectors including ICT, Arts & Culture, Transportation, Sports, Construction, Health & Wellness, and Environment.
- Expansion of Co-operative Education Programming
- Be Our Guest: STEP to Hospitality Program – The TDSB is working with the hotel industry to launch the Specialized Trades Exploration Program for the Hospitality sector. We currently have STEP to Construction and STEP to Transportation. We are working with Toronto hotels such as the Hazelton, the Royal York, the InterContinental and the Four Seasons as well as George Brown College and Accor (the largest hotel group in the world outside of the United States).
- Expansion of Participation in Skills Competitions
 - The skills competitions provide SHSM students with the opportunity to receive a certification and reach ahead for the SHSM components. Students in technological education courses are provided with authentic learning opportunities where they apply their learning from the classroom. The skills competitions help prepare students for future career opportunities.
 - Staff will capitalize on the momentum in the area and continue to increase participation in skills competitions (secondary) and challenges (elementary).

Next Steps

- In an effort to increase city-wide access to technical programming, consultation will begin with secondary principals about a proposed program entitled “Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades”, or FAST.
- Continued expansion of:
 - Specialist High Skills Major Program
 - Co-operative Education Programming
 - Participation in Skills Competitions

Program Priorities

French Immersion and Extended French

How do we Support French Immersion and Extended French?

- French is one of Canada’s two official languages and it is a language used widely around the world.
- Proficiency in French is a valuable skill and an element of student achievement.
- Teaching and learning French-as-a-Second Language strengthens English language skills, enhances reasoning, problem-solving and creative thinking skills and develops understanding and respect of other cultures.

Having over 90,000 students in Core French and another 28,000 students in French Immersion/Extended French programs comes with system successes and challenges. We are proud of the Board’s successes in retention rate, inclusion of students with special education needs as well as accessibility and transportation. At the same time, challenges include multiple entry points, equity of access, and transportation.

2019-2020 Update

- In June 2020, the French Review Interim Report was presented to the Board Trustees for information.
 - The interim report helped inform how the TDSB could possibly achieve the goals and objectives set out in the Board’s key strategic documents.
 - The report indicated that the TDSB will phase in changes and enhancements to FSL programs, which are all aimed at improving equity of access for students. The future redistribution of some existing EFI entry programs will help support the establishment of a single program model with two entry points – Junior Kindergarten French Immersion (beginning 2022) and Grade 4 MFI (beginning 2021). As part of planned program changes, the Grade 4 Junior Extended French (JEF) Program will phase out as the Grade 4 MFI Program begins, and the following entry points will phase out entirely: the one (1) Grade 6 Intensive Extended French Program and the fourteen (14) Grade 7 Entry Extended French programs. At the foundation of this decision was a commitment to ensuring that access to intensive FSL programs was more fair and equitable across the TDSB. The streamlining of programs will increase access to an intensive FSL program for students in the board.
- Operational procedure, PR597, French Immersion/Extended French was revised in December 2019.

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- The Core French Action Plan was developed.
- The implementation of a proposed transportation plan was completed.

Next Steps

- Development of a redistribution plan for French Immersion programs to improve equity of access

Indigenous Education

We recognize that the persistent achievement gap, identified across Ontario for Indigenous students, when compared to their non-Indigenous peers, is rooted in the destructive events and histories of colonization.

How do we Support Indigenous Education?

The TDSB's Indigenous Education Strategy is focused on enhancing the achievement and social and emotional well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Taking action to "decolonize" our school will be done by:

- Building the leadership capacity of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous leaders to centre Indigenous knowledges and challenge anti-Indigenous discrimination in schools and throughout the Board.
- Increasing the representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in positions of formal leadership.
- Improving access to enhanced academic pathways in secondary schools and multiple post-secondary options for all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.
- Providing culturally-safe learning environments that effectively support Indigenous students' physical, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being within their school community.
- Reducing the over-representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in Special Education programs.
- Reducing the over-representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students among students being suspended and expelled across the system.
- Ensuring that Indigenous students have access to Indigenous cultures, languages and community upon entering Full Day Kindergarten (FDK).

Program Priorities

2019-2020 Update

For a comprehensive update, please see [*The Road to Reconciliation, Indigenous Education in the Toronto District School Board, Annual Report: January 2018 – January 2019.*](#)

Next Steps

- Continue moving forward with the design and construction of the Wandering Spirit School (Kapapamahchkwew).
- Continue to engage community through the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee.
- Provide mandatory training to all formal leaders on The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Integrate professional learning about anti-Indigenous racism, trauma informed approaches and cultural safety into all leadership development opportunities.
- Initiate and lead Indigenous Education Administrator Collaborative Inquiry in order to support the enhancement of Indigenous Education in schools, as well as support to inform School Improvement Plans.
- Support school leaders with the creation of Indigenous Education foci in School Improvement Planning.
- Continue to build upon the Indigenous Aspiring Leadership Network for First Nations, Métis and Inuit staff.
- Develop and implement focused professional learning inquiries for Principals, Vice Principals and teachers on creating conditions for enhancing Indigenous student well-being and achievement within Grade 7-10 classrooms.
- Create and provide ongoing access for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to Indigenous Student Leadership Groups.
- Develop structures, in collaboration with the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee and the Council of Elders, for peer and community mentorship programs.
- Continue and enhance system-wide referral process through the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.
- Establish communication processes to ensure the presence of an Indigenous advocate (e.g., UIEC Student Success Team member) at all IPRC meetings that involve First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families.

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- Create supports for non-Indigenous Special Education staff to work with Indigenous holistic approaches.
- Continue to build and enhance professional learning for all staff in trauma informed practices and cultural safety from Indigenous perspectives.
- Provide professional learning for all central Special Education staff on anti-Indigenous racism.
- Work with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee to identify barriers and develop strategies for removing systemic processes that impede First Nations, Métis and Inuit well-being and learning.
- Provide professional learning for Caring and Safe Schools Centrally Assigned Principals and Advisors on Indigenous Education contexts, anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous approaches to restorative practices and student engagement.
- Provide professional learning for school leaders on Indigenous Education contexts, anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous approaches to restorative practices and student engagement with a focus on ethical decision making.
- With the support of families and community partners, support Principals and Vice Principals in developing whole-school Indigenous approaches to restorative practices.
- Work with community partners to create an Indigenous focused pre-Kindergarten program for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families.
- Support the mobilization of Indigenous community members and Indigenous Early Years educators with expertise in Indigenous approaches to Early Years education in order to create and implement professional learning for all early years educators.
- Work with the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee to develop and share strategies to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit families with formal school-entry processes.
- Provide culturally-relevant resources and access to the Council of Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous language speakers.
- Create Early Years curriculum writing opportunities that centre Indigenous perspectives.
- Provide all Early Years practitioners (school-based teams – Designated Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten teachers, administrators) with professional learning on how to engage with and support Indigenous students and their families/caregivers with reference to an anti-Indigenous racism framework.

Program Priorities

Special Education and Inclusion

How do we Support Special Education and Inclusion?

Students with special education needs should participate and be included in all school activities. They need to be valued as individuals for their unique contributions to school life so that they will enjoy a sense of belonging to a school community that accepts ownership and responsibility for their learning. They deserve to be unencumbered by stereotypical, outdated perspectives about abilities and disabilities.

2019-2020 Update

The Integrated Equity Framework for Special Education and Inclusion includes the following Equity Goals:

Students are successfully included, supported, and empowered when:

- All students experience a sense of belonging and social citizenship (e.g., membership, inclusion, shared power and value (Parekh, 2014))
- The learning environment is modified to fit the student, not the student to fit the environment (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)
- All identities and cultures are celebrated within the learning environment (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)
- The right to participation and establishing a positive climate where social engagement and friendships can be promoted is prioritized (Underwood, 2013)
- Deficit thinking is rejected and students are not organized within and outside the classroom by perceived ability (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)

Next Steps

- Continue to remodel the Home School Program. Ensure that resources are available to meet the needs of primary students who will be served in the regular class in their local school.
- Continue to move towards greater inclusion by:
 - Ensuring that all students with exceptionalities are reviewed through the IPRC process at least every other school year.

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- Continuing to use a variety of communication strategies in order to provide parents/students with information about services and programs offered by Special Education and Inclusion and Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional Programs.
- Continuing to provide professional learning opportunities for all staff.
- Increase employment opportunities and outcomes for all students with Low Incidence Exceptionalities (Intellectual Disabilities, Physical Disability, Low Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Health/Medical) by:
 - Reviewing data to better understand the post-secondary pathways of students with special education needs;
 - Completing an inventory of employers, within our own system and beyond, identifying those that can accommodate students with various disabilities (e.g., intellectual, blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, physical disability), and those that are located at an accessible site ;
 - Supporting school leaders and liaise with community partners to explore creative ways of increasing the number of students served through the Special Education Experiential Learning Program and continue to seek out opportunities for additional partnerships with business and various levels of government;
 - Continuing to provide staffing and collaborate with partners in Project SEARCH to support our school to work transition initiative;
 - Working with support staff to better support students with Developmental Disabilities in experiential learning settings; and
 - Leveraging the Continuous Intake Co-op (CIC) Program and investigate additional co-op opportunities for students with Intellectual Disabilities.

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