

**2017-2020**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



**Community  
Services**

# INTRODUCTION

The Community Services (CS) unit of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is excited to present the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan to set its strategic directions and goals into motion over the next three years and beyond. The guiding vision for this strategic plan is to strengthen the role CS plays in the community by continuously improving services offered to the community. The strategic plan is a testament to the department’s commitment to evolve and grow in a dynamic and sustainable way. To continually grow, CS needs to confront challenges upfront, look for opportunities, be innovative and utilize the abundant assets and resources of the department and the team. This plan will provide tools and help guide the decision-making process to help achieve the vision as articulated in this document.

The strategic planning process confirmed that CS has a strong foundation and numerous strengths on which to build an exciting future. However, beyond building on the department’s strengths, the consultation process made it clear that there is still room for improvement. The following sections, which explain principles, values, strategic directions objectives, activities and key measurement metrics will detail how these improvements will be made and put the priorities of the community, staff, clients/learners, funders, department and the Board into action.

**MISSION:** Community Services’ mission is to develop and deliver services that support a diverse clientele to achieve their settlement, employment, language and/or skills development goals.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The following principles are keys to everything we do and they will inform all our decisions and actions going forward.

### Service Excellence

Organizationally as part of the Director of Education’s service excellence initiative, as well as departmentally, CS is committed to enhancing responsiveness and providing high quality services through service excellence to support our clients and learners to achieve their goals.

### Collaboration

We strongly believe that we can do more together than alone. We are committed to working together as a team and developing partnerships both internally and externally to respond to shared challenges and goals.

### Innovation

We are committed to fostering a culture of innovation and creative thinking in order to deliver high quality services and strengthen staff.



“A goal without a plan is just a wish”  
Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

## GUIDING VALUES:

### Respect

Listening and treating each other with respect; recognizing everyone's unique and essential contributions.

### Diversity and inclusiveness

Valuing diverse perspectives and experiences and celebrating uniqueness of all voices; ensuring a welcoming environment for all.

### Openness and transparency

Fostering an atmosphere of trust by being honest and transparent in our communication.

### Integrity

Leading by example and taking responsibility for our actions.



## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS:

This strategic plan is the result of extensive consultation with a vast array of important contributors. The diagram below summarizes the process.

CONSULTATION	WITH WHOM	WHEN
Internal Consultation/SWOT Analysis	Senior Management/ Coordinators	September-October 2016
Online Staff Survey	166 Staff	December 2016
Research/Environmental Scan	The City, MAESD and IRCC priorities and strategic plans, Ontario Population projections, Labour Market trends in Ontario, General Economic Statistics by the City, various reports on Literacy and Basic Skills Programs, EO Services, Workforce and Immigration Trends	October 2016- January 2017
Focus Groups	Staff	January 2017
Employer Interviews	Employers	March 2017
Review of Client/Learner Feedback	Clients and learners	February- March 2017
Presentation of Draft Plan to Advisory Committee	Staff	March 2017
Final Strategic Plan		March 2017

# WHAT WE HEARD

The ideas collected from staff and management were analyzed and distilled into seven strategic priorities:

1. Innovation/technology
2. Expanding Funding
3. Collaboration among teams, with TDSB and the community
4. Effective communication strategy and public awareness - marketing and outreach
5. Efficiency/simplification of processes
6. Successful client outcomes
7. Strengthening staff through recognition and professional development

Research, environmental scans, client and employer feedback as well as input collected from the Advisory Committee members further shaped the strategic plan by transforming these priorities into actionable strategic goals.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

I.

**Creating Inspiring and Transformative Client/Learner Experiences**

**Our commitment:**

Improve client/learner outcomes by putting our clients and learners at the centre of everything we do.

II.

**Raising Our Profile in the Community**

**Our commitment:**

Build a reputation in the community for service excellence

III.

**Enhancing Staff Experiences**

**Our commitment:**

Create a work environment where staff are proud to work with CS and TDSB

IV.

**Achieving Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability**

**Our commitment:**

Strive for operational excellence

# I. CREATING INSPIRING AND TRANSFORMATIVE CLIENT/LEARNER EXPERIENCES

## **Objective 1: Provide outstanding customer service**

### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Develop and put in place measurable service standards using sector best practices
- Improve access through web, phone and in person
- Review and update client/learner intake processes on a yearly basis to ensure that all staff are equipped with the right tools and resources to do their job effectively and support clients/learners on a timely manner
- Provide regular training on policies and procedures; ensure all staff are trained in the Board's "Service Excellence" initiative
- Develop a client satisfaction survey and implement it annually; share the results with all staff as a learning opportunity and implement suggestions as appropriate
- Promote a service delivery approach which sees clients/learners as partners by continuously seeking their insight and opinions on their experiences through work groups and committees
- Develop a system to track all client/learner complaints centrally for service improvement purposes

## **Objective 2: Provide services that are relevant and responsive to client and learner needs**

### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Conduct regular needs assessments with clients and learners
- Develop tools to collect client/learner feedback on what they want, when and how they want them
- Document and share emerging client/learner needs

## **Objective 3: Focus on innovative service delivery models to better support clients and learners**

### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Research different innovative service models and technology available
- Create tools to encourage creative thinking and collect ideas for new programs/services
- Launch webinars, and one-on-one online counselling services and explore opportunities for these online services to be utilized in other service delivery areas
- Provide training for all impacted staff to deliver online services
- Explore funding opportunities for purchasing technology and for program delivery that involves greater use of technology
- Explore partnership opportunities for innovative programming- colleges/universities, theatres, arts and culture organizations, museums etc.

## **Objective 4: Ensure that services are well-coordinated to achieve seamless transitioning, internally and externally, for our clients and learners**

### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Enhance internal communication to reduce silos and improve alignment within CS
- Create effective information sharing tools so that staff know about services and programs being offered at TDSB for referral purposes
- Look for new opportunities to share services, locations and supports both internally (within the department and within the TDSB) and externally
- Plan for collaborative project ideas across teams
- Develop a referral plan to connect clients and learners to other services within or outside TDSB
- Develop a resource kit to support staff to do successful referrals

### **KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS**

- Overall client satisfaction
- Number of client complaints
- Number of online services offered to program participants and other engagement opportunities
- Number of new initiatives to strengthen the collaboration among teams
- Staff satisfaction with PD opportunities
- Number of successful referrals
- Number of clients and learners using online services
- Number of staff trained and delivering online services

## II. RAISING OUR PROFILE IN THE COMMUNITY



### **Objective 1: Make community engagement a priority**

#### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Create a Community Engagement Plan through social media, online surveys, e-newsletters, local media etc.
- Develop a survey for the community on awareness of CS programs and services
- Conduct an environmental scan
- Look for under-utilized and untapped opportunities
- Define objectives and timelines
- Enable and empower staff to promote their programs and services effectively- Social Media training, tools to collect staff feedback, improved communication between all programs
- Develop an outreach calendar with planned activities and dates to better coordinate outreach efforts across teams

### **Objective 2: Improve internal and external communication strategies**

#### **2017-2020 Activities**

##### **First year:**

- Define roles and responsibilities of site supervisors, POs and central staff related to marketing and outreach
- Review past and present communications

##### **Second year:**

- Clarify, simplify and update all communication materials
- Promote the Unit internally (throughout TDSB) through different tools such as attendance at 2 committee meetings per year, meeting with guidance, distribution of materials to appropriate schools, contributing at least 2 times per year in the system leaders bulletin and directline

##### **Third year:**

- Complete marketing/community engagement plan



### Objective 3: Share successes

#### 2017-2020 Activities:

- Increase presence in the community by regularly attending network meetings such as Local Immigration Partnerships and Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, organizing annual events at each site such as Open Houses, attending and presenting at professional association meetings
- Show and advertise the results and objectives that the CS Unit achieves through social media, website and in print materials such as posters, flyers and brochures
- Increase use and visibility of blog and other social media

#### KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Number of external referrals
- Number of social media followers
- Awareness of CS programs/services in the community
- Number of contributions in the system leaders bulletin and directline
- Number of memberships in internal and external networks, committees and workgroups
- Staff/client survey results



### III. ENHANCING STAFF EXPERIENCES

**Objective 1:** Provide professional development opportunities that meet the identified needs of staff to allow them to excel in their roles

**2017-2020 Activities:**

- Create an annual Professional Development plan
- Continue and expand the mentorship program
- Develop resources for staff to help them to keep abreast of recent and emerging trend/best practices to better support clients and learners
- Review and update the onboarding/orientation process for new staff
- Develop and deliver change management training for all team leaders
- Provide team building training to all staff
- Ensure that the hiring process reflects the mission and the core values of CS and supports mission focused staff who are actively pursuing personal and team growth
- Equip all team leaders with clear understanding of their obligations regarding operating safe workplaces and all applicable laws and collective agreements to manage in a fair, ethical and responsible manner

**Objective 2: Provide opportunities to get involved and contribute**

**2017-2020 Activities:**

- Look for opportunities to create workgroups or committees to continuously seek staff input
- Develop and implement a staff satisfaction survey annually; share results with all

**Objective 3: Improve internal communication so that staff understand and celebrate the mission, values and goals of the department and the TDSB**

**2017-2020 Activities:**

- Maximize openness and transparency in decision-making
- Improve information sharing tools among all teams
- Clarify roles and responsibilities across the Unit to ensure that staff understand their role in realizing the unit's mission
- Provide electronic and in person opportunities to hear about and contribute to important developments within the department i.e. town hall meetings, annual meeting, annual report, newsletters, web based discussions, conference calls, confidential web based "suggestion box"

**Objective 4: Recognize excellence**

**2017-2020 Activities:**

- Develop objective criteria to support the leadership team to recognize staff
- Improve recognition programs to better engage, motivate and appreciate staff

#### KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Overall staff satisfaction rate and response rate as measured through the annual survey
- Number of staff participating in mentorship and other engagement opportunities
- Staff's knowledge of other programs/projects
- Staff satisfaction with PD opportunities
- Number of staff complaints/grievances
- Staff attendance



## IV. ACHIEVING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY


### **Objective 1: Implement process efficiencies across the Unit**

#### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Map all internal processes and evaluate their efficiencies based on clarity, simplicity and repeatability
- Identify root causes which prevent process improvement
- Select processes to be improved and establish well-defined process efficiency targets
- Update frameworks/program charts to define roles and responsibilities
- Look for ways to simplify paperwork to eliminate redundant and unnecessary activities
- Replace outdated technology to speed the process wherever is possible

### **Objective 2: Increase and diversify funding**

#### **2017-2020 Activities:**

- Continuously look for new funding opportunities and respond to call for proposals
  - Develop new program ideas and proactively approach existing as well as potential funders for new or additional funding
  - Conduct regular environmental scans and review research to analyse future trends and their effects on programming
  - Explore new partnership opportunities to diversify programming and new funding opportunities in the areas of settlement, employment, language and skills development
  - Explore the feasibility of developing knowledge products and materials for a fee to generate additional funding
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### Objective 3: Develop cost containment plans

#### 2017-2020 Activities:

- Increase opportunities for cost saving through shared services and shared spaces
- Find ways to combine tasks to maximize the use of limited resources



#### KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Percentage growth in projects
- Number of funding sources
- Long term self-sufficiency achieved through contracts and other fees collected

### DELIVERING ON THE PLAN

The success of the strategic plan will be measured in its ability to realize the vision for the CS Unit. It is dependent on all Community Services staff and will be the responsibility of management at all levels. The key performance measures have already been built into the plan and will be monitored very closely in the next three years, along with the annual plans that will be developed to break the activities down into operational plans.

The plan is not meant to be prescriptive. Changes and updates are expected as the organization needs to respond to challenges as they arise and capitalize on opportunities wherever they exist. The Strategic Plan's progress will be documented through an Annual Progress Report which will be shared broadly across the department. CS is committed to engaging in an open dialogue with all stakeholders-clients, learners, staff, community partners, employers- and to listen attentively to both criticism and encouragement.

While change is not always easy, CS strongly believes that it must continuously evolve to achieve its goals. This will be done with the development of new tools, strategies and ways of working in order to move confidently toward a new future.

# LAST WORDS

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“Change before you have to”  
Jack Welch

The following quote was taken from the Mississauga City Strategic Plan and perfectly captures the case for change.

In a letter written in 1892, New York Governor Martin Van Buren counselled President Andrew Jackson against change:

“The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as ‘railroads’.

The federal government must preserve the canals for the following reasons:

1. If canal boats are supplanted by railroads serious unemployment will result. Captains, cooks, drivers, hostlers repairmen and lock tenders will be left without means of livelihood, not to mention the numerous farmers now employed in growing hay for horses.
2. Boat builders would suffer and tow-line, whip and harness makers would be left destitute.
3. Canal boats are absolutely essential to the defence of the United States. In the event of the expected trouble with England the Erie Canal would be the only means by which we could ever move the supplies so vital to waging modern war.

For the above-mentioned reasons the government should create an Interstate Commerce Commission to protect the American people from the evils of ‘railroads’ and to preserve the canals for posterity.

As you may well know, Mr. President, ‘railroad’ carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by ‘engines’ which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed.”

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