

# SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

## AGENDA MAY 21, 2025

**George Wedge (Chair)**

Easter Seals Ontario

**Lori Mastrogiuseppe**

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

**Geoffrey Feldman**

**(Vice Chair)**

Ontario Disability Coalition

**Tyler Munro**

Inclusion Action in Ontario

**Melanie Battaglia**

Autism Ontario (Alternate)

**Michelle Cousins**

Easter Seals Ontario (Alternate)

**Richelle De Belchior**

Community Representative

**Jennifer Di Francesco**

Center for ADHD Awareness

**Lisa Mason**

Community Representative

**Ivona Novak**

Community Representative

**Ashley Pabon**

Learning Disabilities Association

**Marissa Seymour**

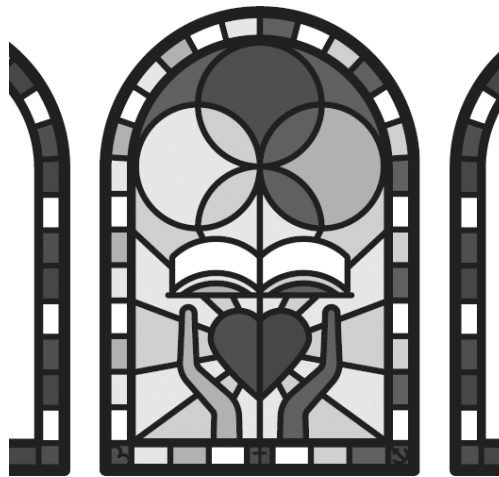
Autism Ontario

**TRUSTEES**

**Frank D'Amico**

**Angela Kennedy**

**Maria Rizzo**



### 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: Sapphire Adaikpoh, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2295**

**Dr. Brendan Browne**  
**Director of Education**

**Markus de Domenico**  
**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 adopted for the 2024-2025 School Year:

1. Recommend the development of contingency plans to implement testing should schools close (as they did for Covid) and alternative be necessary. Include these plans in the Special Education Plan;
2. To review and discuss information made available to SEAC about Assessments and Testing used to identify and support Special Education Students;
3. To make time at each SEAC meeting for discussion about Special Education matters in which all members can participate;
4. To review the 2024-2025 goals of the Empower Program;
5. To review timelines of Psych-educational Assessments and how they are going to be handled;
6. How SEAC can support Special Education Students transitioning out of our educational system and entering the world;
7. To increase Committee membership;
8. Review policies that impact Special Education Students and make recommendations for revisions that might be helpful;
9. Review handbooks for parents and guardians to comment on changes that need to be made to assist Special Education Students; and
10. Continue to provide feedback to the Special Education Plan on a monthly basis.

## **Land Acknowledgement**

The land we walk on belongs to the Creator. Earth does not belong to humanity but rather, humanity is part of the Earth. The land was created to be enjoyed by all living beings, a principle reflected in The Dish with One Spoon covenant. Taking only what we need to preserve our earth for future generations, leaving some for others as a sign of our respect and caring, and keeping it clean by revitalizing the land to sustain generations to come.

All Toronto Catholic District School Board properties are situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinabek, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Wendat peoples. We recognize that the land covered by Treaty 13 is held by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also listen to the echoes of their prayers to the Creator, and respect the beauty of Mother Earth while striving to learn and draw wisdom from First Nations, Inuit and Métis traditions.

## **La reconnaissance des territoires**

Les terres sur lesquelles nous marchons appartiennent au Créateur. La Terre n'appartient pas à l'humanité mais c'est plutôt l'humanité qui fait partie de la Terre. Les terres ont été créées pour que chaque être vivant puisse en profiter. Ce principe se reflète dans l'accord du « bol à une seule cuillère » qui vise à prendre seulement ce dont nous avons besoin afin de préserver notre terre pour les générations futures, en laisser suffisamment aux autres en guise de respect et de bienveillance, tout en la maintenant propre par sa revitalisation, en vue des générations à venir.

L'ensemble des propriétés du Toronto Catholic District School Board se situent sur les terres traditionnelles des peuples Anishinabés, de la Confédération de Haudenosaunis, et des peuples Wendats. Nous reconnaissons que le territoire ciblé dans le Traité 13 appartient à la Première Nation des Mississaugas de Credit. Nous écoutons également les échos de leurs prières envers le Créateur et le respect de la beauté de notre Terre nourricière, tout en nous efforçant d'apprendre et de nous référer à la sagesse issue des traditions des Premières Nations, Inuit et Métis.

## OUR 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.*

## OUR VISION

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



# AGENDA

## THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### PUBLIC SESSION

George Wedge, Chair

Geoffrey Feldman, Vice Chair

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

7:00 P.M.

---

Pages

1. Opening Prayer
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Singing of O'Canada
4. Roll Call and Apologies
5. Approval of the Agenda
6. Declarations of Interest
7. Approval and Signing of the Minutes of the Meeting held April 9, 2025 1 - 11
8. Delegations
9. Member Statements
10. Presentations
11. Notices of Motion
12. Consent and Review

### **13. Annual Calendar Items**

13.a Draft Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar 2024 - 2025 12 - 15

13.b Special Education Plan May 2025 16 - 90

#### Sections for Discussion

19A. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

19B. Accessibility Annual Report

20. Parent Guide to Special Education

21. Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies

22. Board Improvement and Equity Plan

### **14. Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees**

14.a Special Services Superintendent Update – May 2025 91 - 96

14.b Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Student Achievement Plan 2024-2025 Report Back and Draft Student Achievement Plan (SAP) 2025-2026 for Consultation 97 - 132

### **15. Consideration of Motions For Which Previous Notice Has Been Given**

15.a From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Improved Accommodation Process for Students with Neurodivergent Differences (Disabilities) / Special Education Needs 133 - 134

15.b From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a “Superpower” not a Disability 135 - 136

15.c From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Motion to Reform Disciplinary Practices for Students with Learning Differences (Disabilities) and Special Education Needs 137 - 138

### **16. Unfinished Business**

17. **Matters Referred/Deferred to the Committee by the Board and Other Committees**
18. **List of Communications**
19. **Association Reports**
20. **Inquiries**
21. **Pending List**
22. **Adjournment**

### **OUR 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.*

### **OUR VISION**

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



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

**HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025**

### **PRESENT:**

#### **Trustees:**

F. D'Amico  
A. Kennedy

#### **External Members:**

G. Wedge, Chair  
G. Feldman, Vice Chair  
R. De Belchior – Virtual  
J. Di Francesco - Virtual  
L. Mastrogiuseppe – Virtual  
A. Pabon – Virtual  
M. Seymour - Virtual

#### **Staff:**

A. Della Mora  
C. Fernandes  
M. Meehan  
F. Cifelli  
V. Cocco  
A. Coke  
D. Comacchio  
O. De Figueiredo  
M. Gendron  
R. Macchia  
K. Morra  
  
S. Hinds-Barnett, Acting Recording Secretary

#### **4. Roll Call and Apologies**

An Apology was extended on behalf of Tyler Munro. Trustee Rizzo, Lisa Mason and Ivona Novak were absent.

#### **5. Approval of the Agenda**

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Goeffrey Feldman, that the Agenda, as amended to include Member Statement, Item 9a) From Jennifer Di Francesco regarding Heartfelt Gratitude to Volunteers on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and throughout the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), in Celebration of Volunteer Month, April, be approved.

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

#### **6. Declarations of Interest**

Trustee Kennedy declared a Conflict of Interest in Item 10a) 2025 – 2026 Budget Framework – R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, as she has family members who are employees of the Board. Trustee Kennedy indicated that she would neither participate in discussions regarding that Item nor vote.

#### **7. Approval and Signing of the Minutes**

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the Minutes of the Meeting held March 5, 2025 be approved.

The Motion was declared

CARRIED



## 9. Member Statements

- 9a) **From Jennifer Di Francesco regarding Heartfelt Gratitude to Volunteers on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and throughout the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), in Celebration of Volunteer Month, April.**

Trustee Kennedy left the virtual room at 7:09 pm due to a Declaration of Interest in Item 10a) below, as earlier indicated.

## 10. Presentations

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Jennifer Di Francesco, that Item 10a) be adopted as follows:

- 10a) **2025 - 2026 Budget Framework - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer** received.

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy returned to the horseshoe at 7:34 pm.

## 11. Notices of Motions

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Trustee D'Amico, that Item 11a) be adopted as follows:

- 11a) **From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Improved Accommodation Process for Students with Neurodivergent Differences (Disabilities) / Special Education Needs** that this be considered at the May 21, 2025 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting:

WHEREAS: The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) serves over 20,000 students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) and special education needs;

WHEREAS: The TCDSB has a duty under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights to accommodate the learning needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) up to the point of undue hardship;

WHEREAS: If a parent /guardian is concerned that TCDSB is not delivering accommodations included in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or is otherwise not effectively accommodating their child's learning needs, they require a swift, user-friendly, independent, and fair avenue equipped with the needed expertise to address their concerns; and

WHEREAS: The current procedures of TCDSB are insufficient, as they are not tailored to the needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) and do not ensure that the TCDSB official addressing the issue has the necessary expertise or authority to implement needed accommodations.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the TCDSB should establish a prompt, user-friendly, fair, and effective process for parents/guardians of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs to seek a resolution if they believe that TCDSB is not providing accommodation for their child's learning needs. This includes cases where TCDSB is not delivering on IEP commitments or has refused an accommodation requested by the parent/guardian;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the TCDSB official who receives and addresses complaints from parents/guardians of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs should: a) Have expertise and experience with the education of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs; b) Be independent of those TCDSB staff who have dealt with the student's needs in question; c) Have expertise and training in effective mediation/alternate dispute resolution; d) Have the authority to direct any corrective action they deem necessary;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that if, after review, the TCDSB decides not to provide the requested accommodation, the TCDSB shall provide written reasons for this decision;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that every effort should be made to mediate and resolve disagreements between the family and TCDSB. If the matter cannot be resolved, there should be an option for the Parent/Guardian and the TCDSB to appoint an external mediator or review body to consider the issue within a short time frame;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that this process should be designed to address the needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs and should not include unrelated student complaints;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that this motion outlines the guiding principles for the proposed process while allowing flexibility in its design and implementation to align with Ministry requirements. The new process should become available to parents/caregivers or students after they have first brought their concerns to their teacher and principal; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the process should be available on the TCDSB website, easily found and accessible. The information should also be emailed to all parents in the TCDSB, via multiple avenues, which includes, but is not limited to principals, teachers, SEAC, school messenger, etc.

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Trustee D'Amico, that Item 11b) be adopted as follows:

- 11b) From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a “Superpower” not a Disability** that this be considered at the May 21, 2025 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting:

WHEREAS: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) should no longer be categorized as a "disorder" or "disability" but instead recognized as a cognitive difference within the framework of neurodiversity. By shifting this label, we aim to reduce stigma, highlight strengths, and promote supportive environments that empower individuals with ADHD to thrive;

WHEREAS: Scientific research increasingly identifies ADHD as a variation in cognitive functioning rather than a pathological condition. Studies highlight that ADHD traits such as impulsivity, hyperfocus, and risk-taking have evolutionary roots, which may have been advantageous in dynamic environments. Viewing ADHD as a

difference rather than a deficit aligns with the growing neurodiversity movement, which recognizes diverse cognitive profiles as part of human variation;

WHEREAS: ADHD individuals frequently exhibit traits that can be powerful assets, including creativity, spontaneity, and innovation. Research shows that individuals with ADHD excel in fields requiring dynamic thinking, adaptability, and unconventional problem-solving. Labeling ADHD as a "disorder" focuses disproportionately on weaknesses rather than fostering environments where ADHD traits can be leveraged for success;

WHEREAS: Challenges associated with ADHD often stem from traditional education and work systems that prioritize prolonged focus, rigid routines, and low stimulation settings. ADHD individuals may thrive when provided with flexible structures, engaging tasks, and creative outlets. By framing ADHD as a cognitive difference, institutions can shift from imposing conformity to nurturing strengths;

WHEREAS: The "disorder" and "disability" labels contribute to stigma, reducing self-esteem and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Reframing ADHD as a cognitive difference encourages individuals to embrace their unique abilities and seek environments where they can excel; and

WHEREAS: ADHD should be categorized as a Cognitive Difference under the broader umbrella of Neurodiversity. This terminology acknowledges the unique cognitive profile of ADHD individuals without pathologizing their experiences. ADHD is a Superpower!

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that by recognizing ADHD as a cognitive difference rather than a disorder or disability, we can foster inclusive environments that highlight strengths, reduce stigma, and promote positive outcomes for individuals with ADHD. This motion calls for the TCDSB to adopt this revised perspective, ensuring students with ADHD are valued, respected, heard, and supported in their growth and achievements;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees to write a letter to the Ministry of Education from the TCDSB Board of Trustees asking the Ministry of Education to recognize ADHD under the neurodiversity framework in the Education Act. Research shows that ADHD individuals have unique strengths—such as creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability—that can thrive in the right learning environments. By reframing ADHD, implementing inclusive educational strategies, and training teachers, staff, and administration on the research, development, and

evolution in thought on ADHD, we can better support students to reach their full potential; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the TCDSB provide targeted support and professional development for educators to deliver curriculum using strength-based, neurodiverse-informed approaches. This includes strategies that engage creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, and other executive functioning skills, while also offering flexible accommodations that empower students with ADHD to thrive academically and socially.

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Trustee D'Amico, that Item 11c) be adopted as follows:

- 11c) From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Motion to Reform Disciplinary Practices for Students with Learning Differences (Disabilities) and Special Education Needs** that this be considered at the May 21, 2025 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting:

WHEREAS: Students with learning disabilities and special education needs, including ADHD, autism, and other neurodivergent conditions, often face disciplinary actions that do not align with their educational and developmental needs;

WHEREAS: punitive measures such as withholding recess, detentions, and exclusion from classroom activities disproportionately impact these students and do not address the root causes of behavioral challenges;

WHEREAS: Research from the American Academy of Pediatrics and educational psychologists highlights that recess and movement are essential for self-regulation, focus, and emotional well-being, particularly for students with ADHD and other learning differences; and

WHEREAS: Traditional punitive approaches often exacerbate behavioral challenges rather than support students in developing self-management skills. A shift toward positive, inclusive discipline aligns with human rights laws, Ontario's Education Act, and best practices in special education.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy prohibits the removal of recess and other physical activity as a form of punishment for students with learning disabilities or special education needs;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that staff are training on trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming disciplinary approaches;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy encourages restorative practices, including conflict resolution and behavioral support strategies tailored to individual student needs;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy Implements a review system to track and assess disciplinary actions taken against students with special education needs to ensure compliance with equitable practices;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that a Positive Discipline Policy is adopted and ensures all schools within its jurisdiction implement the outlined practices by September 2025 for the new school year;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the policy prohibit the use of regulation-based support - such as scheduled breaks, sensory room access, or movement opportunities, etc. - as contingent rewards. Resources that these children need to self-regulate should never be taken away because of not completing work or behavior discipline;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that all school-based staff are training on trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming disciplinary approaches; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC further recommend to the Board of Trustees that the adoption and implementation of preventative, strength-based strategies that foster emotional regulation, connection, and engagement. These proactive approaches minimize the need for reactive disciplinary measures and contribute to more inclusive, supportive learning environments for all students.

## **12. Consent and Review**

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

13b) Special Education Plan April 2025

Section for Discussion:

16) Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies –  
J. Di Francesco; and

14b) Special Services Superintendent Update - April 2025 – Trustee Kennedy.

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that the Items not held be received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

**ITEMS NOT HELD AS CAPTURED IN THE ABOVE MOTION**

13a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft);

13b) Special Education Plan April 2025

Sections for Discussion:

17) Specialized Health Support Services

18a) Staff Development

18b) Professional Learning Plan;

14a) Annual Report on the Accessibility Standards Policy, A.35; and

19a) Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) – Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Education Advocacy Resources.

**13. Annual Calendar Items**

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Jennifer Di Francesco, that Section 16) of Item 13b) be adopted as follows:

**13b) Special Education Plan April 2025:**

**Section for Discussion:**

**16. Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

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

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 14b) be adopted as follows:

**14b) Special Services Superintendent Update – April 2025** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

**22. Adjournment**

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Jennifer Di Francesco, that the meeting be adjourned.



On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

---

SECRETARY

---

CHAIR

# Draft SEAC Annual Calendar 2024-2025

Month	
September	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Develop or review SEAC annual goals for the new academic year</li> </ul>
	<b>This month is:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FASD Awareness Day – September 9</li> </ul>
October	<b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board's General Model for Special Education</li> <li>2. Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process</li> <li>3. Special Education Placements Provided by the Board</li> </ol>
	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> </ul>
	<b>This month is...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism Awareness (Canada)</li> <li>• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness (Canada)</li> <li>• Dress Purple Day (Ontario)</li> <li>• Learning Disabilities Awareness (Canada)</li> <li>• World Mental Health Day (October 10)</li> </ul>
November	<b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Individual Education Plan</li> <li>4A. Individual Education Plan – Elementary – Template</li> <li>4B. Individual Education Plan – Secondary - Template</li> </ol>
	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> </ul>
December	<b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Special Education Staff</li> <li>6. Specialized Equipment</li> <li>7. Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs</li> </ol>
	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• SEAC Elections (Inaugural)</li> </ul>

# Draft SEAC Annual Calendar 2024-2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAC Elections: Chair &amp; vice-Chair (Annual)</li> <li>• SEAC Advent Prayer Service</li> </ul>
	<p><b>This month is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)</li> </ul>
<b>January</b>	<p><b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b></p> <p>8. Transition Planning 9. Roles and Responsibilities 10. Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities</p>
	<p><b>Agenda items include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> </ul>
	<p><b>This month is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell Let's Talk Day (late January)</li> <li>• Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ January 16 – Congregated Gifted Programs</li> <li>○ January 23 – Programs &amp; Services Available Through AccessOAP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<p><b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b></p> <p>11. Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario 12. The Board's Consultation Process 13. Special Education Advisory Committee</p>
	<p><b>Agenda items include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Safe School Report</li> </ul>
	<p><b>This month is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychology Awareness Month</li> <li>• Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ February 19 – Transition to high school for Autistic students on the credit earning pathways</li> <li>○ February 20 – Transition to high school, intensive support programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Draft SEAC Annual Calendar 2024-2025

<b>March</b>	<p><b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b></p> <p>14A. Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs Strategy for JK to Grade 1</p> <p>14B. Classroom Support Process</p> <p>14C. Early Identification Community Resources</p> <p>14D. Early Identification Parent Brochure</p> <p>15. Educational and other Assessments</p> <p><b>Agenda items include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Financial Outlook</li> <li>• Special Education Funding Overview</li> </ul> <p><b>This month is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easter Seals Awareness Month</li> <li>• World Down Syndrome Day – March 21</li> <li>• National Social Work Week (1<sup>st</sup> week)</li> <li>• CYW &amp; EA Appreciation Day (first Monday)</li> <li>• Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ March 1 – Preparing for Life After High School; DSO and Passport Funding Agency</li> <li>◦ March 25 – Life After High School: What's Next?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<p><b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b></p> <p>16. Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies</p> <p>17. Specialized Health Support Services</p> <p>18A. Staff Development</p> <p>18B. Professional Learning Plan</p> <p><b>Agenda items include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Update to Special Education Programs for 2025-2026</li> <li>• Budget Update</li> <li>• Accessibility Report</li> </ul> <p><b>This month is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism Awareness Day – April 2</li> <li>• Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ April 11 or 14 - Project Search Information Night</li> <li>◦ April 22 – SMHO - The intersection of addictions and mental health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Draft SEAC Annual Calendar 2024-2025

<b>May</b>	<b>Special Education Plan sections for discussion:</b> 19A. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 19B. Accessibility Annual Report 20. Parent Guide to Special Education 21. Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies 22. Board Improvement and Equity Plan
	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Budget Update</li> </ul>
	<b>This month is...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Mental Health Week (first week)</li> <li>• Speech, Language &amp; Hearing Awareness</li> <li>• Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May 7 – SMHO - Recognizing signs of substance use and behavioural addictions</li> <li>○ May 13 – Surrey Place - Fostering Emotional Resilience</li> <li>○ May 14 – SMHO - How to talk about substance use at home</li> <li>○ May 22 – SMHO - Current trends in student substance use in Ontario</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>June</b>	<b>Agenda items include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of Special Services Update</li> <li>• Budget Update</li> </ul>
	<b>This month is...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Deaf Blind Awareness</li> <li>• Upcoming Parent Webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ June 4 – SMHO – Technology overuse and problematic gaming</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

**MAY 2025**



## SECTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 19A. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- 19B. Accessibility Annual Report
- 20. Parent Guide to Special Education
- 21. Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies
- 22. Board Improvement and Equity Plan

---

## **Section 19A**

### Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



**POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION**

**SUB-SECTION:**

**APPENDIX NAME: MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**Date Approved:**

September 12, 2013

**Date of Review:**

December 2022

**Dates of Amendment:**

January 25, 2018

**Cross Reference:**

TCDSB Policy (A.35) Accessibility Standards

TCDSB Policy (A.36) Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*

Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11

*Ontario Human Rights Code*

*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*

Notification of Disruption of Service at TCDSB Procedures

TCDSB 2017 Accessibility Annual Status Report

## **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2017 TO DECEMBER 2022**





## **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD December 2017–December 2022**

**Prepared by**

**Accessibility Working Group  
In accordance with  
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act  
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**

**December 2017**

- This publication is available through the Toronto Catholic District School Board's:
  - [website](http://www.tcdsb.org) (www.tcdsb.org → FOR COMMUNITY → Accessibility Policy & Multi-Year Plan)
  - Catholic Education Centre/Head Office (Communications Department- 80 Sheppard Avenue East)
- Hard copies will be made available to all departments, schools and the Catholic School Parent Councils upon request.
- Accessible formats of the plan are available from the Communications Department upon request.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Cover Page	1
Plan Availability	2
Table of Contents	3
 <b>Section</b>	
1. Aim and Objectives	4
2. Commitment to Accessibility Planning	5
3. Description of Toronto Catholic District School Board	6
4. Message from the Director of Education	8
5. Members of Accessibility Working Group	9
6. Strategy for prevention and removal of barriers	10
7. Barrier-Identification Methodologies	14
8. Recent Barrier Removal Achievements	16
9. Barriers to be addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	19
10. Review and Monitoring Process	22
11. Communication of the Plan	23
 <b>Appendices:</b>	
Appendix 1: Definitions	25
Appendix 2: Trustees 2017/2018	27



## 1.0 **Aim**

This multi-year Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Integration Accessibility Standards Regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. The Plan describes the measures that the Board will take over the five year period from 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the Toronto Catholic District School Board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The plan will be guided by the Board's Accessibility Standards-Policy Statement.

### **Objectives**

This Plan:

- 1.1 Describes the process by which the Toronto Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.2 Reviews recent efforts of the Toronto Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.3 Describes the measures the Toronto Catholic District School Board will take in the period 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- 1.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every 5 years;
- 1.6 Describes how the Toronto Catholic District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.



## **2.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

This plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and Accessibility Working Group. It will be presented to the Board for approval. The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- 2.1** Maintaining an Accessibility Working Group;
- 2.2** Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities;
- 2.3** Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Working Group will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies and procedures and to those under review;
- 2.4** Improving access including, but not limited to, facilities, IT services, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community. Consideration of ongoing identification of barriers will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Working Group and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Group to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that will enable the Toronto Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.



### **3.0 Description of the Toronto Catholic District School Board**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is a publicly funded Catholic school board for Toronto, Ontario. It is one of the two English boards of education in the City of Toronto.

With over 90,000 students, the TCDSB is one of the largest school boards in Canada. The TCDSB governs 201 schools in the Toronto area: 30 secondary schools, 168 elementary schools, and 3 schools that combine both secondary and elementary grades.

The TCDSB has 12 wards represented by 12 trustees and 2 student trustees. The Chair of the Board and the Vice-Chair are elected at the inaugural meeting of the Board, and serve for one year.

#### **Our 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 of TCDSB**

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

#### **We believe...**

- in the worth and dignity of every person
- in the critical role that our Catholic schools play in promoting Gospel values, social justice, environmental responsibility, human solidarity and the common good
- that high standards and expectations foster greater achievement



- that people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment grounded in respect for the diversity of every person
- that teaching is responsive to individual needs
- that teaching and learning should be rooted in research and evidence
- that each of us shares responsibility for creating collaborative communities of learning
- that equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusivity are integral to the Catholic community
- that the 21st century competencies – collaboration, real world problem solving and innovation, knowledge construction, skilled communication, self-regulation and the use of information communication technology for learning, are essential.

"Our vision of Catholic education invites each one of us—parents, students, teachers, principals, chaplains, support staff, trustees, clergy, supervisory personnel— to work together as a community of believers committed to putting the values of our faith into practice in the daily life of the school, the home, and in all of society."

([\*Fulfilling the Promise\*](#), Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario)



#### **4.0 Message from the Director of Education**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an educational community that values the dignity and worth of every individual in its care. In this context, plans are developed to support the well-being of all its members. To this end, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been developed to address the needs of its members who have disabilities.

Our Board currently demonstrates leadership in working with people with disabilities through its special education programs and services to students with special needs, through its accommodations for employees who are disabled and by ensuring that buildings and facilities become increasingly accessible.

It is our hope that all parents, students and employee groups become familiar with accessibility issues and work together to fulfill our mission of providing a community that is safe and welcoming and an example of a Christian community that is highly accessible.

Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education



## **5.0 Members of Accessibility Working Group**

The Accessibility Working Group members consist of a core group of advisors, some of whom are persons with disabilities, depending on the area of the plan addressed.

The members represent the following groups:

- Senior Staff
  - Superintendent of Human Resources
  - Superintendent of Special Services
  - Superintendent of Student Success
- Staff Representative(s)
- Student Representative(s)
- Information Technology
- Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Facilities Services
- Transportation Services
- Parent Representative(s)

The Accessibility Working Group will meet to review progress and to respond to the requirements of the AODA. Evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier removal and prevention strategies will be on-going. The Working Group will assist staff regarding roles in the implementation of the Annual Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Working Group developed the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for December 2017-December 2022.





## **6.0 Strategy for prevention and removal of barriers**

Beginning in September 1, 2012, the principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments have informed Toronto Catholic District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services. The multi-year accessibility plan places particular emphasis on the provisions of the regulations made under the AODA with regard to service, information and communications, employment and school transportation.

Initiatives at the local level and system wide address accessibility issues and hence identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Accessibility initiatives are addressed through the various departments, including but not limited to: Planning and Facilities, Special Services, Health and Safety, and Human Resources.

### **Planning & Facilities:**

The TCDSB has undertaken a number of initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

The Capital Development and Planning services department continues to ensure all schools that are in the design and construction phase, or any additions made to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards. Presently, there are four (4) new elementary school in construction – scheduled to open in late 2018 or the spring of 2019. The Board is proceeding with three (3) replacement secondary schools and four (4) replacement elementary schools. In addition, the Board has completed the construction of four (4) elementary school additions with three (3) other elementary school additions underway.



The Facilities Department ensures that procedures are in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces, and for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. This includes providing notice of the temporary disruptions and contact information both on-site and electronically, when possible. ([TCDSB Notice of Disruption Document](#)) Malfunctioning or broken accessibility components will be prioritized on work orders.

The following accessibility features have also been installed in some schools several years ago from a one-time accessibility grant:

- Washroom modifications
- Ramps
- Wheelchair Stair-Lifts
- Automatic Door Openers
- Elevator Repairs
- Lifting Devices
- Structural Wall Modifications

The Board operates a large number of schools that either have one (1) story or alternatively, at schools which are greater than one (1) story, have a passenger elevator to assist individuals who may have mobility issues and who may experience a physical/architectural barrier if the individual is unable to utilize the stairwells. All accommodation options will be reviewed for individuals working in a multiple-story building without an elevator.

Through the annual budget presentation, specific projects are identified, prioritized and completed in a coordinated effort between the Planning & Facilities Department, Special Services and the local school Superintendents.



### **Special Services:**

Student accessibility projects and initiatives are reported to the Ministry of Education through the TCDSB's Special Education Plan. This plan is posted on the TCDSB's website [www.tcdsb.org](http://www.tcdsb.org).

Through the Intensive Support Amount (ISA), the Board has been able to provide assistive technology and many more accommodations at the individual school for students in need due to a disability.

The ISA process allows for individualized equipment such as a walker, standers, sensory materials, lifts, computers and assistive software to be purchased on behalf of individual students, if it is deemed essential for them to have the equipment in order to access the curriculum.

### **Human Resources/Employment:**

The TCDSB is an equal opportunity employer. In this regard, the Board recruits qualified staff specific to requirements of the particular job. Routine processes allow staff to be placed in facilities that accommodate their disability. The TCDSB accommodates staff with disabilities by providing necessary equipment that allows staff members to perform their duties in a barrier free workplace. The TCDSB has experienced professionals in place to assist staff members with disabilities to appropriately, safely and respectfully accommodate the employee in the workplace.

The workplace accommodation process practiced by the professionals in the Human Resources department is outlined in the Board's Workplace Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities Policy. Itinerant employees are encouraged to contact the site/supervisor prior to or upon arrival at the worksite to discuss accessibility needs.

### **Customer Service:**

The TCDSB updated its Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities policy (A.36) on September 22, 2016. The TCDSB remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.



The TCDSB regularly solicits feedback about the manner in which it provides service and facilities to people with disabilities. Feedback processes vary including: in person, by telephone, in writing by mail, hard copy, diskette or fax, or by some other communication technology.



## 7.0 **Barrier Identification Methodologies**

The Accessibility Working Group will use the following identification methodologies. Staff with disabilities will be consulted throughout the process.

- (1) Presentation to Senior Staff:
  - Input and feedback will be provided as the plan evolves and consultation will be on-going.
- (2) Presentation to Employee Groups:
  - Information regarding the plan will be provided and the working group will prioritize the removal of barriers.
- (3) Presentation to Trustees:
  - Providing information regarding the plan and presented prior to posting the updated annual plan.
- (4) Data Gathering:
  - Information to be gathered from all TCDSB stakeholders to identify barriers and measures that would make the TCDSB more accessible to people with disabilities.

Data will be gathered by either facilitating interviews, focus groups and/or surveys from three (3) sources: the Board's central office, schools and individuals. In addition, data will also be gathered through the review of policies. The data-gathering instruments will address all areas of accessibility barriers (physical, architectural, communication, information, attitudinal, technological, policy and practice).

**Board Central Office-** Department heads and other key staff will be contacted.

**Schools-** A representative which may include parents or members of the school community.



**Individuals-** Individual students, parents and staff will be invited to respond and to contribute their suggestions in the area of accessibility. Information will be gathered from individuals using surveys and/or focus groups.

While the primary focus of the surveys, focus groups or interviews is to gather data for informed decision making, it is expected that they will also serve to raise the awareness of respondents regarding the question of accessibility and accessibility planning within the TCDSB community.

In gathering the data, deliberate efforts will be made to encourage participation from people with disabilities. This will include extensive communication of the plan and widespread invitations for input and feedback.

Pamphlets will be distributed to local schools to raise awareness on accessibility. Principals are encouraged to add accessibility awareness as a topic for discussion at staff meetings.



## **8.0 Recent Barrier Removal Achievements**

Between 2012-2017, the TCDSB implemented projects and programs to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to meet requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

This document includes a summary of the accessibility initiatives the TCDSB has completed.

### **Information and Communications**

The TCDSB ensures it can identify and have ready access to resources that enable the Board to provide information and communication supports upon request and in a timely manner to persons with disabilities. (e.g. access to board meetings/school events)

The TCDSB has ensured readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.

The TCDSB has reviewed the status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources upon request in anticipation of 2020 deadline.

The TCDSB Information Technology (IT) Services has reviewed accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards.

### **Employment**

During the 2012/2013 calendar year, the hiring and recruitment practices were reviewed with a view that employment is based upon qualifications and the ability to complete the core functions of the job description. The hiring and recruitment process for job classifications and professions at the Board was reviewed in order to minimize any possibility of individuals with disabilities being disadvantaged with accessibility barriers when seeking employment with the TCDSB.



Under the AODA, the recruitment process is to be barrier free for job applicants with disabilities and when making offers of employment the Board must notify the successful candidate of the policies in place regarding accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace.

By January 1, 2014 the TCDSB was required under the AODA to notify all job applicants when they are selected to participate further in the selection process that accommodation is available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. The Board must consult with the applicant who is selected and who requests an accommodation and is required to provide and arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation. The TCDSB must also notify all successful applicants, when making offers of employment, of policies, procedures and plans for accommodating persons with disabilities.

### **Architectural & Physical Barriers**

All designs of new schools and additions have building features that incorporate principles of universal and barrier-free design to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and in many cases to address additional exceptional program needs.

Accessibility alterations and provisions of specialized facilities within existing schools continue where identified. Accessibility is addressed with the provision of power door operators at major interior and exterior doors, unisex barrier-free accessible washrooms, ramps at level changes, enhanced ventilation requirements, appropriate signage and audio or visual emergency alarm systems.

### **Policies**

The TCDSB's Accessibility Policy, in accordance with the AODA, reinforces the Board's commitment to providing accessible educational material, facilities, transportation and human resource practices for employees, students, volunteers and community members with disabilities.





## Training

In accordance with AODA requirements the TCDSB provided interactive training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities for school board employees, volunteers and all other persons who provide goods and services or facilities on behalf of the school board. All school boards will be obligated to present this training.

Link to training modules:

Accessibility Awareness:

<https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/default.aspx>

Customer Service Standards:

<https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/Customer-Service-Standards-Training-AODA.aspx>



## **9.0 Barriers to be addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011 pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* identified specific requirements to achieve accessibility in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation

These requirements build on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which came into force in 2007.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board intends, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2017-2022, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the Standards areas of current Regulations. This is in addition to ongoing work the Board is undertaking with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board's physical environment.

### **By January 1, 2020, the Board needs to:**

(1) Provide accessible school library resources when asked. If available, provide accessible versions of print resources and materials such as large print, electronic or audio versions.

#### Exceptions

The Board does not need to provide accessible formats for:

- rare books
- special collections
- archived materials
- donated books and materials

Types of accessible formats:

- large print
- electronic versions



- CDs or other audio, including podcasts
- braille

Types of conversion-ready formats:

Electronic or digital formats that are easy to convert into accessible formats such as HTML and structured Microsoft Word files.

How to comply:

To determine what format to provide, speak with the students who will be using the content. They may already be aware of ways to access it or convert it. If it is not possible to provide information in an accessible or conversion-ready format, your library representative will need to:

- explain why it cannot provide the materials as requested
- provide a summary of the information that cannot be converted

## (2) Make printed learning materials accessible

If the Board produces other printed learning materials, it must make them accessible or easy to convert into other formats like accessible Microsoft Word files.

If you are unable to provide the content in an accessible or conversion-ready format, you must:

- explain to individual why you cannot convert the information
- provide a summary of the information



**By January 1, 2021, the Board needs to:**

Make websites and web content accessible.

The TCDSB public website and its content must meet WCAG 2.0, as outlined in the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

The TCDSB does not have to make its internal website (intranet) accessible. The Board does not have to modify content posted before 2012. If asked, the Board will need to work with individuals to make the content available to them in an alternate format such as large print or braille.

Policies:

The TCDSB's current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and amended every five years. The TCDSB's Accessibility Policy, in accordance with the AODA, reinforces the Board's commitment to providing accessible educational material, facilities, transportation and human resource practices for employees, students, volunteers and community members with disabilities.



## **10.0 Review and Monitoring Process**

The Accessibility Working Group meets during the year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

The Accessibility Working Group will ensure that in respect of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:

- (a) An annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan is prepared.
- (b) At least once every 5 years the plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant committees.



### **11.0 Communication of the Plan**

In addition to the public availability of the plan as referenced earlier on Page 2, the Toronto Catholic District School Board will post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website. The Board will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to the Superintendent of Human Resources.



## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Definitions
- Appendix 2: Trustees



## APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

### BARRIER:

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including:

**Physical** barrier- Objects added to the environment, doors, windows, elevators, furniture, workstations, recreational facilities, playgrounds, bathroom hardware, etc.

**Architectural** barrier- inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, web sites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.

**Communication** barrier- Difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone; difficulties interacting with staff, difficulties receiving training and articulating in the recruitment and interview process.

**Attitudinal** barrier- Staff who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities; staff who refuse to provide service; discriminatory behaviours.

**Technological** barrier- Computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches; inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

**Policy or a Practice**- Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent one from performing their job satisfactorily; or from serving the public; or that restrict public participation.

### DISABILITY:

- (a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfiguration that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation,





lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- (d) A mental disorder, or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under an insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; ("handicap")



## APPENDIX 2: TRUSTEES 2017-2018

### **TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES 2017-2018**

#### **Wards**

- |                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Joseph Martino                | 416-512-3401 |
| 2. Ann Andrachuk                 | 416-512-3402 |
| 3. Sal Piccininni                | 416-512-3403 |
| 4. Patrizia Bottoni              | 416-512-3404 |
| 5. Maria Rizzo, Vice-Chair       | 416-512-3405 |
| 6. Frank D'Amico                 | 416-512-3406 |
| 7. Michael Del Grande            | 416-512-3407 |
| 8. Garry Tanuan                  | 416-512-3408 |
| 9. Jo-Ann Davis                  | 416-512-3409 |
| 10. Barbara Poplawski,<br>Chair  | 416-512-3410 |
| 11. Angela Kennedy               | 416-512-3411 |
| 12. Nancy Crawford               | 416-512-3412 |
| Rhea Carlisle                    |              |
| Student Trustees                 | 416-512-3413 |
| Joel Ndongmi,<br>Student Trustee | 416-512-3417 |

---

## **Section 19B**

### Accessibility Annual Report



# ANNUAL STATUS REPORT FOR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2022/2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

*“Do to others, as you would have them do to you.”*  
**Luke 6:31**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) 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.

The TCDSB is committed to upholding a learning and working environment that actively promotes a culture of accessibility for its entire Catholic community. This involves actively removing visible and invisible barriers to accessibility.

During the past school year, the TCDSB continued its efforts to support the elimination of barriers for individuals with disabilities. According to section 4 (1) of Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards, in the AODA the TCDSB is required to publish reports on the measures adopted to implement the priorities outlined in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.



**IN GOD'S IMAGE:** *Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope*

## Accessibility Achievements in 2022/2023

- **APRIL: National AccessAbility Week** – partnership with Rick Hansen Foundation and Easter Seals to help support events, school resources and activities to promote a culture of accessibility.
- **OCTOBER: TREAT Accessibility** – The Toronto Catholic District School Board supported accessible trick-or-treating and created community awareness for students with disabilities. – supported schools with resources, guest speakers and activities including printed materials.
- **OCTOBER: Barriers Students with Disabilities Grant:** begin work with Student Trustees CSLIT and ECSLIT to help engage and include students to:
  - a. Empower students to play a leadership/allyship role in promoting inclusive, barrier-free school environments and raise awareness about the value and benefits of accessibility and inclusion.
- **NOVEMBER: TCDSB Accessibility Compliance Report for Regional Internal Audit Team (RIAT) Legislative Compliance.**
- **DECEMBER: Partnerships with Rick Hansen Foundation** – reviewer for staff Training Modules to address breaking down attitudinal barriers and accessibility training and awareness.
- **DECEMBER: International Persons with Disabilities Week** enabled the Rick Hansen Ambassador Speaker series for students and staff.
- **ONGOING: Monthly AODA meetings** with Capital Development, Environmental Support Services and Special Services to review and action all AODA requests and all new school buildings.
- **ONGOING: Working Group** in the process of reviewing the TCDSB AODA Plan.

## SECTION 1

### Architectural & Physical Barriers

All designs of new schools and additions have building features that incorporate principles of universal and barrier-free design to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and in many cases to address additional exceptional program needs.

Accessibility alterations and provisions of specialized facilities within existing schools continue where identified. Accessibility is addressed with the provision of power door operators at major interior and exterior doors, unisex barrier-free accessible washrooms, ramps at level changes, enhanced ventilation requirements, appropriate signage and audio or visual emergency alarm systems.

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<p>A. Major retrofit at St. Paul VI for a new childcare was completed in 2024 which incorporated barrier-free door access hardware into the building.</p> <p>B. Completion of new construction at the following schools in 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regina Mundi Retrofit at former Dante Alighieri</li> <li>- Holy Angels Elementary School new school</li> <li>- St. Leo Elementary School new school</li> <li>- St. Matthias School new school</li> <li>- St. Raymond new school</li> </ul> <p>C. Numerous schools remain in design development.</p> <p><i>Refer to Section 2 for an additional list of projects</i></p>	<p>Continue design meetings with the Superintendent of AODA</p> <p>Local Design Committee meetings with stakeholders</p>

#### Expected Outcomes By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

Complete the design and construction of numerous schools to meet the requirements and expectations of AODA and the Ontario Building Code.

## SECTION 2

### Capital Development and Planning Services, Asset Management & Renewal, Environmental Support Services

The TCDSB has undertaken a number of initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

The Capital Development and Planning services department continues to ensure all schools that are in the design and construction phase, or any additions made to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards.

The Environmental Support Services Department ensures that procedures are in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces, and for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. This includes providing notice of the temporary disruptions and contact information both on-site and electronically, when possible. ([TCDSB Notice of Disruption Document](#)) Malfunctioning or broken accessibility components will be prioritized on work orders.

Through the annual budget presentation, specific projects are identified, prioritized and completed in a coordinated effort between the Planning & Facilities

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exterior work that contains accessibility features (Barrier-free parking, line painting, ramps, etc.).</li> <li>Universal Washrooms</li> <li>Washroom renovations</li> <li>Exterior door replacements with new door operators and hardware</li> <li>Elevators</li> <li>Lifts</li> <li>Floor coverings</li> <li>Guardrails</li> <li>Any Accommodation work completed either through Renewal or Environmental Support Services</li> </ul>	<p>Refer to Appendix A for specific accomplishments.</p> <p>Monthly meeting to review all projects and AODA requests.</p> <p>Meetings with project supervisors to review project designs.</p>
<b>Expected Outcomes</b> By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024	

Continue to complete requested projects and planned projects to meet the accessibility needs of staff, students and all stakeholders and improve accessibility throughout the Board by incorporating accessible design where applicable in renovations.

## SECTION 3

### Transportation

The student Transportation unit continues to provide integrated accessible school transportation, or appropriate alternative accessible transportation services for students with disabilities where integrated services are not possible or not the best option due to the nature of the disability or safety concerns. Through the IPRC process, specific needs are identified and passed to transportation via the Individual Student Transportation Plan while documentation around the services provided by student transportation are provided to families through this process as well.

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<p>A. Passed Website Accessibility Test</p> <p>The transportation consortium passed the Website Accessibility test providing various tools and items to allow stakeholders with various disabilities access to transportation information.</p> <p>B. Published and Awarded Student Transportation Request for Tender.</p> <p>Items such as the inclusion of large-scale wheelchair-accessible school buses were included so that students in wheelchairs can accompany their peers on the same bus when attending field trips or other events where travel is required.</p>	<p>Must update and continue to review documentation on the website to ensure it is in accessible formats.</p> <p>Ensure that schools are aware of this service and that it is included in the approved vendor list for school review.</p>

#### Expected Outcomes By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

Continue to deliver accessible school transportation solutions for our stakeholders.



**SECTION 4****Design of Public Space**

We are committed to designing, monitoring, and maintaining and repairing accessible elements of public spaces

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Monitoring/Next Steps</b>
A. Service Counter at Catholic Education Centre	Continue to collect feedback for improvement.
B. Emergency Prevention and Maintenance: Fire Safety Plans are in the process of being updated to reflect Toronto Fire and the approved process for evacuation. Areas of Safe Refuge are being created where required.	ESS - As necessary and ongoing As required and ongoing Ongoing and working with all stakeholders
C. Temporary Disruptions: all service disruptions will be posted on the TCDSB Accessibility webpage.	
D. Identify accessible entrances in our buildings project.	

**Expected Outcomes** By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

All projects are designed to meet the accessibility requirements of the AODA and the Ontario Building Code

## SECTION 5

### Special Services

Special Education information regarding supporting students with special education needs, including those with disabilities, is reported to the Ministry of Education annually through the TCDSB's Special Education Plan. This plan is posted on the TCDSB's website [www.tcdsb.org](http://www.tcdsb.org).

Through the Special Equipment Amount (SEA), the Board has been able to provide assistive technology, materials, resources, and equipment at the individual school for students in need due to a disability.

The SEA process allows for individualized equipment such as a walker, standers, sensory materials, lifts, computers and assistive software to be purchased on behalf of individual students if it is deemed essential for them to have the equipment in order to access the curriculum.

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<p>A. Ensure that requests for Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment for students are processed and appropriate equipment is provided.</p> <p>B. Holland Bloorview: Dear Everybody Campaign, Project Inclusion Learning Modules, Staff Professional Development</p> <p>C. Ministry of Education (MOE) Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities Grant Application Approved</p>	<p>Ongoing and as requested.</p> <p>Professional Development targets met for the academic year.</p> <p>Partner with various stakeholders including Student Trustees, CSLIT and ECSLIT to help educate and empower students about removing barriers for students with disabilities.</p>

#### Expected Outcomes By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

By the end of June, the MOE, Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities Grant requirements will be fulfilled.

## SECTION 6

### Human Resources/Employment

The TCDSB is an equal-opportunity employer. In this regard, the Board recruits qualified staff specific to the requirements of the job. Routine processes allow staff to be placed in facilities that accommodate their disability. The TCDSB has a dedicated team of experienced professionals in Disability Management who appropriately, safely, and respectfully facilitate accommodation for staff members with disabilities in the workplace. The accommodation may include providing staff with disabilities with the necessary equipment that allows staff members to perform their duties in a barrier-free workplace.

The workplace accommodation process practiced by the professionals in the Human Resources department is outlined in the Board's Workplace Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities Policy. Itinerant employees are encouraged to contact the site/supervisor prior to or upon arrival at the worksite to discuss accessibility needs as outlined in the Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP).

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<p>A. Responding to accommodation requests made by staff in a timely manner.</p> <p>B. Developed internal processes with IT Partners to ensure IT equipment required for accommodations is given the highest priority when a ticket is logged.</p>	<p>Continue to track and monitor accommodation requests for any possible trends. If identified, proactively address opportunities for improvement with the appropriate internal stakeholders i.e., when the Board is replenishing office chairs – only purchase ergonomic chairs with adjustability.</p>

#### Expected Outcomes By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

The TCDSB expects to continue to address individual accommodation requests in a timely manner. The Human Resources department will continue to work with internal partners to improve response time in acquiring equipment, furniture, and assistive devices for staff accommodation.

**SECTION 6A****Human Resources – Employment and Recruitment**

During the 2012/2013 calendar year, the hiring and recruitment practices were reviewed with a view that employment is based upon qualifications and the ability to complete the core functions of the job description. The hiring and recruitment process for job classifications and professions at the Board was reviewed in order to minimize any possibility of individuals with disabilities being disadvantaged by accessibility barriers when seeking employment with the TCDSB.

Under the AODA, the recruitment process is to be barrier-free for job applicants with disabilities and when making offers of employment the Board must notify the successful candidate of the policies in place regarding accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace.

By January 1, 2014, the TCDSB was required under the AODA to notify all job applicants when they are selected to participate further in the selection process that accommodation is available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. The Board must consult with the applicant who is selected and who requests accommodation and is required to provide and arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation. The TCDSB must also notify all successful applicants, when making offers of employment, of policies, procedures and plans for accommodating persons with disabilities.

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Monitoring/Next Steps</b>
<p>The Recruitment Department is committed to ensuring that the appropriate accommodations are provided for those applicants who have self-identified in the job application process as a requirement for accommodations during the interview and selection process.</p> <p>In the year 2022/2023 - one candidate for the non-union group was required to have the interview questions visible on screen. This was provided to the candidate in the Chat during the Zoom interview.</p>	<p>Candidates who self-identify as having a disability during the application process must request an accommodation from the Recruitment Department.</p>

**Expected Outcomes** By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

All accommodation requests and any modifications are dealt with by the Recruitment Department and are kept confidential. Once the candidate discloses, that they require an accommodation, the Sr. Coordinator

and/or Sr. Manager of Recruitment will contact the candidate requesting supporting medical documentation to specify functional limitations associated with the disability that may be impacted by the selection process. This documentation shall not contain any specific medical diagnosis. Candidates are advised that all supporting medical documentation received is kept confidential and protected under the Personal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (PFIPPA).

The Recruitment Department advises the Interview Panel or Hiring Manager on the approved accommodations required during the interview process.

## SECTION 6B

### Human Resources – Training

In accordance with AODA requirements, the TCDSB provided interactive training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities for school board employees, volunteers and all other persons who provide goods and services or facilities on behalf of the school board. All school boards will be obligated to present this training.

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
The Board developed a Compliance and Mandatory Training program, a Compliance Training website (I Agree) and resources for specific employee groups including all educators.	<p>Ongoing training for new employees and volunteers in the areas of:</p> <p><b>Accessibility Awareness:</b>  <a href="https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/default.aspx">https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/default.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Customer Service Standards:</b>  <a href="https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/Customer-Service-Standards-Training-AODA.aspx">https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/Customer-Service-Standards-Training-AODA.aspx</a></p>

#### Expected Outcomes By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

Training modules will be developed and included in onboarding new and existing employees

## SECTION 7

### Information and Communications

The TCDSB strives to ensure that public information is accessible and available in a timely manner to persons with disabilities. (e.g. access to board meetings, communication products, etc.)

Accomplishments	Monitoring/Next Steps
<p>A. Consistency in Review: Ensure that all products, when produced or reviewed by the Communications department, are AODA compliant.</p> <p>B. Web Accessibility: Launched a new TCDSB website that complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards in September 2022. Continue to ensure the TCDSB website (<a href="http://www.tcdsb.org">www.tcdsb.org</a>) and materials posted on <a href="http://www.tcdsb.org">www.tcdsb.org</a> meet such compliance requirements.</p> <p>C. Public Correspondence: Members of the public may request TCDSB communications in accessible formats.</p> <p>D. Document Formats: Offer large-print (for printed and digital materials) and audio or video formats to help accommodate people with vision impairment.</p> <p>E. Captioning &amp; Transcripts: Provide captioning for video content and make available transcripts for audio content, if requested, to make it accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p> <p>F. Inclusive Language: Adopt inclusive language that respects diversity and avoids ableism or other forms of discrimination in all communications.</p> <p>G. Public Feedback: Open to public feedback about the accessibility of TCDSB communication materials.</p>	<p>Ongoing Compliance, Support and Review (As Needed)</p>

H. Accessible Social Media: When posting on social media platforms, use accessible features like alt-text for images and be mindful of colour contrasts to make posts more readable.

### **Expected Outcomes** By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

- Create training tutorials for staff to make documents accessible
- Track requests for accessible formats of public communications/documents
- Monthly AODA reminders and resources for K – 12 Principals to share with school communities.
- Regularly review and update the TCDSB Accessibility webpage to ensure it is current and rich in resources and information

## **SECTION 8**

### **Customer Service**

The TCDSB updated its Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities policy (A.36) on September 22, 2016. The TCDSB remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

The TCDSB regularly solicits feedback about the manner in which it provides services and facilities to people with disabilities. Feedback processes vary including in person, by telephone, in writing by mail, hard copy, diskette or fax, or by some other communication technology.

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Monitoring/Next Steps</b>
A. Request form Feedback Mechanisms: Implement multiple, accessible ways for the public to provide feedback or ask questions, such as an easy-to-find email address (by clicking on the 'Accessibility' link) at the bottom of our external web pages and accessible online forms.	Ongoing review of all feedback to inform next steps

### **Expected Outcomes** By the end of Academic Year 2023-2024

Survey the public to provide feedback on request satisfaction

## Appendix A

### 2022-23 AODA SUMMARY

#### Recently Completed Capital, Renewal and ESS Projects

School	Type of Project	Scope of Work
Christ the King CS (Temporary St. Leo)	Barrier-free/universal washroom	New floor and wall tile, code-compliant fixtures.
Christ the King CS (Temporary St. Leo)	Stairlift	Stairlift at the main entrance, three steps down.
St. Mary Secondary Academy	Floor covering	Carpet tile installation in room 139D, 240A
Mother Cabrini CS	Student W/R, Stair Railings	**Awaiting all specs from School-Respective Depts
St. Gregory CS	Student washroom, millwork, Door Operators	**Awaiting all specs from School-Respective Depts
Marshall McLuhan CSS	Elevator, Designated washrooms, ESS & Renewal	Door hardware, fixtures & electrical completed
St Paul CS	Exterior Door Replacement - nearing completion	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operators and Push Buttons.
Brebeuf College	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operators and Push Buttons.
Msgr Fraser	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operators and Push Buttons.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operators and Push Buttons.
St Thomas Aquinas CS	Exterior Door Replacement - nearing completion	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operators and Push Buttons.
St Rose of Lima CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. New ramp, line painting. (completed)
St Marguerite Bourgeoys CS	Barrier-free/universal washroom. Code-compliant sink, new floor tile, grab bars, new toilet	



St Maria Goretti CS	Full elevator replacement.	New AODA audible devices inside of car, camera and brail ID sign outside of the car. (completed)
St. Paul VI CS	Capital Childcare Renovation	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button.
St Barnabas CS	Capital Childcare Addition	3 room childcare spaces comply with Building Code AODA requirements
St Roch CS	Capital Childcare Addition	3 room childcare spaces comply with Building Code AODA requirements
Blessed Trinity CS	Washroom Renovation	Boys Washroom #106 and Girls Washroom #110
Nativity of Our Lord CS	Washroom Renovation	Boys Washroom #103 & Girls Washroom #113
Michael Power - St. Joesph HS	Washroom & Changeroom Renovations	Boys Changerooms #1142 & #1145, Girls Changeroom #1151, Boys Washroom 2066 & Girls Washroom 2069
Michael Power - St. Joesph HS	Parking Lot Renovation	Barrier-free parking, line painting, ramps, curb cuts, etc.
St. Stephen CS	Washroom Renovation	Boys Washroom #204 & Girls Washroom #207 (i.e., note, that the girl's washroom is not AODA as per the consultant's error in design)
St. James CS	Exterior Door Replacement	The main entrance & door nearest to the parking lot door widen to meet AODO & include push buttons for exterior and indoor doors
St Brendan CS	AODA Washroom Renovation	Auto door opener. New flooring, new audible fire devices, sink and toilet.
Mary Ward CSS	Exterior Door Replacement - Front Doors Only	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (completed)
St Columba CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (completed)
St Aidan CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (completed)

Cardinal Leger CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (completed)
Sacred Heart CS	Exterior Door and Window Project	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (completed)
St. Mother Teresa CS	Interior work	Door Hardware - Automatic Door Operator and Push Button. (in progress)
Mary Ward CSS	Elevator upgrade	Replace the key operator with the push button operator
St. Mary C Academy	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting.
St. Oscar Romero CSS	MEDD Room Renovation	Fully accessible: Room, Kitchen, Washroom (in progress to be completed by end of 2023)
St. Helen CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St. Rita CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St. John Bosco CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St Paul VI CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St. Augustine CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St Francis Xavier CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
St Francis De Sales CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
Chaminade College	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet (in construction)
Blessed Margherita CS	Exterior Door Replacement	Oversized door installed, operator not in yet
CEC	Front desk	New service counter
Blessed Trinity CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting.
Epiphany of Our Lord CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting.
Precious Blood CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting. Handrails and Tactile plates on exterior steps.

St. Andrew CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting. Accessible pedestrian walkway, curb depressions with tactile plates
St. Denis CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Accessible pathway through play yard, accessible access to new artificial turf and tiered Armour stone seating
St. Jerome CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting. Future Play Structure (Spring 2024) will include accessible play elements
St. Roch CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting. Future Play Structure (Spring 2024) will include accessible play elements
St. Martha CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting.
All Saints CS	Site Improvement/Paving	Barrier-free parking spots. Line painting. Accessible pedestrian walkway, curb depressions with tactile plates
St. Margherita of Città di Castello CS	Play Structure	AODA Accessible playground, including transfer stations, fully accessible ground-level play, accessible and fully fenced stairways

---

## **Section 20**

### Parent Guide to Special Education

# PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

*January 2024*

Includes information for Parents about:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Identification, Placement and Review (IPRC)
- Overview of the Special Education Process

---

**TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
80 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M2N 6E8  
Phone: 416-222-8282 | [www.tcdsb.org](http://www.tcdsb.org)

## OUR MISSION AND VISION

### OUR 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.

### OUR VISION

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

### OUR CATHOLIC VALUES

*We believe...*

- in the worth and dignity of every person,
- in the critical role that our Catholic schools play in promoting Gospel values, social justice, environmental responsibility, human dignity, solidarity, and the common good,
- that high standards and expectations foster greater achievement,
- that people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment grounded in respect for the diversity of every person,
- that teaching is responsive to individual needs,
- that teaching and learning be rooted in research and evidence,
- that each of us shares responsibility for creating collaborative communities of learning,
- that equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity are integral to the Catholic community, and,
- that the 21st century competencies – collaboration, real world problem solving and innovation, knowledge construction, skilled communication, self-regulation and the use of information communication technology for learning, are essential.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Parents' Guide is to provide information to parents about special programs and services provided by the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), and the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Throughout this guide, "parent" will mean one or both parents or guardians.

## PHILOSOPHY

***"...The integrity of Catholic education does not and cannot rest solely on the shoulders of a few individuals or belong only to certain groups of people..."***

***"We are bound together by a common faith and in common service."***

***-Fulfilling the Promise (Pp. 6-7)***

In partnership with families, the parish and the community, our Catholic education system is directed at developing the full spiritual, physical, academic, cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing of each student. Through their learning experiences, students develop a sense of self-worth and dignity as people of God and are able to make a useful contribution in a complex and changing society.

Inherent in these beliefs is the recognition that all students, regardless of exceptionality, are entitled to education in the most enabling environment. The exceptional student is a unique child of God and has a right to be part of the mainstream of education, to the extent to which it is practical and beneficial.

***"Our commitment is to every student. This means ...[ensuring] that we develop strategies to help every student learn, no matter their personal circumstances."***

***-Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education, 2008***

***"Only by helping every student reach his or her potential can we hope to close the achievement gap between groups of students."***

***-Learning for All, 2013 (p.12)***

In order to provide an education in the most enabling environment, TCDSB advocates the principle of inclusion as part of a continuum of services/programs which includes modification of the regular class program, withdrawal, and intensive support programs.

Inclusion of students with special educational needs in our schools can be summed up in the following quote:

***"We invite you to become active participants in the process of Catholic Education. We urge you to bring your energy, enthusiasm and generosity to the task of building a Catholic community within your school and to shaping the vision of Catholic education."***

***-This Moment of Promise (P. 22)***

## Who is identified an Exceptional Student?

The Education Act defines an exceptional student as “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

## What Are Special Education Services?

Special Education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

## What is a Special Education Program?

A Special Education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- Is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation
- Includes an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

## What Is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- a description of the student's strengths and needs and specific educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- a transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

For more information, consult the TCDSB IEP brochure found in the TCDSB Special Education Plan.



## **What is an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)?**

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) has three essential functions:

- to determine the strengths and needs of a student
- to identify the student's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (see pp 13-15)
- to recommend program placement, to be followed by the development/modification of the Individual Education Plan.

An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Board. This is a requirement of Regulation 181/98 of the Ontario Ministry of Education.

## **How is an IPRC Meeting Requested?**

The principal:

- may, with written notice to the parent, refer the student to an IPRC *when* the principal and the teacher(s) believe that the student may benefit from a special education program
- must request an IPRC meeting for the student, upon receiving a written parental request.

Within 15 days of receiving a parental request, or giving the parent notice, the principal must provide the parent with a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

## **May parents attend the IPRC meeting?**

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

## **Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?**

- the principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

## **Who may request that they attend?**

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

## **What Information will Parents and Students Receive about the IPRC Meeting?**

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the principal will provide the parent with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend.

At least one day before the IPRC meeting, the parent and student age 16 and older will receive a written copy of any information that will be considered by the IPRC. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

## **What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?**

If the parent is unable to attend to the scheduled IPRC meeting, he/she shall:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time, or
- inform the school principal that he/she will not attend and give written or verbal permission for the IPRC to proceed.

If the parent gave permission for the IPRC to proceed, the principal shall forward the IPRC form for the parent's consideration and signature.

## **What Happens at an IPRC Meeting?**

The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting. The IPRC will review all available information about the student. They will:

- consider an educational assessment
- consider other assessments as needed subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996
- interview the student (with parental consent if the student is less than 16 years of age) if required
- consider any information that the parent or student submits, including recommendations for programs and services.

The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the student. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at the parent's request, or at the request of the student, aged 16 years or older. The parent is encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion. Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward for the parent's consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement.

## **What will the IPRC Consider in Making Its Decisions?**

Before the IPRC can consider placing a student in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet the student's needs
- be consistent with the parent's preferences.

If the IPRC determines that placement in a regular class will meet the student's needs and the parent agrees, the committee will recommend placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If the committee decides that the student should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for the decision in its written statement of decision.

## **What will the IPRC's Written Statement of Decision Include?**

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state whether the student has been identified as exceptional;

If the student is identified as exceptional, the statement will include:

- the categories and definitions of any identified exceptionalities, as permitted by the Ministry of Education
- description of the student's strengths and needs
- placement decision
- recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services.

Where the IPRC has decided that the student should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision will be provided.

## **What Happens after the IPRC has made its Decision?**

The parent's signature on the IPRC form indicates agreement with the decision made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.

If the IPRC identifies the student as exceptional and the parent has agreed with the IPRC

identification and placement decision, the Board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program will be provided. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student will be developed or modified.

## **How is a Special Education Placement Reviewed?**

A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice (waiver) from the parent dispensing with the annual review.

The parent may request a review IPRC meeting any time after the student has been in a special education program for 3 months.

## **What does a review IPRC consider and decide?**

- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the IPRC, as well as any new information.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

## **What if the Parent Disagrees with the IPRC Decision?**

If the parent does not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, the parent may:

- within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss these concerns; or
- within 30 days of receipt of the decision, the parent may file a notice of appeal with the

Director of Education who is also Secretary of the Board. Please call the Special Services Offices at (416) 222-8282 extension 2486 for detailed contact information.

If the parent does not agree with the decision after the second meeting, the parent may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of receipt of the decision.

If the parent does not consent to the IPRC decision and does not appeal it, the Board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

## The IPRC Appeal Process

The **Notice of Appeal** must:

- indicate the decision with which the parent disagrees and
- include a statement that sets out reasons for the parental disagreement.

The **appeal process** involves the following steps:

- the Board will establish a Special Education Appeal Board to hear the appeal. The Appeal Board will be composed of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal
- the Chair of the Appeal Board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless the parent and Board both provide written consent to a later date)
- the Appeal Board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal
- the parent and student, (if 16 years old or over), are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions
- the Appeal Board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting. It may agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the Board about the identification and/or placement
- the Appeal Board will report its recommendations in writing to the parent and to the School Board, providing the reasons for its recommendations
- within 30 days of receiving the Appeal Board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. Boards are not required to follow the Appeal Board's recommendation
- the parent may accept the decisions of the School Board, or may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. A parent may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the Tribunal will be included with the Appeal Board's decision.

## Special Education Programs

In addition to Special Education Resource at each school, the following Intensive Support Programs (ISP) are available at some school locations:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Autism                              | • Learning Disability                     |
| • Behavioural                         | • Language Impairment                     |
| • Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing            | • Mild Intellectual Disability            |
| • Gifted Congregated                  | • Multiple Exceptionalities/Developmental |
| • Kindergarten Language Program (KLP) | Disability                                |

The student's home school will first be considered in providing an appropriate program.

Note: To obtain further information about location and range of programs currently available, please contact the Special Services Department (416-222-8282 extension 2486).

Overview of the Special Education Process

Classroom Teacher identifies student needs. The Classroom Teacher provides instruction to support student needs as per Learning for All 2013.

Parents are involved at each level of the process.

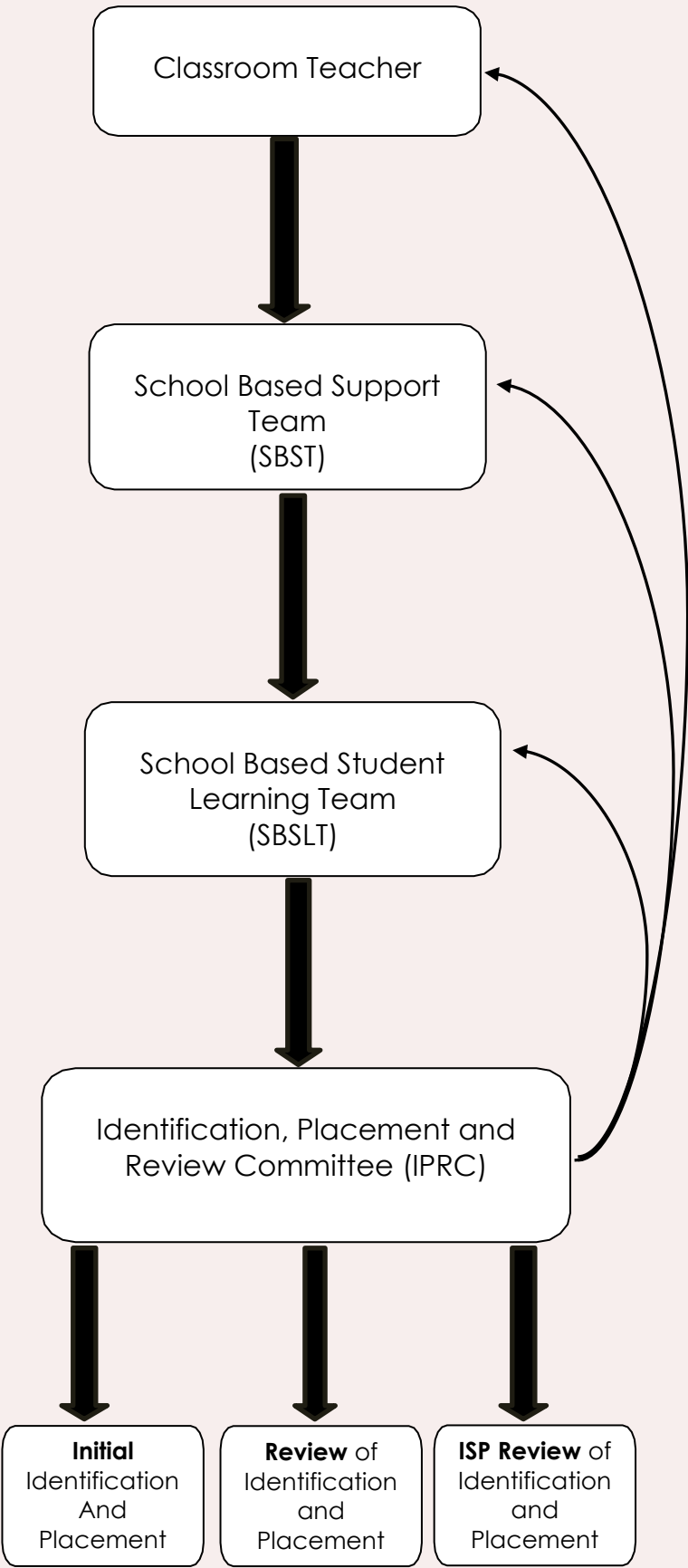
Classroom Teacher discusses student needs with the SBST, including the Principal, the Special Education Teacher, the Department Head or Guidance (in Secondary). Teacher implements suggested strategies and observes and reflects on student progress. An IEP may be developed to support student needs.

Student lack of progress may suggest the need for strategies beyond those identified through SBST. The Psychologist, Social Worker, Speech and Language Pathologist and Assessment and Programming Teacher may provide additional strategies to school staff to support student learning at an SBSLT.

An IEP may be developed to support student needs or may be expanded to include new strategies. If appropriate, a referral for consideration of a student assessment may be made.

Assessment results may indicate the need to identify a student. An IPRC may be held to determine the identification and placement of a student.

Each year the Identification, Placement and Review Committee meets to review student progress.



# Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

## BEHAVIOURAL

**Behavioural Exceptionality:** A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- a. an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- b. excessive fears or anxieties;
- c. a tendency to compulsive reaction;
- d. an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

## COMMUNICATIONAL

**Autism:** A severe learning disorder that is characterized by: \

- a. disturbances in: rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment; mobility; perception, speech, and language;
- b. lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

**Language Impairment:** A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a. involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b. include one or more of: language delay; dysfluency; voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.



**Speech Impairment:** A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

**Learning Disability:** One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:

- ◇ affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range;
- ◇ results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;
- ◇ results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;
- ◇ may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);
- ◇ may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;
- ◇ is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.

## **INTELLECTUAL**

**Giftedness:** An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

**Mild Intellectual Disability:** A learning disorder characterized by:

- a. an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services;
- b. an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
- c. a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

**Developmental Disability:** A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- a. an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
- b. an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
- c. a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

## **PHYSICAL**

**Physical Disability:** A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of students without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.

**Blind and Low Vision:** A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

## **MULTIPLE**

**Multiple Exceptionalities:** A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.



## Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The Ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyper-activity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

### **Demonstration Schools For Students With Severe Learning Disabilities, Some Of Whom May Have ADHD**

Amethyst School  
1515 Cheapside Street  
London, ON N5V 3N9  
Tel: 519-453-4408

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/amethyst/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/amethyst/index.html)

Trillium School  
347 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 3X9  
Tel: 905-878-8428

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html)

Sagonaska School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2  
Tel: 613-967-2830

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sagonaska/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sagonaska/index.html)

### **Provincial Schools For The Deaf**

Ernest C. Drury School  
255 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 2M5  
Tel: 905-878-2851

TTY: 905-878-7195

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/ecd/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/ecd/index.html)

Sir James Whitney School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2  
Tel: 613-967-2823 or 1-800-501-6240

TTY: 613-967-2823

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html)

Robarts School  
1515 Cheapside Street  
London, ON N5V 3N9  
Tel: 519-453-4400

TTY: 519-453-4400

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/robarts/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/robarts/index.html)

### **Provincial School for The Blind and Deaf-Blind**

W. Ross Macdonald School  
350 Brant Avenue Brantford, ON N3T 3J9  
Tel: 519-759-0730 or 1-866-618-9092

[www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/wross/index.html](http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/wross/index.html)

### **Where can parents obtain additional information?**

Additional information can be obtained from:

- the school principal; or
- the Special Services Department, (416) 222-8282 extension 2486

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEMBERSHIP as of September 2023**

**Richelle De Belchior, Community Representative**

[Richelle.deBelchior@tcdsb.org](mailto:Richelle.deBelchior@tcdsb.org)

**Jennifer Di Francesco, Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC)**

[Jennifer.DiFrancesco@tcdsb.org](mailto:Jennifer.DiFrancesco@tcdsb.org)

**Geoffrey Feldman, Ontario Disability Coalition**

[Geoffrey.Feldman@tcdsb.org](mailto:Geoffrey.Feldman@tcdsb.org)

**Lori Mastrogiuseppe, FASworld Toronto**

[Lori.Mastrogiuseppe@tcdsb.org](mailto:Lori.Mastrogiuseppe@tcdsb.org)

**Lisa McMahon, Community Representative**

[Lisa.McMahon@tcdsb.org](mailto:Lisa.McMahon@tcdsb.org)

**Tyler Munro, Integrated Action for Inclusion in Education**

[Tyler.Munro@tcdsb.org](mailto:Tyler.Munro@tcdsb.org)

**Deborah Nightingale, Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC Ontario)**

[Deborah.Nightingale@tcdsb.org](mailto:Deborah.Nightingale@tcdsb.org)

**Ivona Novak, Community Representative**

[Ivona.Novak@tcdsb.org](mailto:Ivona.Novak@tcdsb.org)

**Ashley Pabon, Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District (LDATD)**

[Ashley.Pabon@tcdsb.org](mailto:Ashley.Pabon@tcdsb.org)

**Marissa Seymour, Autism Ontario**

[Marissa.Seymour@tcdsb.org](mailto:Marissa.Seymour@tcdsb.org)

**George Wedge, Easter Seals Ontario**

[George.Wedge@tcdsb.org](mailto:George.Wedge@tcdsb.org)

**Frank D'Amico, Trustee**

[Frank.Damico@tcdsb.org](mailto:Frank.Damico@tcdsb.org)

**Angela Kennedy, Trustee**

[Angela.Kennedy@tcdsb.org](mailto:Angela.Kennedy@tcdsb.org)

**Maria Rizzo, Trustee**

[Maria.Rizzo@tcdsb.org](mailto:Maria.Rizzo@tcdsb.org)

## Organizations to Assist Parents

Many community organizations provide information and support to parents of exceptional students:

### **Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC Ontario)**

info@abcontario.ca

### **Autism Ontario**

1-866-925-9969

### **Down Syndrome Association of Toronto**

416-966-0990

### **FASworld Toronto**

416-264-8000

### **Integrated Action for Inclusion in Education**

416-802-3118

### **Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District**

**416-229-1680**

### **Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD)**

519-290-1763

### **Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy**

416-244-9686

### **Toronto Association for Community Living**

416-968-0650

### **Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada**

1-800-361-3120

### **VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children**

admin@voicefordeafkids.com

Please contact your local School Based Learning team through your child's school principal for additional resources and community services.

***Without a vision the people perish***

*Proverbs 29:18*

---

## **Section 21**

### Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies

**Date of Issue:** September 25, 2009**Effective:** Until revoked or modified**Subject:** PROTOCOL FOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES  
FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES BY REGULATED HEALTH  
PROFESSIONALS, REGULATED SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS,  
AND PARAPROFESSIONALS**Application:** Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers and Supervisory Officers of School Authorities  
Superintendents of Schools  
Principals of Elementary Schools  
Principals of Secondary Schools

---

## Introduction

The ministry is committed to promoting effective community-based partnerships with external agencies that foster continuous improvement in the delivery of programs and services for all students, including students with special needs. Closing achievement gaps for all students continues to be a major priority.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards<sup>1</sup> concerning the review and/or development of a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies for the provision of services in Ontario schools by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals. It outlines the requirements for reviewing and/or developing a local protocol, and specifies the requirements for implementing the protocol and for reporting on the protocol to stakeholders.

## Requirements for Review and/or Development of a Board Protocol

School boards with an existing protocol will review their protocol to ensure that it is aligned with the requirements outlined in this memorandum. School boards without an existing protocol will develop a protocol that is aligned with those requirements. The protocol will be designed to support the school board's capacity to provide programs and services to all students, including students with special needs. The protocol will reflect local circumstances, including the language of the board.

---

1. In this memorandum, *school board(s)* and *board(s)* refer to district school boards and school authorities, with the exception of section 68 school authorities.

The protocol will outline the following:

- programs and services that are currently delivered by external agencies
- programs and services that are currently delivered by school board professional student services personnel (PSSP) and paraprofessionals
- programs and services that could be delivered by school board PSSP and paraprofessionals, but are not being delivered by them for financial reasons or because requirements do not match the job descriptions or qualifications of board PSSP and/or paraprofessionals

A distinction must be made in the protocol between long-term and short-term (time-limited) partnerships to ensure that long-term duplication of services already provided by school board PSSP and paraprofessionals does not occur.

The protocol must be aligned with the collective agreements of unionized school board staff and enhance the delivery of services. The protocol must provide for supplementing, but not duplicating, the services of school board PSSP and paraprofessionals. A protocol will be developed by each school board even if there are currently no unionized regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals on staff.

Where applicable, co-terminus and contiguous school boards must, at a minimum, explore the development of partnerships and protocols to facilitate the delivery of programs and services.

Boards must seek the advice of PSSP and paraprofessionals when reviewing and/or developing their protocol. Boards will also design a procedure for reviewing their protocol and projected services in consultation with external agencies and unionized school board staff at least once a year.

Boards will also ensure that their protocol is consistent with standard school board provisions related to:

- informed consent;
- criminal reference checks;
- appropriate insurance coverage;
- compliance with the Safe Schools Act;
- conflict of interest, confidentiality, equity, human rights, and other relevant policies.

### **Eligible Categories of Professionals and Paraprofessionals**

A board's protocol will cover the following categories of PSSP and paraprofessionals:

- audiologists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
- speech-language pathologists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
- occupational therapists, as defined by the Occupational Therapy Act, 1991
- physiotherapists, as defined by the Physiotherapy Act, 1991
- psychologists, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991

- 
- psychological associates, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991
  - social workers, as defined by the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998
  - other regulated professionals and/or paraprofessionals who are deemed by the school board to be essential for the delivery of programs and services for students with special needs

Any future regulated categories will also be covered by the protocol.

### **Additional Requirements for the Board Protocol**

In order to assist school boards and external agencies in the development, review, and maintenance of local protocols, a memorandum from the Deputy Minister of Education accompanies this policy/program memorandum and outlines the elements that each protocol must contain. Any changes to the elements required in the local protocols will be communicated in the future to boards through a similar memorandum.

### **Implementation and Reporting**

School boards will implement their newly developed or reviewed protocol and post it on their website by January 1, 2010. Reviews of and revisions to established protocols will be completed and posted on school board websites by January 1 of each subsequent year.



## **PROTOCOL**

### **RE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

#### **PURPOSE**

This protocol outlines the background, and the principles and administrative procedures that the Board will follow, with respect to community professionals' and private therapists' involvement in school programs where such professionals are retained and/or compensated by parents/guardians.

The purpose of the protocol is to clarify the relationship between the school and the community health professional/private therapist where:

- Parents/guardians have retained such community professionals to support their child ("privately retained community health professionals"), and/or
- Staff from another agency and/or ministry request to observe and/or work with a student at school.

This protocol recognizes that parents/guardians, community health professionals and the school share a common goal to pursue, within defined roles, the best interest of the child.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

The *Education Act* requires the Ministry of Education and Training (the "Ministry") to ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them appropriate special education programs and special education services without the payment of fees by parents or guardians resident in Ontario. Subsection 8(3), in part, provides:

*"The Minister shall ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, appropriate special education programs and special education services without payment of fees by parents or guardians resident in Ontario..."*



It is recognized that it is the exclusive role of the school in partnership with parents/guardians, to be the primary providers of school based programs and services.

Schools have the rights and obligation to provide education programs and services in schools as prescribed by the *Education Act*.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) provides a range of special education programs and services. A description of special education programs and services is outlined in the Special Education Plan which is posted on the school board website.

School board staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that the needs of their child are identified, considered and met. To that end, collaboration with community agencies and private therapists is considered.

## **BACKGROUND**

Some students receive additional support through community agency staff or by private therapists/consultants hired by parents.

These services may be beneficial to students, and can be offered to students in the home, community, or practitioner office setting.

Occasionally, schools receive requests to have third party services delivered in the school. Some examples of services that have been requested are:

- tutoring
- child care services
- speech pathology services
- music lessons
- private assessments
- intensive behaviour intervention

There are a number of concerns related to having third party services take place in the school:

- liability to the Board
- privacy and confidentiality issues
- conflicts with collective agreements
- qualifications and professional standards of third party staff
- informed consent issues
- supervision
- use of teacher and educational assistant time
- availability of school space
- payment of services
- equity issues
- duplication of service

## THE NATURE OF THIRD PARTY SERVICES

Direct services to students are delivered by school board staff such as teachers, educational assistants, and special services staff. In some situations, other services for students are needed, and are delivered by individuals who are paid by someone other than the board of education/Ministry of Education. These services are called third party services.

There are two types of third party services – public and private.

### *a. Public third party services*

Public third party services are those delivered by staff from an agency or other public organization. This could also include not for profit charitable organizations that are considered to serve public interests. Public third party services may be mandated by the government, be the result of interministerial agreement, or be funded by a government agency or donations. Services from these organizations are generally available to students in the system who qualify under the mandate or operation of the public third party. Public third party services, where needed, are requested by the Board. The following public third party services are permitted in TCDSB schools (with parent permission):

- School health support services through community care access centres (CCACs). This includes:
  - speech pathology
  - occupational therapy
  - physiotherapy
  - nursing
  - nutrition

### *b. Private third party services*

Private third party services are those retained and/or paid for by parents/guardians. The request for services has come from parents/guardians. They have not been requested by the Board.

## DIRECTION

Because of the difficulties listed in the Background section, private third party services delivered directly to students during the school day are not allowed in the school setting.

The Board does not allow individual parents to provide in-school or in-classroom student direct therapy/assistance.

Privately retained and community health professionals may visit a classroom only to observe a student and **not** for the purpose of providing instruction or therapy.

Privately retained and/or community health professionals are permitted in schools for the following purposes:

1. For observation, where this assists the privately retained or community health professionals to set appropriate goals for the child in non-school environments and to ensure consistency of programming outside the school environment.
2. To attend school meetings in order to share information regarding the child's participation in an outside program or to report results of outside evaluations or testing which may have taken place.
3. A private therapist or community health professional may act as an advocate for a child in the Special Education Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) process, upon the written authorization of the parents or guardians of the child.

#### **PROCEDURES RE: REQUESTS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY AGENCY STAFF OR PRIVATELY RETAINED STAFF**

The following are administrative procedures for schools when parents request involvement of community agency staff or privately retained staff:

1. As noted above, requests for involvement in a classroom or school by a privately retained or community health professional must be for observation, exchange of information or IPRC/IEP advocacy purposes only, and not for the delivery of direct services to students.
2. A request by a privately retained therapist or community health professional to observe a student in a classroom must be made by the parent/guardian to the school principal.
3. Privately retained or community health professionals must be accompanied by a member of the school administration or designate, or by a Board special services staff person during the observation period.
4. In your sensitivity in working with parents you as the principal of the school can determine and schedule the number and duration of parental requests in an effort to minimize the disruption to the delivery of the instructional program.
5. A community health professional/private therapist must keep confidential any personal information obtained about other students, teachers or staff while observing a particular student in a classroom, in accordance with relevant legislation including the *Education Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act*.

6. A privately retained or community health professional who makes a classroom visit for the purpose of observation must provide a copy of the written report of the observation to the Board.
7. A criminal background check of all private therapists or community health professionals is required prior to any direct contact with pupils. (Ontario Regulation 521/01 "Collection of Personal Information" requires a personal criminal history of every individual who is an employee or a "service provider" who comes into direct contact with pupils on a regular basis (period of time to be established by TCDSB).
8. A sample letter is included in Appendix I. This can be adapted for use when community agency staff and private professionals request access to schools.

#### **QUESTIONS REGARDING REQUESTS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY AGENCY STAFF OR PRIVATELY RETAINED STAFF**

Questions or concerns regarding requests for involvement of community agency staff or privately retained staff should be directed to the Superintendent of Special Services.

*Approved by Education Council, March, 2006*

(School Letterhead)

Dear:

This letter is in follow-up to the meeting/request for a classroom observation by \_\_\_\_\_.

TCDSB would like to continue to work in partnership with you and we would like to accommodate your request in a mutually agreeable fashion.

The following are the steps that would need to take place to set up this observation:

1. An appointment for observation would be set up through the Principal.
2. The purpose of the visit is for classroom observation only, with the classroom teacher retaining responsibility for the educational program.
3. The observers should not review or comment on the performance of the teacher, or other school staff and should not interrupt the flow of instruction.
4. Confidentiality of staff and of other students in the class must be maintained. The observers must not make any specific comments about students or staff in oral or written reports.
5. A copy of the written report about the observation would be provided to the school board, to my attention.
6. Outside service providers must have a criminal background check as prescribed by the *Education Act*. The Board has contracted with the Ontario Education Service (OESC) to gather this information. This documentation is required prior to access to schools and classrooms.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

(Principal)

---

## **Section 22**

### Board Improvement and Equity Plan

# Overview: New Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP)

The Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP) establishes provincial education priorities, goals and performance indicators to support continuous quality improvement. The BIEP will provide a standardized tool for school boards to identify local actions that will lead to improved achievement, equity, well-being and transitions for all students.

The BIEP is a demographic data-driven tool designed to capture the experiences and outcomes of Indigenous students, Black and other racialized groups of students, students with disabilities and/or special education needs (non-gifted), 2SLGBTQ+ students, and students from low-income households. School boards will provide baseline data and set aspirational targets for each performance indicator laid out in the BIEP, including relevant disaggregated demographic data.

## Achievement



All students, including those communities of students who - historically and currently - are underserved, will be given the tools to succeed academically and in life.

## Mental Health, Well-Being and Engagement



All students will be supported to improve mental health, well-being and engagement, which requires boards to foster a sense of belonging and a positive school environment and provide students with the appropriate, timely and quality school-based mental health supports, using a tiered approach to intervention.



## Learning Recovery and Renewal

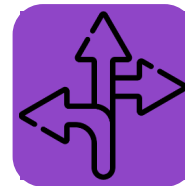
The ministry will identify a theme in the BIEP to respond to emerging priorities. The theme of the emergent priority is learning recovery and renewal in the context of COVID-19.

## Human Rights and Equity



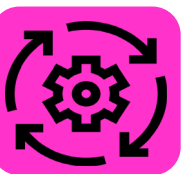
All students will have an equal opportunity to succeed, thrive, and reach their full potential. This requires boards to address systemic discrimination and eliminate disparities in educational experiences for students who are underserved by the education system, revealed by the collection and analysis of demographic data.

## Pathways and Transitions



All students will have the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in the future, as they transition from elementary to secondary school and to their postsecondary pathway: apprenticeship, college, community living, university or the workplace.

## Emergent Priority: Learning Recovery and Renewal



### Mental Health and Well-Being

% of students who accessed school-based mental health services

% of board-level staff and educators receiving professional learning in student mental health literacy and board protocols regarding student mental health

### Early Reading and Math

% of students who received targeted early reading and math supports

% of educators who received professional learning related to supporting students in early reading and math

### Re-engaging Students

% of schools that have implemented activities that promote school connections, including extra-curricular activities

% of schools that have an intentional strategy to keep students engaged

## Provincial Priority: Achievement



### Improve Math Achievement

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on Grade 3, 6 and 9 EQAO math

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard in math report card assessments in Grades 3, 6 and 9

### Improve Literacy Achievement

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on Grade 3, 6 EQAO reading and writing

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard in reading and writing report card assessments in Grades 3 and 6

% of first time eligible fully Participating students who are successful on the OSSLT

### Improve Conditions for Learning

% of students in Grades 4-12 who report they see themselves reflected and affirmed in their learning

## Provincial Priority: Human Rights & Equity



### Build Human Rights and Equity Capacity Through Representative, Accountable and Ethical Leadership

% of Supervisory Officers', Principals' and Vice- Principals' whose performance appraisal plan include goals to eliminate disparities revealed by student and workplace demographic data collection

% of Trustees that participate in human rights and equity professional development

### Support the Implementation of De-streaming

% of students achieving the provincial standard in Grade 9 de-streamed math

% of student enrollment in University (U), College (C), University/College (M), and Workplace (E) courses in Grades 11 and 12

% of students in Grades 9 and 10 participating in locally developed compulsory credit courses

### Reduce Discretionary Student Discipline Practices

% of suspension and expulsions across grades 4-12

% of school staff who have undertaken professional development to support fair student discipline practices

### Address Human Rights Complaints and Hate-Based Incidents

# of human rights complaints raised and % resolved (informally and formally)

# of reported hate-based incidents

## Provincial Priority: Mental Health, Well Being & Engagement



### Improve Student Mental Health and Well-Being

% of students in Grades 4-12 who feel their school is a safe and inclusive environment

% of students in Grades 4-12 who report feeling comfortable seeking supports for their mental health

Board specific indicator aligned to board Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan

### Improve Student, Parent and Community Engagement

Student attendance rate

Board-specific indicator related to improving student, parent and community engagement

## Provincial Priority: Pathways & Transitions

### Improve Graduation Rates

% of students graduating with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma within five years of starting Grade 9

### Improve Student Readiness for Future Success

% of students participating in job skills programs (including co-op, Specialist High Skills Majors, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Dual Credits)

% of students in Grades 7–12 who annually update their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)

% of Ontario students entering a university program, college program, apprenticeship training program or other post-secondary institution after secondary school\*

% of students enrolled in STEM-related courses in Grades 11 and 12





## SPECIAL SERVICES

### SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

## MAY 2025



## UPCOMING JUNE PARENT WEBINAR

### Parent Webinar – Addictive Behaviours

We are excited to share a valuable opportunity to support your child's well-being. School Mental Health Ontario is offering a free webinar as part of the [By Your Side learning hub](#), designed to help parents and caregivers navigate important topics related to substance use and addictive behaviors.

This expert-led webinar will provide insights and practical strategies on:

- ☒ **June 4, 2025 12:00pm – 1:00pm**  
Technology overuse and problematic gaming

The webinar will include answers to questions that parents/caregivers can provide ahead of the webinar, giving you the chance to ask questions and gain practical guidance.

 [Register for free today](#)

We encourage all parents and caregivers to participate in this informative webinar. Together, we can support the well-being of our children and communities.



May is

## SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND HEARING Month



This May, in recognition of **Speech, Language, and Hearing Awareness Month**, we have been actively fostering communication accessibility and awareness across our schools.

---

## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE**

The Speech-Language department shared valuable resources with educators and families to support early communication development in young learners, as well as strategies for older students. They provided guidance on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). AAC is a range of tools and techniques that help individuals express themselves when spoken language is challenging. These efforts highlight the diverse ways in which our students communicate.



## **DEAF/HARD OF HEARING (D/HH)**

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing department shared a meaningful prayer and resources for schools while preparing for an exciting Social Butterfly event on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at St. Bruno/St. Raymond Catholic School. This learning opportunity for students in grades 3 to 7 will help support the social-emotional well-being of D/HH students and foster a strong sense of community. Additionally, our department helped spread awareness about VOICE Dress Loud Day. VOICE is a parent organization that supports children who are deaf and hard of hearing across Ontario. We shared information with students about this important initiative that celebrates the importance of inclusivity and the many ways people communicate.



## **SOCIAL WORK**

This month the Social Workers engaged in professional development from EGALE to strengthen our support to students who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. This opportunity solidified our commitment to ensure that our students rely on the foundation of their faith in growing to their full potential and understanding that they are loved and welcome always.

---

## MENTAL HEALTH

During April and May, the mental health team actively supported student wellbeing through various initiatives:

1. **Stress Busters Program:** In partnership with Strong Minds Strong Kids: Psychology Foundation of Canada, an 8-week program called Stress Busters was conducted for Grade 4-6 students in selected elementary schools. These schools were chosen in coordination with our social workers. A social worker from Strong Minds Strong Kids facilitated this evidence-based mental health promotion program, empowering students with adaptive coping skills.
2. **Health and Physical Education:** In collaboration with our Health and Physical Education (HPE) lead educator, the mental health team oriented all HPE heads to tools and resources for teaching about healthy relationships and mental health. This included the Kids in the Know program from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and mental health lesson plans from School Mental Health Ontario.
3. **Suicide Prevention Implementation:** In collaboration with School Mental Health Ontario, the TCDSB participated in a provincial panel to present our school board's implementation of suicide prevention protocols and resources across the school board.
4. **Suicide Prevention Workshops:** Several suicide prevention workshops were facilitated for various stakeholders across the school board, including chaplains, elementary and secondary guidance educators.
5. **Professional Development:** Professional development sessions on supporting a mentally healthy classroom were conducted for secondary student success teachers and math de-streaming facilitators.
6. **Preventative and Restorative Practices:** In collaboration with Safe Schools, Indigenous Education, and Nurturing our Catholic Community, the Mental Health team facilitated practices focused on creating mentally healthy spaces for all principals from K to Grade 12.
7. **Social-Emotional Poster Series:** Distributed a series of eight social-emotional posters to all Education and Community Partnership Program (Section 23) teachers for use in their classrooms with students.

- 
8. **International Collaboration:** The Mental Health team showcased mental health initiatives in a few TCDSB schools to a German delegation and representatives from the Ministry of Education.
  9. **Professional Development on Progressive Discipline:** Facilitated professional development on Mitigating and Other Factors related to progressive discipline for school administrators.
  10. **Suicide Intervention Skills Training:** Conducted a two-day Suicide Intervention Skills training for re-certification for some mental health professionals (social workers and psychologists).
  11. **Mental Health Awareness Week:** Shared various resources, including wellness calendar activities and daily announcements for classroom teachers. Resources for staff wellbeing, including information about the employee assistance program, were also shared with school and business leaders.
  12. **Parent Engagement:** During Mental Health Awareness Week, a parent newsletter was distributed to school principals to share with their parent community. Additionally, a brochure about an upcoming parent webinar on supporting children with anxiety was shared (attached here).
  13. **ESL Instructor Professional Development:** Facilitated a professional development session for English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors for adult learners on staff wellbeing, emphasizing the importance of personal boundaries.
  14. **Student Leadership and Mental Health Resources:** In collaboration with Student Success, Guidance Educator leads, and Toronto Public Health Nurses, a professional development session was conducted for all Mental Health Action Team members on student leadership and mental health resources. Keynote speakers from the Rick Hansen Foundation presented on the importance of physical health for good mental health and the connection between inclusion and mental health.



## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 2025

"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us." (Pope Francis)

### Dear Parents/Guardians,

Every year the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) marks the first full week in May, this year May 5-11, as Mental Health Awareness Week. During this week, and throughout the school year, students have an opportunity to engage in discussions and activities that promote good mental health. We encourage you to review the tips and resources below as you continue to support your child/youth's mental health at home. Don't hesitate to reach out to your child's school with questions or concerns.

1

### Support and Validate

Whatever your child/youth is feeling, simply listening can help. If they are upset, resist the urge to cheer them up or fix the problem right away. Instead try to put yourself in their shoes and focus on validating their experience. This empathetic approach will not only help the child/youth to regulate, but will also help them feel seen and understood. Check out the following resource: [Listening & Coming Alongside Kids Emotions](#).



2

### Nurture Sense of Identity

Exploring cultural, faith, and/or community activities together with your child/youth can help build cultural identity, create social connection, and boost self-esteem. Are there cultural foods or other traditions that your family can enjoy together? Are there stories about your family or culture you can share? Listening to music and dancing are other ways to celebrate culture and improve well-being.



3

### One-on-one Time

A child/youth's relationships with parents/guardians and other caring adults are key to their well-being. Spending regular one-on-one time together goes a long way to nurture your relationship. Even just a few minutes a day makes a difference. Building this time into everyday activities such as involving your child in meal preparation can help make this more achievable.



4

### Get Active Together!

Physical activity helps reduce stress and boosts mood. Even a short walk outdoors can really make a difference. Try building activity into your family's daily or weekly routine.



5

### Support Your Own Well-being

Self-care is not only essential for your own well-being, but is also necessary in order to support your child/youth's well-being. Check out this [Personal Resiliency Tip Sheet](#) for ideas. Also consider reaching out to family, friends, your parish, or other members of your community for support. If you're looking for mental health support, [Connex ON](#) can link you to counselling services.

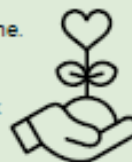


## 6

## Try a New Mental Health Practice

Each of the exercises below can help us cope with stress and improve our overall mental health. Consider choosing one or two to practice together with your child/youth. When learning new skills, it's important to practice when calm.

- **Deep breathing** relaxes the body and mind and can be done anywhere. [Read about how to do it here](#). Kids Help Phone's offers a helpful visual: [Breathing Balloon](#).
- **Prayer** can be a healing act in times of difficulty. Consider a family prayer routine. Check out these [prayer resources](#).
- **Practicing Gratitude** helps us to develop a more optimistic and hopeful outlook even in challenging times. Consider asking each member of the family to share one positive thing about their day at dinnertime each evening.
- **Practicing mindfulness** can help reduce stress and help us cope with a range of feelings. Check out this [4 minute video](#) to learn about how you can be more mindful everyday.



## How to Notice and Respond to Mental Health Challenges

It can sometimes be tricky to know whether behaviours and feelings you observe in your child are typical reactions to life's challenges or signs of a mental health concern. Start by reflecting on the questions below. Consider also speaking to other caring adults in your child's life, such as teachers or other school staff, to see what they are noticing.

- Are these behaviours and emotions out of character for my child?
- Are they impacting my child's ability to enjoy everyday life?
- Are concerning behaviours happening more often?
- Are they more intense and lasting longer?



For more information, click on this resource: [Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child](#).

## Reach Out When Needed

- Mental health support is available to your child/youth through school social workers and psychologists. Speak to your child's principal to discuss.
- [Kids Help Phone](#) offers counselling 24/7. Children/youth can call 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868.
- [Black Youth Helpline](#) offers culturally relevant services for youth and families. Call 416-285-9944. Check website for more details and hours of operation.
- [Hope for Wellness for Indigenous Peoples](#) offers 24/7 phone counselling and crisis intervention for Indigenous peoples across Canada. Call 1-855-242-3310 or visit website for online chat.
- [What's Up Walk-In](#) offers virtual or in-person counselling with no appointment needed. Variety of languages available and 2SLGBTQ+ counsellors available on request. [Click here](#) for locations, hours, and further details.



**SPECIAL  
SERVICES**  
MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

For more information or to access mental health supports for your child, please reach out to the school principal





REPORT TO

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

## TCDSB Student Achievement Plan 2024-2025 Report Back and Draft SAP 2025-2026 for Consultation

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity" 2 Peter 3:18*

### Drafted

April 14, 2025

### Meeting Date

May 21, 2025

Cristina Fernandes, Executive Superintendent, Student Achievement, Innovation and Well Being  
 Michael Caccamo, Superintendent, Literacy Curriculum & Innovation, and Safe Schools  
 Kimberly Dixon, Superintendent, Mathematics and Central Curriculum Leadership & Innovation  
 Roy Fernandes, Superintendent, Indigenous Education, Equity and Community Relations, and Curriculum  
 Maria Meehan, Superintendent of Special Services and Mental Health

### 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.*



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN  
2022 - 2025

IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne  
Director of Education

Adrian Della Mora  
Associate Director of Academic  
Affairs & Chief Operating Officer

Derek Boyce  
Associate Director of Corporate  
Services and Chief Commercial Officer

Ryan Putnam  
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the implementation of the TCDSB Student Achievement Plan for the 2024-2025 year and outlines a draft plan for 2025-2026 for broad consultation. The plan was a requirement of the Ministry of Education's Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023. The plans align with the TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and departmental action plans.

**The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 60 hours**

## B. PURPOSE

1. This report provides information on the implementation of the 2024-2025 TCDSB Student Achievement Plan (TCDSB SAP).
2. Included in this report is the proposed draft 2025-2026 Student Achievement Plan (Appendix A) for consultation.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. The Ministry of Education, through the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, mandated that every board develop a Student Achievement Plan. The plan provides a measure of accountability.
2. The TCDSB SAP is designed to provide a consistent set of performance indicators emphasizing student achievement, future success, and mental health and well-being outcomes. The plan ensures that strategic planning and policy development are data driven. The SAP includes input from families and communities to promote transparency in school boards.
3. The plan has three main areas to be monitored:
  - a. Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills;
  - b. Preparation of Students for Future Success, and
  - c. Student Engagement and Well-Being.
4. For each area tracked, the Ministry of Education has identified several metrics that will be gathered over time to inform the work of district school boards. Some metrics are part of our ongoing work (e.g., EQAO achievement data) while other metrics were captured through student surveys within the EQAO collection processes.



5. Consultation was conducted through a survey in April 2024 to key stakeholders and the final plan was posted at the end of May 2024.
6. This report provides information on the implementation of the actions related to the Ministry metrics.

## D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

7. The following chart outlines the actions undertaken during the 2024-2025 academic year in the three areas designated by the Ministry of Education:

1. Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills	
✓	Implemented early reading screening in Kindergarten (Year 2), Grade 1 and 2
✓	Introduced explicit instruction focusing on foundational reading strategies
✓	Introduced tier 2 intervention in Grade 1 classes and expanding tier 3 interventions to more priority schools
✓	Focused use of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated instruction to support Literacy and Mathematics learning in all grades
✓	Teaching students with fidelity to math curriculum
✓	Engaging staff in ongoing learning of math content knowledge for teaching
✓	Knowing the math learner by ensuring mathematical tasks, supports and interventions that are relevant and responsive
2. Preparation of Students for Future Success	
✓	Ensure students are aware of Secondary School expectations including compulsory and elective credits.
✓	Continue to monitor student credit accumulation for the purpose of intervention through local school student success teams.
✓	Develop and increase student participation in Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credit and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs as an option for every pathway.
✓	Work with schools to implement new programming and support student participation.

✓	Provide students multiple options for course selection and jump ahead credits (e.g., Gr. 8 to 9 Transitions course; online asynchronous learning through day e-learning, continuing education summer, evening and weekend programs, and alternative learning programs).
<b>3. Student Engagement and Well-Being</b>	
✓	Student absenteeism is tracked daily and students with multiple absences are flagged for contact and intervention.
✓	Use of progressive discipline approaches that support student social emotional learning and restorative practices.
✓	Safe Schools and Special Education and Equity Departments work in tandem to support student mental health and self-regulation.
✓	TCDSB implemented the Middle Years instrument to identify areas for student support, including mental health.

8. The actions outlined on the 2024-2025 plan were implemented throughout the year. Some of this work is ongoing and will continue into 2025-2026 with a renewed focus as outlined in the new framework (See appendix A).
9. Specific actions are also summarized in a slide deck presentation (See Appendix B) provided to the Board of Trustees in alignment with this report, outlining both the work of the previous plan and the actions being taken to address the ongoing work of student achievement.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The TCDSB Student Achievement Plan provides data on TCDSB achievement in relation to the ministry-selected metrics. It also provides boards with the opportunity to include comments on strategies to enhance the engagement and achievement of specific subgroups of our populations (e.g., English Language Learners, Students with Special Needs, Students from low-income neighbourhoods).
2. The provincial plan template provides district school boards with the opportunity to list some of the actions they are taking to address the needs in the system. While the template provides only limited space to outline some of the professional learning and opportunities that are provided to staff and students, links have been included in each section of the plan to our TCDSB Action plans which outline further strategies. (e.g., Math Achievement Action

Plan, Equity Action Plan, Special Services Action Plan, Mental Health Action Plan, Professional Learning Plans etc.).

3. The 2025-2026 SAP draft template will go out to consultation at the end of April/beginning of May in accordance with directives from the Ministry of Education. A draft SAP will be posted on the TCDSB website for the consultation process.
4. This broad consultation will include a slide deck summary to the Board of Trustees, the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Catholic Parent Involvement Committee along with a survey that allows all parents and interested groups (advisory and labour groups) to contribute to the work of student achievement.
5. Upon receiving feedback, the final SAP plan with the considered feedback will be provided to trustees for final approval. Once approved, the plan will be posted on the TCDSB website and will be used for guiding the work of the system.
6. The Ministry encourages district school boards to continue work in areas that are not specifically outlined in the Student Achievement Plan template, but that are integral to the board's communities. As such, we will continue to include Equity as it aligns with the MYSP in our day-to-day work as outlined in each school's School Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP).
7. In the Fall, schools will implement a School Improvement and Equity Plan that is aligned with the SAP and is responsive to each community's needs, reflecting the local student population and the parent community's priorities.
8. Additionally, central academic staff will provide professional learning opportunities for staff (as outlined in the annual Professional Learning Plan) and in special events for students to support the work at the school level.
9. Both the TCDSB Student Achievement Plan and the School Improvement and Equity Plan will be publicly posted, the SAP on the board site and the SIEP on each school's site. The plan will be reviewed annually and consulted on as appropriate for implementation. The outcomes of the plan are reported annually to the Board of Trustees.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board of Trustees.

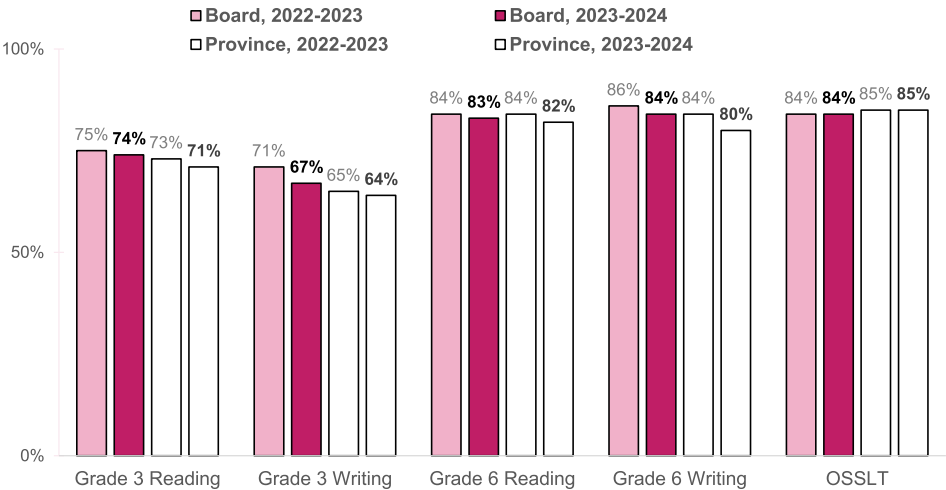
Student Achievement Plan: Toronto CDSB

2023-2024 Academic Year

Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills

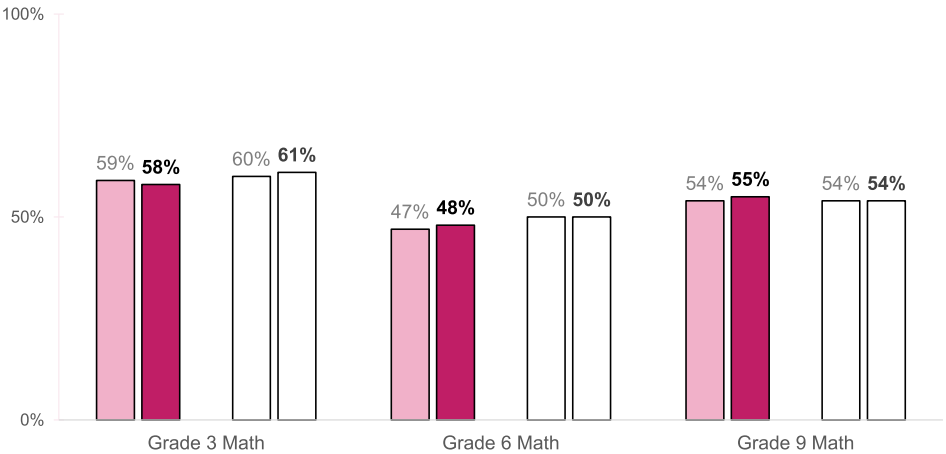
Goal: Improve students’ literacy learning and achievement

Measure: % of student who met or exceeded the provincial standard on EQAO Assessments for Grade 3/6 Reading and Writing and % of first time eligible students who were successful on the OSSLT/TPCL.



Goal: Improve students’ math learning and achievement

Measure: % of students who met or exceeded the provincial standard on EQAO Assessments for Grade 3/6/9 Math

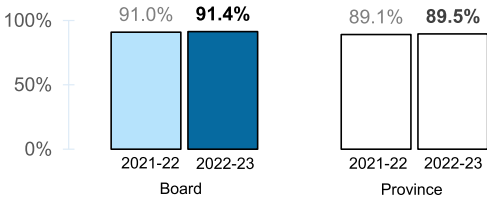


2023-2024 Academic Year

Preparation of Students for Future Success

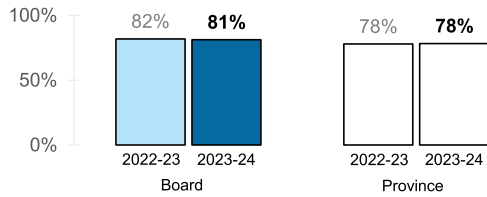
Goal: Improve students’ graduation rates and preparedness for future success

Measure: % of students graduating with an OSSD within five years of starting Grade 9

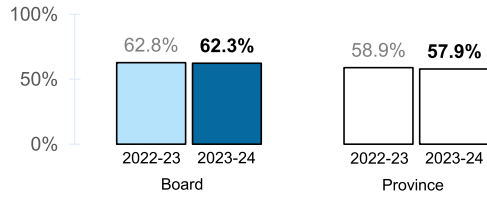


Includes students who began Grade 9 in 2018-2019 and tracks their progress until 2022-2023.

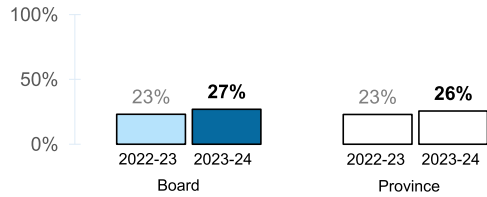
Measure: % of students who earn 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10



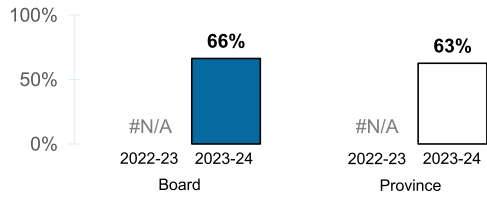
Measure: % of students enrolled in at least one Grade 12 math or Grade 11 or 12 science courses



Measure: % of students participating in at least one job skills program (Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credits or Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program)



Measure: % of students who believe their learning has prepared them for the next step in their learning experience (i.e. next grade, post secondary, etc)

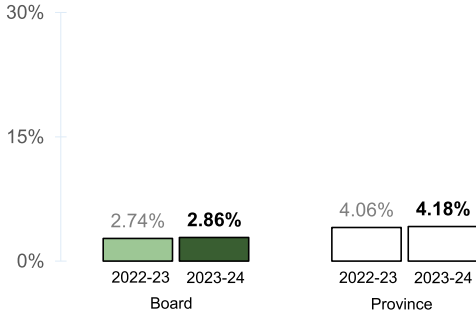


2023-2024 Academic Year

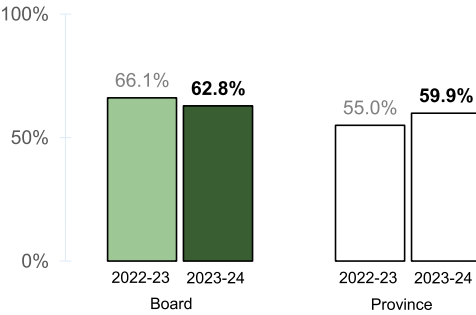
Student Engagement & Well-Being

Goal: Improve students’ participation in class time and learning

Measure: % of students in Grades 4-12 who were suspended at least once

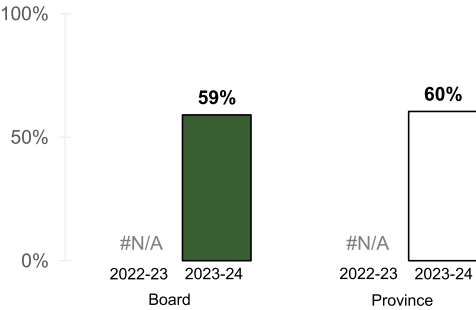


Measure: % of students in Grades 1-8 whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent



Goal: Improve student well-being

Measure: % of Grade 6, 9 and 10 students who report being aware of mental health supports and services in order to seek supports for mental health



Source: As reported by schools through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 2021-2022 to 2023-2024, and the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.

#N/A: Not applicable. Secondary student indicators are not available for elementary only school boards. Learning Preparedness and Mental Health Awareness data is not available for 2022-2023.

Student Achievement Plan: Toronto CDSB

2023-2024 Academic Year

Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills

Goal: Improve students’ literacy learning and achievement

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on:		
Grade 3 EQAO Reading	74%	71%
Grade 3 EQAO Writing	67%	64%
Grade 6 EQAO Reading	83%	82%
Grade 6 EQAO Writing	84%	80%
% of fully participating, first-time eligible students who are successful on the OSSLT/TPCL		
	84%	85%

Goal: Improve students’ math learning and achievement

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on:		
Grade 3 EQAO Math	58%	61%
Grade 6 EQAO Math	48%	50%
Grade 9 EQAO Math	55%	54%

Additional School Board Measures	School board
Math Achievement Action Plan (LINK: <a href="https://5il.co/2942j">https://5il.co/2942j</a> ) has additional strategies.	TCDSB
Special Education Action Plan (LINK: <a href="https://5il.co/2482u">https://5il.co/2482u</a> ) has additional strategies.	TCDSB

Actions our School Board Will Take to Improve

- 1.Continued identification of subsets of students for focused classroom interventions (literacy and math)
- 2.Reading Facilitator led training on Tier 1 and 2 reading strategies
- 3.Use screening tools to precisely support placements in Tiered interventions (5th block, Corrective Reading, Empower)
- 4.Investigate screeners for additional grades for reading and math interventions
- 5.Use of High Impact UDL strategies and resources to support and enhance students with ELL and IEPs
- 6.Engage in pedagogies that centre student-voice and choice and that leverage students’ strengths, abilities and experiences and are culturally relevant
- 7.Continued support to students through school-based student success staff
- 8.Using school math and literacy data to set upcoming goals for local School Improvement and Equity Plans
- 9.Track usage of responsive mathematics tools to support effective curriculum implementation (e.g. Knowledgehook, Edwin)
- 10.Planned support in math for ELL students and students with IEPs
- 11.Promote parent engagement through math experiences
- 12.Increase opportunities in continuing education and e-learning to support math credit attainment

2023-2024 Academic Year

Preparation of Students for Future Success

Goal: Improve students’ graduation rates and preparedness for future success

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students...		
who earn 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10	81%	78%
who participated in at least one job skills program (Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credits or Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program)	27%	26%
who graduated with an OSSD within five years of starting Grade 9 (2022-2023)	91.4%	89.5%
who enrolled in at least one Grade 12 math or Grade 11 or 12 science courses	62.3%	57.9%
who believe their learning has prepared them for the next step in their learning experience (i.e.next grade, post secondary, etc)	66%	63%

Additional School Board Measures	School board
80% of students feel more positive about their school experience after connecting with Graduation Coaches for Black students	TCDSB
Equity Action Plan (LINK: <a href="https://5il.co/1rqfg">https://5il.co/1rqfg</a> ) has additional strategies.	TCDSB

- Increased Student Awareness:
  - 1.Expand Cooperative Education opportunities that reflect student interests.
  - 2.Continue to build awareness of Guidance Counsellor Teachers of the variety of pathways and opportunities that will support students.
  - 3.Continue to provide student access to career fairs responsive to their interests.
- Increased Pathway Program to meet student needs and interests:
  - 4.Provide ELL students and students with IEPs pathway options that align with and support their abilities (E.g. SHSM Certifications, etc.)
  - 5.Engagement of outside agencies to help students feel an increased sense of belonging at school.
  - 6.Expanded access to specialty STEAM programming (e.g. Robotics)
- Pathways to Graduation:
  - 7.Local tracking of credit completion to inform interventions provided.
  - 8.Ensure student awareness of ways to stay on track with credit accumulation through e-learning, Continuing Education options and credit recovery.
  - 9.Increase access to Graduation Coaches and other caring adults to support students in reaching their pathway goals.

2023-2024 Academic Year

Student Engagement & Well-Being

Goal: Improve students’ participation in class time and learning

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students...		
in Grades 1-8 whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent	62.8%	59.9%
in Grades 4-12 who were suspended at least once	2.86%	4.18%

Goal: Improve student well-being

% of Grade 6, 9 and 10 students who report being aware of mental health supports and services in order to seek supports for mental health	59%	60%
---	-----	-----

Additional School Board Measures	School board
Middle Years Instrument indicated that students had overall good social and emotional development.	TCDSB
Middle Years Instrument reported that some students indicated that they have worries but report high level of connectedness.	TCDSB
Mental Health Plan (LINK: <a href="https://5il.co/29okp">https://5il.co/29okp</a> ) and Safe Schools Plan (LINK: <a href="http://www.tcdsb.org/page/safe-schools">www.tcdsb.org/page/safe-schools</a> )	TCDSB

- Increase student engagement:
  - 1.Increase student attendance through a communication campaign with families on the importance of attending school
  - 2.Offer parent webinars through CSPCs on how to support student engagement
  - 3.Recognize and celebrate good or improved student attendance in schools
- Increase awareness of restorative practices:
  - 4.Continue to provide professional development to staff on implicit bias, restorative practices and creating physically and emotionally safe learning environments
  - 5.Continue to provide opportunities for students to be leaders that promote safe and accepting communities (e.g. Safe School Teams and symposiums)
- Increase awareness of mental health supports for students:
  - 6.Display Mental Health resources prominently in schools (posters, flyers, newsletters) and on the TCDSB website
  - 7.Provide training to teachers and administrators to embed MH practices within classrooms & schools (e.g. Mental Health Action Teams)
  - 8.Use of Faith and Wellness strategies to inform student awareness to strengthen engagement and achievement.



# TCDSB Student Achievement Plan

## Update and Next Steps

April | 24 | 2025

**IN GOD'S IMAGE:** *Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope*



# The SAP Process 2025/2026

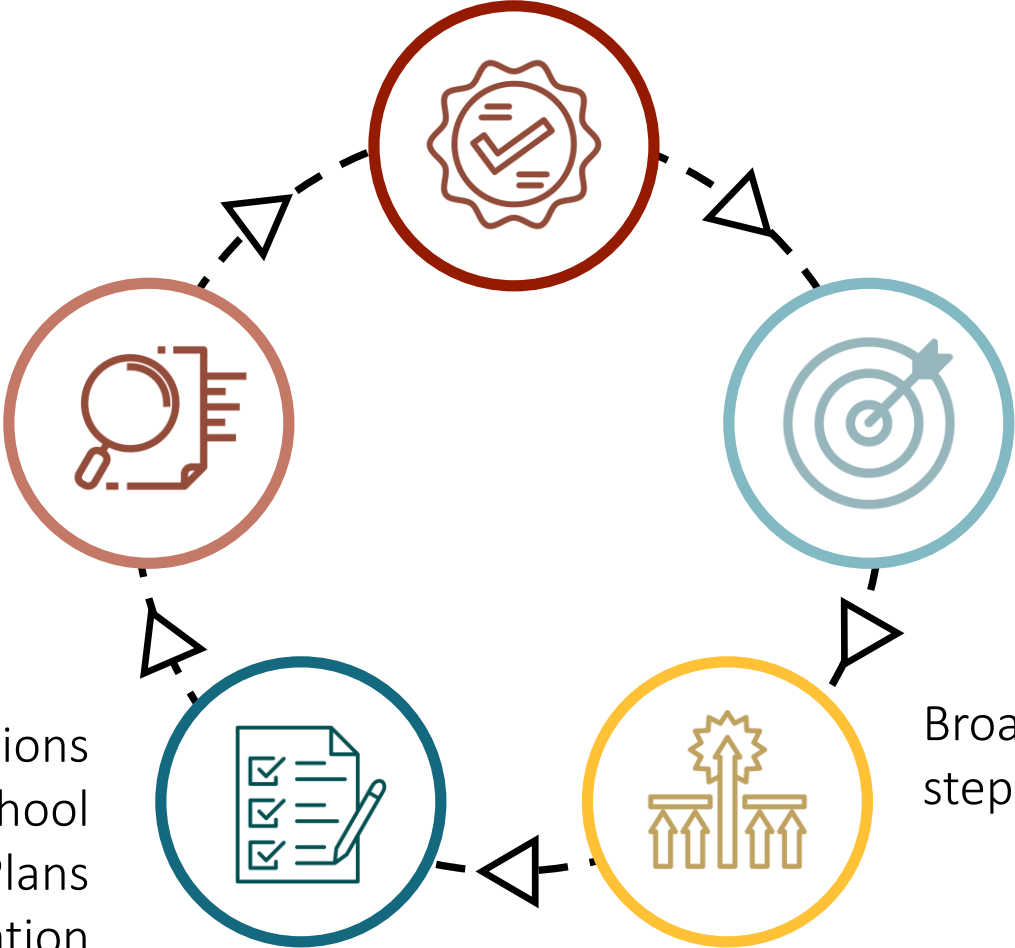
Review of 2024-2025 Student  
Achievement Plan – Actions  
accomplished

Review new Ministry of  
Education data and identify  
areas of strength and areas  
for growth

Broad Consultation on Next  
steps for Implementation

Implement the new actions  
identified through individual School  
Improvement and Equity Plans  
(SIEP) with CSPC Consultation

Monitor implementation  
of interventions and  
actions identified



# Student Achievement Plan

## Overview

- Focus on three areas:
  1. Achievement
  2. Preparation of Students for Future Success
  3. Engagement and Well-Being
- Implementation of the plans locally via School Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP)
- Central Implementation via the Professional Learning Plans



# TCDSB Student Achievement Plan (SAP)

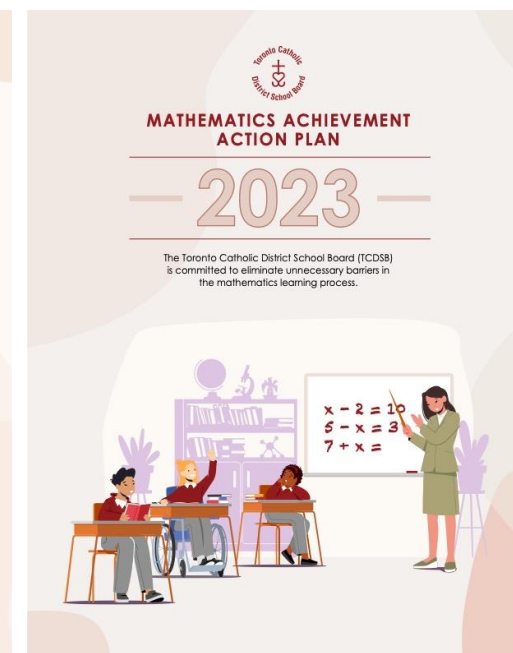
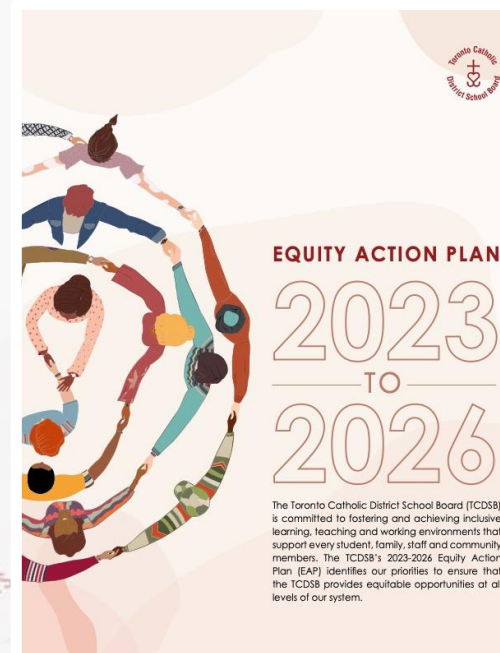
Guided by our Pastoral Plan

- The Pastoral Plan in alignment with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan informs the work of schools as they implement the SAP.
- For 2025-2026, the focus will be *Growing in Knowledge with Justice*



# TCDSB Action Plans Inform the Work of the Student Achievement Plan

- Equity Action Plan (EAP)
- Mathematics Achievement Action Plan (MAAP)
- Mental Health Action Plan (MHAP)
- Special Services Action Plan (SSAP)

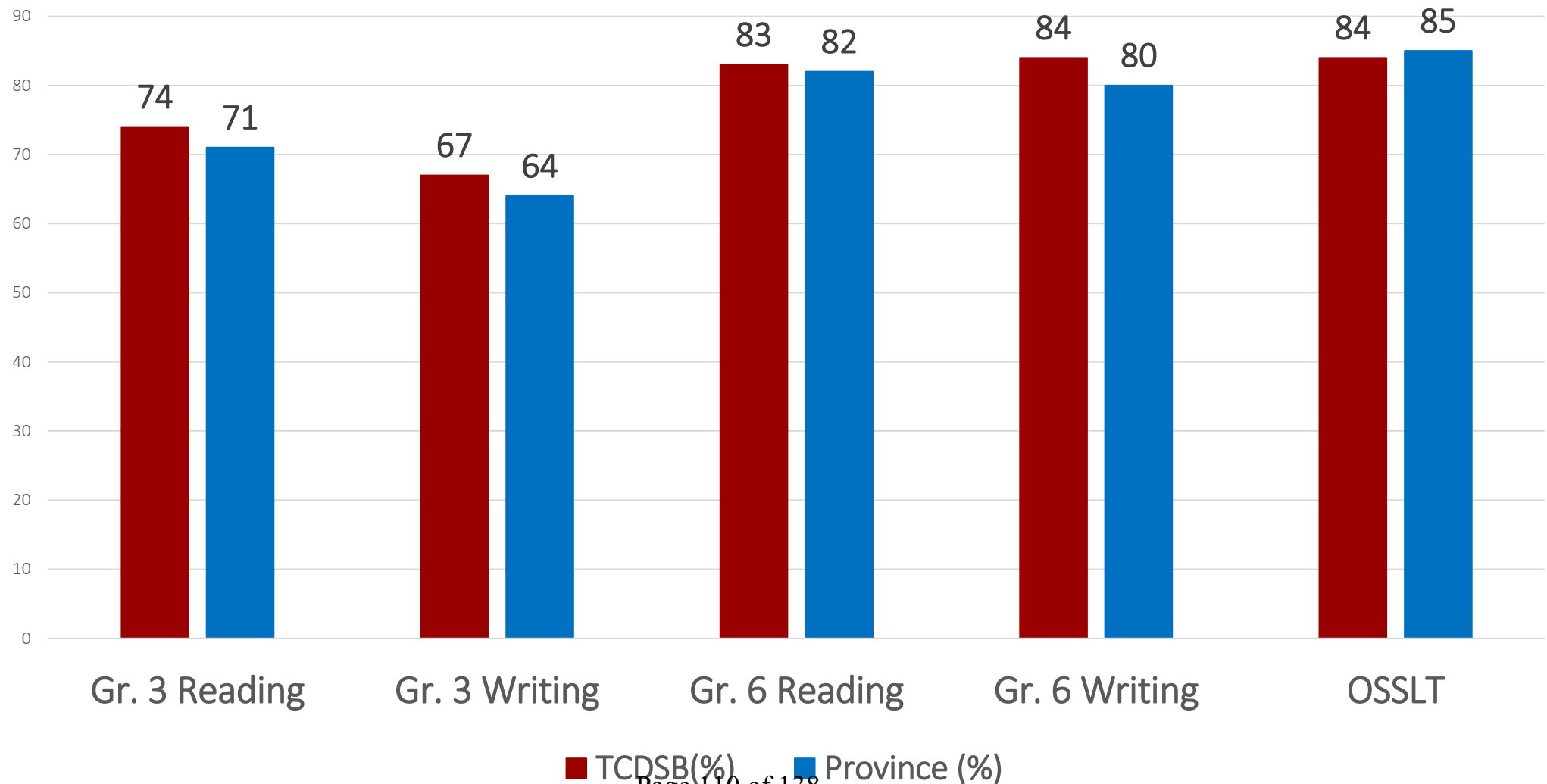


# Achievement

## Literacy and Mathematics

# Achievement: Literacy Grades 3, 6 and 10

Reading and Writing 2023-2024



# Achievement

## Literacy Actions Implemented:

Screen students in  
Kindergarten  
(Yr. 2)  
Grade 1  
Grade 2

**Screening**  
**N=16,495**

Phonemic Awareness  
Alphabet knowledge  
Phonics  
Vocabulary  
Word Reading  
Fluency

**Explicit**  
**Instruction in**  
**Foundations of**  
**Reading**

Tier 2 and 3 within class  
Tier 3 withdrawal  
Corrective Reading in all  
schools  
5<sup>th</sup> Block  
Empower

**Interventions**  
**and Resources**

Increased  
implementation of  
Universal Design for  
Learning  
Differentiated  
Instruction

**High Impact**  
**Instructional**  
**Strategies**

# Achievement

## Literacy Next Steps

# 1

### Screening

- Identify subsets of students for focused classroom interventions
- Facilitator led training on Tier 1 and 2 reading strategies
- Use screening tools to precisely support placements in Tiered interventions (5<sup>th</sup> block, Corrective Reading, Empower)
- Investigate screeners for additional grades for reading interventions

# 2

### Supporting ELL and Students with Reading Needs

- Use of High Impact UDL strategies and resources to support and enhance the achievement of ELL students and students with an IEP.
- Engage in culturally relevant pedagogies that centre student-voice and choice and that leverage students' strengths and abilities

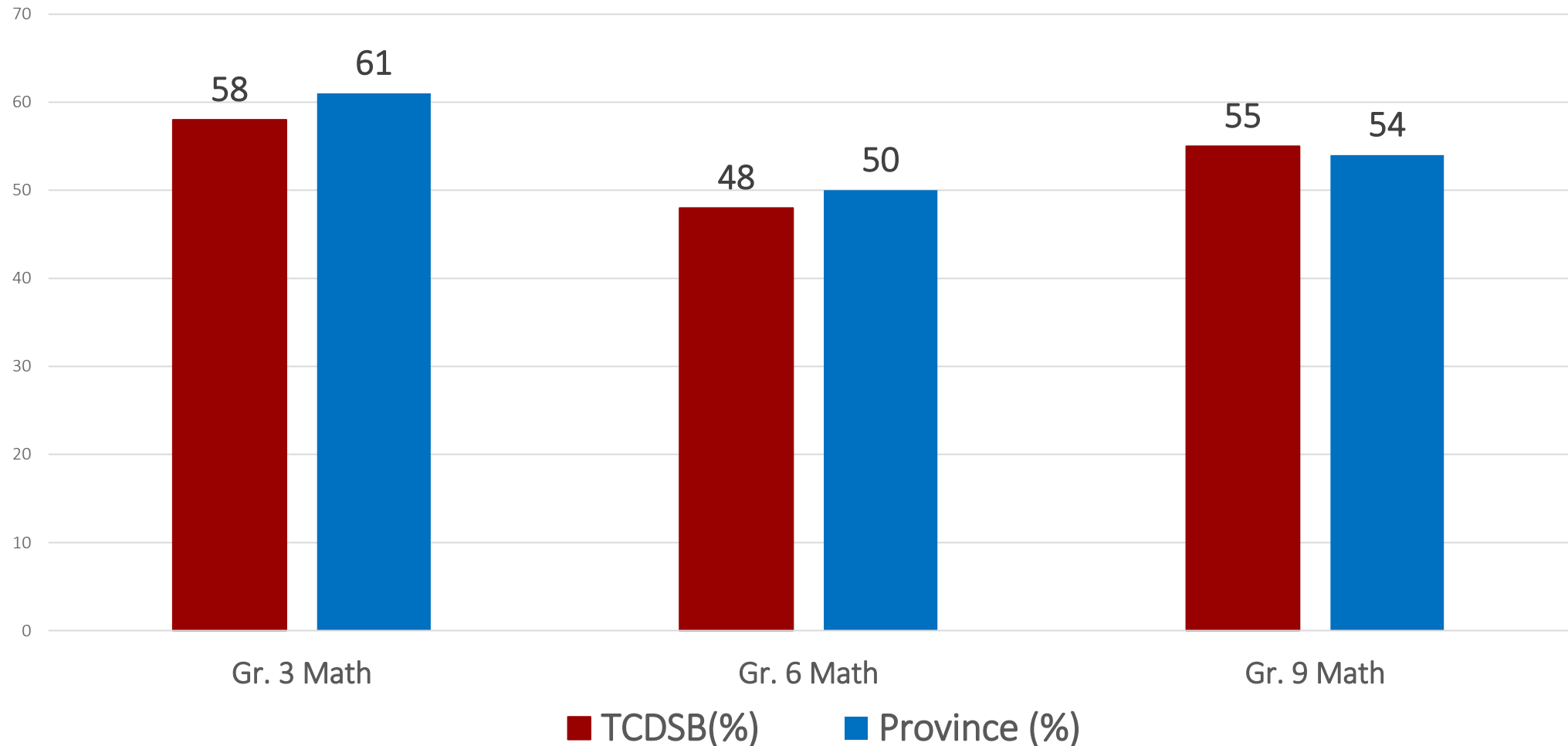
# 3

### De-streamed Grade 9

- Investigate screening tools to support literacy development
- Continue use of Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction
- Continued support to students through school-based student success staff

# Achievement: Mathematics Grades 3, 6 and 9

## Mathematics 2023-2024



# Achievement

## Mathematics Actions Implemented:

Use of Ministry Math Curriculum Resources

Applications aligned to TCDSB math resources (Knowledgehook, MathUP and Edwin)

Central Resource support and PD

Reference Ministry Math resources and tools

Co-learning and co-planning in Priority Schools by facilitators

Building Student Confidence in Math through Social Emotional Learning (Gr. 6 and Gr. 9)

Triangulated data to inform instruction (UDL, DI)

Universal Design for Learning

Differentiated Instruction and Assessment

Large Group instruction with responsive small group and individual interventions

---

**Fidelity to Curriculum**

---

**Math Content Learning for Staff**

---

**Knowing and Responding to the Learner**

---

**High Impact Instructional Strategies**



# Achievement

## Mathematics Next Steps

1

### Fidelity to Curriculum

- Using school math data to set upcoming goals for local School Improvement and Equity Plans
- Investigate math screeners to support foundational mathematics learning and identify areas of growth
- Track usage of responsive mathematics tools to support effective curriculum implementation

2

### Math Knowledge

- Ongoing implementation of High Impact Instructional strategies and integration of UDL/DI strategies
- Planned support in math for ELL students and students with IEPs
- Promote parent engagement through math experiences

3

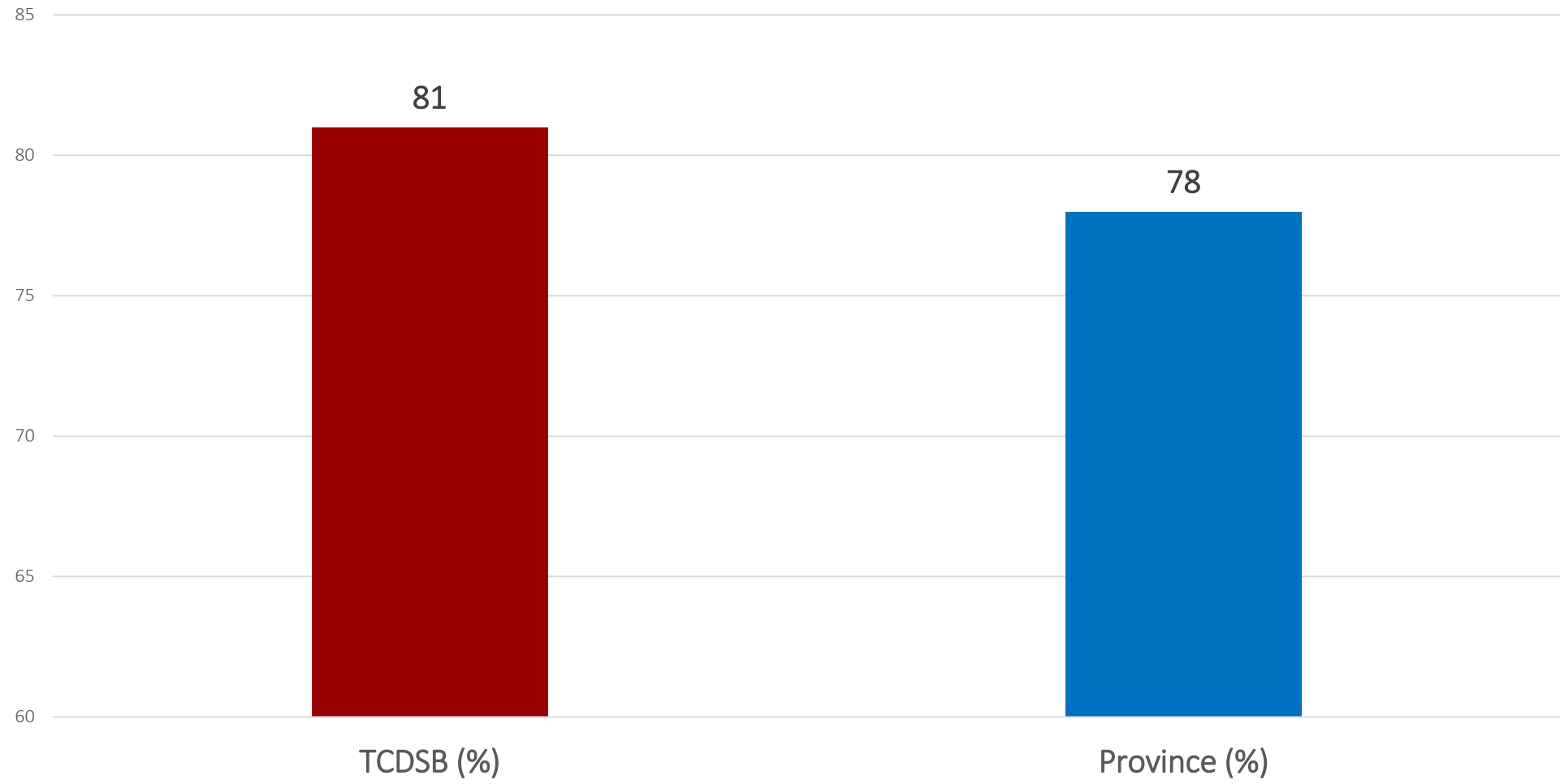
### Knowing and Responding to the Learner

- Integrate responsive interventions for learners
- Increase opportunities in continuing education or e-learning to support math credit attainment
- Select culturally relevant resources that reflect students' experiences and support representation in math learning

# Preparation of Students for Future Success

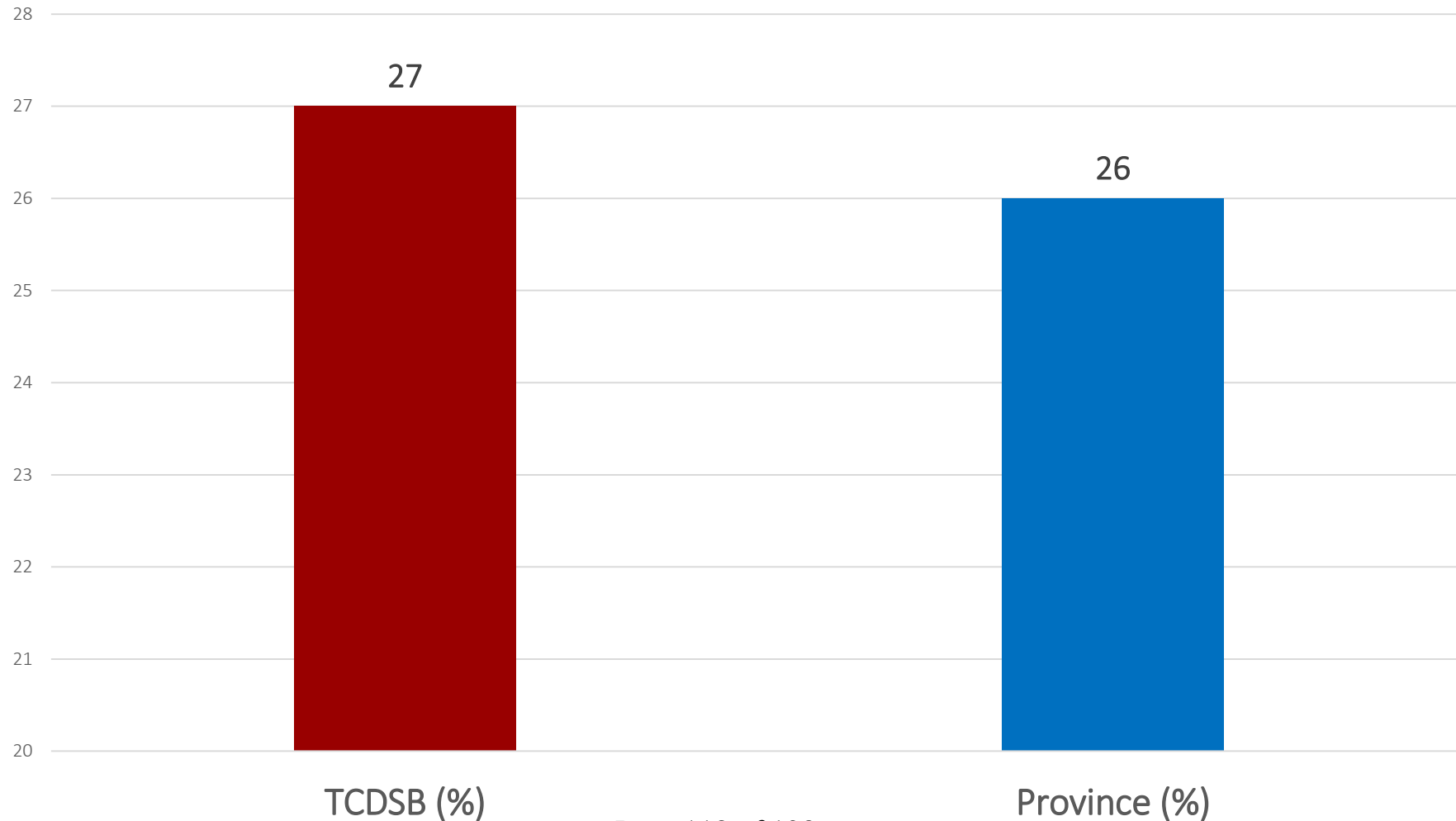
# Preparation of Students for Future Success

% of students who earn 16 or more credits by end of Gr. 10 in 2023-2024



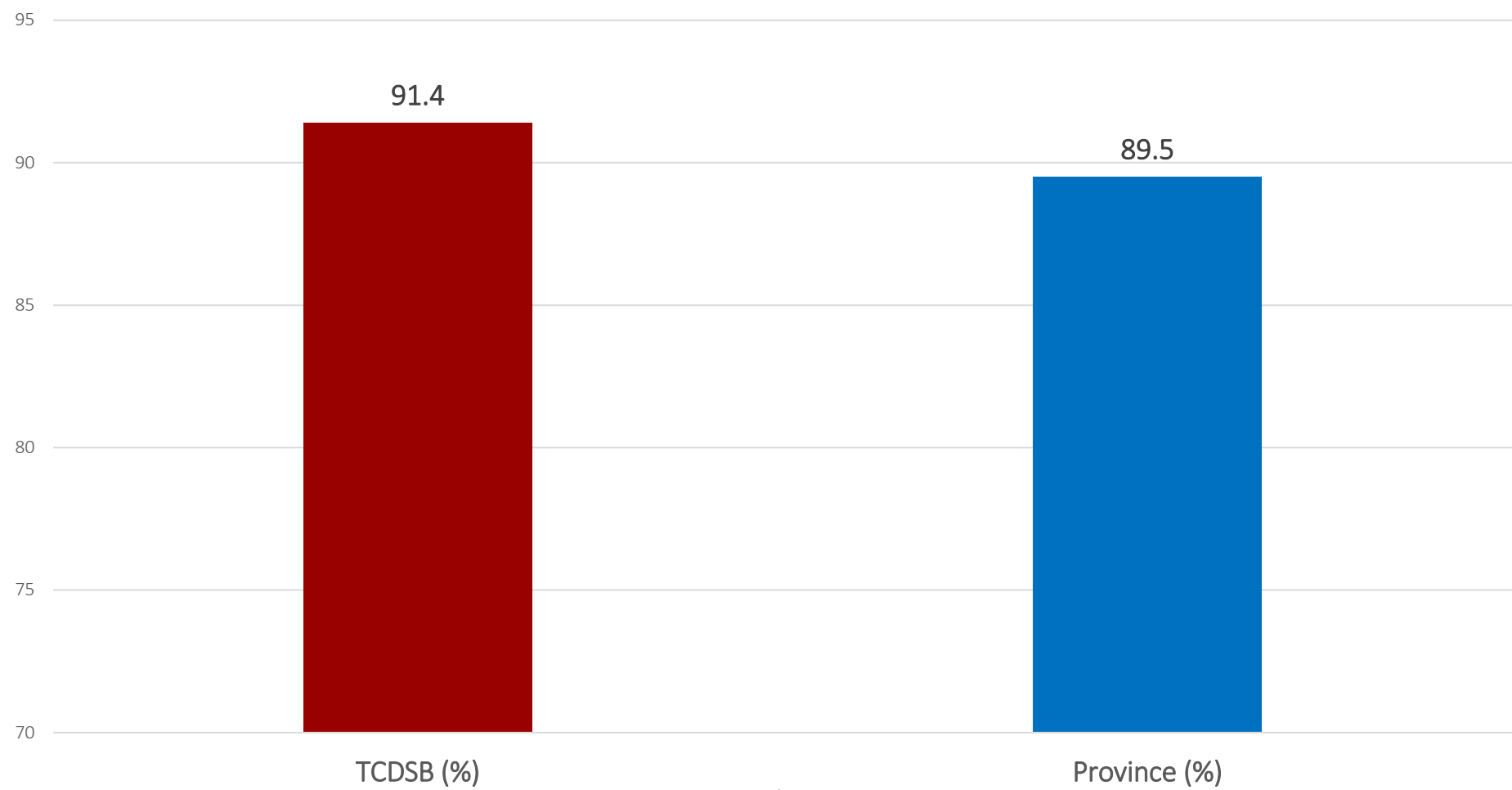
# Preparation of Students for Future Success

% of students participating in at least one job skills program in 2023-2024



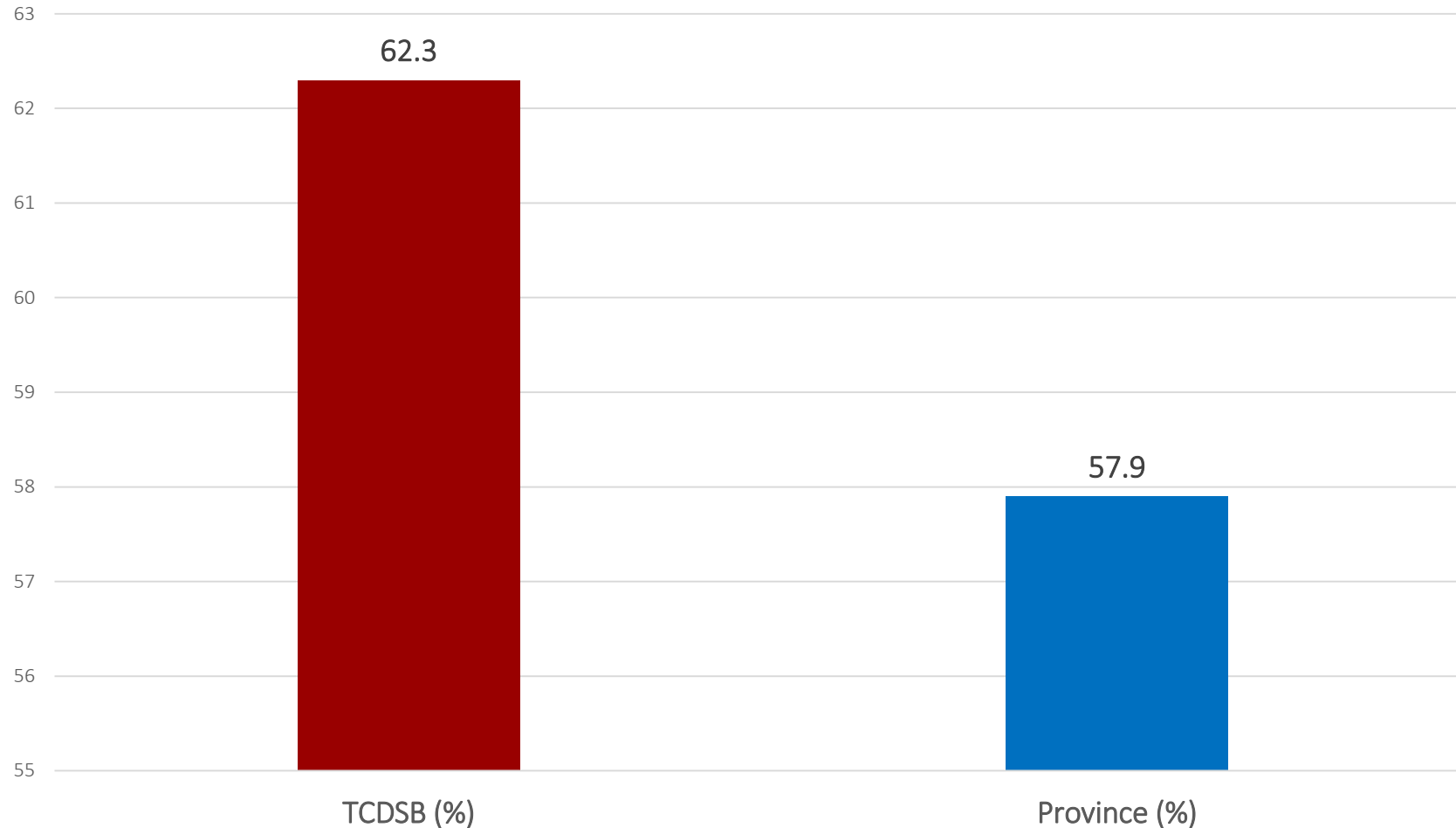
# Preparation of Students for Future Success

% of students graduating with an OSSD within 5 years of starting grade 9 in 2022-2023



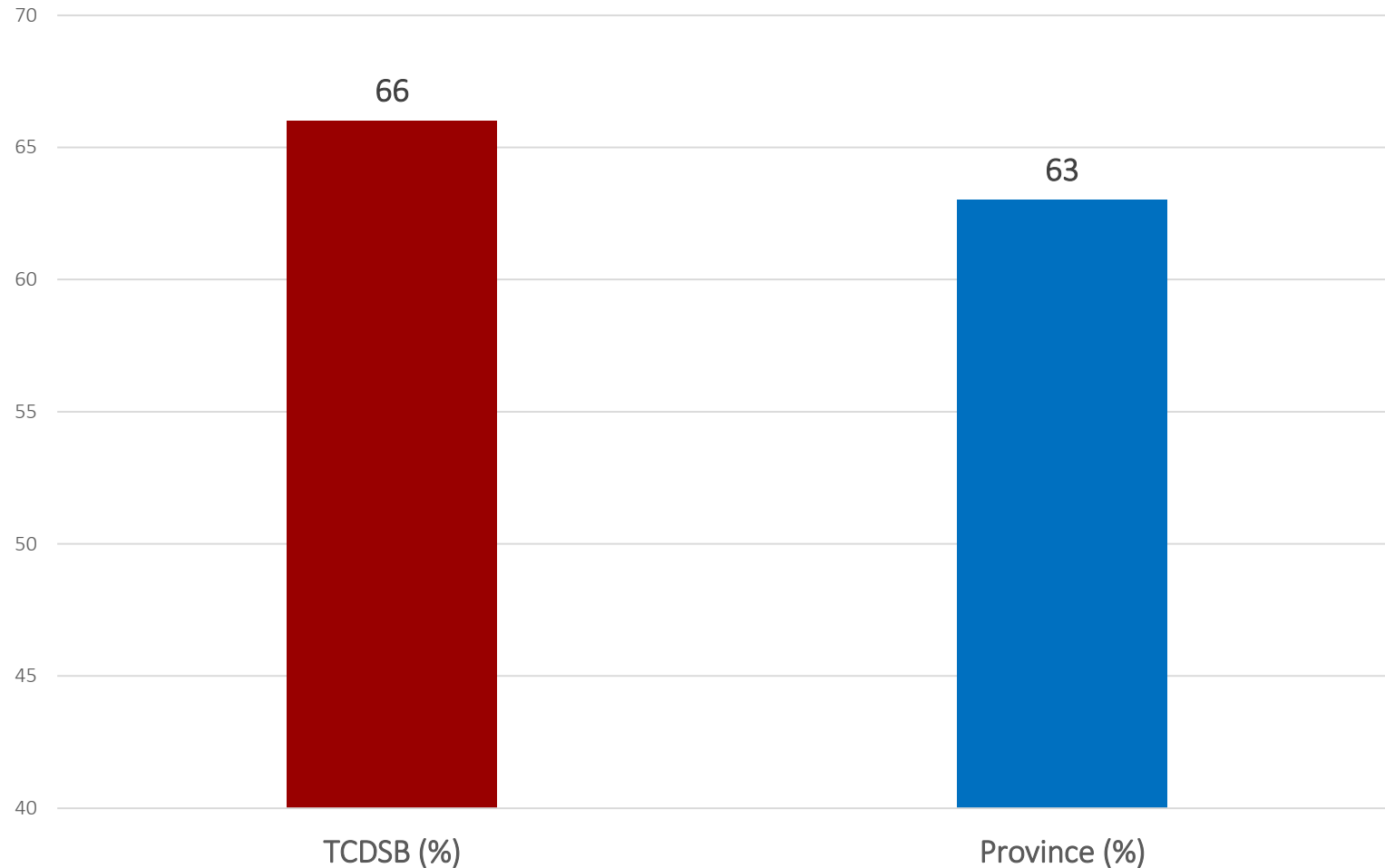
# Preparation of Students for Future Success

% of students enrolled in at least one Gr. 12 math or Gr.11/12 science course in 2023-2024



# Preparation of Students for Future Success

% of students who believe their learning has prepared them for the next step in their learning experience



# Preparation of Students for Future Success

## Actions Implemented:

Awareness of  
Compulsory and Elective  
Credits

Monitor Credit  
Accumulation in  
Learning Cycles

Interventions by Student  
Success and De-  
streaming Staff

---

**Secondary  
School  
Expectations**

Build Awareness of  
OYAP, SHSM and Dual  
Credit Opportunities as  
an option for every  
pathway

Training provided to  
Guidance teams

---

**Job Skills and  
Trades  
Promotion**

Jump Ahead Credits  
(Summer Transition Course)  
Day E-Learning through CVO

Summer School

School Within a College  
Cooperative Education

---

**Expand Options  
for Students**

Awareness of math  
and science courses  
required for Job  
Skills programs

Building a  
sustainable pathway  
in MyBlueprint

---

**Students taking  
Gr. 11 math and  
Gr. 11/12 Science**



# Achievement

## Preparation of Students for Future Success Next Steps

### 1

#### Increased Student Awareness

- Continue to offer a variety of Cooperative Education opportunities that reflect student interests.
- Continue to build awareness of Guidance Counsellor Teachers of the variety of pathways and opportunities that will support students.
- Continue to provide student access to career fairs responsive to their interests.

### 2

#### Increased Pathway Program to meet student needs and interests

- Provide ELL students and students with IEPs pathway options that align with and support their abilities (E.g. SHSM Certifications, etc.)
- Engagement of outside agencies to help students feel an increased sense of belonging at school.
- Continue access to specialty STEAM programming (e.g. Robotics)

### 3

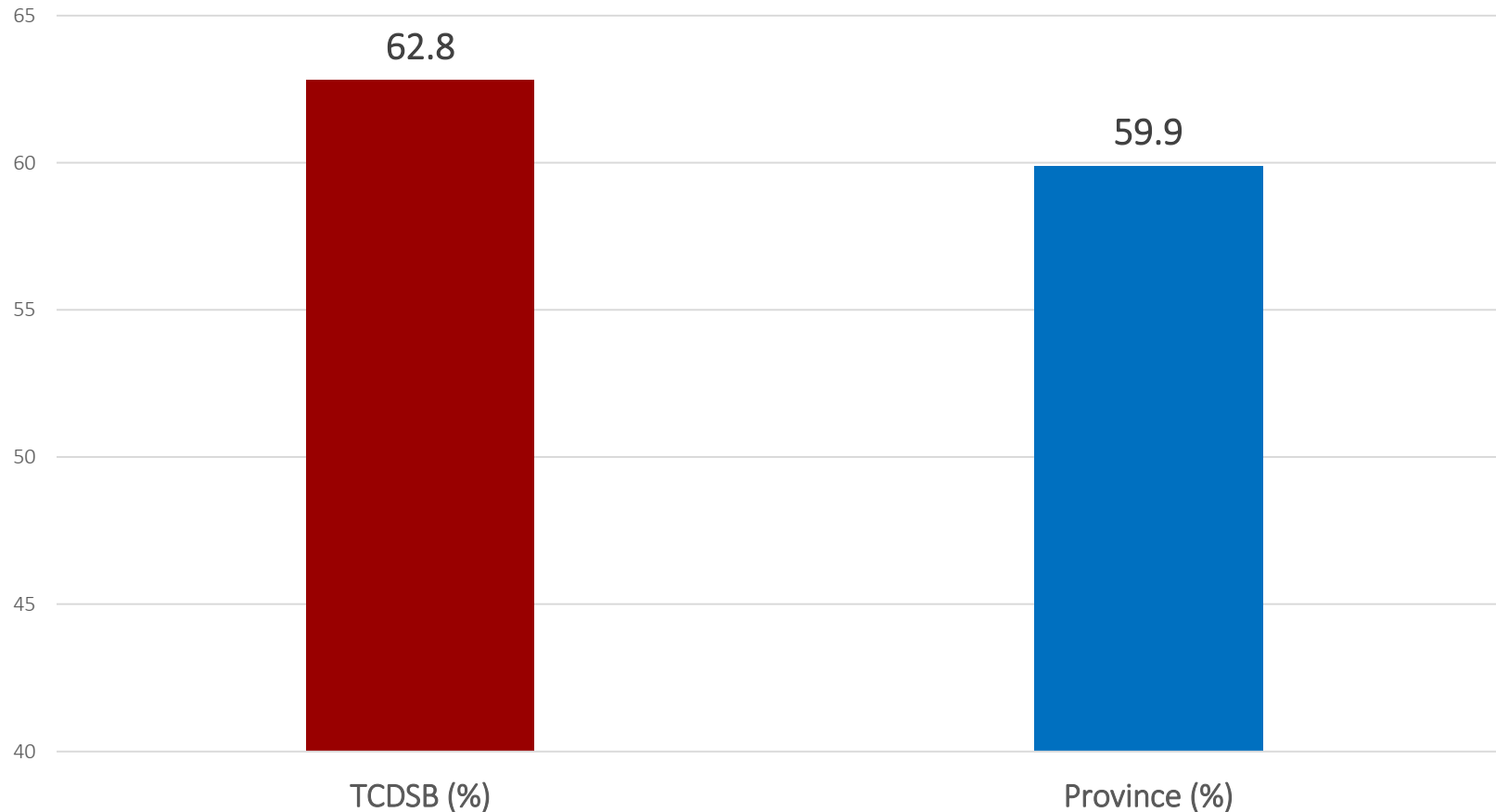
#### Pathways to Graduation

- Tracking credit completion to inform interventions provided.
- Ensure student awareness of ways to stay on track with credit accumulation through e-learning, Continuing Education and credit recovery.
- Increase availability of Graduation coaches to support students in reaching their pathway goals.

# Student Engagement and Well-Being

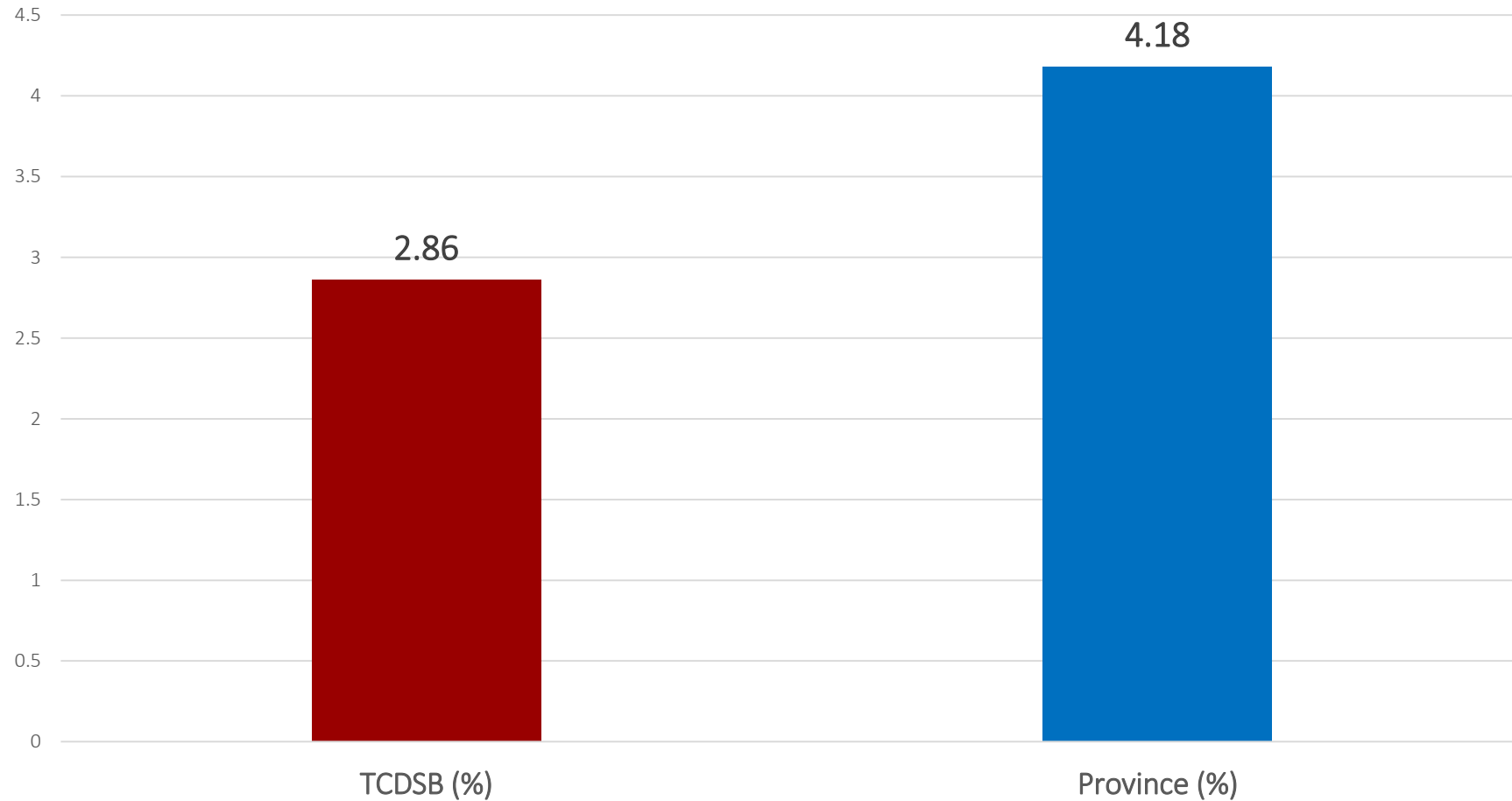
# Student Engagement and Well-Being

% of students whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent



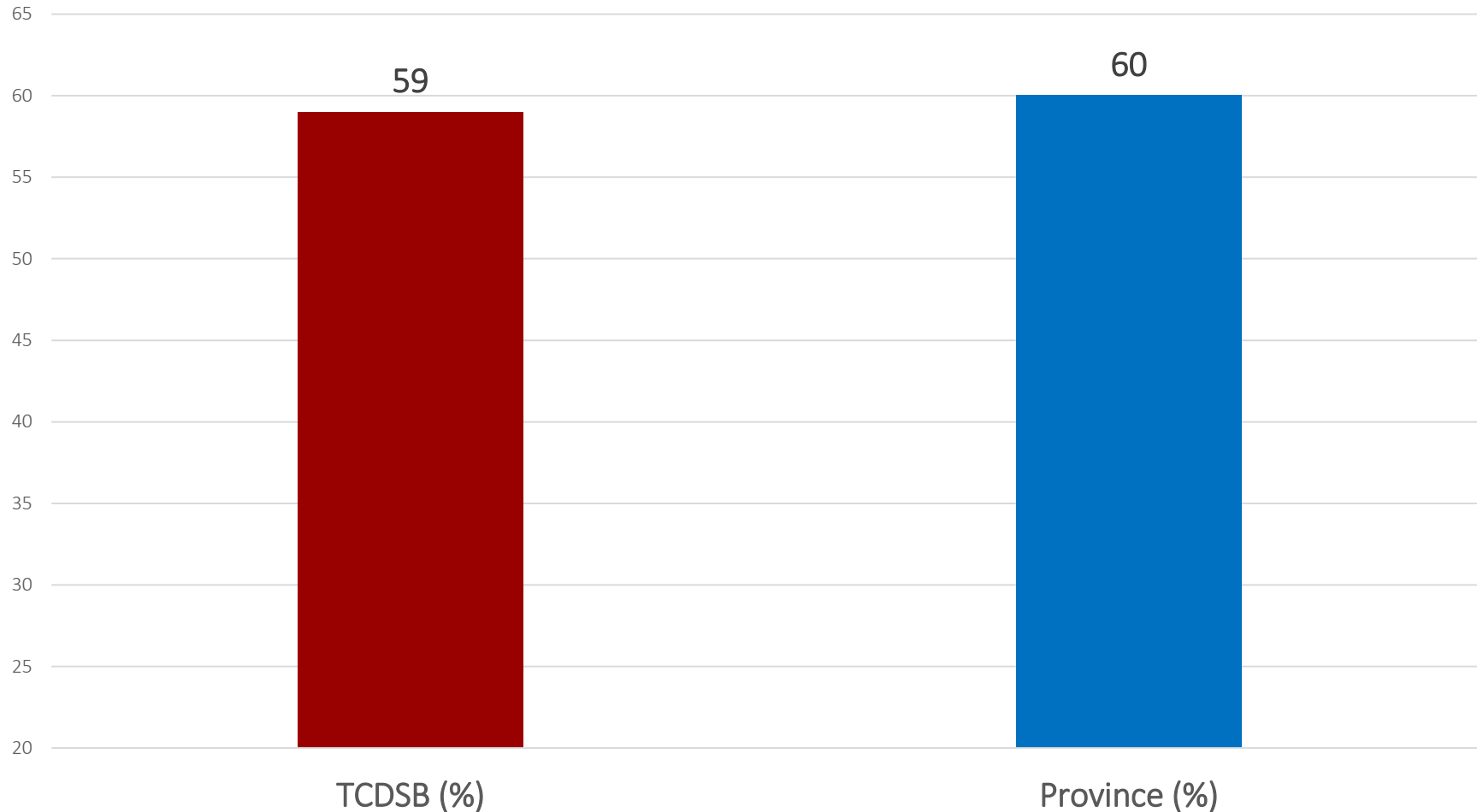
# Student Engagement and Well-Being

% of students in grades 4-12 who were suspended at least once



# Student Engagement and Well-Being

% of grade 6, 9 and 10 students who report being aware of mental health supports and services in order to seek supports for mental health



# Engagement and Well-Being

## Actions Implemented:

Monitor Daily Attendance

School Interventions to support families to reduce absences

Social Work intervention approaching 15 consecutive days

Attendance

Use of Progressive Discipline for SEL

Restorative Practices and Bias Training for Staff

Student Symposia and school assemblies  
Safe School Teams

Suspensions

Mental Health Action Teams

Faith and Wellness Resource for school and class implementation

Faith Formation and Christian Meditation

Mental Health Supports

Students reported overall good social and emotional development

Some students indicated that they have worries but reported a high level of connectedness

Middle Years Instrument  
Grades 4-8

# Achievement

## Student Engagement and Well Being Next Steps

1

### Increase student engagement

- Increase student attendance through a communication campaign with families on the importance of being in school
- Offer parent webinars through CSPCs on how to support student engagement
- Recognize and celebrate good or improved student attendance in schools

2

### Increase awareness of restorative practices

- Continue to provide professional development to staff on implicit bias, restorative practices and creating physically and emotionally safe learning environments
- Continue to provide opportunities for students to be leaders that promote safe and accepting communities (e.g. Safe School teams and symposia)

3

### Increase awareness of mental health supports for students

- Display Mental Health resources prominently in schools (posters, flyers, newsletters)
- Provide training to teachers and administrators to embed MH practices within classrooms and schools (e.g. Mental Health Action Teams)
- Use of Faith and Wellness strategies to inform student awareness

# SAP Consultation





**IN GOD'S IMAGE:** *Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope*

## CONSULTATION PROCESS

**Feedback sought from the following stakeholders:**

- a) Parents of students attending TCDSB schools/programs
- b) Trustees, SEAC, CPIC, CSPC, Advisory Groups, Labour Partners

**Feedback sought on the Plan in the following areas:**

- 1) Student Achievement: Literacy
- 2) Student Achievement: Mathematics
- 3) Student Achievement: Mathematics Resources
- 4) Preparation of students for Future Success
- 5) Student Engagement and Well-Being
- 6) Open-ended -Additional Comments related to the Student Achievement Plan Actions

**Consultation Timeline:** April 28<sup>th</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup>

# Q&A

**To:** Special Education Advisory Committee

**From:** Jennifer Di Francesco

**Date:** May 21, 2025

**Subject: Consideration of Motion - Improved Accommodation Process for Students with Neurodivergent Differences (Disabilities)/Special Education Needs**

---

**MOVED BY: Jennifer Di Francesco, SECONDED BY: Trustee D'Amico**

**WHEREAS:** The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) serves over 20,000 students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) and special education needs;

**WHEREAS:** The TCDSB has a duty under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights to accommodate the learning needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) up to the point of undue hardship;

**WHEREAS:** If a parent/guardian is concerned that TCDSB is not delivering accommodations included in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or is otherwise not effectively accommodating their child's learning needs, they require a swift, user-friendly, independent, and fair avenue equipped with the needed expertise to address their concerns; and

**WHEREAS:** The current procedures of TCDSB are insufficient, as they are not tailored to the needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities) and do not ensure that the TCDSB official addressing the issue has the necessary expertise or authority to implement needed accommodations.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the TCDSB should establish a prompt, user-friendly, fair, and effective process for parents/guardians of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs to seek a resolution if they believe that TCDSB is not providing accommodation for their child's learning needs. This includes cases where TCDSB is not delivering on IEP commitments or has refused an accommodation requested by the parent/guardian;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the TCDSB official who receives and addresses complaints from parents/guardians of

students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs should: a) Have expertise and experience with the education of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs; b) Be independent of those TCDSB staff who have dealt with the student's needs in question; c) Have expertise and training in effective mediation/alternate dispute resolution; d) Have the authority to direct any corrective action they deem necessary;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that if, after review, the TCDSB decides not to provide the requested accommodation, the TCDSB shall provide **written reasons** for this decision;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that every effort should be made to mediate and resolve disagreements between the family and TCDSB. If the matter cannot be resolved, there should be an option for the Parent/Guardian and the TCDSB to appoint an external mediator or review body to consider the issue within a short time frame;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that this process should be designed to address the needs of students with neurodivergent differences (disabilities)/special education needs and should not include unrelated student complaints;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that this motion outlines the guiding principles for the proposed process while allowing flexibility in its design and implementation to align with Ministry requirements. The new process should become available to parents/caregivers or students after they have first brought their concerns to their teacher and principal; and

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the process should be available on the TCDSB website, **easily found and accessible**. The information should also be emailed to all parents in the TCDSB, via multiple avenues, which includes, but is not limited to principals, teachers, SEAC, school messenger, etc.

---

Jennifer Di Francesco  
Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada

**To:** Special Education Advisory Committee

**From:** Jennifer Di Francesco

**Date:** May 21, 2025

**Subject: Consideration of Motion - ADHD is a “Superpower,” not a Disability**

---

**MOVED BY: Jennifer Di Francesco, SECONDED BY: Trustee D’Amico**

**WHEREAS:** Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) should no longer be categorized as a "disorder" or "disability" but instead recognized as a cognitive difference within the framework of neurodiversity. By shifting this label, we aim to reduce stigma, highlight strengths, and promote supportive environments that empower individuals with ADHD to thrive;

**WHEREAS:** Scientific research increasingly identifies ADHD as a variation in cognitive functioning rather than a pathological condition. Studies highlight that ADHD traits such as impulsivity, hyperfocus, and risk-taking have evolutionary roots, which may have been advantageous in dynamic environments. Viewing ADHD as a difference rather than a deficit aligns with the growing neurodiversity movement, which recognizes diverse cognitive profiles as part of human variation;

**WHEREAS:** ADHD individuals frequently exhibit traits that can be powerful assets, including creativity, spontaneity, and innovation. Research shows that individuals with ADHD excel in fields requiring dynamic thinking, adaptability, and unconventional problem-solving. Labeling ADHD as a "disorder" focuses disproportionately on weaknesses rather than fostering environments where ADHD traits can be leveraged for success;

**WHEREAS:** Challenges associated with ADHD often stem from traditional education and work systems that prioritize prolonged focus, rigid routines, and low-stimulation settings. ADHD individuals may thrive when provided with flexible structures, engaging tasks, and creative outlets. By framing ADHD as a cognitive difference, institutions can shift from imposing conformity to nurturing strengths;

**WHEREAS:** The "disorder" and "disability" labels contribute to stigma, reducing self-esteem and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Reframing ADHD as a cognitive

difference encourages individuals to embrace their unique abilities and seek environments where they can excel; and

**WHEREAS:** ADHD should be categorized as a Cognitive Difference under the broader umbrella of Neurodiversity. This terminology acknowledges the unique cognitive profile of ADHD individuals without pathologizing their experiences. ADHD is a Superpower!

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that by recognizing ADHD as a cognitive difference rather than a disorder or disability, we can foster inclusive environments that highlight strengths, reduce stigma, and promote positive outcomes for individuals with ADHD. This motion calls for the TCDSB to adopt this revised perspective, ensuring students with ADHD are valued, respected, heard, and supported in their growth and achievements;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees to write a letter to the Ministry of Education from the TCDSB Board of Trustees asking the Ministry of Education to recognize ADHD under the neurodiversity framework in the Education Act. Research shows that ADHD individuals have unique strengths—such as creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability—that can thrive in the right learning environments. By reframing ADHD, implementing inclusive educational strategies, and training teachers, staff, and administration on the research, development, and evolution in thought on ADHD, we can better support students to reach their full potential; and

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the TCDSB provide targeted support and professional development for educators to deliver curriculum using strength-based, neurodiverse-informed approaches. This includes strategies that engage creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, and other executive functioning skills, while also offering flexible accommodations that empower students with ADHD to thrive academically and socially.

---

**Jennifer Di Francesco**  
**Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada**

**To:** Special Education Advisory Committee

**From:** Jennifer Di Francesco

**Date:** May 21, 2025

**Subject: Consideration of Motion** - Motion to Reform Disciplinary Practices for Students with Learning Differences (Disabilities) and Special Education Needs

---

**MOVED BY:** Jennifer Di Francesco, **SECONDED BY:** Trustee D'Amico

**WHEREAS:** students with learning disabilities and special education needs, including ADHD, autism, and other neurodivergent conditions, often face disciplinary actions that do not align with their educational and developmental needs;

**WHEREAS:** punitive measures such as withholding recess, detentions, and exclusion from classroom activities disproportionately impact these students and do not address the root causes of behavioral challenges;

**WHEREAS:** Research from the American Academy of Pediatrics and educational psychologists highlights that recess and movement are essential for self-regulation, focus, and emotional well-being, particularly for students with ADHD and other learning differences; and

**WHEREAS:** Traditional punitive approaches often exacerbate behavioral challenges rather than support students in developing self-management skills. A shift toward positive, inclusive discipline aligns with human rights laws, Ontario's Education Act, and best practices in special education.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC** recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy prohibits the removal of recess and other physical activity as a form of punishment for students with learning disabilities or special education needs;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC** recommend to the Board of Trustees that staff are training on trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming disciplinary approaches;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC** recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy encourages restorative practices, including conflict resolution and behavioral support strategies tailored to individual student needs;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the policy Implements a review system to track and assess disciplinary actions taken against students with special education needs to ensure compliance with equitable practices;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that a Positive Discipline Policy is adopted and ensures all schools within its jurisdiction implement the outlined practices by September 2025 for the new school year;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees the policy prohibit the use of regulation-based supports — such as scheduled breaks, sensory room access, or movement opportunities, etc. — as contingent rewards. Resources that these children need to self-regulate should never be taken away because of not completing work or behavior discipline;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that all school-based staff are training on trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming disciplinary approaches; and

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** SEAC further recommend to the Board of Trustees that the adoption and implementation of preventative, strength-based strategies that foster emotional regulation, connection, and engagement. These proactive approaches minimize the need for reactive disciplinary measures and contribute to more inclusive, supportive learning environments for all students.

---

**Jennifer Di Francesco**  
**Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada**