

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

June 13, 2022

Leadership Report

Learning Transformation and Equity

Audley Salmon, Associate Director, Learning Transformation and Equity
Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent of Special Education & Inclusion

Project Search

[Project Search Toronto](#) is a transition-to-work program for TDSB students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students in their final year of high school will gain marketable skills needed for employment. Students in a typical year complete approximately 700 hours of hands-on work experience across three interconnected co-op placements with one or both of the host businesses, Toronto Rehab-UHN and Holland Bloorview.

Placements have included: Environmental Management, Maintenance, Materials Management, Nutrition Food Services, Reception & Clerical Support, Client Registration & Billing, Sodexo Environmental Services, Sodexo Food Services, Kindercircle Day Care.

The Project SEARCH team has worked hard to develop opportunities for students who are progressing well to do their third co-op placement off site with a potential employer. Two students started this in April 2022.

On the slide you will find quotes from current students on their Project Search experience.

We are pleased to share that 100% of graduates from 2019/20, who are seeking employment are employed and working +16hr per week. 66% of graduates from 2020/21, who are seeking employment are working +16 hours per week. Graduates who are not currently employed are working with our community partner Community Living in their job search in their second year connected with the program. More information can be found at the following link: [Project Search Good News Report SEAC](#)

Literacy Achievement of Deaf Learners: Updating the Evidence Base: Research Summary Report

Dr. Connie Mayer, York University
Dr. Beverly Trezek, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The primary objective of this study was to collect the necessary data to update the evidence base regarding the literacy outcomes of deaf learners, and to develop the first-ever evidence base of this type in the Canadian context. The widely cited outcome data in the literature has consistently indicated significant delays in reading achievement among this population, with a reported median 4th grade reading level for deaf students graduating from high school. Interestingly, these outcomes

have not changed significantly from those reported by Pinter and Patterson in 1916 (see Qi & Mitchell, 2012 for review). The most recent data were collected in 1996 (Traxler, 2000), and therefore do not represent deaf learners who have been impacted by two major shifts in the field during the past 20 years— the widespread implementation of newborn hearing screening and the advances in hearing technologies including cochlear implantation.

The findings from this study represent a profound shift in literacy outcomes for deaf students with a majority performing in the average range. Variability in achievement is related to: 1) early and consistent use of hearing technology, 2) quality of intervention in the early years, 3) presence of additional disabilities, and 4) on-going educational support as students in other contexts are not performing as well as this cohort in the TDSB. We cannot take these outcomes for granted, as they are dependent on the quality of educational support provided.

Please see the full research article for your reference:

[Literacy Achievement of Deaf Learners-Summary Report Oct. 2021.pdf](#)

[Reading Achievement of Deaf Students Challenging Mayer Trezek Hancock 2021.pdf](#)

Special Education and Inclusion - Supporting Students through Inclusionary Practices

Inclusive education and supporting students with special education needs is about providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students, includes a commitment to human rights, equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and to combating anti-Indigeneity and anti-Black racism. This commitment is the foundation of the TDSB Equity Policy, and underpins all special education programming across all grade levels. The principles of Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy must be the foundation of instructional practice for all students including those with special education needs.

As a system we need to reimagine the nature of disability, and want that to mean in our district, schools, and individual classrooms. How does power and privilege intersect with our understanding of supporting students with disabilities in practical ways that promote inclusive education for all students? We need to focus on ability and access to curricula, as it allows for alternatives to pedagogy and programming.

SEAC ADHD Motion

Staff have been working to develop a professional learning plan through a committee that includes central Special Education and Inclusion staff, Professional Support Services Staff (e.g., psychologist, Social Worker) and school administrators focusing on building awareness, capacity and understanding of how to support students with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD). The plan includes components to:

- identify how the work of equity, inclusion and anti-oppression disrupts and challenges unconscious biases and understanding about supporting students with ADD/ADHD;
- build deeper awareness and understanding about ADD/ADHD and the impact on student learning through discussions of the possible presence of LD and/or other exceptionalities (e.g., during IST/SST process, triangulation of data);



- provide professional learning, gather and develop resources that support students, teachers, support staff and families that are also culturally relevant and responsive and supports how to build accessible learning environments that are necessary for an inclusive experience for students with ADD/ADHD (e.g., concrete strategies); and
- identify community organizations and partnerships that can support a better understanding and delivery of programs for students with ADD/ADHD.

SEAC K-12 Working Group and Staff Response

Staff have initiated a committee that is currently working through a plan focused on addressing the SEAC K-12 Working Group's motions. The committee includes staff from the communications department, the web team, central special education staff, and AODA. The plan will include components to:

- provide families with effective information resources on services for students with special education needs through an updated special education website and through publications to families (e.g., Parent Concern Protocol, Guide to Special Education and Appeal Process, Special education Programs and Services offered in TDSB); and
- ensure accessibility to special education web resources aligned with AODA standards.

Ministry Application for Supporting Students with Disabilities

The Ministry of Education is providing application-based funding for school boards to implement initiatives to prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with disabilities in the 2022-23 school year. Preventing and removing barriers for students with disabilities was a key focus in the [Kindergarten to Grade 12 Standards Development Committee \(K-12 SDC\) Final Report](#) and [the Accessible Transitions for Students with Disabilities in Kindergarten to Grade 12 \(K-12\) Report](#).

TDSB has submitted an application in collaboration with OT/PT related to Attitudes, Behaviours, Perceptions and Assumptions, Awareness and Training, and Curriculum for supporting students with disabilities to support preventing and removing accessibility barriers experienced by students with disabilities. A further update will be provided once we receive a status update on our application from the ministry.



IPRC Data - May 2022

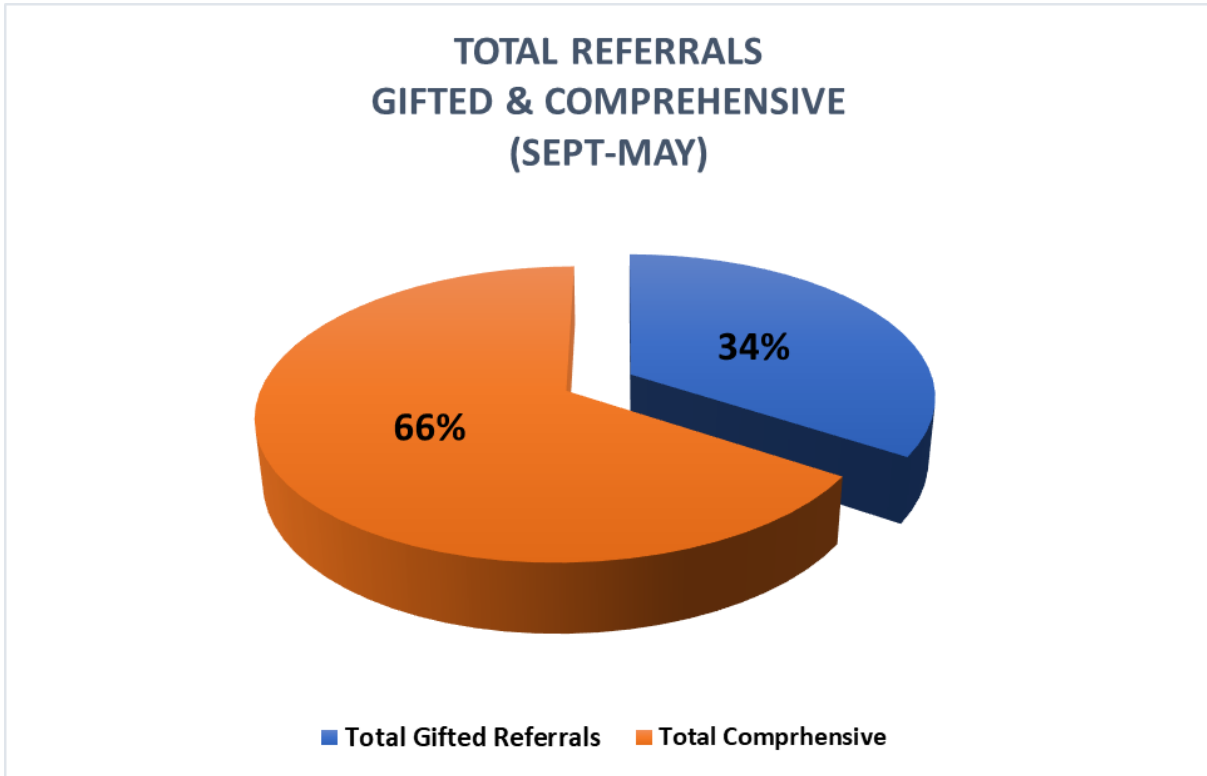
May IPRCs	
IPRCs Completed	179
IPRCs Scheduled	576
IPRC Cumulative since August 2021	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2021	1,867

Psychological Assessments - May 2022

Provided below is the report of assessments completed in May.

May	LC1	LC2	LC3	LC4	Total
Completed	102	119	90	162	473
Referrals	63	55	45	167	330
Completed					
Completed	961	1133	743	1165	4002
In Progress	145	130	170	214	659
Waiting*	190	166	201	334	891
Removed	147	205	133	275	760
Total Referrals**	1443	1634	1247	1988	6312

Psycho-Educational Assessments Statistics Including 'Aged' Statistics Per Learning Centre



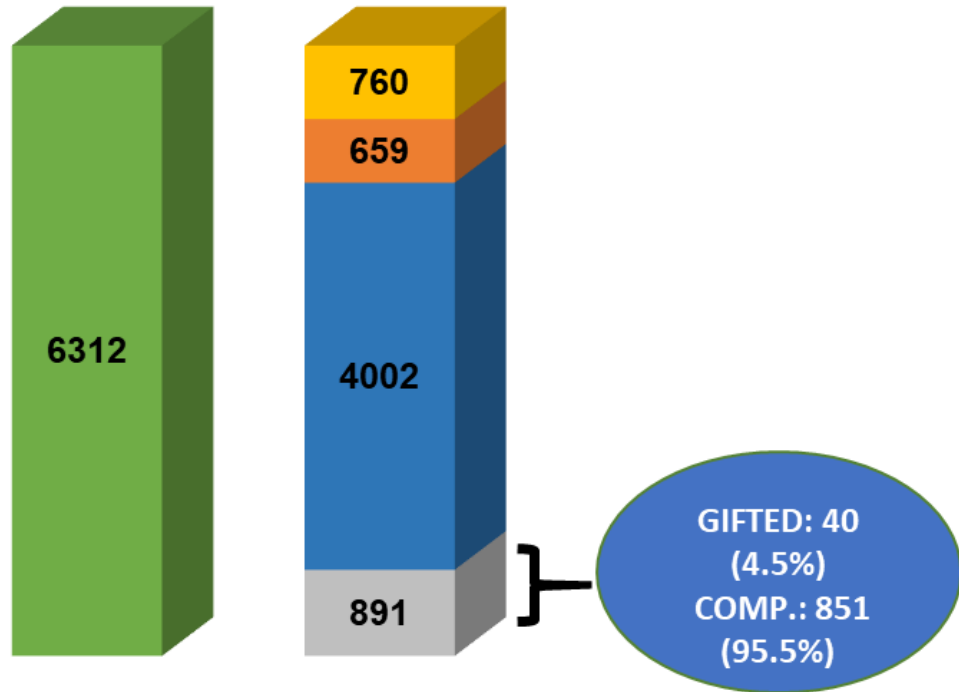
From September 2021 to May 31st, 2022, the total number of referrals is **5552** (6312-760 which were removed).

Gifted referrals begin in late October after students have completed the CCAT. The total percentage of **Gifted Referrals vs. Comprehensive Referrals at the end of May 2022 continues to be in the proportion of 34% and 66% respectively.**



PSYCHOLOGICAL REFERRALS-BREAKDOWN SEPT.-MAY

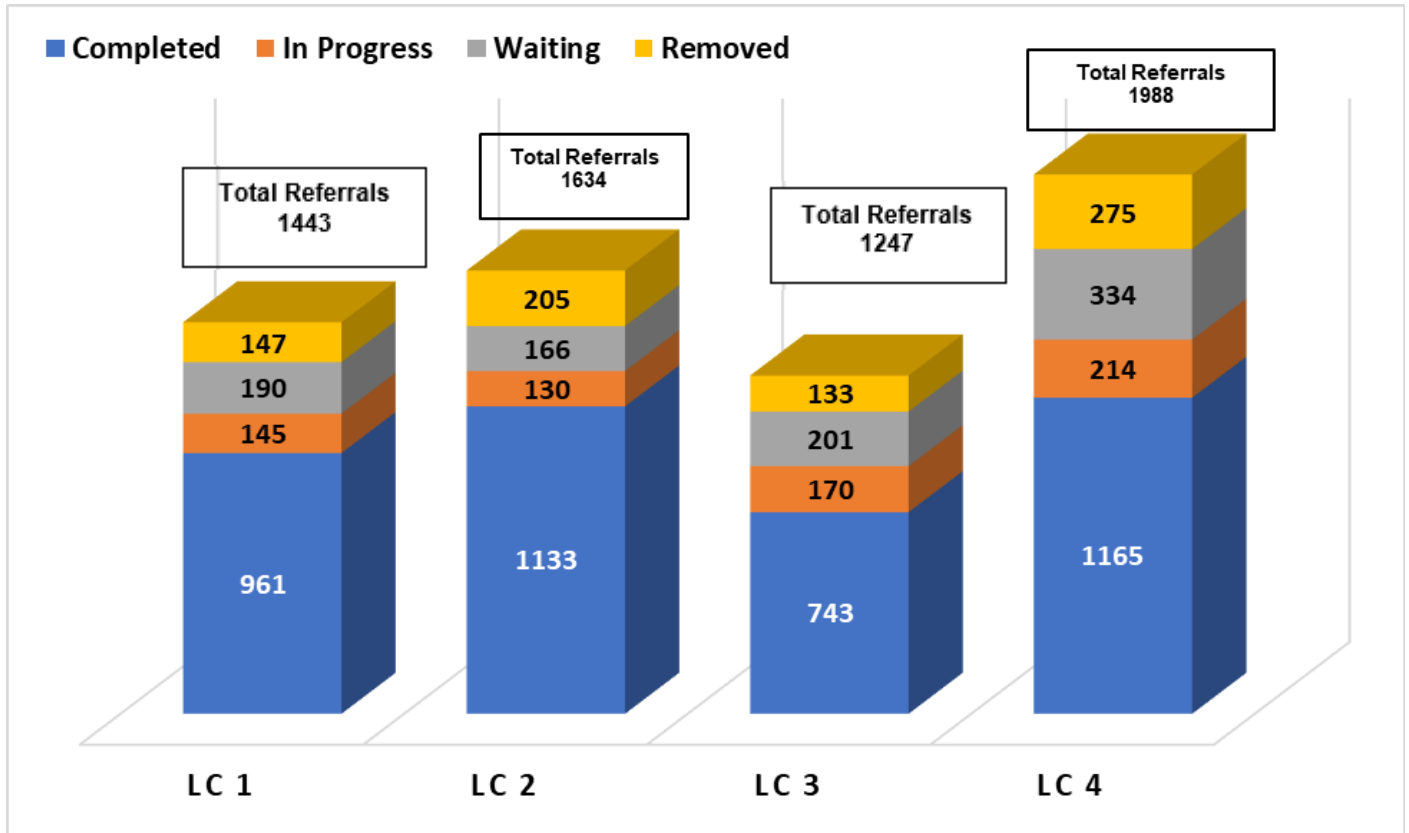
■ Total Referrals ■ Waiting ■ Completed ■ In Progress ■ Removed



This chart indicates the breakdown of the **5598 psychological referrals** received since September 2021-April 2022.

- End of May 2022, **891 Comprehensive & Gifted Assessments** are on the waitlist.
 - Of the 891 Total Waitlist: **851 and 40** are **Comprehensive & Gifted Assessments respectively**.
 - This is a total reduction of 12.3 % of the waitlist from April 2022.
- **4002 Referrals (Comprehensive & Gifted)** have been completed since September 2021
 - This is a **12% increase of completed assessments** since April 2022.
- **659 Referrals (Comprehensive & Gifted)** are in progress
- **760** have been removed for some of the following reasons:
 1. *The parent/guardian has not consented to the assessment*
 2. *The student has left the board*
 3. *The student moved out of the country*

4. Other supports were provided that supported the initial needs which initiated the assessment (trauma therapy; outside private psycho-educational assessment by parent/guardian; supports/differential strategies provided to the educators in the classroom that have positive outcomes etc.)



This chart showcases total referrals (Comprehensive & Gifted) for each LC.

**The waitlists do vary, and part of this variance includes the following (2021 numbers)



Learning Centre	Number of Schools	*Elementary Student Population	*Secondary Student Population	*TOTAL Student Population
1	134	42,430	20,258	62,688
2	136	41,428	16,877	58,305
3	133	40,878	15,589	56,467
4	157	49,445	17,837	67,277

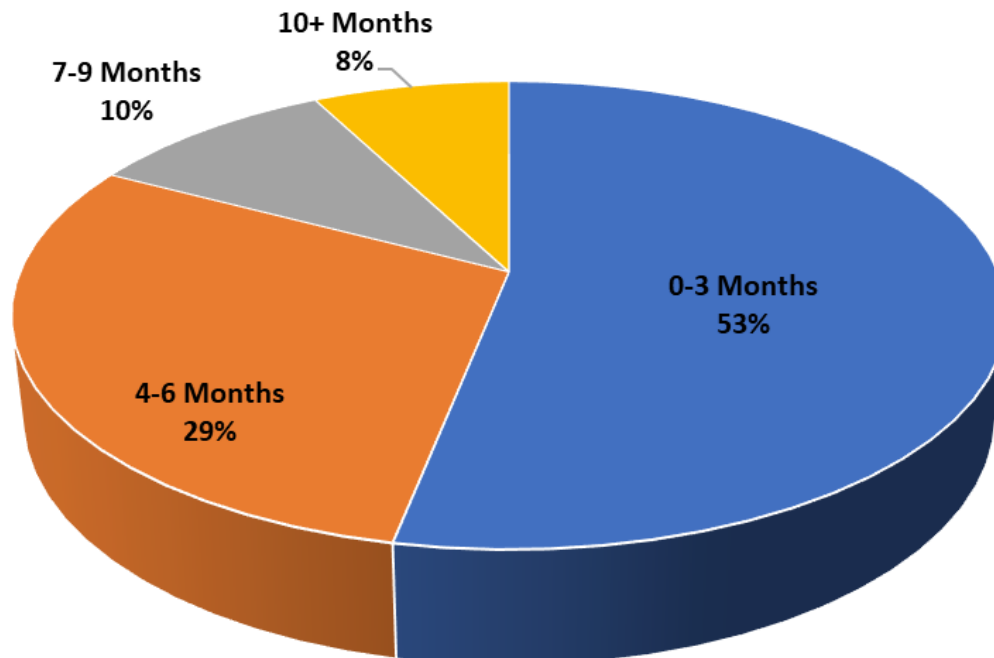
Higher referral numbers in LC4 are attributed to:

- LC4 has 20 plus schools more than the other LC's
- LC4 has 5000-10,000 more students than the other LC's

Comprehensive Assessments Aged Waitlist	0-3 Months	4-6 Months	7-9 Months	10+ Months	TOTAL
Sept.-Mar.	537	275	82	81	979
Sept.-Apr.	511	273	79	80	943
Sept.-May	452	252	82	65	851



Comprehensive Assessments "Aged" Waitlist Referrals Sept-May 2022



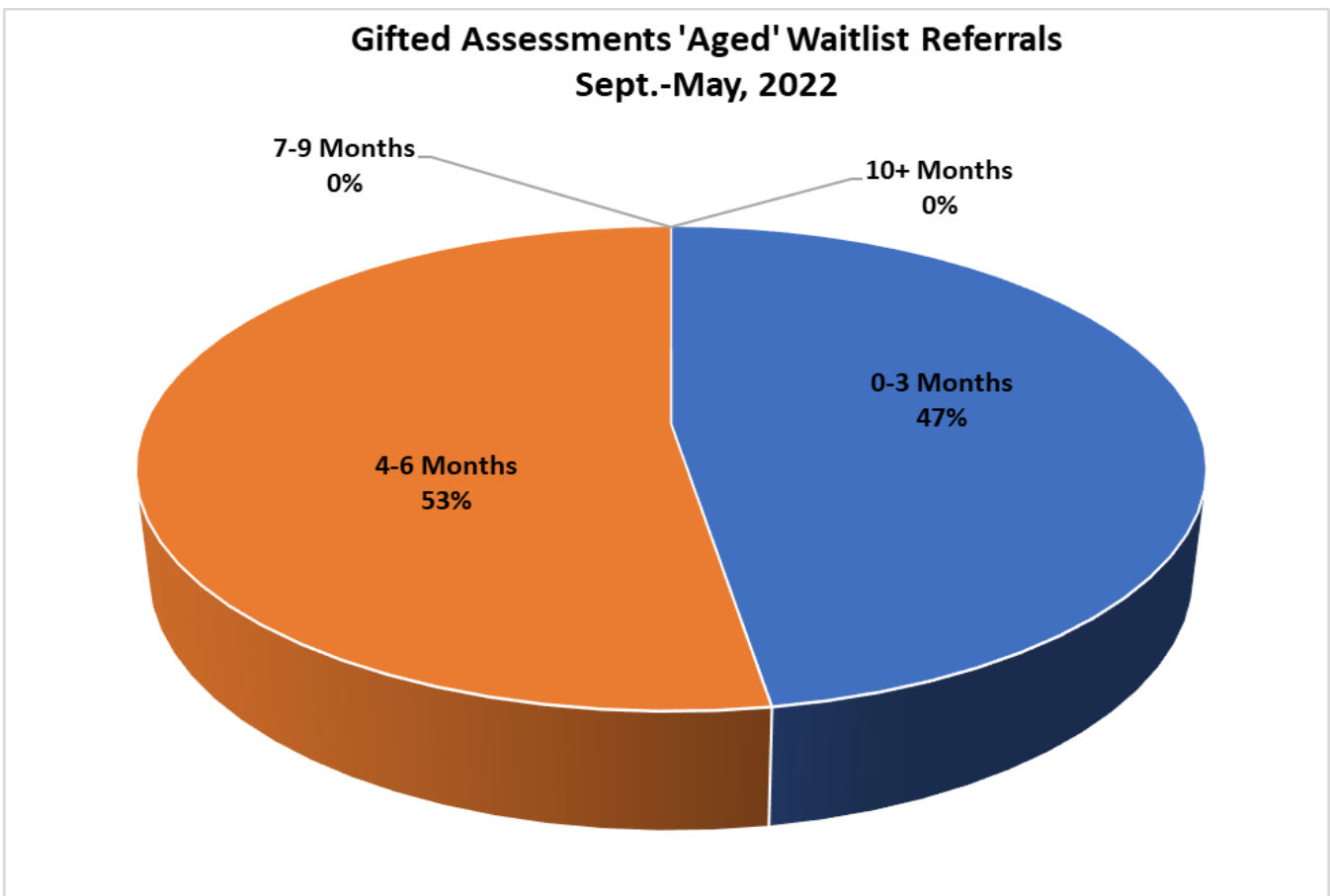
Psychological staff are working on ensuring comprehensive assessments, over 6 months, are attended to and completed, including any referrals from 2021 that remain on the comprehensive waitlist.

Below are some rationales why 6-month comprehensive referrals remain on the waitlist:

- 1) Parents/Guardians/Caregivers want to continue with the assessments and the students are in virtual school where only a portion of psychoeducational assessments can be completed virtually. These students and parents/guardians/caregivers are being offered local school spaces and administrative buildings to support the completion of in person testing but have declined.
- 2) Students who left, in between testing, to go out of the country/city/province and want to remain on the waitlist.
- 3) Students who enrolled in virtual school in between testing and want to remain on the waitlist.
- 4) Students and parents/guardians/caregivers who are not responding to staff and staff are working with the school and Attendance Counselors to locate.

Gifted Assessments Aged Waitlist	0-3 Months	4-6 Months	7-9 Months	10+ Months	TOTAL
Sept.-Mar.	162	60	9	13	244
Sept-Apr.	46	27	0	0	73
Sept.-May	19	21	0	0	40

45% ↓



Staff will be completing as many comprehensive and gifted assessments over the summer 2022 (i.e. during the summer of 2021 **234 Gifted and 43 Comprehensive Assessments were completed).

