

## The Context for TDSB

As a diverse system with approximately 246,000 students, it is essential that students see themselves reflected in their schools and their learning. Building innovation in the program area and developing program priorities is an evolving process that supports what students need to be successful both at school and beyond.

Equity of access and opportunity, fair distribution of specialized schools and programs, and program viability continue to be drivers that underpin the work done in the program area.

The five program priorities which represent major areas of focus for the entire system include:

- Secondary Program
- Building the Workforce of Tomorrow
- French Immersion and Extended French
- Indigenous Education
- Special Education and Inclusion

### **Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Vision for Learning**

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2018 sets direction and identifies five system goals:

Transform student learning

- Create a culture for student and staff well-being
- Provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students
- Allocate human and financial resources strategically to support student needs
- Build strong relationships and partnerships within school communities to support student learning and well-being

## The Context for TDSB

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan is a high-level statement of intent for the TDSB and drives all of our other work as outlined in our Vision for Learning and Service and connects to Leadership, the School Improvement Process, Service Excellence and Governance. Together these strategies set direction and provide support for how we work but the real change happens when each unique school and each unique department examines their specific data, determines actions for their improvement, measures impact and communicates progress. The entire system improves when classrooms, schools, and departments focus their improvement efforts within the context of system direction.

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy is an important part of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. It advances the system goal to “provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students”.

### **Integrated Equity Framework**

A key component of the Vision for Learning is the Integrated Equity Framework, a major directional framework that sets out a series of coordinated, strategic actions to focus and align every facet of the Board’s work including policies, practices, program, culture through an equity lens, and anchor all of it within a coherent, comprehensive framework of Equity. This equity action plan provides us focus and ensures that the work we are doing at the system level has a direct impact in classrooms. A large part of this work is having conversations and dialogue, and understanding how bias and perspective can create or remove obstacles.

The TDSB is committed to providing programs through a process that understands the central role of student voice in creating equity, inclusion and enhanced learning cultures.

## Program Priorities

### Secondary Program

#### How do we Support Secondary Program?

Staff is currently involved in 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 will address 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.

#### 2018-2019 Update

In June 2019, the Secondary Program Review report was presented to the Board of Trustees outlining the rationale for a comprehensive review of secondary school programming and related policies, procedures and practices.

The Board of Trustees approved the action plan for the Secondary Program Review, which triggered a series of next steps. These included:

- Posting/competition process and subsequent hiring of a Centrally Assigned Principal to lead the review
- Refinement of the vision for secondary programs and access (see below)
- System scan of existing secondary schools and programs, course offerings at each site, as well as facility utilization rates and enrolment
- Review of past plans for Secondary Program Review
- Identification of related policies and procedures which will require review

## Program Priorities

### Next Steps

- Development of Vision to look at secondary program and accessibility differently
  - Staff will continue to work strategically to further develop a vision of secondary program that will benefit all students. Staff will work at a system level to examine the distribution and viability of secondary programs and schools to determine how best to meet the needs and interests of students and move the system towards much needed focus.
- Alignment with the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS)
  - Staff will align the LTPAS with the secondary program vision and present a report to the Board with the updated LTPAS.
- 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.
- Staff reports regarding the Secondary Program Review will be presented at Committee of the Whole meetings throughout the year with a final report in June 2020.

## 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;

## Program Priorities

- 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

### 2018-2019 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. In 2018-2019, the TDSB offered 113 SHSM programs in 49 of its secondary schools. This is an increase of 13 programs over the previous year.
- 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).

## Program Priorities

- Expansion of Participation in Skills Competitions
  - The TDSB sent 321 students to Skills Ontario in spring 2019. From there, four students qualified for Nationals in Halifax.
  - 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.
  - In 2018-2019, the TDSB expanded opportunities for elementary students to participate in Skills challenges. In previous years, only one Skills challenge was available to students in Grade 7 and 8. This year, the Experiential Learning and Science/STEM departments facilitated participation in seven challenges. 262 elementary students competed in TDSB Skills Competitions and 102 competed in Skills Ontario Elementary Challenges.
  - 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: 10 new programs have been approved for 2019-2020
  - Co-operative Education Programming
  - Participation in Skills Competitions

## 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.

## Program Priorities

- 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.

### 2018-2019 Update

The Board of Trustees approved the recommendations of the French-as-a-Second-Language Review in June 2019. The recommendations included:

- i. That intensive French-as-a-Second-Language programs be restructured leading to a single intensive French Immersion program model with two entry points (Junior Kindergarten and Grade 4), and that all other entry points be eliminated;
- ii. That minimum intake and a maximum cap be established at entry points to ensure program viability and to account for attrition rates;
- iii. That a Core French action plan be developed;
- iv. That inclusive practices in all FSL programs be ensured;
- v. That the current plan for the recruitment and retention of FSL teachers be strengthened.

### Next Steps

Staff reports regarding the French Review will be presented at Committee of the Whole meetings throughout the year with a final report in June 2020.

More information will be included regarding the following:

- Development of Core French Action Plan
- Implementation of a proposed transportation plan

## Program Priorities

- Development of a redistribution plan for French Immersion programs to improve equity of access
- Revision of operational procedure, PR597, French Immersion/Extended French

## 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.

# Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy 2019-2028

## Program Priorities

- Ensuring that Indigenous students have access to Indigenous cultures, languages and community upon entering Full Day Kindergarten (FDK).

### 2018-2019 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 (Kapapamahchakwew).
- 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.

## Program Priorities

- 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.
- Create supports for non-Indigenous Special Education staff to work with Indigenous wholistic 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.

## Program Priorities

- 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.

## 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.

### 2018-2019 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))

## Program Priorities

- 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.
  - 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

## Program Priorities

- Experiential Learning Program and continue to seek out opportunities for additional partnerships with business and various levels of government;
- o Continuing to provide staffing and collaborate with partners in Project SEARCH to support our school to work transition initiative;
  - o Working with support staff to better support students with Developmental Disabilities in experiential learning settings; and
  - o Leveraging the Continuous Intake Co-op (CIC) Program and investigate additional co-op opportunities for students with Intellectual Disabilities.