

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

AGENDA FEBRUARY 8, 2023

George Wedge (Chair)
Easter Seals Ontario

Tyler Munro
Inclusion Action in Ontario
Representative

**Geoffrey Feldman
(Vice Chair)**
Ontario Disability Coalition



Deborah Nightingale
Association for Bright Children

Melanie Battaglia
Autism Ontario

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 - 2025
IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope

Ivona Novak
Easter Seals Ontario (Alternate)

Richelle De Belchior
Community Representative

Mary Pugh
VOICE for Hearing Impaired

Lisa Mason
Community Representative

TRUSTEE MEMBERS
Frank D'Amico
Angela Kennedy
Maria Rizzo

Lori Mastrogiuseppe
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
Disorder (FASD)



MISSION

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*

VISION

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Recording Secretary: Sophia Harris, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2293
Assistant Recording Secretary: Skeeter Hinds-Barnett, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2298
Assistant Recording Secretary: 416-222-8282 Ext. 2298

Dr. Brendan Browne
Director of Education

Nancy Crawford
Chair of the Board

Terms of Reference for the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) shall have responsibility for advising on matters pertaining to the following:

- (a) Annual SEAC planning calendar;
- (b) Annual SEAC goals and committee evaluation;
- (c) Development and delivery of TCDSB Special Education programs and services;
- (d) TCDSB Special Education Plan;
- (e) Board Learning and Improvement Plan (BLIP) as it relates to Special Education programs, Services, and student achievement;
- (f) TCDSB budget process as it relates to Special Education; and
- (g) Public access and consultation regarding matters related to Special Education programs and services.

SEAC shall also make recommendations to Board pertaining to these matters, in order to improve the lives of students with Special Education Needs and their families.

N.B: The following goals were suggested for the 2021-2022 School Year:

1. Continued work on the Special Education Plan;
2. To increase Committee membership;
3. To “Covid-proof” Testing, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Identification Placement Review Committees (IPRCs) processes that are essential to identifying and supporting our special education students;
4. Increased depth of knowledge of Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) budget processes and advocating for Special Education needs;
5. That SEAC make recommendations to Board regarding goals for the following year that are deemed important for the Director of Education to pursue as they relate to students with special needs and the Special Services Department in the Spring of the school year; and
6. To strengthen political advocacy for special education needs for our Board and other Boards in Ontario.

Land Acknowledgement

Out of our deep respect for Indigenous peoples in Canada, we acknowledge that all Toronto Catholic District School Board properties are situated upon traditional territories of the Anishinabek (a-ni-shna-bek), the Haudenosaunee (hoh-Dee-noh-Shoh-nee) Confederacy, and the Wendat peoples. We also acknowledge the land covered by Treaty 13 is held by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Toronto is subject to The Dish with One Spoon covenant. We also recognize the contributions and enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

La Reconnaissance du Territoire

Nous témoignons du plus grand respect pour les Peuples autochtones au Canada et nous avons à cœur de souligner que tous les immeubles du Toronto Catholic District School Board sont situés sur les terres traditionnelles de la Nation Anishinabek, de la Confédération de Haudenosaunees et des Wendats. Il est également important de noter que le territoire visé par le Traité 13 est celui des Mississaugas de la Première Nation Credit et que celui de Toronto est protégé par l'accord d'« un plat à une cuillère ». Nous tenons également à rappeler la présence pérenne et l'importance des contributions des Premières Nations, des Metis et des Inuits en Ontario, et dans tout le Canada.

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AGENDA

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC SESSION

George Wedge, Chair

Geoffrey Feldman, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

7:00 P.M.

	Pages
1. Opening Prayer	
2. Land Acknowledgement	
3. Roll Call and Apologies	
4. Approval of the Agenda	
5. Declarations of Interest	
6. Approval and Signing of the Minutes of the Meeting held January 18, 2023	1 - 11
7. Delegations	
8. Presentations	
8.a Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) Community Engagement Policy - S. Vlahos, Chief of Communications and Government Relations	12 - 46
8.b Annual Chief Financial Officer Overview - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer	47 - 59

9.	Notices of Motion	
10.	Consent and Review	
11.	Annual Calendar Items	
11.a	Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft) as of February 8, 2023	60 - 64
11.b	Report from the Informal Working Group to Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	65 - 72
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Special Education Placement Provided by the Board</i> • <i>Special Education Staff</i> • <i>Appendix: Special Education Staff</i> • <i>Staff Development</i> • <i>The Board's General Model for Special Education</i> 	
11.c	Education Quality Accountability Office (EQAO) 2021-2022 - M. Meehan, Superintendent of Special Services and B. Doan, Chief of Educational Research	
12.	Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees	
12.a	Special Services Superintendent Update – February 2023	73 - 74
12.b	Mental Health and Well-Being Annual Report 2021-2022	75 - 83
13.	Consideration of Motions for Which Previous Notice Has Been Given	
13.a	From Richelle de Belchior, Community Representative regarding Details of Professional Development Workshops	84 - 87
14.	Unfinished Business	
15.	Matters Referred/Deferred to the Committee by the Board and Other Committees	
16.	List of Communications	

16.a	Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)- Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2022	88 - 93
16.b	Ministry of Education Special Education Update November 2022	94 - 123
16.c	Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities	124 - 128
17.	Association Reports	
18.	Inquiries and Miscellaneous	
19.	Pending List - Nil	
20.	Adjournment	

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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023

PRESENT:

Trustees:

F. D'Amico
A. Kennedy- Virtual and In-person
M. Rizzo

External Members:

G. Wedge, Chair
G. Feldman, Vice-Chair
R. De Belchior
L. Mason - Virtual
L. Mastrogiuseppe – Virtual
T. Munro
D. Nightingale
I. Novak - Virtual

Staff:

A. Della Mora
C. Fernandes
M. Meehan
F. Cifelli
V. Cocco
B. Doan
M. Gendron
P. Klim-Conforti
R. Macchia
D. Reid
P. Stachiw

S. Hinds-Barnett, Acting Recording Secretary

External Guest: Alasdair Robertson (Parliamentarian)

3. Roll Call and Apologies

Apology was extended on behalf of Melanie Battaglia. Mary Pugh was absent.

4. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee D'Amico, that the Agenda, as amended to include the Addendum, be approved.

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee D'Amico, that the following items be added to the Agenda:

Inquiries from Trustee Rizzo regarding:

18b) Psychologist Services;

18c) Supports in Classroom; and

Inquiry from Deborah Nightingale regarding:

18d) Status of Motions passed by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

On the Vote being taken, the Motion, as amended, was declared

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

6. Approval and Signing of the Minutes

MOVED by Lori Mastrogiuseppe, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the Minutes of the Meeting held November 30, 2022 be approved.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

8. Presentations

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 8a) be adopted as follows:

8a) Accountability Framework for Special Services Reimagined - Dr. Brandy Doan (Chief of Educational Research) received.

Trustee Kennedy joined the virtual room at 7:22 p.m.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

9. Notices of Motion

MOVED by Richelle de Belchior, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 9a) be adopted as follows:

- 9a) **From Richelle de Belchior, Community Representative regarding Details of Professional Development Workshops** that this item be considered at the February 8, 2023 SEAC Meeting.

WHEREAS: Professional development workshops were held on November 18th, 2022;

WHEREAS: These workshops were presented by the Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBAs) on areas such as Autism, Be the Reinforcer, Understanding students with autism spectrum disorder;

WHEREAS: There were additional workshops held by School Mental Health Ontario on how to identify children requiring assistance in the younger age classes

WHEREAS: On one of the workshops the BANCK team presented evidence-based strategies focusing on children in the early years;

WHEREAS: The assistive technology team presented accessibility apps such as read and write app and the orbit note; and

WHEREAS: Courses such as Registered Behavior Training were held by the Geneva summit.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Staff provide SEAC with following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The links to the workshops and modules presented by the BCBAs on Autism, Be the reinforcer and understanding students with autism spectrum disorder;
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop presented by the BCBAs;
3. The designation of the staff members who did attend the workshop presented by the BCBAs;
4. The grades that these staff members who attended the BCBA presentation regularly teach; and
5. The duration of each of these workshops.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board Staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The link to the School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) workshop on how to do early identification;
2. The number of staff members who attended the School Mental Health Ontario workshops on how to do early identification;
3. The designation of the staff members who did attend the School Mental Health Ontario workshop;
4. The grades that these staff members who attended the School Mental health Ontario workshop regularly teach; and
5. The duration of the SMHO workshop.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The evidence – based classroom strategies focusing on children in the early years as presented by BANCK;
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop demonstrating these evidence-based strategies;
3. The designation of staff members who attended the evidence-based strategy workshop focusing on children in the early years;
4. The grades that the members who attended the strategy course regularly teach; and
5. The duration of the strategy course.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. An example of the read and write apps and the names of the apps including an example of the orbit note;
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop presenting these apps and orbit note;

3. The designation of staff members who attended the presentation of these read and write apps including the orbit note;
4. The grades that the members who attended the presentation of these read and write apps including the orbit note normally teach; and
5. The duration of the presentation of the read and write apps including the orbit note.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. Examples be shown of what behaviour training was taught at the Geneva summit;
2. The number of staff members who attended the Geneva summit courses involving behaviour training for children with autism;
3. The designation of staff members who attended the Geneva summit training as of February 1st, 2023;
4. The grades that the members who attended the Geneva summit normally teach;
5. The duration of the Geneva summit behaviour training course; and
6. Feedback and criticism of the staff who attended the Geneva summit courses in regard to the behaviour training course.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. Sufficient budget is allocated for future staff to attend all workshops and Geneva summit courses offered Enforcement of making these workshops mandatory for lower grades (JK and SK) teachers and assistants to attend these workshops and Geneva summit courses so that children can be identified as early as possible for special needs.

13. Consent and Review

The Chair reviewed the Order Page and the following Items were held:

- 11a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft) as of January 18, 2023 – Deborah Nightingale;
- 11b) Report from the Informal Working Group to Toronto Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) (Previously listed as Special Education Plan Review) – Tyler Munro;
- 12a) Special Education Superintendent Update – January 2023 – Deborah Nightingale;
- 12b) 2021-2022 Accessibility Annual Status Report – Trustee Rizzo;
- 18a) Ministry of Education Special Education in Ontario – Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC) on Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), November 28, 2022 – Deborah Nightingale;

Inquiries from Trustee Rizzo regarding:

- 18b) Psychologist Services;
- 18c) Supports in Classroom; and

Inquiry from Deborah Nightingale regarding:

- 18d) Status of Motions passed by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

11. Annual Calendar Items

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that Item 11a) be adopted as follows:

- 11a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft) as of January 18, 2023** received

Trustee Kennedy disconnected virtually and joined the horseshoe at 7:56 p.m.

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that SEAC recommend to Board that the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results that specify the Special Education component come to the February 8, 2023 SEAC Meeting.

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that SEAC recommend to Board that Staff provide SEAC with the relevant data from the Ontario School Information System (ONSIS) report on Special Education Students at the February 8, 2023 SEAC Meeting.

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

On the Vote being taken, the Motion, as amended, was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 11b) be adopted as follows:

- 11b) Report from the Informal Working Group to Toronto Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) (Previously listed as Special Education Plan Review) received and referred to Staff.**

Trustee Rizzo left the horseshoe at 8:40 p.m. and returned at 8:45 p.m.

Trustee Kennedy left the horseshoe at 8:46 p.m. and returned at 8:50 p.m.

On the Vote being taken, the Referral Motion was declared

CARRIED

12. Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 12a) be adopted as follows:

- 12a) Special Education Superintendent Update – January 2023** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 12b) be adopted as follows:

- 12b) 2021-2022 Accessibility Annual Status Report** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

18. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Tyler Munro, that Item 18a) be adopted as follows:

- 18a) Ministry of Education Special Education in Ontario – Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC) on Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), November 28, 2022** received.

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Richelle de Belchior, that this

item be deferred to the February 8, 2023 SEAC Meeting and that SEAC members submit their questions by Monday, January 23, 2023.

On the Vote being taken, the Deferral Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 18b) be adopted as follows:

- 18b) From Trustee Rizzo regarding Psychologist services** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 18c) be adopted as follows:

- 18c) From Trustee Rizzo regarding Supports in the Classroom** received and referred to Staff.

On the Vote being taken, the Referral Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Tyler Munro, that Item 18d) be adopted as follows:

- 18d) From Deborah Nightingale regarding Status of Motions passed by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

20. Adjournment

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that the meeting be adjourned.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

SECRETARY

CHAIR



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 07

Date Approved:

December 13, 2012-
Board

Date of Next Review:

November 2022

Dates of Amendments:

November 16, 2017

Cross References:

S.S. 04, Access to School Premises

H.M. 24, Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education

S. 09, School Accommodation Review

S. 10, Catholic School Advisory Councils

S.S. 09, Code of Conduct

S.P. 02- Elementary French Programming

Ministry of Education:

O. Reg. 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

[Parents in Partnership - A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010](#)

Appendix A – Community Engagement Handbook, revised September 2012

Purpose:

This policy affirms and promotes the need to engage community members in decision-making processes that foster student achievement and well-being, identify new and emerging issues, support the implementation of Toronto Catholic District School Board plans and strategies, and provide direction about policy decisions.

Scope and Responsibility:

The policy extends to all activities designed to bring about ongoing stakeholder engagement by building and strengthening the relationship between the TCDSB and its communities. Guidelines about suitable methods of engagement and facilitating input and feedback from community members and the general public on the



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

TCDSB's activities will be provided. All who advocate for the TCDSB are responsible to adhere to this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic values

Strengthening Public Confidence

Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Excellence in Governance

Policy:

The Board of Trustees, embracing its governance mandate, strives to engage Catholic and community stakeholders, ratepayers, and all involved in Toronto Catholic schools to contribute their input to the ongoing development and strategic direction of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

The TCDSB will commit to ensuring that meaningful input from our community members is considered to ensure initiatives, policies and practices reflect our mission and meet the needs and expectations of the communities served by the TCDSB.

Regulations:

1. Community members have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in decisions.
2. The TCDSB will provide community engagement opportunities that are open, honest, transparent and accessible to all, and that value the input obtained in its decision making.



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

3. The authority to implement community engagement is as follows:

- (i) Internal TCDSB staff – Director of Education;
- (ii) Board wide engagement – Board of Trustees;
- (iii) Ward level engagement – Director of Education and the Ward Trustee.

4. The TCDSB shall engage community members and the general public in meaningful ways on matters in the purview of the Board to allow deeper conversations about values, beliefs and concerns, to emphasize the desired future, appreciate the positives and build on past successes and create effective networks.

5. The Board of Trustees will take into consideration the views of all community members in making policy decisions by facilitating ongoing exchange of information and feedback among the TCDSB, its communities and the public.

6. The following principles form the foundation of effective engagements: commitment, evaluation, timing, inclusiveness, accessibility, location, clarity, respect, accountability and transparency.

7. The Board of Trustees, TCDSB Staff, Catholic communities and the general public will use the Community Engagement Handbook to support this policy. The TCDSB Staff will develop procedures and a community engagement strategy to ensure ongoing and effective implementation of this policy.

8. The Continuum of Engagement comprises six different levels of engagement that could be sought with community members: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Consensus and Empower.



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

9. In preparing for a community engagement process, the Board or designated leader will select one or more of these levels of engagement to ensure that the community is appropriately engaged and identify the stakeholders it wishes to engage.
10. At the completion of each community engagement process, stakeholders will be informed by TCDSB staff of the outcome.
11. Stakeholders involved in each engagement process will be solicited for their feedback consistent with the level of engagement used in the process.



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

Definitions:

Continuum of Engagement

The continuum comprises the six different levels of engagement that could be sought with community members: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Consensus, and Empower.

Inform

To provide community members and the general public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding issues, the alternatives, opportunities and solutions.

Consult

To obtain input from community members and the general public on proposed Board directions and decisions.

Involve

To work directly with the community members throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in decision-making processes.

Collaborate

To partner with the community members in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Consensus

To work together with community members until the decision is reached through appropriate consensus.



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

Empower

To provide elements of the final decision or implementation in the hands of the community.

Toronto Catholic District School Board or The Board (abbreviated TCDSB)

Refers to the complete corporate entity and includes the Board of Trustees and all Staff and students.

The Board of Trustees

The twelve elected officials charged with governing the TCDSB.

Community Engagement

An active, intentional, purposeful and ethical relationship between the Catholic communities, the general public and the TCDSB.

Catholic Communities

Include students, parents, Catholic ratepayers, Staff, Trustees, and the Catholic Church.

General Public

Includes residents within the TCDSB boundaries, and levels of government in Ontario.



POLICY SECTION: TRUSTEES

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T. 7

Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Catholic schools and the TCDSB are accessible and welcoming to parents and other community members;
2. Community members and the general public have open access to information and a growing understanding of educational policies, programs and services;
3. Predefined and Board approved metrics for each community engagement and feedback solicited from stakeholders on the process and participation.
4. A report of community engagement process as reported by staff to be reviewed by the Board annually.

Details on the process by which planning for, and implementation of, community engagement may be carried out at the Board can be found in the Community Engagement Handbook, revised September 2012.

APPENDIX A



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Revised Sept. 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT

SECTION A: Methods of Engagement and Suitable Engagement Levels

SECTION B: Creative Problem Solving Techniques

SECTION C: Helpful Criteria for Choosing a Physical Location

SECTION D: How to Conduct a Public Meeting

INTRODUCTION:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) strives to engage Catholic and community stakeholders, ratepayers, and all involved in Toronto Catholic schools to contribute their input to the ongoing development and strategic direction of the TCDSB.

This handbook has been developed under the direction of the Board of Trustees of the TCDSB's to support its inclusive public engagement policy. The goal is to deeply engage stakeholders in setting directions for the board and to participate in the governance of their school board by contributing their views on important issues, such as board goals, strategic planning, and student accommodation.

Community members have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in decisions that will affect them. Meaningful input from our community members is integral to ensuring initiatives, policies and practices reflect the school board's mission and meet the needs and expectations of the communities served by the TCDSB.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to community engagement opportunities that are open, honest, transparent and accessible to all, and that value the input obtained in its decision making.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the Community Engagement Policy is to:

- bring about ongoing stakeholder engagement;
- build and strengthen the relationship between the School Board and its communities;
- provide guidelines on suitable methods of engagement and guidelines on groups to engage, in current and emerging trends and concerns in Catholic education
- improve the Board's decision-making processes
- facilitate input and feedback from community members and the general public on the Board's activities
- ensure that the Board is able to take into consideration the views of all community members in making policy decisions
- facilitate an ongoing exchange of information and feedback among the Board, its communities and the public.
- engage community members and the general public in meaningful ways, to allow deeper conversations about values, beliefs and concerns, to emphasize the desired future, appreciate the positives and build on past successes and create effective networks.

PURPOSE

Community engagement:

- demonstrates living our values
- directly impacts and improves student achievement and well being
- increases public confidence
- contributes to community members feeling that they are an integral part of the Board's decision-making process.

Community participation contributes to the Board of Trustees' decision-making processes by identifying new and emerging issues; providing feedback and recommending improvements to existing Board services, programs and policies; and participating in visioning, developing, implementing and monitoring Board plans and strategies.

EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Catholic schools and the TCDSB are accessible and welcoming to parents and other community members;
2. Community members and the general public have open access to information and a growing understanding of educational policies, programs and services;
3. Community members play a meaningful role in the policy and strategic planning of the TCDSB.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The implementation of a comprehensive Community Engagement Policy requires leadership, resourcing, data management, communication and reporting systems. Building the capacity of Staff within the TCDSB is also required.

LEGAL IMPACT

Liability insurance required for all locations where engagements are conducted on an in-person basis.

ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT

A well-run engagement process is comprised of five key stages. These stages are implemented based on the principles outlined below. To achieve the goals and objectives of the engagement, and to help the process run smoothly, engagement must be well planned. The Board's engagement plans will allow sufficient preparation time for meaningful participation by community members.

The design process allows Staff to develop strategies to implement the engagement in manageable stages, while simultaneously working with community members so that everyone's needs are met.

The stages in an engagement process are as follows:

Stage 1: Preparation

- Determine if there is a need for engagement by identifying the issue, its scope and the public environment.
- Identify the objectives of the specific engagement.
- Determine how communications will be managed before, during and after the engagement process.

Stage 2: Design

- Propose an appropriate approach to involving community members based on the information collected during the preparation stage, and consistent with the scope and the scale of the issue.
- Identify what information will be needed to support the engagement process and how this will be shared with community members.
- Define and clarify the approach by testing the ideas with the intended community members.

Stage 3: Implementation

- Implement the engagement plan that was developed during the preparation and design stages.
- Adapt to changing circumstances and unanticipated challenges. Communicate any changes to community members.

Stage 4: Feedback and Follow-up

- Provide participants with information concerning how their ideas and comments will be used in the decision-making process.
- Share progress reports and the results of the engagement publicly with community members in a timely fashion.

Stage 5: Evaluation

- Assess whether the process met the objectives set out in the design stage.

SECTION A

Levels and Methods of Engagement

LEVEL	METHOD
1. Inform	Communication Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilize current structures ie. SEAC, CPIC, CSAC, CSLIT, Parish bulletins, contacts with partner groups, board email exchange, communication protocol, to inform community members ○ Post Announcement on website ○ Include information to community members in the Director's Voice ○ Direct emails and/or printed letters/brochures to community members and through principals to forward to community members
2. Consult	Face-to- Face and Electronic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilize current structures ie. SEAC, CPIC, CSAC, CSLIT, to receive input from stakeholder groups on a specific policy or initiative ○ Direct email request to individual stakeholders for input ○ Posting of policy document or initiative with request for input on board website
3. Involve	Ad Hoc Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite interested community members to be part of a focus group to provide input on a specific policy or initiative
4. Collaborate	Representative and Integrated Development Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure involvement of representatives from community members, especially those stakeholders who will be most impacted by the policy, issue or initiative are involved in the development process ○ Establish suitable timelines in development process to allow representatives to share with their community members and provide meaningful input and feedback during

	<p>the development process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share initial proposal or draft document with the system and community members and request feedback ○ Respond to feedback by including suggestions or explaining why suggestions are not feasible
Consensus	<p>Facilitated Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community members, staff and trustees work together in a facilitated workshop session with shared understanding of goals and related success criteria to reach a consensus that aligns with the articulated mission, vision and values of the board
Empower	<p>Culture of Respect and Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A culture of respect, responsibility and ownership establishes at the board level that models and supports community members collaboration in initiatives and policies at all levels of the system

SECTION B

Creative Problem Solving Techniques

Problem Solving Techniques: Model #1

Separate the people from the issues

Separating the people from the issues allows the parties to address the issues without damaging their relationship. There are three sources of people problems that need to be addressed: differences of perception, emotions when people feel their interests are threatened and ineffective communication. Usually the best way to deal with people problems is to maintain a good relationship, think of each other as partners in negotiation rather than as opponents. Try to understand the other's case even if you are not in agreement.

Focus on interests rather than positions

Defining a problem in terms of positions means that at least one party will "lose" the dispute. When a problem is defined in terms of the parties' underlying interest it is often possible to find a solution which satisfies both parties' interests. The first step is to identify interests and discuss them together. If a party wants the other side to take their interests into account, they must explain their interest clearly. Parties should keep a clear focus on their interest, but remain open to different proposals and positions.

Generate options

Brainstorm for all possible solutions to the problem. Wild and creative proposals are encouraged. Suggest partial solutions to the problem. Only after several proposals have been made should the group turn to evaluating the ideas. Avoid falling into a win-lose mentality by focusing on shared interests. The key to reconciling different interests is to look for items that are of low cost to you and high benefit to them, and vice versa.

Use objective criteria

Usually there are number of different criteria which could be used. The parties must agree which are best for their situation. Criteria should be both realistic and practical. Each issue should be approached as a shared search for objective criteria. Ask for the reasoning from the other party. Each party must keep an open mind and be willing to reconsider their positions when there is a reason to.

Leadership Toolbox for Problem Solving and Managing Conflict: Model #2

1. A Common Vision: The commitment to consider all sides of the issue.

Key questions:

- Can you see your whole board, school or district?
- Can your colleagues see the whole, too?
- Are you all holding the same picture in mind?

Considering all sides takes practice. Stay open-minded to all sides of the issue. Try to understand the issue and the history behind it.

2. Systems Thinking: Stay focussed on the important parts of the issue and how they link together.

Key questions:

- How do the parts of your school system (teachers, administrators, trustees, parents, students, community members, central office) fit together?
- When does hot or cold conflict prevent these parts from working smoothly as one integrated system?

School board leaders and trustees need systems thinking to manage an organization effectively. Because every sizable organization has departments or divisions that develop their own self-interest, an over-arching perspective - sometimes called “going to the balcony” - is essential. Leading “our” side against “their” side is thinking like a manager. Forming a “third side” that can build a bridge and transform the conflict is thinking like a mediator.

3. Presence: Use all our mental, emotional and spiritual resources to assess and transform the conflict.

Key questions:

- Are you fully present in most, if not all, of your leadership roles?
- Do strains, stresses or distractions hinder your effectiveness?
- If so, where is your effectiveness compromised and what steps are you taking to obtain support in these areas?

No matter how much we may want to see the whole and think about it systemically, we cannot do so if we are not right here, right now. Presence is an expression of our capacity to apply all our personal resources to assessing and transforming the conflict.

4. *Inquiry: A way of asking questions that gets to the real information that will help to transform the issue.*

Key questions:

- Do you ask the right questions of the right people at the right time?
- Are you missing vital information that you need to lead your board effectively because you are not asking questions?

It is difficult to understand complex systems or conflicts without asking questions. No matter how much knowledge we might have in our heads, sooner or later we need to draw on the wisdom of others. If we don't, our analysis almost certainly will be incomplete. Whether you are a teacher in a classroom, a principal managing a single school or a superintendent managing an entire district, asking questions is a critical early step in transforming conflict.

5. *Active Conversation: The awareness that we are free to choose how we speak and listen.*

Key questions:

- Are you aware of the full range of communication options available to you?
- Do you know when to use each one for maximum impact?
- Is your board's "meeting culture" well designed?

Being aware of the options for speaking and listening and knowing when to use them most effectively can immediately improve productivity and prevent unnecessary conflicts. Conscious communication also can save a school system's most precious resource: time.

6. *Dialogue: An inquiry-based, trust-building way of communicating that helps to bridge thoughts and ideas and to be innovative.*

Key questions:

- Are school and board leaders stuck in debate mode?
- Do members of your board and senior leadership team waste valuable time and energy trying to prove that their decisions are right and others' decisions are wrong?

7. *Bridging: The process of building relationships that cross the divisions in an organization.*

Key questions:

- What relationships in your board, school or school district are not functioning at optimal levels?

- Do you and your colleagues know how to bridge these differences to achieve better results?

We have many words for the construction materials from which these invisible bridges are built: trust, social capital, respect, healing, empathy, understanding, courage, collaboration. The energy must change in order for conflict to be transformed into synergy. When this shift occurs, what was impossible before now becomes possible. The stage is now set for a breakthrough. The stronger these bridges can be built, the more confident students and their parents feel about the education process.

8. Innovation: The creative, educational breakthrough that creates new options for moving through conflicts.

Key questions:

- Are the human relationships in your board designed to produce maximum innovation?
- How is innovation rewarded - or punished - in your board culture?

There is no guarantee that conflicts can be transformed into resolutions. The breakthrough can be an innovation. This innovation - a new way of doing things that perhaps could be imagined but not achieved until now - brings hope. It points the way toward resolving or transforming the conflict so education not only survives, but becomes stronger.

Adapted from Mark Gerzon, Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Conflict into Opportunity

Conflict Partnering: Model #3

Sister Donna J. Markham, Prioress of the Congregation, of Adrian Dominica Sisters, challenges us to a new model of leadership for our Catholic schools that clearly emphasizes: relationships, connections, community, compassion and awe. She states that “lack of the connections is the breeding ground for violence.” She believes that “Catholic leaders are obligated to stand in the tension of difference.”

- Understand that community is the practice of the reign of God.
- Communicate and connect without agreement
- Commit to work toward understanding
- Commit to sustaining the dialogue
- Understand that maintaining the relationship is more important than winning the argument

Adapted from Sr. D. Markham’s address to T.C.D.S.B. principals, Friday, March 31, 2006

Proposed Method for Ethical Decision Making: Model #4

1. Identify the core issue or issues involved
2. Make sure you understand the facts
3. Identify the main players in this issue and see if you can identify their interests
4. List the values and ethical tensions at stake or in conflict in this matter
5. Critically reflect on the possible options and their likely consequences
6. Choose the option you think best caters for the values and ethical standards you believe to be important
7. Give reasons (to yourself or others) why you have chosen this option and show why it is a better resolution of the issue than the other options
8. Make the decision but look for honest feedback and keep an open mind
9. Take action carefully.
10. Reflect and learn.

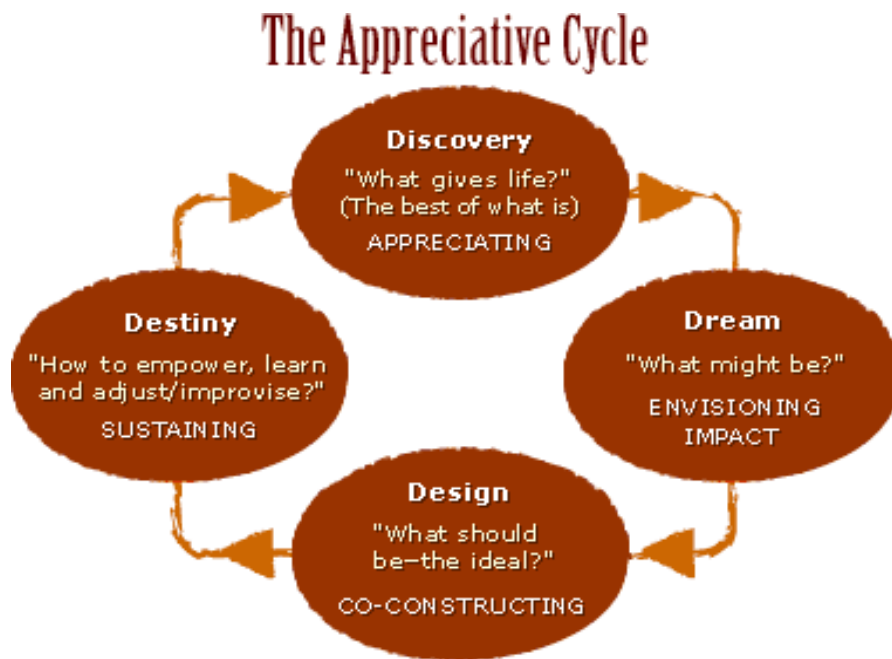
Adapted from Education Leadership: Key Challenges and Ethical Tensions, Patrick Duignan

Appreciative Inquiry: Model #5

Appreciative Inquiry is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms, **Appreciative Inquiry** involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the “unconditional positive question”. In **Appreciative Inquiry** the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design.

The Appreciative Inquiry Process consists of five main steps:

1. **Definition:** establishing the focus and scope of the inquiry.
2. **Discovery:** eliciting stories of the system at its best - this is started in pairs, with the stories then shared with larger groups.
3. **Dream:** collecting the wisdom and imagining the future - this includes graphically visualizing the desired future.
4. **Design:** bridges to the future based on the best of the past and the present - groups work to use assets discovered in the second phase to design a plan to create the desired future.
5. **Destiny:** Making it happen.



Adapted from [A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry](#) by David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.

SECTION C
Helpful Criteria for Choosing a Physical Location

1. Is it a central location readily accessible by public transportation?
2. Is it accessible for individuals with mobility issues?
3. Is there adequate parking?
4. Does the venue have the necessary seating capacity appropriate to the anticipated size of the gathering?
5. Does it have 'break- out' rooms if there is a need for small group discussion?
6. Is the venue equipped with an internet connection and screen to facilitate the technological resources that may be needed?
7. Is there the necessary on-site support for the technology?
8. Does the venue allow for off-site participation through technology?
9. Is there an appropriate and proximate room for the provision of baby- sitting services if required?
10. Is there fresh water available for speakers?
11. Is there a budget for light refreshments?

SECTION D

How to Conduct a Public Meeting

Planning for Public Meetings

Successful public meetings first and foremost require planning. Meetings not planned well often leave participants feeling frustrated and believing that attending the meeting was a waste of time. Listed below are some ideas for how to prepare for a successful public meeting.

Determine the purpose of the meeting.

One of the first steps in planning a public meeting is to know its purpose. For example, is the meeting intended to inform, consult or involve the public? Are there other more efficient and effective methods including digital media that could be used instead?

Is the meeting intended to offer an opportunity for collaboration or consensus building with the public and community members or to create a culture of empowerment with the broader community? Another important point to consider is whether the purpose is best achieved through a public meeting. If it is decided that a public meeting should be held, then the reasons for it must be articulated to the public. The purpose of the meeting should be reiterated at the start of the meeting to set the parameters for those in attendance.

Prepare and Share an Agenda

Before any meeting takes place, an agenda should be developed. This agenda should be presented to the participants prior to the meeting or at its beginning. The participants should revise it at the beginning, if deemed necessary. This agenda is very important because it serves as a guide for the facilitator to keep the group moving toward accomplishing their goals. In preparing the agenda, the convener or facilitator of the meeting should focus on what, how, who, and when. The what of a meeting includes the issues to be discussed, the how includes the means or process through which the issues will be addressed, the who is the participant responsible for presenting or discussing the agenda item, and the when is where the issue or item is on the agenda and amount of time each item will be allotted.

Communication

Ensuring timely announcement of and invitation to the meeting in a variety of appropriate formats is critical. Another step in planning for public participation involves identifying and involving the key stakeholders. A successful public process will include a diversity of citizens who have a substantial interest in the outcome of that process. Diverse participation also ensures that relevant information about the particular issue is not overlooked. Diverse participation also can help to legitimize the final decisions or actions for the larger public.

Ground Rules

Another important outcome of building rapport with potential participants in advance is the ability to propose **ground rules** for how the meeting will be conducted ie. avoid talking while others are speaking, avoid personal attacks or accusations, and respect agreements about time. At the onset of any potentially contentious meeting, ground rules should be agreed upon. They should also be revised periodically throughout the meeting as needed. Engaging a skilled facilitator for a large public meeting is an excellent practice. If the issue is especially contentious it is helpful to have a facilitator who is seen to be 'neutral' in the matter. Neutral and trained facilitators do not have a strong sense of personal involvement in the issue at hand and, thus, are able to implement a process that is deemed fair by the participants.

Have a follow-up plan.

Another aspect of the planning process is to have a strategy identified for **following-up** once the meeting is completed. Following up with participants helps to prevent spending too much time reviewing what happened at a previous meeting, if additional meetings are required. Participants should be provided with the minutes of the meeting as soon as possible. Other materials generated during the meeting, such as anything written on flipcharts, should also be saved as records of the meeting and what actually occurred.

Some tips for conducting an effective meeting:

1. Define the meeting mission (purpose) and vision (future view).
2. Define the meeting facilitator and who will take minutes.
3. Define who will attend the meeting – consider representation from all parties needed to define and implement any decisions as well as who would be affected.
4. Define the meeting start and end times.
5. Define and pre-distribute the agenda that should include the meeting mission and vision, any relevant reports, start and end times, and attendees.
6. Ensure there is a process for registration or on-site sign up sheet to allow for follow-up with the participants.
7. Open the meeting with a prayer.
8. At the beginning of the meeting welcome everyone and if people in the room do not know each other (and if the number of participants is not too large) do a round table self-introduction.
9. State the ground rules of the meeting such as: this is a safe environment; no idea is a bad idea; everyone can openly disagree but opinions must be expressed with the reasoning behind them; the goal is define which ideas have the best chance to succeed.

10. Work through the agenda items inviting a dialogue of views and creative scenarios.
11. Write the ideas (not the names of who created them) on a chart visible by all. Gather consensus on which ideas have the least gaps and the greatest chance to succeed.
12. If follow up information is needed or if a decision has been made assign an accountable party to execute and bring a report back to the group.
13. Review the action items with the group and set those deliverable items at the beginning of the next meeting's agenda.
14. Provide fresh water for the speakers and if there is a budget for it, light refreshments.
15. Thank everyone for their participation.

Continuum Levels: Definitions and Descriptions of Responsibilities

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Consensus	Empower
Purpose and Level of Engagement	To provide community members and the general public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and solutions involved in policy initiatives.	To obtain input from community members and the general public on policy directions and decisions.	To work directly with community members throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in the decision making process.	To partner with community members in the decision making process including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions.	To work together with community members when feasible to reach a decision through consensus.	To empower community members in having a deeper sense of responsibility and ownership of policy decisions.
TCDSB Responsibility	TCDSB Staff and Trustees will inform community members and the general public in an appropriate and timely manner, providing helpful information in accessible ways.	TCDSB Staff and Trustees will invite community members with diverse perspectives to participate and will listen and seek to understand all concerns.	TCDSB Staff and Trustees will ensure that the process is accessible and sustainable for the participating community members and will listen, understand and consider community input at every step of the process.	TCDSB Staff and Trustees will facilitate a process of collaborative dialogue and work with community members to incorporate their recommendations where feasible	TCDSB Staff and Trustees will strive to work with community members until a mutually acceptable solution is reached. This is not always possible given the breadth and depth of issues in a large urban school board and ultimately the final decision in policy rests with the board of trustees.	TCDSB Staff and Trustees through improved communications, transparency and ethical decision-making processes will empower community members to better understand, support and implement decisions.
Community Responsibility	Community members and the general public will be open to receiving and understanding information.	Community members and the general public will participate and provide input.	Community members will commit to providing thoughtful input throughout the process.	Community members will commit to the process and provide researched and representative input and collaborate to formulate alternatives and solutions.	Community members will work with TCDSB Staff and Trustees where feasible to work toward a mutually acceptable solution..	Community members will actively participate and encourage others to do so, taking ownership and responsibility for the outcomes.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

Date Approved: December 13, 2012- Board	Date of Next Review: November 2022	Dates of Amendments: November 16, 2017 December XX, 2022
Cross References: S.S. 04, Access to School Premises H.M. 24, Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education S. 09, School Accommodation Review S. 10, Catholic School Advisory Councils S.S. 09, Code of Conduct S.P. 02, Elementary French Programming Ministry of Education: O. Reg. 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees <u>Parents in Partnership - A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010</u>		
Appendix A – Community Engagement Handbook, revised September 2012 Appendix A: TCDSB Community Engagement Guidelines		

Purpose:

This policy affirms and promotes the need to engage and inform **TCDSB** stakeholders and community members in decision-making processes **and to** that foster student achievement and well-being, identify new and emerging issues, support the implementation of Toronto Catholic District School Board plans and strategies, and provide **seek input on** direction about policy decisions.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

Scope and Responsibility:

The policy extends to all activities **requiring meaningful feedback and/or input from TCDSB stakeholders, including but not limited to the budget setting process, capital and renewal projects, school programs and policies** designed to bring about ongoing stakeholder engagement by building and strengthening the relationship between the TCDSB and its communities, and facilitating input and feedback from the general public on the TCDSB's activities will be provided. **All departments who advocate for the TCDSB are responsible to adhere to this policy, including the Community Engagement Guidelines.**

Alignment with MYSP:

Learning

Equity

Well-Being

Policy:

The Board of Trustees, embracing its governance mandate, strives to engage Catholic and community stakeholders, ratepayers, and all involved in Toronto Catholic schools to contribute their input to the ongoing development and strategic direction of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

The TCDSB will commit to ensuring that meaningful input from our community members is considered in order for initiatives, policies and practices reflect our



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

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POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

mission and meet the needs and expectations of the communities served by the TCDSB.

Regulations:

1. Community members **The TCDSB community has** ~~have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in decisions.~~
2. The TCDSB will provide community engagement opportunities that are open, honest, transparent, and accessible to all, and that ~~value the input obtained in its decision-making~~ follow the TCDSB Community Engagement **Guidelines: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower** (see Definitions).
3. The authority to implement community engagement is as follows:
 - i. ~~Internal TCDSB staff—~~ Director of Education;
 - ii. ~~Board-wide engagement—~~ Board of Trustees;
 - iii. **Central Superintendent;**
 - iv. ~~Ward-level engagement—Director of Education and the Ward Trustee.~~ **Area Superintendent;**
 - v. School-level engagement— Principal;
 - vi. **Local Trustee**
4. ~~The TCDSB shall engage community members and the general public in meaningful ways on matters in the purview of the Board to allow deeper conversations about values, beliefs and concerns, to emphasize the desired future, appreciate the positives and build on past successes and create effective networks.~~



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

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POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

5. ~~The Board of Trustees will take into consideration the views of all community members in making policy decisions by facilitating ongoing exchange of information and feedback among the TCDSB, its communities and the public.~~
6. ~~The following principles form the foundation of effective engagements: commitment, evaluation, timing, inclusiveness, accessibility, location, clarity, respect, accountability and transparency.~~
7. ~~The Board of Trustees, TCDSB Staff, Catholic communities and the general public will use the Community Engagement Handbook to support this policy. The TCDSB Staff will develop procedures and a community engagement strategy to ensure ongoing and effective implementation of this policy.~~
8. ~~The Continuum of Engagement comprises six different levels of engagement that could be sought with community members: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Consensus and Empower.~~
9. In preparing for a community engagement process, the Board or designated leader will select one or more of these levels **determine the level of engagement (board-wide, ward or school level) required** to ensure ~~that the community is appropriately engaged and identify the inclusion of the stakeholders it wishes to engage.~~
10. At the completion of each community engagement process, stakeholders will be informed by TCDSB staff of the outcome.
11. ~~Stakeholders involved in each engagement process will be solicited for their feedback consistent with the level of engagement used in the process.~~



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

Definitions:

Continuum of Engagement

The continuum comprises the six different levels of engagement that could be sought with community members: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Consensus, and Empower.

Inform

To provide community members and the general public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding issues, the alternatives, opportunities and solutions. **To provide TCDSB stakeholders with timely and accessible information to navigate the TCDSB system and support their child's school and learning as appropriate.**

Consult

To obtain input from community members and the general public on proposed Board directions and decisions. **To obtain meaningful feedback on TCDSB schools, programs and strategic directions to serve stakeholders better.**

Involve

To work directly with the community members throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in decision-making processes. **To provide regular, inclusive opportunities for**



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stakeholders to participate in TCDSB events, initiatives, and consultations to ensure concerns and priorities are identified.

Collaborate

~~To partner with the community members in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.~~ **To partner with stakeholders who will be most impacted by the initiative or issue, incorporating input in the development or resolution process.**

Consensus

~~To work together with community members until the decision is reached through appropriate consensus.~~

Empower

~~To provide elements of the final decision or implementation in the hands of the community.~~ **To reach a conclusion that is reflective of stakeholder feedback.**

~~Toronto Catholic District School Board or The Board (abbreviated TCDSB)~~

~~Refers to the complete corporate entity and includes the Board of Trustees and all Staff and students.~~

The Board of Trustees

~~The twelve elected officials charged with governing the TCDSB.~~



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

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POLICY NAME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POLICY NO: T.07

Community Engagement

~~An active, intentional, purposeful and ethical relationship between the Catholic communities, the general public and the TCDSB.~~

Catholic Communities

~~Include students, parents, Catholic ratepayers, Staff, Trustees, and the Catholic Church.~~

General Public

~~Includes residents within the TCDSB boundaries, and levels of government in Ontario.~~

Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. **TCDSB sites and Catholic schools** ~~and the TCDSB~~ are accessible and welcoming places ~~to parents and other community members;~~
2. Community members and the general public have open access to information and a growing understanding of educational policies and programs ~~and services;~~
3. Predefined and Board approved metrics for each community engagement and feedback solicited from stakeholders on the process and participation.



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4. An annual report of community engagements process **that have occurred** ~~as reported by staff to be reviewed by~~ **will be shared with the Board annually.**

Details on the process by which planning for, and implementation of, community engagement may be carried out at the Board can be found in the Community Engagement **Guidelines Handbook**, revised ~~September~~ November 2022~~12~~.



Community Engagement Guidelines

These guidelines outline steps to ensure a culture of respect, inclusion, and responsibility established at the board level to support community engagement on policy decisions.

Community engagement, as defined in **Policy T.07**, takes place when meaningful feedback and/or input from TCDSB stakeholders is received.

The following audiences should be considered in all community engagement activities as applicable:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians • Students • Staff • Unions • Parent groups SEAC and CPIC • Advisory & Steering Committees • Advocacy Groups • Archdiocese of Toronto and parishes • CSLIT student group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School neighbours • Catholic ratepayers |
|--|--|

TCDSB engages its community stakeholders via the following communications channels as applicable:

- Tcdsb.org website
- Social media
- Email
- Direct Mail (targeted)

Principles of TCDSB Community Engagement

1. **Inform:** To provide TCDSB stakeholders with timely and accessible information to navigate the TCDSB system and support their child's school and learning as appropriate.
2. **Consult:** To obtain meaningful feedback on TCDSB schools, programs, services and strategic directions to serve stakeholders better.
3. **Involve:** To provide regular, inclusive opportunities for stakeholders to participate in TCDSB events, initiatives, and consultations to ensure their concerns and priorities are understood.
4. **Collaborate:** To partner with stakeholders who will be most impacted by the initiative or issue, incorporating input in the development or resolution process.
5. **Empower:** To reach a conclusion that is reflective of all stakeholder interests.



Planning For Effective Engagement

Step 1: Preparation

The questions outlined below will assist in determining the overarching vision for your engagement.

1. Identify the issue, its scope, and related stakeholders:
 - What are you trying to achieve by engaging with the public?
 - What information and feedback do you need to know, and why?
2. Determine the purpose and overall objectives of the engagement:
 - Will the input be used to inform the development of a policy, program or regulation?
 - What change(s) do you anticipate as a result of the engagement?
 - How will the feedback be analyzed and used to achieve the purpose?
3. Determine required communications and their timelines before, during and after the engagement process.

Step 2: Design

TCDSB is committed to providing community engagement opportunities that are free of barriers and biases. Please review the [Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities Policy](#) and [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) at the beginning of the design phase.

1. Determine the type of engagement approach to involve community members (townhall meeting, survey, etc.) and its overall objectives.
2. Identify what information will be needed to support the engagement process.
3. Identify communications channels to share engagement related information with community members.
4. Determine metrics to be used in evaluation.

Step 3: Implementation

Implement the engagement plan that was developed during the preparation and design steps following the **Community Engagement Event Procedure**:

- All TCDSB Community Engagements must begin with a prayer and land acknowledgement.
- All participants are expected to adhere to TCDSB's [Code of Conduct Policy](#), maintaining a safe environment where participants respect and treat others fairly at all times.
- Invitations to participate should be shared with appropriate stakeholders a minimum of one week prior to community engagements.

Step 4: Feedback and Follow-up

Provide participants with information concerning how their feedback will be used in the decision-making process. Next steps and a summary of feedback received from the engagement should be shared with community members in a timely fashion.

Step 5: Evaluation

1. Assess whether the process met the objectives using metrics set out in the design stage.
2. Submit a summary of engagement activity to Communications Department for inclusion in report to Board of annual community engagements.

Annual CFO Overview

Ryan Putnam, CPA, CA, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

Presented to: Board of Trustees

Date: January 26, 2023

“I am the vine; and you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

(John 15:5)

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

(Matthew 25:40)

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.”

(1 Corinthians 12:12)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Guiding Principles, Foundational Documents
- Recent Fiscal Results, Current Financial Position
- Enrolment, Utilization, Funding vs Expenditure
- Areas of Focus, Anticipated Challenges
- Overall Summary, Looking Ahead: Next Steps

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Strategic Plan, Student Centered
- System Stability, Flexibility
- Alignment, Integration
- Efficient, Effective, Sustainable
- Evidence Based, Measurable
- Prioritize, Opportunity Costs
- Organizational Risk, Compliance
- Transparency, Accountability

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- Board Improvement and Equity Plan
- Right to Read, Kindergarten Readiness Reports
- Special Education Plan, Mental Health Strategy
- Equity Action Plan, Board Action Plan, Pastoral Plan
- Information Technology Strategic Plan
- Long Term Accommodation Plan
- Ministry Funding Technical Paper
- Legislation, Policy, Collective Agreements

RECENT FISCAL RESULTS

- 2021-2022 Year End Financial Statements
 - \$24.2M In-Year Deficit
 - COVID Investments, Enrolment Impact
- 2022-2023 Revised Estimates
 - \$24.6M In-Year Deficit
 - Adjusted for Incremental Enrolment Decline
 - Targeted Staffing Investments and Supports
 - Equity, Learning Recovery, Right to Read
 - Student Services, Mental Health
 - Device Strategy, Virtual Infrastructure

CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

- Reserve Funds
 - Operating Contingency (\$2.6M balance after Ministry recovery)
 - Schools, CSPC, FNMI, Pastoral Plan (protect and carry forward)
 - Strategic Reserves
 - IT Systems, Infrastructure (fund one-time IT Strategic Plan initiatives)
 - Administrative Facilities (earmarked for essential unfunded repairs)
 - Outdoor Playgrounds (fully allocated to planned projects)
 - Student Equity (fully dispersed in 20/21 to support EPAN schools)

ENROLMENT AND UTILIZATION

- System Enrolment
 - 2022 - 84,414; 2025 - 81,620; 2027 - 83,638
- School Utilization
 - Elementary - 80% (average size 347 students)
 - 50 under 300; 24 under 200; 2 under 100
 - Secondary - 97% (average size 808 students)
 - 9 under 800; 6 under 600; 2 under 400

FUNDING VS EXPENDITURE

- System Staffing - \$11M
- Sick Leave - \$8M
- Language Programs - \$5M
- School Operations - \$5M
- Transportation - \$5M
- Technology - \$6M
- Special Education - \$30M
- 3rd or 4th Quartile in all Categories
- Board Administration (underspent)

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Learning Recovery, Literacy, Numeracy
- Faith Formation, Equity, Diversity, Human Rights
- Special Education, Mental Health
- Student Pathways, System Programs
- Evolving Pedagogy, Emerging Technology
- Wellbeing, Health and Safety

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES

- Ministry Funding, Collective Bargaining
- Enrolment Decline, Staffing Parameters
- Contracts, Inflation, Absence Related Costs
- Diminishing Reserves, Facilities Infrastructure
- Legacy Programs, New Strategic Priorities
- System Expectations, Operational Efficiencies

OVERALL SUMMARY

- Current operating deficit of approximately \$25M (not sustainable)
- Maximized resources to maintain system stability during and post-pandemic
- Enrolment decline to continue to 2025, rebound to 2022 levels by 2027
- School size and utilization below optimal funding, capital and operational levels
- Spending beyond funding in the majority of expenditure categories
- Emphasis on Learning Recovery, Right to Read, Equity, Numeracy, Technology
- Multi-year budget framework, operational efficiencies, program/policy reviews
- Fiscal stewardship, tough choices, long-term perspective vs short-term focus

LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT STEPS

- Multi-Year Financial Forecast (Feb), Budget Framework (March)
- Ministry Funding Overview (April), Mid-Year Forecast (April)
- Enrolment, Staffing (March to Sept)
- Stakeholder Consultation (April, May)
- Preliminary Budget (May), Final Budget (June)
- Senior Team Discussions (ongoing)
- NEW - CFO Sound Bites (TBD)

SEAC Annual Calendar

Month	Annual Activities/Topics	Board Events/Deadlines
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of SEAC Calendar - S.O. Updates - Association Reports (if any) - Develop or review SEAC annual Agenda/Goals - Annual Safe Schools Report - Special Education Plan Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FASD Awareness Day – September 9
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Education Plan Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies o The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals o Education and Other Assessments o Individual Education Plans (IEP) - Review of SEAC Calendar - S.O. Updates - Association Reports (if any) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autism Awareness (Canada) - Child Abuse Prevention Awareness - Learning Disabilities Awareness - World Mental Health Day (October 10) - EQAO Preliminary Results for Gr. 3 and 6 and OSSLT - Reports on Student Numbers of Elementary and Secondary School Students to be submitted to the Ministry of Education - Engagement and Governance Supports Discussion Guide
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Education Plan Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Roles and Responsibilities o Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities o Provincial and Demonstration schools in Ontario o Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Syndrome Awareness (first week) - EQAO Results for Gr. 3, 6, 9 (math), and Gr. 10 (OSSLT)

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Professional Learning Plan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Engagement and Governance Supports Discussion Guide</i> - <i>ONSIS report on identified students</i> - <i>Year End for School Board Financial Statements</i> - <i>Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)</i>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>The Board's Consultation Process</i> o <i>Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies</i> o <i>Special Education Plan Checklist</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>SEAC Elections (Inaugural)</i> - <i>SEAC Elections: Chair & vice-Chair (Annual)</i> - <i>SEAC Mass and Social</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)</i> - <i>Human Rights Day (December 10)</i> - <i>Independent review of assessment and reporting</i>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>The Board's General Model for Special Education</i> o <i>Special Education Placements Provided by the Board</i> - <i>Review of Draft SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Bell Let's Talk Day (late January)</i> - <i>Grade 9 EQAO Testing takes place in Secondary Schools</i> - <i>Long Term Accommodation Program Plan (ongoing)</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Review of Policy: S.P.01 Special Education Programs and Services (next review January 2023)</i> - <i>Reviews of Policy: A.23 Special Education Advisory Committee (next review January 2024)</i> - <i>Priority Budget Setting Discussion (effective January 2020)</i> 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Special Education Staff</i> o <i>Staff Development</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Annual Accessibility Report</i> - <i>Multi-year Accessibility Plan/AODA-Updates</i> - <i>Mental Health Annual Report</i> - <i>AFSS Report: Exceptionality Frameworks-Goals & Outcomes, EQAO Student Achievement Data (for various exceptionalities as appropriate)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Psychology Awareness Month</i> - <i>New term begins in Secondary semestered Schools</i> - <i>Report Cards are distributed (Elementary and Secondary)</i> - <i>Parent-Teacher Conferences</i>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>The Parents' Guide to Special Education</i> o <i>Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings</i> o <i>The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Safe Schools Committee Update</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Easter Seals Awareness Month</i> - <i>World Down Syndrome Day – March 21</i> - <i>National Social Work Week (1st week)</i> - <i>CYW & EA Appreciation Day (first Monday)</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mental Health Advisory Council Update</i> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)</i>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</i> o <i>Protocols for Partnership with External Agencies</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Financial Report as at January, 2023 (GSNs)</i> - <i>Graduation Statistics for Students with Special Education Needs Update</i> - <i>Update to Special Education Programs for 2023-2024</i> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Autism Awareness Day – April 2</i> - <i>ONSIS report on identified students</i>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Specialized Equipment</i> o <i>Special Education Board Improvement and Equity Plan Overview</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>March 31st Special Education student count</i> - <i>Student Grants 2023-2024</i> - <i>PRO Grants Application Update</i> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Children's Mental Health Week (first week)</i> - <i>Speech, Language & Hearing Awareness</i> - <i>Megan's Walk</i> - <i>Budget Consultation</i> - <i>EQAO Assessment</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Budget approval update</i> - <i>Status of PRO Grant application</i> - <i>Develop draft SEAC Annual Agenda and Goals for next school year</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>World Sickle Cell Day – June 19</i> - <i>National Deaf Blind Awareness</i> - <i>EQAO Grade 3 and 6 Testing</i>
July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>School Board Submits to the Ministry a balanced Budget for the following year</i> - <i>Annual Special Education Plan Checklist and Plan updates to the Ministry of Education</i>
August		

**Report from the Informal Working Group
to TCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Meeting on February 8, 2023**

INTRODUCTORY:

The working group has broken down their review into 3 parts for each section reviewed of the TCDSB Special Education Plan (Spec Ed Plan):

1. “Required” refers to what is required by the Ministry guidelines found in Special Education in Ontario (Draft Version, 2017) PART B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans)

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec_ed_3.html#intro

2. “Findings” are what the working group observed in the TCDSB Special Education Plan currently on the TCDSB website.
3. “Recommendations” are what we think needs to be changed in the TCDSB plan, and in some instances, our suggested changes.

SCOPE of review:

Review at this time is done from the perspective of compliance with Part B of the Ministry Guidelines document and referenced sections. We may also comment on:

- If the section is well organized in a consistent manner?
- If the section is consistent with the Board’s Mission, Vision and Goals?
- If the section is consistent with Ministry Memorandums and legislation
- If the section understandable by the average parent new to Special Education at the Board?
- Does the section reflect best practices as based on expert research and experience?

- If the section adequately addresses concerns that have been raised to SEAC members from the public or through their organizations?
- Are recommendations from the previous year's reviews reflected in the report?

Sections reviewed this month:

1. Special Education Placement provided by the board.
2. Special Education Staff
3. Appendix: Special Education Staff
4. Staff Development
5. The Board's General Model for Special Education

1. Range of placements [*Plan section 9*]:

a. Required:

- 1.a.i. Provide details on the range of placements offered by the board.
- 1.a.ii. Inform the public that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.a.iii. You are required to describe how the board's SEAC provides their advice on determining the range of placements offered.
- 1.a.iv. Acknowledge that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.a.v. Outline ways a student can be integrated into the regular classroom when the placement meets the student's needs and follows the parents' preferences.
- 1.a.vi. Outline specific information about each type of placement provided at the elementary and secondary levels.
- 1.a.vii. List for each category of exceptionality, the range of placement options available, along with the criteria for admission, the admission process, and the criteria for determining the level of support provided in each placement, including the board's criteria for assigning intensive support for students who need a great deal of assistance.
- 1.a.viii. state the maximum class size for each type of special education class.
- 1.a.ix. List the criteria for determining the need to change a student's placement.
- 1.a.x. Describe the alternatives provided when a student's needs cannot be met within the board's range of placements and how the options are communicated to parents.

b. Findings:

- 1.b.i. This section has been completely rewritten and significantly improved from the previous version. The visual presentation is excellent.
- 1.b.ii. The guidelines expect specific information to be presented before “outlining the detailed about each type of placement provided” and the related content. An example would be an acknowledgement that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.b.iii. Maximum class sizes are missing.
- 1.b.iv. Criteria for change to a student’s current placement are missing.
- 1.b.v. Alternative available options are not explained if the student’s needs cannot be met within the board.
- c. Recommendations:
 - 1.c.i. Review the section and add the required points found missing {see Findings above}.
 - 1.c.ii. Add class sizes to each section based on identification/placement or a separate “Class Size” section that states the class size for each type of placement is ‘X’ number of students.
 - 1.c.iii. Add how a change in a student’s placement could happen. Many parents get frustrated with placements after some time and are further frustrated because they do not understand their rights and the path required to obtain a change in their child’s placement.
 - 1.c.iv. Alternate placement, such as Provincial and Demonstration schools, CTCC etc. needs to be added and briefly explained with a reference to that section of the plan.

2. Special Education Staff [*Plan section 12*]:

- a. Required
 - 2.a.i. Specific details on board staff.

b. Findings

- 2.b.i. The Types of Staff who provide special education programs and services have been included.
- 2.b.ii. The two sections, “Special Education Staff” and the required “Appendix B-2”, have been combined.

c. Recommendations

- 2.c.i. The first part of the section should concentrate on the programs and services offered by Special Education Staff, and the remainder by formatted as required by the Appendix B-2.
- 2.c.ii. The section titled “American Sign Language” is out of place as all other sections relate to a person and not a skill.
- 2.c.iii. The section titled “Deaf/Blind” Interveners needs explanation at how the visual items (e.g., ASL) are handled with a Blind student.

3. Appendix Special Education Staff [*Plan section 12*]:

a. Required

- 3.a.i. information on the types of staff who provide special education programs and services.
- 3.a.ii. Must follow Appendix B-2
 - 3.a.ii.1. Staff Categories.
 - 3.a.ii.2. Qualifications required for these categories of staff.
 - 3.a.ii.3. FTEs.
 - 3.a.ii.4. Split by elementary panel and secondary panel.

b. Finding

- 3.b.i. The information required is largely there, but the plan needs to follow the format required in the guidelines (Appendix B-2).
- 3.b.ii. Some of the words have been unnecessarily bolded.

c. Recommended

- 3.c.i. Reformat the information into the format required in Appendix B-2 of the guidelines.

4. Staff Development [*Plan section 13*]:

a. Required by the Ministry Guidelines

- 4.a.i. Details of the board's professional development plans for special education staff.
- 4.a.ii. The overall goal of the special education staff development plan.
- 4.a.iii. Ways in which staff provide input for the plan.
- 4.a.iv. Ways in which the school board's SEAC is consulted about staff development.
- 4.a.v. Methods of determining priorities in staff development.
- 4.a.vi. The board offered courses, in-service training, and other professional development activities.
- 4.a.vii. Ways in which staff are trained on the legislation and special education ministry policy, with particular attention to training for new teachers.
- 4.a.viii. Details of the board's budget allocation dedicated to the staff development plan in special education.
- 4.a.ix. Any cost-sharing arrangements with other ministries or agencies for staff development.
- 4.a.x. Ways in which school board staff are made aware of the board's special education plan and of professional development opportunities.
- 4.a.xi. Does it reflect any new legislation and Ministry PPMs.
- 4.a.xii. Results of any consultations (setting priorities).

b. Findings in the TCDSB plan

- 4.b.i. There is a detailed chart of the board's professional development plans for special education staff.
- 4.b.ii. Most of the required points in the guidelines are missing.
- 4.b.iii. There are no courses offered that reference changes in legislation or PPM in the staff training chart on special education. The guidelines expect some training that is focused on legislation, PPM, the legal framework.
- c. Recommendations to the TCDSB plan
 - 4.c.i. The chart is useful, but a great deal of information is missing, and the chart should come after as an appendix to the missing information to demonstrate how the board is meeting the Ministry expectations in this section.
 - 4.c.ii. Most of the missing points will need their own header with the related information below it.

5. Model for Special Education [*Plan section 2*]

- a. Required:
 - 5.a.i. A general philosophical approach for the delivery of services.
 - 5.a.ii. A description of the service delivery model.
 - 5.a.iii. A statement that we comply with the following legal standards:
 - 5.a.iii.1. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.
 - 5.a.iii.2. The Ontario Human Right Code.
 - 5.a.iii.3. The Ontario Education Act.
 - 5.a.iii.4. The Regulations made under the Ontario Education Act and,
 - 5.a.iii.5. Any other relevant legislation.
- b. Findings:

- 5.b.i. The philosophical approach is vague and is not related to the “Model for Special Education” section of the Special Education plan. The heading is present but very long.
 - 5.b.ii. The philosophical approach document includes ableism-type statements.
 - 5.b.iii. There is no description of the Service Delivery Model.
 - 5.b.iv. There is a statement of compliance, and this meets the guidelines.
 - 5.b.v. Although not required, there is no statement to include support of Catholic Values, Pontifical statements, the Board’s mission statement and relevant scientific pedagogical research regarding educating special needs students.
- c. Recommendations:
- 5.c.i. The philosophical statement heading needs to be shortened to “Philosophy Approach” or “TCDSB Philosophy” or similar.
 - 5.c.ii. The philosophical approach paragraph is unfocused. It should clearly explain the “Model for Special Education” and ideas clarified.
 - 5.c.iii. Ableist type statement should be removed or edited to reflect more modern approaches to or model of Special Education.
 - 5.c.iv. The required “Service Delivery” description must be added with an appropriate heading.
 - 5.c.v. A heading should be added to the compliance statement section.
 - 5.c.vi. The compliance statement should be expanded to reflect support of Catholic Values, Pontifical statements, the Board’s mission statement and relevant scientific and pedagogical research regarding educating special needs students.



SPECIAL SERVICES

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2023



UPCOMING PARENT ENGAGEMENT SERIES

Saturday February 25th, 2023

The Transition Team will be hosting two parent workshops:

1. Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Students with Autism in Grades 7 and 8 on the Credit Earning Pathway
2. Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Students in Grade 7 & 8 in Multiple Exceptionality/Developmental Disability ISP Classes.

Information will be shared with schools to inform their parent communities.

AUTISM

On Saturday January 21st, the Transition Team hosted a parent workshop, **Preparing For Life After High School**. The workshop was very well attended and included presentations by the Transition Team in collaboration with Surrey Place and representatives from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and Passport Funding. Families were able to ask questions and meet individually with the staff and the representatives afterwards.



PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology staff offered an interactive presentation on **Trauma-Informed Practices in Schools**. The pandemic, as we know, has brought about unprecedented stress to students and school staff, and being present as a learner has become more challenging. This is especially so for students who may be struggling with trauma. Some children may be withdrawn while others may be presenting with more challenging behaviors. This presentation aimed to address these needs by enhancing knowledge and skills and building the capacity of school staff to engage in trauma-informed practices, so they are equipped to support the well-being of all students. Participants learned about the impact of trauma on students, how to identify main components of trauma-informed classrooms as well as strategies to foster safety, connection, and self-regulation. Participation was open to 50 staff from both the elementary and secondary panel.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Mental Health Team supported the mental health of students throughout the system with the following activities:

- The mental health team was able to train 13 school administrators in **SafeTalk** which is a half-day suicide awareness and prevention workshop. The feedback from the event was very positive. Similar training for school administrators will be offered in the near future.
- During **Bell Let's Talk** week from Jan 23-27, the mental health team shared a system calendar of wellness activities, conversation starters and class announcements with all educators. Many of our schools participated in Bell Let's Talk and mental health activities in their schools and posted on social media.
- Safe Schools offered a full day workshop on **Anti-Sex Trafficking for Youth: Trauma-Informed Prevention & Intervention** for staff. A total of 73 staff from across the system participated.
- A multi-disciplinary team involving Mental Health, Student Success and Guidance lead resource teachers has been planning the relaunch of the student-led mental health initiative across the board. Formerly known as Stop the Stigma, the team presented the plan for the launch of the **Mental Health Action Teams** to all school administrators. Schools are now nominating their Teacher Mentors for the teams and beginning to recruit student leaders for their schools.
- **Staff Well-Being workshops** will be held for approximately 100 newly appointed teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program in early February.



REPORT TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
December 19, 2022	January 12, 2023	Click here to enter a date.

Maria Meehan, Superintendent, Special Services
Dr. Marie-Josée Gendron, Chief of Mental Health and Staff Well-Being
Melissa Hanlon, Mental Health Lead

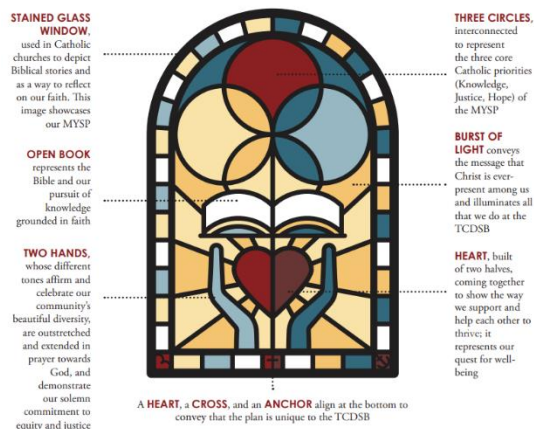
INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

In God's Image: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.

Mission:

Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.



Brendan Browne, PhD
Director of Education

A. Della Mora
Associate Director of Academic
Affairs and
Chief Operating Officer

D. Boyce
Associate Director of
Corporate Services and Chief
Commercial Officer

R. Putnam
Chief Financial Officer and
Treasurer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the pillars within the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan is Well-Being: Growing in Knowledge with Justice and Hope. This means strengthening an environment rooted in Gospel values that nurtures hope and well-being. This is accomplished in part by continuing to use evidence-based well-being strategies and resources to create and sustain mentally healthy classrooms and schools for students that focus on the development of the whole person. Mentally healthy learning environments strive to ensure that the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs of all students are met. This is best achieved through the valued and deliberate collaboration between TCDSB and its community partners. By involving students, parents, and parishes in this integral work, we will better address community Mental Health and Well-Being and nurture trusting relationships to guide our ongoing efforts.

Efforts to create mentally healthy school environments for students are evidenced in many ways. Progress with the Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022 has been made across each of the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Pillars. The focus on creating a mentally healthy school environment has taken on a heightened relevance and has been extended to include the virtual school environment during the pandemic. This focus extends to all employees as well in better supporting a work-life balance for all staff that nurtures spiritual, emotional, physical, and social well-being since a focus on employees' well-being has a direct impact on students' wellness and achievement. To build both awareness and capacity, presentations, workshops, and mental health and well-being initiatives have been offered to students, staff, and the parent community.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 32 hours.

B. PURPOSE

This Mental Health and Well-Being 2021-2022 Annual Report will include data related to student mental health and well-being procedures, programs, and professional development related to the creation of mentally healthy learning environments. This report serves the requirement of the Board for an annual review and will address the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2022 Feedback on the three stipulated pillars and several identified priority areas.

C. BACKGROUND

The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being policy (S.03) was adopted in June 2013. The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022 was presented to the Special Education Advisory Committee on June 12, 2019, and approved by Board on September 19, 2019.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Policy includes the following metrics on the annual reporting of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy: Special Services personnel will annually review the Mental Health Response Guidelines, the Suicide Intervention Guidelines, and the Mental Health Crisis Response Guidelines and assess their effectiveness.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The following Mental Health and Well-Being Pillars form the basis of the TCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022:

- **Within Us** - “I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). The TCDSB will continue to support and develop the fundamentals for everyday mental health and well-being for each and every student.
- **Between Us** - “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). As healthy relationships are one of the most critical protective factors that support positive mental health, the TCDSB will continue to support and strengthen these relationships.
- **Around Us** - “A friend loves at all times, and people are born to share adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). Healthy environments support each community member, and, thus, the TCDSB continues to be committed to creating mentally healthy environments.

The following related legislation and policy govern the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being strategy:

- Open Minds, Healthy Minds Ontario’s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, June 2011

- Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education: A Discussion Document, 2016
- TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being (S.03)

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2022 Feedback on the Three Pillars

During the 2021-2022 school year, the pandemic continued to present unique challenges for Special Services staff to adopt flexible strategies to support the well-being of students, staff and their TCDSB families. Throughout the school year, the Mental Health Action Plan was used to address the continued need to serve TCDSB students, families, and staff.

Highlighted below are some key strategic responses that have supported our students, staff, and families, beginning in September 2021 and continuing through to August 2022. They are organized by priorities identified in 2021-2022.

Priority #1: Supporting mental health and social-emotional literacy to create mentally-healthy classrooms and schools

- In early September, the mental health team facilitated a webinar and launch of the **Student Re-Engagement Kit** for all school staff to raise awareness of mental health literacy and resources.
- Several **calendars of wellness activities** were created and distributed throughout the school year (i.e., September, Christmas, January return, Bell Let's Talk week, March break, Mental Health Awareness Week in May) for easy implementation of social-emotional learning activities in the classroom.
- In collaboration with the Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education Department staff, messaging around **Black Mental Health Week** was sent to system with calendar events for the week.

- Developed the **Decision and Support Tool** to help local school teams to make informed decisions around student presentations of a sensitive nature.
- The Social Work department designated a special role for a staff member to support Ukrainian newcomers. The staff member helped facilitate consultations for families, delivered a workshop on Stress and Coping and prepared **300 Coping Kits** with wellness activities and toys for students over the summer break.

Priority #2: Support student well-being

The Mental Health, Psychology and Social Work teams work together to support student well-being at the TCDSB. A team of over 70 Social Workers, 48 Psychology service providers and six Mental Health Professional Workers actively engaged in providing counselling services, conducting psychological assessments, facilitating mental health workshops to various stakeholders (i.e., educators, students, and parents) and providing suicide and crisis interventions. Below is a summary of the data gathered over the 2021-2022 school year:

- Mental Health Professional Workers facilitated 29 mental health literacy workshops in various secondary schools reaching over 5,000 students and 300 staff members. Social Work staff facilitated about 360 classroom presentations throughout the school year. Psychology staff delivered 73 mental health workshops and 35 learning-based presentations to schools.
- Social Work, Psychology, and Mental Health team members provided clinical support and team consults as follows. Individual counselling referrals: social workers supported 11,367 students, psychology service providers supported 342 students and mental health professional workers supported 347 students, totalling 12,056 students overall.
- Over the summer months, Special Services continued to provide clinical support for 61 students.

Priority #3: Continue to build capacity among staff to help them better support students' mental health and well-being

- In collaboration with the Health and Physical Education (HPE) lead, the mental health team facilitated a webinar to raise awareness of **social-emotional learning** for HPE teachers, as well as for St. Anne educators.
- Facilitated an information session to all school administrators on **mitigating factors** impacting progressive discipline and decisions about student behaviour.
- During the **Pastoral Day of Care**, provided classroom resources to support student well-being to 125 secondary school administrators and chaplains.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, HPE, Nurturing Catholic Community (NCC) and Mental Health facilitated a series of presentations on **cannabis** for school administrators to raise awareness about cannabis and to offer resources for educators.
- In collaboration with The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, facilitated an information session on **sex trafficking** for all administrators.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, Equity, NCC and Mental health, facilitated a workshop for supporting students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ with Father James Martin to all school administrators.
- Individual Social Work and Psychology staff members completed a certificate program from School Mental Health Ontario, entitled **Centering Black Youth Well-being** that provides foundational knowledge to cultivate practices that challenge and combat systemic anti-Black racism.

- A total of four mental health workshops were delivered to 149 new TCDSB teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).

Priority #4: Student engagement.

- Continued the implementation of the *Stop the Stigma* student mental health awareness program in 74 elementary schools and 32 secondary schools. The virtual Stop the Stigma Symposium on **The Power of Community** reached 300 Grade 7-12 classrooms live. The session was recorded and accessed by another 500 viewers.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools staff, the Mental Health team presented on the **Mental Health Benefits of Hope** at their symposium.
- A total of 6 students from the Student Mental Health Action Committee, Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team and student trustees created 3 short videos entitled, “**How can staff support students’ mental health?**” that were later distributed to all schools.
- **Newcomer resources** were prepared by mental health professionals for newcomer students.

Priority #5: Continue to build students’ safety nets by providing suicide awareness and intervention training to staff.

- Delivered two **SafeTalk Suicide Awareness** workshops to 27 support staff at both panels to empower them with strategies on how to recognize and respond to students who may be struggling with suicidal ideation.
- Offered the **START suicide prevention program** (asynchronous webinar) in conjunction with a live session to contextualize the training and review our TCDSB guidelines to 25 elementary support staff.
- Delivered a two 2-day **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training** (ASIST) to 31 Social Work, Psychology and Guidance staff. Suicide Intervention Risk reviews are completed using the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) model.

Priority #6: Parent engagement in supporting student mental health

- Special Services hosted ten **Parent Engagement presentations** on various mental health topics including Helping Teens Navigate Emotional Times, Supporting Gifted Students and Supporting Students with Anxiety, reaching hundreds of parents.
- Distributed seasonal **Mental Health Newsletters** (i.e., September, Christmas, Mental Health Awareness Week in May, summer) for parents.

Priority #7: Memorandums of Understanding with children and youth mental health agencies

- The social work and psychology departments continued the partnership with community mental health agencies for mental health services in the community. This partnership allows families to access service more quickly than typical wait list times. The Social Work and Mental Health Professional Workers teams referred 2,709 students to outside agencies with about 50 student referrals being part of Priority Access.
- In collaboration with the Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Safe Schools, NCC, HPE and Mental Health, an information workshop on cannabis for educators at both panels was facilitated.
- TCDSB maintained the existing Mental Health Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with 13 mental health agencies, who provided services to students.
- Social Work, Psychology and Mental Health Professional staff continued to work collaboratively with Mental Health and Addiction Nurses through Toronto Central Community and Care Access Centre (TC-CCAC) and referred 216 students to this service.

Priority #8: Support staff well-being for all employee groups through various professional development opportunities.

- System **messaging on Gratitude** shared with business and academic leaders.
- **Professional Development** on Staff Well-Being facilitated for 70 Assessment and Programming Teachers and Autism staff, as well as for 75 new teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program and with support staff at both panels throughout the year.
- Two **Masterclass in Stress Management** workshops offered to 200 elementary support staff throughout the year.
- Provided **information and strategies regarding** Staff Well-Being during Pastoral Day of Care to 125 secondary school administrators and chaplains.
- A workshop with Asante Haughton, offered to 30 staff members on **Deep Responsibility: Building Safer Spaces for Inclusion and Empowerment**.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the information of the Board.

To: Special Education Advisory Committee

From: Richelle de Belchior

Subject: Details on Professional development workshops

MOVED BY: Richelle de Belchior

WHEREAS: Professional development workshops were held on November 18th, 2022

WHEREAS: These workshops were presented by the BCBA's on areas such as Autism, Be the Reinforcer, Understanding students with autism spectrum disorder

WHEREAS: There were additional workshops held by School Mental Health Ontario on how to identify children requiring assistance in the younger age classes

WHEREAS: on one of the workshops the BANCK team presented evidence-based strategies focusing on children in the early years

WHEREAS: the assistive technology team presented accessibility apps such as read and write app and the orbit note

WHEREAS: courses such as Registered Behavior Training were held by the Geneva summit

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Staff provide SEAC with following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The links to the workshops and modules presented by the BCBAs on Autism, Be the reinforcer and understanding students with autism spectrum disorder.
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop presented by the BCBAs
3. The designation of the staff members who did attend the workshop presented by the BCBAs.
4. The grades that these staff members who attended the BCBA presentation regularly teach
5. The duration of each of these workshops

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board Staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The link to the School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) workshop on how to do early identification
2. The number of staff members who attended the School Mental Health Ontario workshops on how to do early identification
3. The designation of the staff members who did attend the School Mental Health Ontario workshop
4. The grades that these staff members who attended the School Mental health Ontario workshop regularly teach
5. The duration of the SMHO workshop

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. The evidence – based classroom strategies focusing on children in the early years as presented by BANCK
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop demonstrating these evidence-based strategies
3. The designation of staff members who attended the evidence-based strategy workshop focusing on children in the early years
4. The grades that the members who attended the strategy course regularly teach

5. The duration of the strategy course

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. An example of the read and write apps and the names of the apps including an example of the orbit note
2. The number of staff members who attended the workshop presenting these apps and orbit note
3. The designation of staff members who attended the presentation of these read and write apps including the orbit note
4. The grades that the members who attended the presentation of these read and write apps including the orbit note normally teach
5. The duration of the presentation of the read and write apps including the orbit note

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. Examples be shown of what behaviour training was taught at the Geneva summit
2. The number of staff members who attended the Geneva summit courses involving behaviour training for children with autism
3. The designation of staff members who attended the Geneva summit training as of February 1st, 2023
4. The grades that the members who attended the Geneva summit normally teach
5. The duration of the Geneva summit behaviour training course
6. Feedback and criticism of the staff who attended the Geneva summit courses in regard to the behaviour training course

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board that the Board staff provide SEAC with the following information before February 8th, 2023:

1. Sufficient budget is allocated for future staff to attend all workshops and Geneva summit courses offered

2. Enforcement of making these workshops mandatory for lower grades (JK and SK) teachers and assistants to attend these workshops and Geneva summit courses so that children can be identified as early as possible for special needs.

Richelle de Belchior
Parent representative

Minister's Advisory Council On Special Education

Annual Report

For the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2022

Ministry of Education

Minister's Advisory Council
on Special Education
315 Front Street West, 12F
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Ministère de l'Éducation

Conseil consultatif ministériel de
l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté
315, rue Front Ouest, 12 étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 0B8

April 30, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce,

Please accept the attached Annual Report on the activities of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (the Council) for the fiscal year 2021-2022.

During our three meetings this year, the Council participated in discussions and offered advice related to several areas that affect students with special education needs. We also welcomed the opportunity to speak with you directly at each of our meetings, particularly as it related to the challenges the education sector has experienced in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also appreciate that during your 34 months as Minister you have made 24 appointments or re-appointments to the Council. We note, however, that there are now 7 vacancies among the 20 voting members of MACSE and we urge you to fill them, and future vacancies, as quickly as possible.

On behalf of the Council, I am also pleased to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to MACSE's work by Lynn Ziraldo over a period of more than 25 years, first as the representative of the Learning Disability constituency, then for a decade as chair, and most recently since 2008 as Advisor. She gave generously of her time and expertise and the children of Ontario are better for it.

We look forward to continuing our work with you and ministry staff to support the special education needs of students in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,



Peggy Blair
Chair

c: Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Clayton La Touche, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education

Mandate and Structure of the Council

The Council advises the Minister of Education on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for exceptional students, including the identification and provision of early intervention programs for students with special education needs.

The Advisory Committee on Special Education was established in 1974 and has been renewed continually from that date. Its name was later changed to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). The Council:

- responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education or other ministries, as submitted to the council, from time to time;
- identifies concerns in the delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils and provides information, advice and recommendations for ministry consideration; and
- meets up to three times a year for a maximum of 4½ days per year.

MACSE's membership includes the following representation:

- one seat for each of nine exceptionalities;
- one seat for each of nine educator and professional categories;
- one seat for students/youth;
- one seat for Indigenous communities;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Health; and
- two representatives each for the Francophone and Roman Catholic communities, appointed from among the members above.

Representatives of a constituency on the Council are normally appointed for an initial term of up to three years and may be re-appointed for combined service of up to six years. When directed by the Minister's office, the ministry will issue a call for applications to organizations with an interest in special education in the areas related to existing and/or upcoming vacancies. Individuals who wish to be considered are required to apply through the Public Appointment Secretariat (PAS), which then provides the application profiles to the ministry. The applications are then reviewed, and qualified candidates submitted for the Minister's decision.

Changes to MACSE Membership

The following new members joined the Council:

- Anne Kawamura (Medical Practitioners) on August 13, 2021
- Domenic Gentilini (Developmental Disability) on March 30, 2022

The following members retired/resigned from the Council:

- Robert Saltstone (Psychologists) on May 5, 2021
- Linda Zaretsky (Autism) on January 19, 2022
- Rose Cantisano (Trustees) on February 18, 2022

The membership of MACSE as of March 31, 2022, is provided in Appendix I.

Activities in 2021-2022

MACSE's mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for students with special education needs. In 2021-2022, the Council participated in discussions and offered advice related to several areas that affect students with special education needs:

- Assessment Schedule, Reporting Plan, and Student Perceptions in Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments
- Review of *Caring and Safe Schools* (2010)
- De-streaming
- Equity and Human Rights in Special Education: Reflective Practice Guide for Educators
- K-12 Education Standards Development Committee
- Learning Modules for Educators: Students with Disabilities
- Learning Recovery and Renewal
- Modernizing Education Curriculum – Graduation Requirements, Modernized Learning Opportunities, Course Types and Pathways, and the Curriculum Review Cycle
- Role of the Ontario College of Teachers and Special Education-focused Additional Qualification Courses
- Review of *Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 81 – Provision of health support services in school settings*
- Protocols to Combat Sex Trafficking
- Provincial and Demonstration Schools
- Rise to Resilience: School Mental Health-Ontario's Action Plan for 2021-22

- School-based Rehabilitation Services
- Sonderly™ – Geneva Centre for Autism’s online educational and training platform for Autism and Mental Health resources
- Special Education in Ontario – A Guide for Students and Caregivers
- Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities with Reading

Members of the Council also engage their constituencies and bring information forward about successes, challenges, effective practices, and suggestions to the Council through the standing agenda item on Community Collaboration. The information brought forward by MACSE members informs the work of the ministry.

MACSE’s advice also informed ministry policy and operational work, including supporting students with special education needs during the pandemic. The result of this work included documents such as the *Guide for Remote Learning – a resource designed for educators, students and parents*.

MACSE also provided comments that informed ministry consideration of curriculum reform, review of graduation requirements, support for early intervention to support math learning for students in Grades 4-6, enhanced data collection to provide clearer understanding of who Ontario’s students are, and student and school mental health.

Priorities for 2022-2023

In 2022-2023, the Council will continue to advise the Minister on priorities.

MACSE will also respond to ad-hoc requests for comments and advice from the Ministry of Education, as well as other ministries and agencies of the government. We will continue to work with ministry staff to ensure that advice is provided in a timely fashion to support the ongoing policy and operational work of the government.

Council members will also continue to undertake outreach to their constituencies to gather information about effective practices, challenges, opportunities, and suggestions in advance of each Council meeting.

Expenditure in 2021-2022

Members of MACSE serve as unpaid volunteers. Meetings have been held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting costs for the period to translation and accessibility compliance of documents. Total expenditure in 2021-2022 was \$6,819.29.

Appendix I

Members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education March 31, 2022

Sectors Represented	Name	Term Expiry
Chair	Peggy Blair	March 31, 2023
Immediate Past Chair	Joe Trovato	March 31, 2023
Exceptionalities		
Autism	Vacant	
Behavioural	Maxine Share	March 31, 2022
Blind and Low Vision	Kerrie St. Jean	November 18, 2022
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Vacant	
Developmental Disability	Domenic Gentilini	March 29, 2025
Giftedness	Stacey Manzerolle	November 18, 2022
Learning Disability	Vacant	
Multiple Exceptionalities	Michael Jacques	November 18, 2022
Physical Disability	Vacant	
Educator Groups		
Educational Assistants	Patricia Sky	March 31, 2022 ¹
Principals	Gary Pieters	March 31, 2023
Teachers	Katheryne Hoffschmidt	March 31, 2022 ¹
Supervisory Officers	Peggy Blair	November 18, 2022
Trustees	Vacant	
Support Professionals		
Medical	Anne Kawamura	August 16, 2024
Psychologists	Vacant	
Social Workers	Lorie Laroche	March 31, 2022 ¹
Speech and Language Pathologists	Leah Brighton	March 31, 2022 ¹
Other		
Indigenous Communities	Judy Carter	March 31, 2022 ¹
Students/Youth	Ben Smith	February 17, 2023

¹ Subsequent to the fiscal year covered by this Annual Report, five members whose terms expired on March 31, 2022, were re-appointed. With those five re-appointments, there were seven vacancies (Autism, Behaviour, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing, Learning Disability, Physical Disability, Trustees, Psychologists).

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE
NOVEMBER 2022**

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COVID-19, Learning Recovery and Key Updates

- The government released its ***Plan to Catch Up*** on July 25, 2022, which is intended to help students catch up on learning, prepare for the jobs of the future and support their physical and mental health and well-being.
- The Plan includes five key pillars:
 - Kids being **back in the classroom**, on time with a full school experience that includes extracurriculars like sports, band and field trips;
 - **Tutoring supports** to fill gaps in learning;
 - Preparing them for the **jobs of tomorrow**, including the skilled trades;
 - More money to **build new schools** and improve education; and
 - Expanded supports for **students' mental health**.
- The government has made key investments that students and educators are already benefiting from, including:
 - More than \$26.6 billion in funding for the 2022-23 school year, the highest investment in public education in Ontario's history.
 - Investing more than \$175 million for enhanced tutoring support programs delivered by school boards and community partners, with a focus on reading, writing and math.
 - \$304 million in time-limited funding to support the hiring of up to 3,000 front line staff, including teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, and other education workers.
 - Investing \$14 billion to build state-of-the-art schools and classrooms and renew and repair existing schools, including \$2.1 billion for the 2022-23 school year.
 - Allocating \$90 million for mental health initiatives and supports for students, a 420 per cent increase from 2017-18.
 - Additional funding to support students with exceptionalities through a \$93 million increase in funding for the Special Education Grant and over \$9 million in funding to support the new de-streamed grade nine program, with an emphasis on supporting students most at risk including students from racialized, Black, immigrant, and Indigenous communities.
- On October 20, 2022, the ministry announced **next steps on Ontario's *Plan to Catch Up*** that include:
 - ***Catch Up Payments***, offering families direct financial support to support their children as they catch up. This new initiative commits a total of \$365 million in direct financial relief for parents. Families of students in publicly funded, private, First Nation/federally-operated or home-school settings will receive financial support. Students (up to 18 years old) can receive \$200 per child; students with special education needs (up to 21 years old) can receive \$250.
 - Developing and releasing a Curriculum Review Guide that includes a regular curriculum review cycle that ensures curriculum is up to date and relevant to important job and life skills.
 - Working with school boards to create provincial expectations for how boards help students with attendance difficulties and enable more students to benefit from consistent classroom learning.

- Noting that EQAO released provincial highlights from the 2021-22 school year Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, and the Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions. While results reveal stable performance in the OSSLT and relative stability in Grade 6 reading and writing results, there is weaker performance in math across all grades and reading and writing in Grade 3.
- Building on the work to date and to support students to recover learning in math, a new Math Recovery Plan is in development, which will include
 - access to more digital math resources, including elementary math course packs provided by TVO and TFO Idello's Missions d'Élo, and access to the Grade 9 online math course for additional review and practice.
 - An additional \$15 million for school boards to offer a digital tool aligned with the Ontario curriculum to support students, parents, and educators.
 - Working directly with school boards through the Math Action Teams, including board and school-based math coaches.
- In line its commitment to improve student literacy in response to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) *Right to Read Report*, the ministry will require all students in publicly-funded schools in year 2 of Kindergarten to Grade 2 to be screened for reading twice a year using evidence-based early screening tools.
 - The second screening would be optional for students meeting or exceeding the benchmark.
 - The ministry intends to work with school boards and partners on recommended screening tools in the current 2022-23 school year, for use in the 2023-24 school year.

Key Facts

- On August 5, 2022, the ministry released its 2022-23 Health and Safety Measures in Schools. On the advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, for the 2022-23 school year, most health and safety requirements remain unchanged from the previous direction provided to school board partners at the end of the 2021-22 school year.
 - Continuing with this direction and based on the advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, masks will not be required for students, staff and visitors in schools, school board offices, or on student transportation. We strongly encourage school boards and schools to actively promote respectful, welcoming and inclusive environments for individuals who choose to wear, or not to wear a mask within their school communities.
 - The government will continue to provide free high-quality masks for students and staff and eye protection for staff, if they choose to use them. School boards can continue to order this optional PPE for students and staff through the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (formerly the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services).

- Where staff are required to perform an Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure (AGMP) or required to be in the same room when an AGMP is being performed, N95 respirators (fit tested) are recommended and will continue to be provided. All staff will also continue to have access to non-fit-tested N95s.
- School boards will also continue to have access to rapid antigen tests to be used in accordance with provincial testing guidance.
- It is recommended that staff, students and visitors continue to self-screen every day before attending school using either the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#), or a screening tool designated by the local public health unit, in alignment with current provincial guidance. Following public health guidance, individuals should stay home if they are feeling ill to prevent the spread of illness.
- Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should continue to be promoted
- Schools and school vehicles are expected to continue with enhanced cleaning protocols requiring cleaning/disinfecting high-touch surfaces at least once daily. Required critical supplies and equipment, for example, disinfectant, will continue to be provided to school boards through the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and the government's pandemic supply chain.
- Significant improvements have been made to ventilation and filtration through the implementation of various measures across all schools. This includes improvements to existing ventilation systems, deployment of over 100,000 standalone HEPA filter units and other ventilation devices, upgrades to school ventilation infrastructure and increased transparency for students, parents and staff.
- In February 2022, the ministry released its 5-point action plan for learning recovery. The plan leverages and expands upon proven, high-yield programs and supports, and introduces new investments to address critical gaps. The full plan to support learning recovery and modernize education is outlined as follows:
 1. Measure and assess by reintroducing provincial EQAO assessments after a two-year pause to better understand student learning levels and additional opportunities for support going forward;
 2. Strengthen numeracy and literacy skills by investing \$15 million in summer learning with expanded opportunities for targeted student populations, providing over \$11 million in funding to support de-streaming and investing \$25 million in reading intervention programs and professional assessments;
 3. Focus on student resilience and mental well-being by stabilizing \$80 million of historic mental health funding made last year, providing an additional \$10 million for enhanced supports, and committing to consult, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, to leverage the best available evidence on emerging student mental health needs to support resilience and mental well-being, in alignment with Ontario's Roadmap to Wellness and within the continuum of mental health care;
 4. Deliver comprehensive tutoring supports through school boards, including in partnership with local community organizations, and the expansion of online

- tutoring through Mathify and Eurêka! supported by a major investment of \$176 million; and
5. Modernize education to better prepare students for job and life skills by investing over \$8 million in the 2022-23 school year.

Special Education Funding

Special Education Grant (SEG) Investments

Key Facts

- Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding for 2022-23 was announced on February 17, 2022 in [Memorandum 2022 B03](#); and further details can be found in supporting documents such as the [Technical Paper 2022-23](#), [Memorandum 2022 SB08: Special Education Grant Changes for 2022-23](#) and the [2022-23 Education Funding: A Guide to the Special Education Grant](#).
- The government is committed to ensuring that every student, including students with special education needs, has access to the supports they need to succeed in school.
- This commitment is demonstrated by investments in the Special Education Grant (SEG), which provides boards with funding for programs, services, and/or equipment for students with special education needs. Boards may use the grant only for special education and must set aside any unspent funding to use for special education in a future school year.
- For 2022-23, SEG funding is projected to increase to over \$3.25 billion. The highest amount ever provided in SEG funding, this represents an increase of approximately \$93 million, or 2.9 per percent, over 2021-22 SEG funding.
- This 2022-23 increase in SEG funding is a result of the following:
 - Transferring of Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF) in 2021-22 to Grants for Student Needs (GSN) 2022-23:
 - \$16.3¹ million in a new Local Special Education Priorities Amount within the Special Education Grant's (SEG) Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA).
 - Providing a \$1.4 million funding increase to the Northern Supports Component within the Special Education Grant's (SEG) Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA).
 - Providing a \$7.4 million funding increase to the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Per-Pupil Amount (PPA) for Assistive Technology.
 - Increasing Special Education Grant (SEG) benchmarks, consistent with other GSN benchmarks, to reflect a labour provision increase. This labour provision increase is subject to the outcome and conclusion of labour negotiations with teachers' federations and education worker unions whose agreements expire August 31, 2022.
- For further information regarding special education funding please visit the ministry's [Education Funding page](#).

¹ Total provincial funding for Local Special Education Priorities Amount, including isolate boards, will be \$16.3M. The amount provided to school boards only is \$16.1M

2022-23 Priorities and Partnership Funding Investments

- In addition to SEG funding, school boards can use other GSN funding and Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF) transfer payments funding to meet their responsibility to support students with special education needs. The PPF provides support for a variety of time-limited, high-impact initiatives that directly support students in the classroom.

Regular School Year Pilots and Programs – Special Education (\$7.48M)

- Special Education Additional Qualifications (AQ) Subsidy for Educators \$1.00M
- Developmental Disabilities Pilot: Student Transitions \$0.48M
- Supporting Students with Special Education Needs / Students with Disabilities (Removing Barriers) \$6.00M

Regular School Year Pilots and Programs – Supporting Student Potential (\$33.32M)

- Professional Assessment and Reading Intervention Programs \$25.00M
- Early Intervention in Math for Students with Special Education Needs \$8.32M

Additional Third-Party Investments (\$5.85M)

- Geneva Centre for Autism – Online Training \$2.00M
- Geneva Centre for Autism – Synchronous Educator Training \$2.50M
- Special Education Additional Qualifications (AQ) Subsidy for Principals \$0.40M
- Learning Disabilities Assoc. of Ontario \$0.75M
- Opportunities & Transition Supports for students who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing \$0.20M

Summer 2022 Funding (\$10M)

- Summer Learning for Students with Special Education Needs \$10M
- The Ministry of Education allocates funding to Ontario's 72 publicly funded district school boards through the Special Education Grant (SEG), as part of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN), to support the additional costs of programs, services and equipment required by students with special education needs.
- School boards may use the grant only for special education and must set aside any unspent funding to use for special education in a future school year.
- In addition to Special Education Grant (SEG) funding, school boards can use other Grants for Student Needs (GSN) allocations and Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) to meet their responsibility to support students with special education needs.

- For the 2022-23 school year, the Special Education Grant ([SEG](#)), consisting of 6 allocations, is projected as follows:
 1. The ***Special Education Per Pupil Amount - \$1.61 billion***
Provides funding to every school board to assist with the costs of providing additional support to students with special education needs. It is allocated to school boards based on the total enrolment of all students, not just students with special education needs.
 2. The ***Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount - \$1.21 billion***
Addresses the variation among school boards with respect to their population of students with special education needs and school boards' ability to support these needs.
 3. The ***Special Equipment Amount - \$140.1 million***
Provides funding to school boards to assist with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs.
 4. The ***Special Incidence Portion - \$142.0 million***
Helps offset the additional staff costs for students with extraordinarily high needs who require more than two full-time staff to address their health and/or safety needs, and those of others at their school.
 5. The ***Education and Community Partnership Program - \$113.3 million***
Supports school boards' provision of education programs to school-aged children and youth in care and/or treatment centres, and in custody and correctional facilities.
 6. The ***Behaviour Expertise Amount - \$37.3 million***
Provides funding for school boards to hire professional staff at the board level who have expertise in Applied Behaviour Analysis, to provide training opportunities to build school board capacity in Applied Behaviour Analysis, and to provide students with ASD and other special education needs with additional targeted skills development opportunities, outside the instructional day.

Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide (2017)

Key Facts

- *Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide* was released in August 2017 as a draft in electronic form only.
http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/onschools_2017e.pdf
- The Guide updates and consolidates information currently found in: *Standards for School Board's Special Education Plans (2000)*; *IEP Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation (2000)*; *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)*; *Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)*; and *Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)*.
- The document is intended for school and school board administrators but will be of interest to the broader educational community.
- This document is currently in process of migrating from the old ministry website to the new digital curriculum platform. In the near future it will be “going live” on this new platform. The new Curriculum and Resources site can be found at:
<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/>

Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Key Facts

- The Ministry of Education (EDU) is committed to supporting successful outcomes for all students, including students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- EDU is also committed to working with Ontario's families, educators, school boards, and partner ministries to help students find success inside and outside of the classroom.
- EDU is supporting the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in implementing the Entry to School program, part of the Ontario Autism Program (OAP).
- The Entry to School program is being delivered by OAP community providers and is a six-month group-based skill-building program for young children on the autism spectrum (three to five years of age), who are entering school for the first time. Eligible children participate in this program during the six months preceding their school entry. The focus of the program is on preparing children to enter school. The first cohort of students are expected to transition to school from the program in September 2022. OAP Entry to School Program service providers partner with their local school boards to support school transitions for children in the group-based program. Strong partnerships between community-based OAP organizations and their local school boards are critical to support families.

Funding

- Funding for the Behaviour Expertise Amount through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) is projected to be \$37.3 million in 2022-23. This provides funding for school boards to hire professional staff at the board level who have expertise in Applied

Behaviour Analysis (ABA), offer training opportunities to build school board capacity in ABA and provide After School Skills Development Programs (ASSDP).

The ministry is continuing to fund the Geneva Centre for Autism to provide more ABA-based training opportunities for educators and education workers, including access to the Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) course, through:

- An extension of the \$2 million per year investment for online training; and
- Ongoing implementation of the \$2.5 million annual investment to provide synchronous virtual training.

Next Steps

- EDU is continuing to work with MCCSS on the implementation of the new Ontario Autism Program, including the Entry to School Program.

Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP)

Key Facts

- ECPs are provided for children and youth who are unable to attend the regular school setting due to their primary need for care, treatment or because of a court order to serve a custody or detention sentence.
- ECPs are voluntary, partnership programs developed between school boards and government-approved facilities such as custody and correctional facilities, mental health agencies or hospitals.
- The Ministry of Education (EDU) funds costs related to the education component of the program. The education component is delivered by teachers employed by the district school board.
- The Ministries of Children, Community and Social Services, Health, and Solicitor General fund costs related to the care, treatment or youth justice component of the program.
- 60 school boards are involved in the delivery of ECP Programs.

Funding

- The Ministry is undergoing a review and approval of the Spring submissions for 2022-23 ECP. The Ministry of Education has made up to \$113.3M available for ECPs in 2022-23.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Key Facts

- A \$6M application-based fund was announced in February 2022 for school boards to implement initiatives to prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with special education needs and/or disabilities.
- Over the summer, the ministry carefully reviewed each project application against the application criteria after which, 37 projects were selected for funding. The projects will be undertaken and completed in the 2022-23 school year, examples include:

- Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board – A program to assess and teach skills to young learners with complex needs. Program staff will work directly with the school team to ensure generalization and maintenance of skills.
- Bruce Grey Catholic DSB – A professional-learning focused initiative to strengthen capacity to respond to an increasing number of students with vision impairments.
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario – Conduct universal design for learning training, improve transitions for students with disabilities and developing a multi-year accessibility plan.
- Hamilton Wentworth District School Board – Create and pilot an interdisciplinary studies course focused on disability and human rights.
- Rainy River DSB – Focus on training on equity, ableism, accessibility and inclusion; effective strategies for teaching and designing lesson plans; inclusive assessment and evaluation practices.

Developmental Disabilities Pilot: Student Transitions

Key Facts

- Pilot to support select school boards to explore successful practices in transitioning students with developmental disabilities to work using an intensive job-placement program.

Funding

- \$478,000 for the 2021-22 school year.

Next Steps

- The Ministry of Education received approval to run two-year pilot (Year Two pending funding) supporting select school boards to explore and implement Project SEARCH.
- Project SEARCH transition-to-work model is a one-year employment preparation program for students with developmental disabilities who are in their final year of high school. It is a collaborative model that requires cooperation between school boards, businesses/site hosts and community partners.
- There are more than 600 Project SEARCH sites worldwide, licensed through Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Ohio.
- In Year One of the pilot, of the fourteen participating school boards:
 - Six moved to implementation in September 2022;
 - five are deferring implementation for one year, until September 2023; and
 - three have decided that Project SEARCH is not a good fit for their school board.
- The ministry made a second call for expressions of interest in the Spring of 2022. Two new school boards will be joining the pilot. These new boards will use their first year of the pilot to secure partners and ensure long-term viability in their communities.

Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities

Key Facts

The ministry continues to support students with learning disabilities through the following:

- Policy Program Memorandum 8 (PPM8): *Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities*, 2014 sets out the requirements for school boards for the identification of and program planning for students who have learning disabilities (LDs).
- Learning to read is essential for success in school and in life. The OHRC Right to Read report released in early 2020 recommended improving student literacy and making longer-term reforms to modernize the way reading is taught and assessed in schools, with a focus on phonics.
- The ministry took immediate action in response to some OHRC Right to Read report recommendations to improve student literacy and make longer-term reforms to modernize the way reading is taught and assessed in schools, with a focus on phonics. Ontario's plan to boost literacy outcomes and support learning recovery includes:
 - Revising the elementary Language curriculum and the Grade 9 English course with scientific, evidence-based approaches that emphasize direct, explicit and systematic instruction and removing references to discovery and inquiry-based learning, including the three-cueing system, by 2023
 - Revising the elementary Français and the Grade 9 Français curriculum by September 2023
 - Releasing a science-based guide for educators in spring 2022 that will support effective early reading instruction
 - Collaborating with partners, including faculties of education, on professional development for educators to ensure they are learning science-based reading instruction methods
 - Beginning development of a French-language reading intervention program
 - Engaging with parents and sector partners on a longer-term response and developing accessible, parent-friendly resources on literacy skills.
- How educators are trained and engaged in ongoing professional development are also key to equipping students with the supports they need. The Ministry of Education will continue to work closely with the Ontario College of Teachers and Faculties of Education to align training of prospective teachers with evidence-based approaches to reading. Teachers in Ontario continue to learn and develop professionally once they are in practice, including through the New Teacher Induction Program, professional activity days, additional qualification courses, and initiatives like the Learning and Innovation Fund for Teachers. These activities support Ontario's teachers to have access to the latest resources and educational approaches.

Funding

- As part of its Learning Recovery Action Plan, the ministry announced \$25M to support evidence-based reading intervention programs and professional assessments – beginning immediately and into the 2022-23 school year. With this

funding, the ministry provided guidance to boards about evidence-based approaches to supporting struggling readers, building on expert advice from the ministry's multi-year pilot project on supporting students with learning disabilities affecting reading.

- For several years the ministry has been providing funding to the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) to develop a range of online resources and conduct Summer Institutes for Educators to further enhance the understanding of evidence-based and research informed instructional strategies in the field of LDs. For 2022-25 school years LDAO has been provided with a total of \$2.25 million in funding. The LDAO is implementing educator-tailored capacity building activities and developing resources focusing on supporting students with Learning Disabilities (LDs) and struggling readers. The activities promote evidence-based practices and are conducted in English and French.

Next Steps

- This comprehensive OHRC report requires time for thoughtful review and consideration. The ministry will engage with stakeholders in the education sector, parents, and Indigenous partners, and work with key experts so that every student, including students with learning disabilities, is supported to learn to read well.

Mental Health

Key Facts

- Student mental health and well-being is a top priority for the government. Good mental health is fundamental to a student's ability to learn, succeed, and reach their full potential at school and in life.
- The public education system in Ontario plays a unique role in mental health promotion and prevention for all students, and the early identification and intervention for students who may be experiencing a mental health issue.
- On October 25, 2021 the Ministry of Education announced the formation of the Mental Health Branch within the Student Support and Field Services Division.
- In Ontario, school-based services are reported as the most prevalent setting for students with a mental health issue to initially seek help.
- COVID-19 has impacted all students and their families. The pandemic has expanded existing inequalities and greatly impacted students from equity seeking groups (e.g., racialized, low-income, LGBTQI2S, and students with disabilities). This has made circumstances even more challenging and it has meant that many more families and students face new vulnerabilities.
- Prioritizing student mental health is critical to addressing these inequities and supporting the learning recovery of all students.
- Pre-pandemic child and youth mental health concerns were significant. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing concerns by increasing anxiety, distress, problematic substance use and eating disorders.
- Schools continue to provide mental health promotion supports to all students and offer timely clinical interventions for students that require school-based mental health services.

- On February 17, 2022 the Ministry of Education launched a five point [Learning Recovery plan](#) that included a focus on mental health and well-being. The mental health components of the learning recovery action plan may include:
 - Mandatory professional learning on mental health for educators
 - Working with the Ministry of Health to consult with stakeholders to leverage the best available evidence on emerging student mental health needs.
 - Continuing to support student well-being through:
 - mentally healthy classrooms and learning environments
 - effective and responsive school mental health supports
 - connections to the broader provincial system of mental health care.
- The ministry, through its implementation partner, School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON), continues to provide professional learning opportunities, ongoing coaching support and a suite of evidence-based resources to all publicly funded school boards in the province.
- On August 2, 2022, SMH-ON released their updated *Mentally Healthy Back to School Support Package* for school boards to support student mental health in the return to school. School board mental health leadership teams were offered a menu of resources that could be tailored for their boards' local context and needs.

Funding

- Ontario is investing \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy.
- The ministry is providing school boards with more than \$90M in dedicated funding to support student mental health in 2022-23.
 - This funding includes a new Student Mental Well Being allocation (\$10M) that is comprised of the following two components, fostering the resilience and mental well-being of all students (\$5M) and implementing evidence-based mental health programs and resources (\$5M). This investment will support the mental health and well-being of all students and will enable school boards to continue to assist students who are experiencing mental health challenges that are impacting their learning.
 - More than \$35M of this funding can be used to respond to local priorities such as employing new mental health professionals, providing professional learning and training for educators and mental health professionals, collaborating with community mental health providers for students requiring more intensive services, student engagement opportunities in the area of mental health, and the collection, analysis and reporting of student mental health related information.
- The Ministry of Education continues to fund the approximately 180 new mental health workers (FTEs) in secondary schools that were initially hired by district school boards in 2018-19. The purpose of this investment is to continue to have regulated mental health professionals (e.g., social workers, psychologists and psychotherapists) with specialized training in student mental health in secondary schools providing promotion, prevention, early identification, assessment and direct mental health services to students; enhanced and timely access through referrals to

community mental health services for students in crisis; and support for students, families, as well as classroom strategies for educators.

Next Steps

- EDU is working closely with the Ministry of Health to support cross-sector stakeholder consultations on student mental health. Consultations will occur in Fall 2022.

UPDATES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Investment in Rehabilitation Services and the Preschool Speech and Language Program

Key Facts

- In the 2021 Budget, the Ontario government announced new investments to support children and youth with special needs to live happier and healthier lives.
- The government committed to new funding of \$240 million over four years, beginning in 2021–22. This investment will ensure that more children and families have access to critical services when they need them and build additional service capacity in early intervention and rehabilitation services, and the Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) program.
- The funding has supported Children's Treatment Centres (CTCs), PSL lead agencies and their local partners to build capacity and address waitlists for assessments and speech and language pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services for children and youth in the PSL program and in CTC community- and school-based rehabilitation services.
- As part of this investment, the ministry is also working with CTCs and other partners to implement SmartStart Hubs as a clear entry point to services that use a provincially consistent approach to inform earlier and appropriate connections to local services and streamline functional assessments and service delivery based on an understanding of children's strengths, goals and needs.

Virtual/Remote Service Delivery in Response to COVID-19

- Service providers continue to take pragmatic and innovative approaches to keep children and youth safe and families supported, including delivering services through innovative modalities such as virtual tele-practice and remote services, to avoid or minimize service disruptions to children and families, all while following the guidance of local public health authorities.

Next Steps

- Ontario will be releasing guidelines to support provincial consistency in the provision of a high quality, child- and family-centred PSL and children's rehabilitation services in alignment with the broader provincial objectives to modernize early intervention and special needs services.
- The guidelines were developed with input from the PSL Advisory Group and the Children's Rehabilitation Services Advisory Group and reflect research evidence from Western University and CanChild Centre for Disability Research. They are informed by consultation and engagement with regulated health professionals, service provider organizations and associations to support ongoing improvements in service delivery.

Regulation of Applied Behaviour Analysis

Key Facts

- On [August 13, 2019](#), Ontario announced its intention to strengthen the oversight of behaviour analysts who provide Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), and that the professionals would be regulated through an existing college under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*.
- On June 3, 2021, the Legislature passed the *Advancing Oversight and Planning in Ontario's Health System Act, 2021*. This legislation will regulate ABA as a new profession under the College of Psychologists of Ontario, beginning with behaviour analysts in supervisory and assessment-focused roles.
- Behaviour analysts provide services to a wide range of clients, including children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities and autism, those with mental health challenges or behavioural difficulties, seniors with dementia, and those in substance abuse treatment, brain injury rehabilitation and rehabilitative programming in correctional facilities.
- Currently in Ontario, if there are issues with services, clients and families have limited mechanisms to make a complaint about a provider because the majority of clinicians are not regulated and do not have a local governing body to handle complaints or discipline.
- Regulation of ABA will result in:
 - Consistency in ethical and professional standards to promote a higher level of trust between families and practitioners.
 - Clearly defined educational and ongoing quality assurance requirements for clinicians to improve consistency in treatment.
 - A mechanism for families to report complaints about providers to reduce the risk of harm.
- Behaviour analysts are not currently regulated in any Canadian province or territory; however, Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia have online lists or registries of qualified behavioural service providers for children and youth with autism.
- In the United States, there is a growing trend to regulate behaviour analysts. Thirty-one states have licensed behaviour analysts, while a further four states have proposed licensing legislation for behaviour analysts.

Next Steps

- The College of Psychologists is developing proposed regulations to implement the new legislation for government approval. These regulations will set expectations for professional standards and educational requirements for ABA providers across the province. This will support families in finding qualified providers and making complaints about providers, if necessary.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Hubs

Key Facts

- The five regional Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnostic hubs were implemented in January 2017 to support timely access to diagnostic assessments for autism and to increase capacity to diagnose autism across the province.
- The government provided a \$3.9M increased investment in the diagnostic hubs for 2021-22 and 2022-23, in addition to \$5.5M in annual funding for the hubs, to improve families' access to an assessment for their child by reducing waitlists and wait times.
- With their funding, ASD diagnostic hubs are required to:
 - Conduct diagnostic assessments by partnering with other organizations and professionals;
 - Increase the number of health professionals in local communities able to conduct ASD diagnostic assessments by offering training and capacity building; and,
 - Connect families with the appropriate services in their communities as quickly as possible following a diagnostic assessment.
- The five regional hubs are:
 - Children's Treatment Network (Central Region)
 - Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (East Region)
 - Child and Community Resources (North Region)
 - Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Toronto Region)
 - Hamilton Health Sciences / Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre (West Region)
- Since November 2019, the hubs have been offering training opportunities to support health care professionals in local communities to build their expertise in autism diagnosis, including screening for early signs of autism and training on specific diagnostic assessment tools.

Next Steps

- The hubs continue to provide diagnostic assessments and are working collaboratively to implement capacity-building initiatives across the province.

Implementation of the needs-based Ontario Autism Program (OAP)

- The Ontario Autism Program (OAP) is now supporting about 40,000 children through existing behaviour plans, childhood budgets, interim funding, core clinical services, caregiver-mediated early years programs, the entry to school program, foundational family services, and urgent response services.
- **Foundational family services** launched in August 2020 and are available to all families registered in the OAP. These evidence-informed services aim to build a family's capacity to support their child or youth's learning and development. Services include family and peer mentoring, caregiver workshops, brief targeted consultations, transition supports, and family resource and clinic days.
- **Caregiver-mediated early years programs** launched in June 2021. These programs are time-limited services for young children (12-48 months of age) to help

them learn new skills and meet individualized goals in the areas of social communication and play, and to build the capacity of caregivers to support their children. The following six programs are offered:

- Early social interaction/social communication emotional regulation and transactional supports (ESI/SCERTS)
- Joint attention, symbolic play, engagement and regulation (JASPER)
- Pivotal response treatment (PRT)
- PLAY project
- Project ImPACT
- Social ABCs
- **The entry to school program** launched in March 2022. It is a six-month group-based skill-building program for young children registered in the OAP, aged 3 to 6 years, who are entering kindergarten or Grade 1 for the first time. The program is delivered by 14 service providers across the province and is focused on preparing children to successfully transition and enter school for the first time. Following completion of the group-based program, children will receive transition supports as they enter school to support a successful school transition.
- **Urgent response services** - In April 2022, 11 lead organizations located across the province, started offering urgent response services to children and families registered in the OAP. These include time-limited services and supports, delivered for up to 12 weeks, to respond rapidly to a specific, urgent need to help stabilize the situation, prevent crisis, and reduce the risk of children and youth harming themselves, others and/or property.
- **Independent Intake Organization (IIO)** - As part of the ongoing implementation of the OAP, the ministry officially launched the Independent Intake Organization (the "IIO"), called AccessOAP, in April 2022. AccessOAP provides a single point of access to the OAP. The goal of AccessOAP is to support an integrated and consistent service delivery experience for all families.
- Led by Accerta Services Inc., AccessOAP is delivered through a partnership with McMaster University, Autism Ontario, and HealthCare 365. The IIO partners bring together significant experience in administering public programs, supporting children and youth on the autism spectrum and their caregivers, care coordination, service navigation, research, and healthcare education."
- The ministry started contacting families in spring 2022 to connect them with AccessOAP to support their entry into core clinical services. At this time, children are beginning to receive invitations to enter core clinical services in the order that they registered for the OAP, as recommended by the Ontario Autism Advisory Panel and committed by the Ontario government in December 2021. By fall 2022, Ontario will bring 8,000 children and youth into core clinical services.
- **Core clinical services:** Based on a child's individual support needs, families have access to a broad range of core clinical services and supports such as applied behaviour analysis, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and mental health services.
- Families of children with existing behaviour plans will have the option to enter core clinical services in the order that they registered in the Ontario Autism Program, or

extend their plans until spring 2023, at which time they will begin to transition into core clinical services.

- In July 2021, the ministry announced a plan to build service capacity to deliver the needs-based OAP in Ontario. The Autism Workforce Capacity Action Plan, part of the province's \$600 million annual investment in the program, encompasses a mix of short and long-term initiatives, including the following:
 - Transition funding and other supports for publicly-funded children's service providers;
 - The Workforce Capacity Fund grant program to support capacity-building activities led by public and private children's service providers and community organizations. As announced on December 3, 2021, the government awarded 79 grants to build and retain the workforce in the first year of the program. A second application round will launch in August 2022;
 - Investments in skills and training for more than 7,000 clinicians, including Indigenous Cultural Competency Training and mental health training; and
 - Support for three pilot projects to build capacity in Northern Ontario.

Next Steps

- Implementation of the needs-based autism program is underway and ongoing throughout 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Temporary Changes to Direct-Funding Programs in Response to COVID-19

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services announced a number of updates for the Ontario Autism Program:
 - An [extension for the amount of time families have to spend childhood budget and interim one-time funding](#) and submit their expense form by up to six months, if necessary. Families now have up to 18 months to spend their childhood budget and submit their expense form.
 - The ministry extended the March 31, 2020 deadline for families to submit their OAP registration form and supporting documents to be eligible for interim one-time funding. The ministry continued to provide interim one-time funding to all new applicants whose registration forms and supporting documents were submitted by March 31, 2021.
 - Additionally, to support children and youth on the autism spectrum and their families, the ministry provided greater clarity about what expenses are eligible under the Ontario Autism program for childhood budgets and interim one-time funding for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak. The current list of eligible expenses for the OAP allows for a broad range of services and supports, to support the clinical needs of children with Autism. This includes evidence-based behavioural services, other therapies and services (e.g., Speech language therapy, Occupational therapy, and Physiotherapy), additional autism services and supports (e.g., curriculum-based interventions, life skills and social skills training programs, employment supports, and parent and caregiver capacity building and training), respite services, family service planning and support (e.g., interpretation and translation services, individualized family service planning), travel, and technology.

- For families receiving funding under the OAP – Direct Funding Option, resources approved for a child's existing behaviour plan can be used flexibly to support families to access eligible services through remote or virtual service delivery during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The ministry temporarily expanded the list of eligible expenses for families accessing the Special Services at Home (SSAH) and Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent Children (MFTDC) programs to allow families to use funding for goods and services that may make it easier for them to stay at home and practice physical distancing.
- These programs provide direct funding for families to purchase respite services and/or opportunities for personal growth and development for children and youth. The [temporarily expanded list of eligible expenses](#) includes the following categories of goods and services:
 - sensory items to alleviate anxiety/stress;
 - technology items to help children and youth with special needs to remain connected and/or engage in e-learning;
 - Items to support home-based recreation and fitness activities such as:
 - craft and hobby supplies
 - home-based fitness and sports equipment that children and youth would otherwise access through day programs or community-based programs;
 - personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies;
 - essential service fees such as grocery and pharmacy fees; and
 - behavioural support plans and related interventions.
- These changes are temporary and the existing program terms and conditions will continue to apply upon the government providing notice.
- For the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, families who have already received pre-approval for ACSD expenditures may temporarily, for the duration of the pandemic period, use pre-approved ACSD funding to purchase items/services from the expanded list of admissible expenditures without pre-approval from the ministry. For example, if a family is temporarily not using their funding for a pre-approved expense such as transportation, they can use that funding for the expenses outlined above. These changes came into effect April 1, 2020. ACSD families who are eligible to receive program funding in 2022/2023 can purchase support according to existing program guidelines and these temporary changes.
- As of April, 2022, the Ontario government has made the [wage enhancement](#) for direct support workers (DSW) and personal support workers (PSW) who care for vulnerable people of all ages, including children and youth, in residential, community and home settings permanent.
- To support this initiative, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) is providing additional funding to families who receive direct funding from the following programs:
 - Special Services at Home (SSAH)
 - Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technologically Dependent Children (Enhanced Respite)

- Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Childhood Budget or Interim One-time Funding
- Passport program (for adults with a developmental disability including adults aged 18 to 21 who may be in school)
- Permanent wage enhancement for personal support workers and direct support workers came into effect for direct funding programs as of July 1, 2022. Families in receipt of Special Services at Home (SSAH) and/or Enhanced Respite will receive increased funding of 10% and 18% respectively, (prorated to nine months for the 2022-23 fiscal year). Letters to families in receipt of SSAH and Enhanced Respite were sent starting on June 22, 2022.
- For the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, the ministry has increased the maximum monthly amount of financial assistance that may be paid on behalf of a child with a severe disability.
- On July 8, 2022, MCCSS issued communications to families in receipt of an OAP Childhood Budget and Interim-One Time Funding. The communication noted that effective July 1, 2022, the revised OAP funding amounts will be increased by 10% and will be applicable to the following OAP Childhood Budgets and Interim One-time funding agreements:
 - Families who received a \$5,000 OAP payment and whose current funding agreement has not expired as of July 1, 2022, will be eligible for an additional top-up payment of \$500.
 - Families who received a \$20,000 OAP payment and whose current funding agreement has not expired as of July 1, 2022, will be eligible for an additional top-up payment of \$2,000.
 - Families entering into a new funding agreement, as of July 1, 2022, will be eligible to receive a payment of \$5,500 or \$22,000 based on the age of their child or youth as of April 1 of the funding year.
- Families are not required to apply for this increase in funding and families eligible for a top-up payment will receive a payment within 4-6 weeks of July 1, 2022. The ministry will follow up with families if additional information is required.

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Key Facts

- Universities, colleges and Indigenous Institutes, as direct providers of educational services, have a legal duty to accommodate persons with disabilities under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA) 2005*.
- The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) provides targeted funding through special purpose grants to assist publicly-funded colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes to meet their legislative obligations. These supports are intended to supplement institutions' general operating costs in support of students with disabilities.
- In 2021-22, over 96,000 postsecondary students were registered with Offices for Students with Disabilities (OSDs) at publicly-assisted colleges and universities.

In the last ten years, the total number of students with disabilities registered for services with OSDs more than doubled. **Funding**

- In 2022-23, the ministry is investing approximately \$55 million to assist publicly-assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes in meeting their legal requirements to provide academic accommodations to students with disabilities.
- The government also provided support directly to postsecondary students with disabilities through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Through OSAP, the ministry provided almost \$2 million in 2021-22 to help students with their disability-related educational costs (e.g., services and equipment such as braille displays and assistive listening devices).
- Additionally, for 2022-23, the government is investing \$24.53 million in mental health supports for postsecondary students. These funds will enhance mental health supports at publicly-assisted colleges, universities, and Indigenous Institutes.
- The Ministry of Colleges and Universities also funds the Ontario Postsecondary Access and Inclusion Program (OPAIP).
- OPAIP provides funding to Ontario publicly-assisted postsecondary institutions to deliver on the following three objectives of outreach, transition and retention services to students facing barriers in accessing and successfully participating in postsecondary education. More specifically:
 - **Outreach:** Encouraging eligible students to appreciate the value of Postsecondary Education (PSE).
 - **Access/Transition:** Helping eligible students with admission to PSE programs and transition into PSE studies, as well as employment.
 - **Retention:** Ensuring students enrolled in PSE continue to succeed and graduate.
- The ministry is providing \$34.11 million over three years (or \$11.37 million annually) in OPAIP funding beginning in 2021-22.
 - The ministry held a call for proposals in 2021 and received proposals from 45 publicly assisted postsecondary institutions for over 500 projects. All 45 institutions received some level of OPAIP funding.

Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee

- MCU is committed to identifying opportunities to make a positive impact on the lives of students with disabilities participating in postsecondary education in Ontario. Through the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee (PSE SDC), the ministry is participating in a process to prevent and remove barriers at postsecondary institutions
- The Chair of the Postsecondary Education (PSE) Standards Development Committee submitted the Final Recommendations Report on March 4, 2022. The PSE Final Report makes nearly 200 recommendations on measures to address accessibility barriers. A final version of the recommendations was also posted on [ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca) in April for public viewing. The ministry is currently conducting a review of the recommendations.

Ministry of Health

Home and Community Care Modernization

- On May 1, 2022, the government put in place new legislation and regulations for home and community care.
 - The government brought into effect:
 - Bill 175, the *Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, 2020*; and
 - the new Home and Community Care Services Regulation (O. Reg. 187/22) under the *Connecting Care Act, 2019*; and
 - The government repealed the *Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994* (HCCSA) and its regulations.
- The new legislation and Regulation carry forward and expand:
 - the list of publicly fundable home and community care services (e.g. professional services like nursing and rehabilitation therapies and personal support services), and their patient eligibility criteria
 - delivery requirements for providers, and
 - patient rights and protections
- The new legislative regime continues to include the same home and community care services for students to support learning in their homes or in private or publicly schools, i.e. 'school health professional services' and 'school health personal support services'. Patient eligibility criteria for these services also remain unchanged, except that the new Regulation explicitly makes students who are participating in virtual learning eligible for school health services.
- Home and Community Care Support Services (the business name of the Local Health Integration Networks) continue to arrange home care services, including school health professional services.
- The Ministry of Health continues to carefully plan health system transformation to preserve continuity of home and community care while working toward improvements. This planning will continue to be done in collaboration with patients, caregivers, workers, employers, associations and unions.

Ontario Health Teams

- As noted in the Ministry of Health's update to MACSE in January 2022:
 - The Ontario government is building a connected health care system centred around patients, families and caregivers. These changes will strengthen local services, making it easier for patients to navigate the system and transition between providers.
 - Ontario Health Teams are being introduced to provide a new way of organizing and delivering care that is more connected to patients in their local communities. Under Ontario Health Teams, health care providers work as one coordinated team - no matter where they provide care.
 - There are currently 54 Ontario Health Teams that have been approved by the ministry, and four more teams invited to complete an application to become approved.

School Health Support Services

- As noted in the Ministry of Health's update to MACSE in January 2022:
 - In 2021, the Ministry of Health provided guidance to Home and Community Care Support Services organizations regarding the delivery of school health professional services. The guidance was delivered in a memorandum that emphasized the following parameters for the delivery school health professional services during the pandemic:
 - It is the Ministry of Education's expectation that school boards should work with partners to develop local protocols for school access by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals for the purpose of delivering school-based supports and services.
 - Eligible students registered for in-person learning continue to be eligible to receive school health services.
 - Eligible students can also receive school health services while engaging in remote learning. The Ministry of Health has outlined parameters to support the delivery of care outside of schools.
 - Some families have elected to transition to home schooling and will need to engage with Home and Community Care Support Services to establish services for home-schooled students.
 - All services will continue to be provided in alignment with public health guidance.
- These parameters still apply during the 2022-23 school year.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

- As of Thursday, July 28, 2022, parents and caregivers of children aged six months to under five years have been able to book appointments for the paediatric COVID-19 vaccine. [Immunocompromised](#) youth aged 12 to 17 also became eligible to schedule their second booster dose (fifth dose) if at least six months has passed since their first booster (fourth dose).
- "The approval of a lower dose paediatric Moderna vaccine will give families the opportunity to provide an additional layer of protection against COVID-19 for the youngest members of their families," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Getting vaccinated remains the best defence against COVID-19 and I encourage parents with questions to reach out to their health care provider, the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre or the SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service to make an informed choice for their family."
- Paediatric vaccines have been and are continuing to be distributed across the province and will be available through public health unit clinics, as well as participating paediatricians, primary care providers and pharmacies.
- Starting July 28, appointments have been made available through the [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) and the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre, directly through [public health units](#) using their own booking system, participating primary care providers and paediatricians, as well as at [participating pharmacies](#) and Indigenous-led vaccination clinics.

- Parents and caregivers with questions are encouraged to speak with their health care provider or call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 to speak to a health specialist or visit [COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service](#) to book a confidential phone appointment with a SickKids Registered Nurse.

Family-Managed Home Care Program

- The Ministry of Health amended the Self-Directed Care Program Specifications for the Family-Managed Home Care (FMHC) program to extend the option for students who require nursing services to attend school for the 2022-23 school year until June 30, 2023.
- As in the 2021-22 school year, this exception applies only in circumstances where Home and Community Care Support Services organizations (the business name of the LHINs) or the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) are unable to provide timely and reliable nursing services in school through traditional care.
- Through the FMHC program, eligible clients or, if applicable, their Substitute Decision-Makers may purchase nursing services provided as nursing services in schools for eligible clients in the following cohorts:
 - Children with complex medical needs,
 - Adults with an acquired brain injury, and
 - Clients in extraordinary circumstances.
- Clients will only be eligible for the FMHC program for nursing services provided as nursing services in a school if the child's school and the applicable school board permit the nurse to provide the services in the school.
- The definition of Substitute Decision-Maker in the Family-Managed Home Care program was updated effective September 1, 2022. In addition to the pre-existing categories of who may qualify to act as a Substitute Decision-Maker to receive funding to purchase home and community care services on behalf of a client who is 18 or older (which include an attorney under the *Powers of Attorney Act* and a Guardian of Property appointed under Part 1 of the *Substitute Decisions Act, 1992*), the following two additional categories of individuals may be eligible to act as a Substitute Decision-Maker:
 - a. An individual managing Ontario government funding from MCCSS specifically from the Passport Program, Ontario Works (OW), and/or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) on behalf of the client who is an adult.
 - b. For a period up to twelve (12) months from the date that the client who is enrolled in the Self-Directed Care Program turns 18 years old, the person who was receiving Self Directed Care funding on behalf of the client when the client was a child and who has committed to taking steps to manage Ontario government funding from the MCCSS specifically from the Passport Program, Ontario Works, and/or the Ontario Disability Support Program on behalf of the client who is an adult if the client is incapable of entering into an Self-Directed Care Template Agreement.
- The Substitute Decision-Maker must also meet the eligibility criteria for participating in the Self-Directed Care Program
- The ministries appreciate the continued partnership between schools, school boards and Home and Community Care Support Services and CHEO, care providers and

families in supporting students who require nursing services at school. Where applicable, the Ministry of Education encourages school boards to enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with families and providers to set out expectations for access to school sites. The Ministry of Education understands that some boards have previously developed MOUs for similar purposes and encourages boards to share lessons learned.

Nursing Services Capacity in Schools

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education have communicated the following messages to school boards in June 2022:

- In light of limited nursing capacity across the health care system and province, early planning for the new school year in September is more important than ever to support a smoother transition for students.
- We know that supporting access to school-based nursing for students requires strong collaboration and diligent planning between school and school board staff and Home and Community Care Support Services organizations. As the current school year ends, we encourage the continuation of these relationships and joint planning to support existing and new students expected to need school-based nursing in September.
- Principals or other staff are encouraged to reach out to their local Home and Community Care Support Services organizations to share information, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation, about school nursing needs for the upcoming school year. School boards can also connect with Home and Community Care Support Services in the summer as new school registrations are submitted to identify any additional needs that may be identified prior to September. Home and Community Care Support Services organizations should also reach out to the appropriate contacts at school boards if they believe there may be gaps in planning information.

Community-Based Child and Youth Mental Health Program (CYMH)

- CYMH services are funded under the authority of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA) and delivered by more than 230 community based, not-for-profit agencies that deliver a range of mental health services to children and youth up to the age of 18, and their families. Services are primarily based on a set of provincially defined CYMH “core services,” ranging from prevention services, counselling and therapy to intensive and specialized services.
- Most agencies delivering CYMH services are multi-service agencies that are funded by both MOH to deliver CYMH services and other ministries to deliver services and supports such as child welfare, youth justice and special needs such as Autism. Some CYMH agencies also provide services across the lifespan, and some are Indigenous owned and operated organizations.
- The total funding allocation for CYMH services is \$510 million and approximately 120,000 children are served annually by the CYMH sector, with the average wait time for core services ranging from two days for crisis services to 105 days for

intensive treatment services. These numbers are likely exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of children and youth.

- CYMH program funding, includes \$41 million in base funding to Indigenous organizations and communities to support culturally safe mental health and wellness services to Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities in Ontario.
- Under the authority of the CYFSA, designated Lead Agencies plan for the delivery of core services and coordinate services and supports for clients across various sectors, including health, education and child welfare within their respective service areas.
- The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence (COE) within Ontario Health has a legislated mandate to establish a high-quality MHA program for the province grounded in provincial standards, performance metrics and data.
- Part of the COE's role will be to work with the CYMH sector to weave them into this broader provincial program and ensure that CYMH services are fully connected with the rest of the MHA care continuum and health system.

Other Community Mental Health and Addictions Services and Supports for Children and Youth

- Ontario funds a wide range of community-based mental health and addictions services outside of the CYMH program, including direct, in-person, virtual or online services and supports, as outlined below:
 - In response to the pandemic's impact on children and youth mental health that has led to a surge in eating disorders, Ontario flowed significant investments in 2021 to four pediatric children's hospitals to support intensive services for children and youth who are presenting in greater numbers and are more ill than before.
 - Breaking Free Online, an innovative online therapy tool, makes it faster and easier for Ontarians to access safe and effective addictions supports. Breaking Free is available free of charge to all Ontarians ages 16 and up, and provides support and resources for individuals who want to reduce or stop their use of over 70 addictive substances, such as tobacco, alcohol, and prescription drugs, including opioids. Visit [Breaking Free Online](#) for more information, including how to register.
 - In June 2021 and again in March 2022, the province announced expansion of the [Youth Wellness Hubs](#) across Ontario, bringing the total number of Youth Wellness Hubs across Ontario to 22. These hubs provide developmentally tailored supports for people between the ages of 12-25, by offering walk-in access to primary care and addressing their needs related to mental health, substance use, primary care, education, employment, training, housing and other community and social services.
 - In August 2021, Ontario announced an expansion of the Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian and Caribbean Youth (SAPACCY), establishing 7 new satellite locations across the province. A program started at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, SAPACCY provides a wide range of culturally safe services and supports to African and Caribbean-origin youth, offering assessment, individual and group treatment, and counselling to assist youth in

reducing harm and making the best choices for themselves and their families on the path to recovery

- In September 2021, Ontario announced additional funding to support the expansion of up to 30 new youth treatment beds for Pine River's Institute's mental health and addiction treatment program for youth. Pine River is a not-for-profit facility for youth aged 13-19 living with addictive behaviours and often other mental health issues. Youth and their families have tailored, individualized plans that combine therapy, a structured environment and life skills with an educational program and are grounded in best practices for addiction treatment for youth and based on their developmental needs.
- Students and families looking to learn about services are encouraged to contact ConnexOntario, which offers 24/7 support to people who are looking for information about community MHA services near them. Connex provides free and confidential information to individuals experiencing problems with mental health, alcohol or drugs, and/or problem gambling and their families. You can reach Connex Ontario at 1-866-531-2600, at www.connexontario.ca, or through the ConnexGO app, which can be downloaded on mobile devices. There are services offered for both individuals experiencing mental health and addictions issues and their families.
- Information on where to find mental health services for children and youth up to the age of 18, is also available from Kids Help Phone's [Resource Around Me online web portal](#), which provides information about publicly funded child and youth mental health, addictions and related services across the province. This information is also available on our [Health Care Options web portal](#).

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

Development of a proposed Accessibility Standard for Education under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Key Facts

- The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) has the lead to establish a proposed accessibility standard for education under the AODA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU).
- In February 2018, two separate Education Standards Development Committees (ESDC) were established to support the development of the standard; one committee to focus on the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) sector, and a second committee to focus on the postsecondary education sector.
- The K-12 ESDC included people with disabilities, as well as individuals from organizations from the affected sectors.
- With the submission of its report, and that of a joint K-12/PSE sub-committee on transitions earlier this year, the work of the SDC was complete. The reports are posted on the MSAA's web site.

Next Steps

MSAA and EDU are now reviewing the report and its recommendations.

Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities

As part of the February 17, 2022 [Priorities and Partnerships funding announcement](#), the Ministry of Education announced a \$6M application-based fund for school boards to implement initiatives to prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with special education needs and/or disabilities.

The 37 projects listed below were selected for funding. All projects are to be completed by August 31, 2023.

School Board	Ministry Funded Project(s)
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following five (5) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training and resources for educators in ten schools to build evidence-based methods for printing instruction in Kindergarten. • Partnering with a Speech Language Pathologist to provide sessions for students struggling with speech/phonological awareness to improve skills early. • Training educators how to work with students with disabilities, who display complex behavioural challenges, how to behave safely and productively despite the challenges of everyday life through supporting, assessing and treating severe challenging behaviour with a priority on safety, dignity, and rapport building. • Implementing a program to assess and teach skills to young learners with complex needs. Program staff will work directly with the school team to ensure generalization and maintenance of skills. • Creating a central database to log SEA equipment to enhance tracking and organization of the board's SEA resources.
Avon Maitland District School Board	A project to develop resources and professional learning opportunities to implement the use of Inclusive Education Indicators.
Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board	A professional-learning focused initiative to strengthen capacity to respond to an increasing number of students with vision impairments.

Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities

Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	This project will include conducting training on universal design for learning, improving transitions for students with disabilities through a transitions navigator, and developing a multi-year accessibility plan.
Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières	The board will provide training sessions for educators on universal design for learning to improve management, planning, instruction, and assessment for students with disabilities.
Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir	This project seeks to achieve many different objectives, including accessibility guidelines for learning and school environment, accessibility of school premises, training on universal design for learning, and raising awareness about inclusion in the school community.
Durham Catholic District School Board	This board's initiative focuses on improving and further developing experiential learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Job coaches will be trained in specific skills and approaches to better advocate for job-related learning and experiences.
Halton Catholic District School Board	The board will work to improve transitions for students with developmental disabilities by training administrators, teachers, and other educational staff to ensure that they are sufficiently trained to effectively support student transitions from secondary school to workplace or community placements.
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board	A project to support conversion of the board's existing student/parent-focused websites to be fully AODA compliant and support a culture of accessibility through staff training, community awareness and a sustainable accessible website maintenance strategy.
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following three (3) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to create and pilot an interdisciplinary studies course for educators that aligns with the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Standards Development Committee's Final Report, with a focus on human rights and inclusion and the historical treatment of people with disabilities, including how ableism persists. • Developing and hosting an annual secondary student summit to champion the rights of people with disabilities by engaging all staff and students through meaningful learning and build disability pride.

Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a Transition Navigator position to support transitions for students with disabilities and their families. The work of the Navigator would align with the recommendations of the Joint Technical Sub-Committee on Transitions' report recommendations.
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following two (2) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring an accessibility consultant to support an accessibility audit of six schools to identify gaps and to support multi-year accessibility planning. A project to deliver training on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and develop a process, resource tools and guidelines for UDL within the Board.
Huron Perth Catholic District School Board	<p>The board's project will support students with intellectual disabilities as they transition to post-secondary education, work, volunteer, or the community.</p>
Keewatin Patricia District School Board	<p>This initiative is focused on transitioning students with disabilities to the workplace through a transition coach that will focus on skill and independence-building to prepare students for the transition to postsecondary pathways.</p>
Limestone District School Board	<p>This initiative will focus on expanding opportunities for elementary students with special education needs to engage in sport/play within school environments and at district-wide events.</p>
Niagara Catholic District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following two (2) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing staff and students with learning sessions on topics related to accessibility and inclusion through partnership with community groups such as Autism Ontario. Supporting schools with improving the recess experience by promoting healthy, inclusive, and compassionate interactions. It includes professional learning for school staff, working with students and gathering student voice.

Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following three (3) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to support students and families with a variety of disabilities by expanding relationships with community groups to build accessible pathways that will support life beyond high school. • An initiative to produce resources and tools to support the work of school based special education teams to create inclusive environments for a diverse range of learners with special education needs. • Providing a variety of learning opportunities to district administrators, educators, families, and students to support understanding of accessible and inclusive practices.
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board	Through establishing Equity and Accessibility Leads in several schools, this project will seek to build capacity in Universal Design for Learning, and also foster spaces for critical dialogue about race.
Rainbow District School Board	This project will establish a new Transition Facilitator position to support students, their families, school staff and community agencies to identify pathways and develop specific and student-centred transition plans.
Rainy River District School Board	This project will focus on training on equity, ableism, accessibility and inclusion; effective strategies for teaching and designing lesson plans; inclusive assessment and evaluation practices.
Renfrew Country District School Board	An initiative to establish a new Transition Facilitator position to engage in partnerships with social service agencies and business partners to support employment paths for graduating students with disabilities and provide transition planning and resource development and training for school board staff.
Simcoe County District School Board	A professional learning-focused project to provide targeted, responsive instruction and assessment to Grade 4-6 students with Learning Disabilities in mathematics.

Ministry Funded Projects to Prevent and Remove Barriers for Students with Disabilities

St. Clair Catholic District School Board	This initiative will focus on supporting students with disabilities to explore their options and prepare for their future pathway; it builds on an existing Pathway to Success initiative which focuses on preparing students for future success with emphasis on grades 7 and 8.
Superior-Greenstone District School Board	<p>The board has received funding to carry out the following two (2) projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing practices related to transitions from secondary to post-secondary and beyond. This would improve relationships and partnerships with parents/guardians and community partners and support early planning for successful transitions. • Wayfinding to universal washrooms and calming rooms, and a poster series to create awareness about diverse abilities.
Toronto District School Board	This project would expand an existing pilot to include 125 schools and multiple components to amplify student voices with disabilities through digital learning. This includes a student/school component, parent/guardian/caregiver component, and a resource provision component.
Upper Grand District School Board	This project centers on an Accessibility and Equity Liaison to support transitions for students with disabilities. It includes establishing and working with affinity groups to allow students with disabilities to come and work together.
York Region District School Board	This board's project will engage in an assets and gaps analysis process to strengthen and establish a cohesive Pre-K-12 transition pathway.