

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

September 15, 2022

Leadership Report

Learning Transformation and Equity

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Special Education Plan Update

The annual Special Education Plan review process has been completed by the Special Education and Inclusion team in collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Special Education Plan Subcommittee and various TDSB school and department staff. The updated plan has been approved by the TDSB Director of Education and sent to the Ministry of Education in accordance with [Regulation 306](#) and the ministry policy document entitled [Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans](#). The plan is posted on the public website.

Some high-level changes made to the plan include:

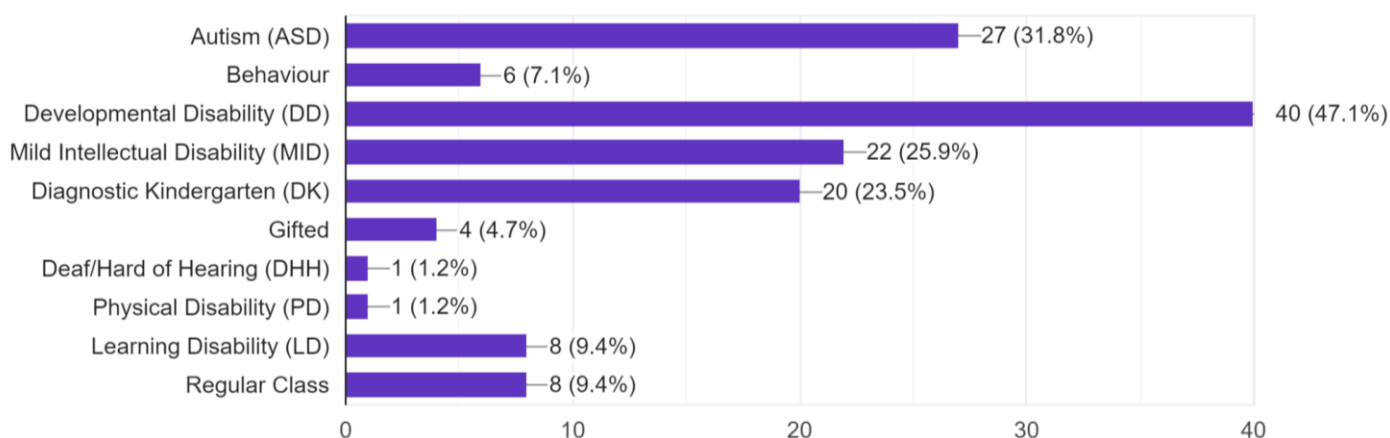
- Changed *Individual Learning Profile* to *Individual Learning Plan* to place emphasis on a plan of action and to remove any negative connotations associated with the word 'profile'.
- Removed the need for the GRS as a step for identification for Giftedness to remove any barriers related to teacher bias and/or subjectivity
- Included reference to culturally safe and trauma-informed practices to better serve Indigenous students with special education needs
- Changed gender pronouns *he/she/his/her* to *they, them, theirs* throughout document
- Included reference to student identity and lived experiences throughout the plan
- Included the need for culturally relevant and responsive assessment and instruction
- Added information on and link to [Brown and Parekh, 2013](#) study around the intersection of special education and racism. This year, more work needs to be done on the plan and professional learning with staff regarding the following: "Special education, particularly special education instruction that is taught in segregated classes, continues to be poorly valued within institutions of higher learning and many fields of employment. Established trends throughout the United States and recently in the Toronto District School Board

(TDSB 2010) find that there is a disproportionate representation of students in Special Education who are racialized or come from poverty”

- Changed *parents* to *parents/guardians/caregivers* throughout the plan
- Changed the location of Central IPRCs from Board offices to local schools to allow families easier access to IPRC meetings
- Links to interactive maps with information about each school where ISPs are located have been added to the Special Education Plan. Maps may be found at the end of each section describing an exceptionality.

Summer Transition for Students with High Special Education Needs

Students with high special education needs have a range of physical, emotional, social, health, safety, and academic needs that should be considered as they transition back to school. For these students, structure and routine are often critical components to learning. Through ministry funding, over 85 elementary and secondary schools offered a transition program for students with high special education needs to facilitate a smooth transition back to school. Programs included establishing relationships, establishing familiarity with schools and reviewing/practicing routines. The chart below provides a synopsis of the various programs that supported students with high special education needs.



Special Education and Inclusion Summer School Program

From July 4 to July 29, the TDSB provided enriching summer programs to support students with physical disabilities, developmental disabilities and for those with deaf and hard of hearing needs. Approximately 450 students accessed the programs at 6 congregated sites and 7 integrated sites across the district.

The programs focused on developing and improving functional academic, communication and daily living skills as identified in students' Individual Education Plans, and supported transitions and strategies for success in the upcoming school year. Teachers and support staff focused on a multi-sensory and multi-disciplinary approach to learning, including the use of manipulatives and technology.

A Summer School Report was written and shared with the family and home school of each student at the end of the program to allow for a continuation of work on the goals for the student in the upcoming school year.

Education Community Partnership Program (ECP) Summer Program

The Education and Community Partnership Program served 96 students in partnership with Sick Kids Hospital, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Massey Centre, Lumenus, Jessies and June Callwood Centre, Turning Point, Springboard, Fernie, Youthdale, Humber River Hospital and Central Toronto Youth Services. Students earned grades 9-12 credits in Math, English, Science, Food and Nutrition, Art, Physical Education and Health.

Summer Skills Development Leisure Program for Students with ASD

The Summer Skills Development Leisure program for students with ASD was held at 8 locations across the TDSB with 2 sites in each Learning Centre. The program served 155 participants: 53% of the participants were going into Grades 4-6, 25% Grades 7-8 and 22% Grades 9 and 10. Ninety-six TDSB schools sent students to the program. The program was held daily from July 5- to July 15 from 9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. and was staffed by 26 teachers with Special Education qualification (with knowledge of ABA strategies and an understanding of Zones of Regulation) plus 4 Childminders and 3 volunteers.

A key focus of the Summer Leisure program was to provide an opportunity for students to enhance their social, self-regulation skills and to prepare for transitioning back to school - to a new grade, division, or a new school. Teachers did a fantastic job engaging and meeting the needs of



students. They also focused on transitions through scenarios, role play and social stories. Students learned about strategies of how to initiate conversations and how to react when someone does not agree with them or want to play with them. Students were also taught how to play various recess games such as "Four Squares" to help them participate with greater confidence with their peers during recess times.

Although the summer session was short, the students enjoyed the social interactions and continued to develop social skills that will help as they transition back to school in September. Families were very appreciative of the opportunity and hope that program will continue.

Orientation and Mobility Collaborative Art Mural @ R H McGregor

The Blind/Low Vision Program, Orientation and Mobility Team facilitated an opportunity for students with visual impairment to design a mural at R H McGregor ES. The purpose of this orientation and mobility mural was to bring awareness to both the hard work and skills required to safely and independently travel with the use of a white cane. The mural is a visual representation of the strokes made by two different white cane travel techniques. To learn more about the mural and the student artists please visit this google site for their full journey at [Our Path: O&M Mural](#).

International FASD Awareness Month & Day

September is FASD Awareness Month. First celebrated in 1999, FASD day is devoted to raising awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) to improve prevention of FASD and diagnosis and support for individuals with FASD. The Government of Canada [officially recognized September as FASD Awareness Month](#) in 2020.

The theme for this year's FASD awareness month is *Building Strengths and Abilities*. Historically, much of the research and discussion about FASD has focused on challenges. While this discussion is necessary, it is also important to recognize people's unique talents, abilities and interests. When we don't explore the success of people with FASD and celebrate their contributions, we fail to recognize their immense potential.

This year's activities include:

Red Shoes Rock: This FASD Month, wear red shoes and help bring attention to FASD. Don't have red shoes? No worries! Add a red shirt or pants to your outfit instead. Be sure to share on social media using the hashtag #RedShoesRock.

Canada Rocks Red for FASD 2022: Along with community members, buildings and monuments across Canada will also be rocking red in September. This year, iconic Canadian monuments and



landmarks will be lighting up red on **September 9th in honour of FASD Awareness Day**. For more information, please visit <https://canfasd.ca/fasd-awareness-month/>.

