

## Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

October 17, 2022

### Leadership Report

#### Learning Transformation and Equity - Special Education and Inclusion

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### **Be the Change: Supporting Accessibility, Inclusion, and Awareness in School Communities Pilot**

This school year, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services and Special Education and Inclusion will be working with schools with Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) for students with developmental and/or physical disabilities to engage in a student and school learning series: **Be the Change - Supporting Accessibility, Inclusion, and Awareness in School Communities**. The series will support school communities of students and educators, along with parents/guardians/caregivers with training on promoting and encouraging equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-ableism, and anti-oppression across the school. The learning series will focus on neurodiversity, Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), disability education, inclusion, activism and allyship, and conclude with each school site engaging in an initiative that will focus on opportunities to amplify or augment student voice or increase visibility of those enrolled in the respective ISP classrooms. The respective schools will also receive resources and/or equipment to foster their initiative around inclusion for neurodiversities. With the new learning and the resource package in place, students are then encouraged to “Be the Change” they want to see within their school communities.

### **TDSB Published Author - Itinerant Blind/Low Vision Teacher**

We are happy to share that one of TDSB’s Blind/Low Vision Itinerant Teacher, Robin Stewart, has co-authored an article published in the **Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness**, titled [Using Appropriate Assessment to Plan Braille Literacy Instruction](#) (August 6, 2022).

#### *Abstract*

To be effective teachers of literacy for students who read braille, we need to know what our students’ strengths and needs are as all these components come together in braille literacy. Using an appropriate assessment that addresses the skill sets involved in braille literacy is critical to putting together effective intervention packages for our students. The first author used the Kamei-Hannan and Ricci Reading Assessment (2015) and the Braille Reading Analysis Chart (Harley, et al., 1997) to determine areas of need for a student in Grade 2 in a braille literacy program. Needs included: identifying ending sounds and naming final letters and sounds; basic decoding of short and long vowel sounds; recognizing sight words; and identifying letters. Specific miscue patterns in



tactile perception (reversals) were identified. Information gathered from these assessments was used to develop a targeted intervention package and informed the development of a balanced literacy program for this student. Following a period of implementation, data showed evidence of overall improvement in braille literacy skills.

## **Professional Learning**

To support coherence and alignment and consistency of special education and inclusion practices, and to build capacity, a number of professional learning opportunities have been offered to staff at all levels since the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

The following sessions which align with the Professional Learning section of TDSB Special Education Plan were specifically offered to school and system leaders:

- **Special Education for Newly Appointed Administrators** – This session was held in August for all newly appointed Vice Principal and Principals and provided an overview of Special Education and Inclusion practices.
- **Coordinators, Consultants and Central Team Welcome to 2022-2023** – To launch the school year, central special education staff continued their learning focused on critical reflective practice as it relates to their roles in special education and supporting the system referencing York University current critical reflective practice resource <https://www.criticalreflectivepractice.com/>.
- **New Administrator Meet-Up** – In partnership with Leadership Development and Professional Learning, this meet-up was an opportunity for new administrators to connect each other, share resources, support and answer questions related to Special Education and Inclusion.
- **Special Education for Administrators Part 1 of 2** – This two-session Professional Learning series, developed for new and experienced school administrators and superintendents provided an overview of Special Education and Inclusion practices which align with Ministry of Education policies and goals of the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).
- **School-based IPRC Principal Chair and Committee Member Training** – This annual training provides principals with an understanding of their role and responsibility in leading school-based IPRCs.
- **Developing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** – Two sessions were offered to support educators in developing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to highlight detailed and specific information about the strengths, abilities and current needs of the student.

## **ADHD Working Group Update**

Staff met in early June of last school year for the first time as part of the ADD/ADHD working group and are scheduled to meet again in October. The anticipated outcome for this group is to develop professional learning for administrators and all educators, with a focus on building system capacity in understanding how to support students with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD).

### **Action Plan:**

- Provide professional learning that supports how to build accessible learning environments that are necessary for an inclusive experience for all students, including students with ADD/ADHD
- Gather and develop resources that support students, teachers, support staff and families that are also culturally relevant and responsive
- Identify community organizations and partnerships that can support a better understanding and delivery of programs for students with ADD/ADHD
  - Identify current research/best practices available
  - Reach out for different perspectives and understanding of ADD/ADHD (i.e., Indigenous perspective)
- Determine ways to incorporate student voice

## **TDSB AODA Advisory Board**

A staff committee made up of various members from across all departments from the director's office, to central departments to school level staff will focus on enhancing accessibility at the Toronto District School Board. The five key focus areas are:

1. Accessibility Awareness and Training
2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations (policies, processes, programs)
3. Information, COmmunication and Inclusive Decision-making
4. Transition Planning
5. Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces

At the November SEAC meeting we look forward to having Dina Anker, the accessibility coordinator for TDSB, who will provide further information.

## **Budget**

As part of the TDSB's 3-year Deficit Recovery Plan, the Special Education and Inclusion Department will consider a reduction in funding in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Discussions will cover Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) and congregated sites. In accordance with the TDSB's commitment to



inclusion, our focus will remain on ensuring appropriate levels of service based on individual student needs.

### Thank you, Janine Small!

Centrally Assigned Principal Janine Small will be leaving us and beginning a secondment with the Ministry of Education effective October 31<sup>st</sup>. Janine has served in the Special Education and Inclusion Department for approximately 8 years, as Central Vice Principal and Central Principal. She has a wealth of knowledge about special education and inclusion practices, and has been a relentless advocate for improving practices at the school and system levels so we can better serve students with special education needs. We wish Janine all the very best in her new role! Centrally Assigned Principal Effie Stathopoulos will be assuming Janine’s position for the remainder of the school year.

### IPRC Data - September 2022

September IPRCs	
IPRCs Completed	67
IPRCs Scheduled	67
IPRC Cumulative since August 2022	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2022	79

### Psychological Assessment Data - September 2022



#### Psychological Services Assessment Statistics

##### September 2022

Month-By-Month	LC1	LC2	LC3	LC4	Total
Completed	16	19	8	28	71
Total Referrals	245	201	292	464	1202
Cumulative (since June 2022)					
Completed	16	19	8	28	71
In Progress	89	96	110	136	431
Waiting*	135	83	156	246	620
Removed	5	3	18	54	80
Total Referrals**	245	201	292	464	1202

\*95.3% of total waitlist are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 4.7% are gifted assessments

\*\*95.8% of total referrals are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 4.2% are gifted assessments